

Contemporary Moral Problems

A Student's Perspective

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Dedication

To my father

Virgilio Raymundo Jr.

To my agapeic love

Kleir Pineda

Preface

This book aims to increase public awareness on morality from a student and a rookie writer's point of view. I wrote this book with my honest moral standing as the basis. My answers here are determined by my own view on the society I currently belong to. Happy reading!

-Raymundo, Jino

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Learning Expectations:

To know what is Egoism

Give the most basic definitions for Psychological and Ethical Egoism

Quote:

"It is important that the assumptions underlying our moral practice should not be confused with particular judgments made within that practice. To defend one is not to defend the other. We may assume quite properly, if my analysis has been correct that the virtue of beneficence does, and indeed should, occupy an important place in the 'the moral institution of life'; and yet we may make constant and miserable errors when it comes to judging when and in what ways this virtue is to be exercised. Even worse, we may often be able to make accurate moral judgments and know what we ought to do, but not to do it. For these Ills, philosophy alone is not the cure."

Book Review:

This part focuses on two popular views used to attack conventional morality, namely **Psychological and Ethical Egoism**. A story by Glaucon in Book II of Plato's *Republic* called the Legend of Gyges. It is about a shepherd who found a magical ring that turns the wearer invisible. He used this power to infiltrate the Royal Palace to seduce the Queen, murder the king and take over the throne. The issue on morality here is on how the wearer of the ring behaves with this special ability. What actions will he take to be satisfied? Another story is told, it is about Mr. Smith, who gave up a vacation, which he would have enjoyed, to aid a friend in his studies, which is less fun than being on a trip. *"The agent is merely doing what he most wants to do."* This statement requires us to think if Mr. Smith was acting selfishly or the other way around. **Psychological Egoism** states that all men's motives in doing things are only of self-interest. Even if what they are doing are for the benefit of others, they still believe that that action is for personal gain. **Ethical Egoism** on the other hand, states that all men's actions, regardless if it is for others to benefit or not, are justified in his own interests. What I really think and feel about this

reading is, people are always held responsible of his and his neighbor's actions. We live in a network called the society. We may or may not live independently to each other but ethical considerations are social tools we all must be responsible for.

What I have learned:

This reading taught me to determine actions that may or may not be ethical to different perspectives.

Integrity Questions:

1. What is morality?
2. Is morality important?
3. What acts define selfishness?
4. What acts define unselfishness?

Review Questions:

1. Explain the legend of Gyges. What questions about morality are raised by the story?

- Gyges found himself a magical ring that would turn its wearer invisible. He then used the ring to infiltrate the royal palace where he seduced the queen, killed the king and took over the throne. The issue covered by morality in this story, is on how the wearer of the ring behaves with this special ability.

2. Distinguish between psychological and ethical egoism.

- Psychological egoism states that all men's motives in doing things are only of self-interest. Even if what they are doing are for the benefit of others, they still believe that that action is only for personal gain. Ethical Egoism on the other hand, states that all men's actions, regardless if it is for others to benefit or the other way around, are justified in his own interests.

3. Rachels discusses two arguments for psychological egoism. What are these arguments, and how does he reply to them?

- The first argument is: "If we describe one person's action as selfish, and another person's action as unselfish, we are overlooking the crucial fact that in both cases, assuming that the action is done voluntarily, *the agent is merely doing what he most wants to do*". Rachels replied: "The mere fact that I am acting on *my* wants does not mean that I am acting selfishly; that depends on *what it is* that I

want. If I want only my own good, and care nothing for others, then I am selfish; but if I also want other people to be well-off and happy, and if I act on *that* desire, then my action is not selfish.”

- The second argument is: “Since so-called unselfish actions always produce a sense of self-satisfaction in the agent, and since this sense of satisfaction is a pleasant state of consciousness, it follows that the point of the action is really to achieve a pleasant state of consciousness, rather than to bring about any good for others. Therefore, the action is ‘unselfish’ only at a superficial level of analysis.” Rachels replied: “If someone desires the welfare and happiness of another person, he will derive satisfaction from that; but this does not mean that this satisfaction is the object of his desire, or that he is in any way selfish on account of it.”

4. What three commonplace confusions does Rachels detect in the thesis of psychological egoism?

- The confusion of selfishness with self interest.
- The assumption that every action is done *either* from self-interest or from other-regarding motives.
- The common but false assumption that a concern for one’s own welfare is incompatible with any genuine concern for the welfare of others.

5. State the argument for saying that ethical egoism is inconsistent. Why doesn’t Rachels accept this argument?

- “To say that any action or any policy of action is *right* (or that it *ought* to be adopted) entails that it is right for *anyone* in the same sort of circumstances.” Rachels said that: “Now it is said that ethical egoism cannot meet this requirement because, as we have already seen, the egoist would not want others to act in the same way that he acts.”

6. According to Rachels, why shouldn’t we hurt others, and why should we help others? How can the egoist reply?

- “The fact that a certain action would help the agent is a reason for doing the action only if the agent cares about his own welfare, and the fact that an action would help others is a reason for doing it if only the agent cares about others.” The egoist would suggest: “the agent *care* about himself, or about other people, before they can get started.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Has Rachels answered the question raised by Glaucon, namely, “Why be moral?” If so, what exactly is his answer?

- Yes, he said that: “It is important that the assumptions underlying our moral practice should not be confused with particular judgments made within that practice.”

2. Are genuine egoists rare, as Rachels claims? Is it a fact that most people care about others, even people they don't know?

- Yes, more and more people have been courteous and sensitive to their environment.

3. Suppose we define ethical altruism as the view that one should always act for the benefit of others and never in one's own self-interest. Is such a view immoral or not?

- For me, it is not immoral because selflessness promotes good will and therefore imposes on charity and generosity.

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Learning Expectations:

Define Religion

Define Morality

Define Conscience

Determine the relationship between Religion, Morality and Conscience

Quote:

“Whatever implies contradiction does not come within the scope of divine omnipotence, because it cannot have the aspect of possibility. Hence it is more appropriate to say that such things cannot be done than that God cannot do them.”

Book Review:

This reading tackles on three arguments, Religion, Morality and Conscience. John Arthur explains the dependence and independence of Religion to Morality and vice versa. He also explains the important role of Conscience in these two doctrines. He imposes the first claim on the relationship between as: “Religion is necessary to provide moral motivation”. In my opinion, this is wrong. For me, religion is something that curtails the liberty of a man to do what he wants to do, thus, may be immoral in some way. The second claim focuses on moral guidance and knowledge rather than on people’s motives. But Arthur stated that we must consult religious revelation for help. But this claim fails too, as no one can justify which of the many religions is true and supreme. The Divine Command Theory tells us that “God has the same sort of relation to moral law as the legislature has to statutes it enacts: without God’s commands there would be no moral rule; just as without a legislature there would be no statutes”. F.C. Copleston and Bertrand Russell debated on this issue, and according to Copleston, human stimuli on the moral law depend on his education and environment and that man relies to his feelings and attitudes to determine morality. I do agree that morality is social because morality is present when we interact with anyone. And I believe that a man’s conscience is what really justifies Morality, it does

not necessarily require Religion per se. Conscience is a very powerful factor for me in making decisions in life.

What I have learned:

This part taught me that Conscience is what really defines Morality.

Integrity Questions:

1. Is Religion necessary for Morality?
2. Is Morality necessary for Religion?
3. What Religion is the most plausible of all?
4. Can Conscience be controlled?

Review Questions:

1. According to Arthur, how are morality and religion different?

- "The practices of morality and religion are thus importantly different. One involves our attitudes toward various forms of behavior (lying and killing, for example), typically expressed using the notions of rules, rights, and obligations. The other, religion, typically involves prayer, worship, beliefs about the supernatural, institutional forms, and authoritative texts."

2. Why isn't religion necessary for moral motivation?

- "Religious motives are far from the only ones people have. For most of us, a decision to do the right thing (if that is our decision) is made for a variety of reasons: 'What if I get caught? What if somebody sees me –what will he or she think? How will I feel afterwards? Will I regret it?' Or maybe the thought of cheating doesn't arise....To say that we need religion to act morally is mistaken; indeed. It seems to me that many of us, when it really gets down to it, don't give much of a thought to religion when making moral decisions. All those other reasons are the ones we tend to consider, or else we just don't consider cheating and stealing at all."

3. Why isn't religion necessary as a source of moral knowledge?

- “Much people may want to do the right thing, according to this view, we cannot ever know for certain what is right without the guidance of religious teaching. Human understanding is simply inadequate to this difficult and controversial task; morality involves immensely complex problems.”

4. What is the divine command theory? Why does Arthur reject this theory?

- The divine command theory means that God has the same sort of relation to moral law as the legislature has to statutes it enacts: without God’s commands there would be no moral rules, just as without a legislature there would be no statutes. Arthur rejects this theory because he said that: “To adopt the divine command theory therefore commits its advocate to the seemingly absurd position that even the greatest atrocities might be not only acceptable but morally required if God were to command them.”

5. According to Arthur, how are morality and religion connected?

- “Even if we agree that God loves justice or kindness because of their nature, not arbitrarily, there still remains a sense in which God could change morality even having rejected the divine command theory. That’s because if we assume, plausibly, I think, that morality depends in part on how we reason, what we desire and need, and the circumstances in which we find ourselves, then morality will still be under God’s control since God could have constructed us or our environment very differently.”

6. Dewey says that morality is social. What does this mean, according to Arthur?

- “Morality therefore is inherently social, in a variety of ways. It depends on socially learned language, is learned from interactions with others, and governs our interactions in society. But it also demands, as Dewey put it, that we know ‘with’ others, envisioning for ourselves what their points of view would require along with our own. Conscience demands we occupy the position of others.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Has Arthur refuted the divine command theory? If not, how can it be defended?

- Yes he did.

2. If morality is social, as Dewey says, then how can we have any obligations to nonhuman animals?

- Animals are living things too. Animals have their own reason for existence and it is just right to treat them good as we treat fellow humans.

3. What does Dewey mean by moral education? Does a college ethics class count as moral education?

- Dewey is saying that moral education acts as a tool to promote and govern morality. Yes, because it will open up the minds of college students to be their own judge to morality.

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Learning Expectations:

To know what is the difference of master and slave morality

How morality is connected with the master and slave relationship

Quote:

“The notion of ‘favour’ has, inter pares, neither significance nor good repute; there may be a sublime way of letting gifts as it were light upon one from above, and of drinking them thirstily like dew-drops; but for those arts and displays the noble soul has no aptitude. His egoism hinders him here: In general, he looks ‘aloft’ unwillingly—he looks either forward, horizontally and deliberately, or downwards—he knows that he is on a height.”

Book Review:

Friedrich Nietzsche stressed on two types of morality, namely, **Master and Slave Morality**. The former, states that this is the morality of a person who is distinguished as “creator of values”, the latter, states that this is the morality of a person who surrenders himself to the master, it is the very opposite of master-morality. Nietzsche also declared that a good society must be powerful in the sense that they must be supreme to all other societies. I think that Nietzsche abides by the saying “Survival of the Fittest”, meaning only the strong shall survive and the weak shall perish. He might have believed to the supreme race, the *Aryan race*. In my honest opinion, the battle for supremacy here in earth is constant and never ending. From technology to military arsenal, nations across the earth have been pulling strings here and there. The one top can claim that they are the masters, and everyone else beneath them is slaves. The hunger for power continues every minute. Morality has suffered very severely through the years. The battle for supremacy lingers every corner. Some nations will pursue it, no matter what the cost. Millions have died in wars around the world. Billions have been injured. The number keeps on growing and that, I think, will remain constant. World peace seems impossible. Many have tried but all of them failed. I just hope that someday, balance of power will exist, or perhaps close to that.

What I have learned:

I have learned that there remains, and always will, a master and a slave.

Integrity Questions:

1. Who deserves to be called as “masters”?
2. Who deserves to be called as “slaves”?
3. Will “morality” be existent if there are things such as a master and a slave?

Review Questions:

1. How does Nietzsche characterize a good and healthy society?

- “The essential thing in a good and healthy aristocracy is that it should *not* regard itself as a function either of the kingship or the commonwealth, but as the *significance* and highest justification thereof—that it should therefore accept with a good conscience the sacrifice of a legion of individuals, who, *for its sake*, must be suppressed and reduced to imperfect men, to slaves and instruments.”

2. What is Nietzsche’s view of injury, violence and exploitation?

- “To refrain mutually from injury, from violence, from exploitation, and put one’s will on a par with that of others: this may result in a certain rough sense in good conduct among individuals when the necessary conditions are given. As soon, however, as one wished to take this principle more generally, and if possible even as *the fundamental principle of society*, it would immediately disclose what it really is—namely, a Will to the *denial* of life, a principle of dissolution and decay.”

3. Distinguish between master-morality and slave-morality.

- Master-morality: “When it is the rulers who determine the conception ‘good’, it is the exalted, proud disposition which is regarded as the distinguishing feature and that which determines the order of rank. The noble type of man separates from himself the beings in whom the opposite of this exalted, proud disposition displays itself: he despises them. Let it at once be noted that in this first kind of morality the antithesis ‘good’ and ‘bad’ mean practically the same as ‘noble’ and ‘despicable’;—the antithesis ‘good’ and ‘evil’ is of a different origin...The noble type of man regards *himself* as a determiner of values; he does not require to be approved of; he passes the judgment: ‘What is injurious to me is

injurious in itself'; he knows that it is he himself only who confers honour on things; he is a *creator of values*."

- Slave-morality: "The slave has unfavourable eye for the virtues of the powerful; he has skepticism and distrust, a *refinement* of distrust of everything 'good' that is there honoured—he would fain persuade himself that the very happiness there is not genuine...Slave-morality is essentially the morality of utility."

4. Explain the Will to Power.

- Nietzsche defines: "The organization in which the individuals treat each other as equal, which the individuals within it refrain from doing to each other. It will endeavor to grow to gain ground, attract to itself and acquire ascendancy—not owing to any morality or immorality, but because it *lives*, and because life *is* precisely Will to Power.

Discussion Questions:

1. Some people view Nietzsche's writings as harmful and even dangerous. For example, some have charged Nietzsche with inspiring Nazism. Are those charges justified or not? Why or why not?

- Yes, according to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche, "However, the Nazis made very selective use of Nietzsche's philosophy; this association with National Socialism caused Nietzsche's reputation to suffer following World War II"

2. What does it mean to be "a creator of values"?

- It means that a man honors whatever he recognizes in himself.

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Learning Expectations:

To know what "Trying out one's new sword" means

To know what is "Moral Isolationism"

Quote:

"Nobody can respect what is entirely unintelligible to them. To respect someone, we have to know enough about him to make a favourable judgment, however general and tentative. And we do understand people in other cultures to this extent. Otherwise a great mass of our most valuable thinking would be paralysed."

Book Review:

"Trying out one's new sword" by Mary Midgley focuses on "Moral Isolationism", which means that it is wrong for us to criticize any other cultures that we do not fully understand. She then tells that this is wrong because it curtails the freedom of moral reasoning. I agree on Midgley's claim because personally, I prefer to just ignore different practices of other cultures, and I believe by doing so, I respect them in a way we both can appreciate. In my opinion, *tsujigiri*, is unlawful, because it involves physically hurting a stranger, and possibly taking his life. Respecting and valuing a person's life is more important than determining the effectiveness of a sword, injuring his own honor, offend his ancestors and let down his emperor. The cruelty of this tradition says it all. I believe that a sword, or any weapon for that matter, should only be used for self-defense and nothing else. People must not abuse the capabilities of injury-inflicting tools such as these weapons. Restraining of one's self to act by using violence is a must. Many other practices from different cultures involves of harming the innocent. What we can possibly do is to raise the awareness of our society on those practices and its harmful consequences. We must do this without resorting in to hostility.

What I have learned:

I have understood that we must respect and understand thoroughly the different cultures around us.

Integrity Questions:

1. Do we have to criticize other cultures?
2. How will we make others appreciate our own culture?

Review Questions:

1. What is “moral isolationism”?

- According to Midgley, “moral isolationism” is: “Consists in simply denying that we can ever understand any culture except our own well enough to make judgments about it. Those who recommend this hold that the world is sharply divided into separate societies, sealed units, each with its own system of thought. They feel that the respect and tolerance due from one system to another forbids us ever to take up a critical position to any other culture. Moral judgment, they suggest, is a kind of coinage valid only in its country of origin.”

2. Explain the Japanese custom of *tsujigiri*. What questions does Midgley ask about this custom?

- *Tsujigiri*, which literally means as “crossroads-cut”, involves a process wherein a Samurai sword has to be tried out to determine if it works properly. The procedure is to slice through someone with a single blow, from the shoulder to the opposite flank. If the wielder of the Samurai sword fails, he could injure his honour, offend his ancestors, and even let down his emperor.

- Midgley asked 3 questions about this custom:

- Does the isolating barrier work both ways? Are people in other cultures equally unable to criticize *us*?
- Does the isolating barrier between cultures block praise as well as blame?
- What is involved in judging?

3. What is wrong with moral isolationism, according to Midgley?

- According to Midgley, "Moral isolationism would lay down a general ban on moral reasoning. Essentially, this is the programme of immoralism, and it carries a distressing logical difficulty."

4. What does Midgley think is the basis for criticizing other cultures?

- Midgley thinks that the basis for criticizing other cultures is to expect the person from a different culture to change his own present judgment to a truer one—namely, one that is favourable and the standards cannot just be Samurai standards but the ones current in his or her culture. Ideals like discipline and devotion will not move anybody unless he himself accepts them.

Discussion Questions:

1. Midgley says that Nietzsche is an immoralist. Is that an accurate and fair assessment of Nietzsche? Why or why not?

- Yes, because Nietzsche advocated master and slave morality. Morality does not have to recognize superiority and inferiority of human beings.

2. Do you agree with Midgley's claim that the idea of separate and unmixed cultures is unreal? Explain your answer.

- Yes, I agree because no one can really isolate his or her culture. Man is created to be a social being and this enables him to seek and be curious about his surroundings.

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Learning Expectations:

To learn about the teachings of utilitarianism

To know the relation of utilitarianism to morality

Quote:

“I have dwelt on this point, as being a necessary part of a perfectly just conception of Utility or Happiness, considered as the directive rule of human conduct. But it is by no means an indispensable condition to the acceptance of the utilitarian standard; for that standard is not the agent’s own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether; and if it may possibly be doubted whether a noble character is always the happier for its nobleness, there can be no doubt that it makes other people happier, and that the world in general is immensely a gainer by it.”

Book Review:

I have always enjoyed pleasure, well, who doesn’t anyway. I enjoy relaxing on a cold night, being with my girlfriend, drinking with friends and having a family vacation. For John Stuart Mill, morality depends on how much happiness we can bring out by doing something. But we must also bear in mind that this happiness or pleasure should be for the benefit of the many. We must all think and act unselfishly to practice proper morality. Mill stated that “There is nothing originally more desirable about money than about any heap of glittering pebbles. Its worth is solely that of the things which it will buy; the desire for other things than itself, which it is a means of gratifying”. This means that money could be a tool that leads to happiness. Lots of people nowadays try their lucks at the local Lottery. A huge amount of money is at stake. One only needs to get lucky. People don’t desire to keep that money for a very long time; otherwise, they want to make full use of it as much as possible. Of course, a smart man will allot specific percentages to establish a business, buy wants and needs, education, and lots of other things. When people have the liberty and the capacity to buy and own what they want, they become happy and contented. Thus, they become morally “good”, well at least to John Stuart Mill’s perspective.

What I have learned:

I have learned that thinking and acting for the benefit of others will bring out happiness to anyone. Contentment also plays a large role to finding own happiness.

Integrity Questions:

1. What is happiness for you?
2. What is pain for you?
3. Are pleasure and absence of pain the things that make up happiness? Why or why not?

Review Questions:

1. State and explain the Principle of Utility. Show how it could be used to justify actions that are conventionally viewed as wrong, such as lying and stealing.

- The Principle of Utility, according to Mill is, "Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness". It says that Morality is determined by the happiness it gives to the person. It is right if a person do things that brings out happiness and wrong if it do not. Lying and stealing can only give happiness to the doer, not to the victim. Therefore, lying and stealing is wrong.

2. How does Mill reply to the objection that Epicureanism is a doctrine worthy only of swine?

- Mill stated that: "The comparison of the Epicurean life to that of beasts is felt as degrading, precisely because a beast's pleasures do not satisfy a human being's conceptions of happiness." Mill disagreed to Stoic teachings.

3. How does Mill distinguish between higher and lower pleasures?

- The higher pleasure according to Mill is: "...to which all or almost all who have experience of both (pleasures) give a decided preference irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it..." The lower pleasure as stated by Mill is: "...those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of."

4. According to Mill, whose happiness must be considered?

- Mill noted that the happiness must be considered to every individual and the good of the whole. He said that Universal happiness is essential.

5. Carefully reconstruct Mill's proof of the Principle of Utility.

- The principle of utility states that happiness and contentment of the many is morally right.

Discussion Questions:

1. Is happiness nothing more than pleasure, and the absence of pain? What do you think?

- For me, happiness is not just about pleasure and absence of pain, happiness embraces the virtue of contentment and humility.

2. Does Mill convince you that the so-called higher pleasures are better than the lower ones?

- No, because people must be always contented to what they have right now. Further looking for pleasure would only practice greed and hate.

3. Mill says, "In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility." Is it true or not?

- No it is not. Mill said that it was the "complete spirit". I believe that morality has many other bases than with just the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

4. Many commentators have thought that Mill's proof of the Principle of Utility is defective. Do you agree? If so, then what mistake or mistakes does he make? Is there any way to reformulate the proof so that it is not defective?

- Yes he forgot to include that "contentment" is essential to happiness, not just pleasure.

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Learning Expectations:

I am expecting to learn more about the principle of Utilitarianism

To know what is the subject of debate on the principle of utilitarianism

Quote:

“The strength of Utilitarianism is that it firmly resists ‘corruption’ by possibly irrational elements. By sticking to the Principle of Utility as the only standard for judging right and wrong, it avoids all danger of incorporating into moral theory prejudices, feelings, and ‘intuitions’ that have no rational basis.”

Book Review:

From the previous part of this book, John Stuart Mill wrote on the Principle of Utility that states: “That happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end; all other things being desirable as means to that end.” In this part, James Rachels, suggests that this theory should be abandoned. I agree with Rachels’s suggestion. I believe that a lot of factors are needed to be considered like justice, rights, and promises to pass moral judgments.

What I have learned:

I have learned that the Principle of Utility is not purely good. I learned that Hedonism is an optimistic view of morality.

Integrity Questions:

1. What did the Principle of Utility lack?
2. Is there some way to revise it to make it more substantial?

Review Questions:

1. Rachels says that classical utilitarianism can be summed up in three propositions. What are they?

- James Rachels summarized the theory of Classical Utilitarianism in three propositions, namely,

1. "Actions are to be judged right or wrong solely in virtue of their consequences. Nothing else matters. Right actions are, simply, those that have the best consequences.
2. "In assessing consequences, the only thing that matters is the amount of happiness or unhappiness that is caused. Everything else is irrelevant. Thus, right actions are those that produce the greatest balance of happiness or unhappiness."
3. "In calculating the happiness or unhappiness that will be caused, no one's happiness is to be counted as more important than anyone else's. Each person's welfare is equally important. As Mill put it in his *Utilitarianism*."

2. Explain the problem with hedonism. How do defenders of utilitarianism respond to this problem?

- Hedonism's problem, as explained by Rachels is that, "Hedonism misunderstands the nature of happiness. Happiness is not something that is recognized as good and sought for its own sake, with other things appreciated only as means of bringing it about."

3. What are the objections about justice, rights, and promises?

- The objections according to James Rachels are as follows:

- **Justice** – "Utilitarianism is incompatible with the ideal of justice. Justice requires us to treat people fairly, according to their individual needs and merits."
- **Rights** – "The notion of personal right is not a utilitarian notion. Quite the reverse: it is a notion that places limits on how an individual may be treated, regardless of the good purposes that might be accomplished."
- **Promises** – "The only kinds of considerations that the Utilitarian theory holds relevant to determining the rightness of actions are considerations having to do with the *future*...The general point to be made about Utilitarianism is that it seems

to be an adequate moral theory because it excludes what we might call backward-looking considerations.

4. Distinguish between rule- and act-utilitarianism. How does rule-utilitarianism reply to the objections?

- Rule-utilitarianism, as defined by Rachels is, "Individual actions will no longer be judged by the Principle of Utility, instead, *rules* will be established by reference to the principle, and individual acts will then be judged right or wrong by reference to the rules." Act-utilitarianism just refers to the original theory.

5. What is the third line of defense?

- The third line of defense as explained by James Rachels as referenced to J. J. C. Smart's 1961 monograph is, "Our moral common sense is, after all, not necessarily reliable. It may incorporate various irrational elements, including prejudices absorbed from our parents, our religion, and the general culture."

Discussion Questions:

1. Smart's defense of utilitarianism is to reject common moral beliefs when they conflict with utilitarianism. Is this acceptable to you or not? Explain your answer.

- No, because after reading Rachel's debate over utilitarianism, I have come into thinking that utilitarianism still is not plausible, whatever defense they said.

2. A utilitarian is supposed to give moral consideration to all concerned. Who must be considered? What about nonhuman animals? How about lakes and streams?

- Generally, all must be considered even animals and the environment. This is because men were chosen to be the steward of the earth. And only we humans have the capability to do so.

3. Rachels claims that merit should be given moral consideration independent of utility. Do you agree?

- Yes, because favors gained from merits are returned, at least in my experience.

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Learning Expectations:

To define categorical imperative

What this reading has to do with morality

Quote:

“Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the time as an end...”

Book Review:

How do I determine the course of my actions and its consequences? I myself believe in the concept of investment. I act on something and see the effects it produces whether beneficial or not. As Immanuel Kant stated on this chapter, the categorical imperative refers to the thinking wherein one will be able to forecast the course and consequences of an action without any prior knowledge of it. People must and should be responsible in every thing he does. As for my personal experience, I enrolled in an IS course, I have very little idea of what can I derived from this investment. But as I progress to the flowchart and passing subjects, the goal gets more and more visible to me. All I know and strive to is to do my best effort in completing this investment.

What I have learned:

This reading exercised my critical thinking.

Integrity Questions:

1. Define categorical imperative in own words.
2. Do you agree on Kant's views? Why or why not?

Review Questions:

1. Explain Kant's account of the good will.

- Kant views good will as something that should not to be considered as good for what consequences and feats it produces rather that is good for itself.

2. Distinguish between hypothetical and categorical imperatives.

- Hypothetical Imperative states that one does not know what something contains unless a condition is provided. Categorical Imperative, on the other hand, is the opposite of the former, meaning one can know beforehand what something contains without any information on the subject.

3. State the first formulation of the categorical imperative (using the notion of a universal law), and explain how Kant uses this rule to derive some specific duties toward self and others.

- Kant stated that: *"For since besides the law this imperative contains only the necessity that our maxim should conform to this law, while the law, as we have seen, contains no condition to limit it, there remains nothing over to which the maxim has to conform except the universality of a law as such; and it is this conformity alone that the imperative properly asserts to be necessary."* This means that it we should act on something you really are capable of doing and aspire for it to become a universal law.

4. State the second version of the categorical imperative (using the language of means and end), and explain it.

- According to Kant, *"The will is conceived as a power of determining oneself to action in accordance with the ideal certain laws. And such a power can be formed only in rational beings. Now what serves these as a subjective ground of self-determination as an end; and this, if it is given by reasons all must be equally valid for all rational beings. What, on the other hand, contains merely grounded of the possibility of an action which effect is an end is called means."* This means that when we act, we must consider at the same time both the means and the end of what we try to do.

Discussion Questions:

1. Are the two versions of the categorical imperative just different expressions of one basic rule, or are they two different rules? Defend your view.

- For me they express the same sense.

2. Kant claims that an action that is not done from the motive of duty has no moral worth. Do you agree or not? If not, give some counterexamples.

- I agree, because I myself think that personal duties are the ultimate basis for morality.

3. Some commentators think that the categorical imperative (particularly the first formulation) can be used to justify nonmoral or immoral actions. Is this a good criticism?

- Yes, because it defines authority in one's own self.

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Learning Expectations:

To know more about happiness and virtue according to Aristotle

To broaden learning on morality through this reading

Quote:

"...With regard to feelings of fear and confidence, courage is the mean; of the people who exceed, he who exceeds in fearlessness has no name, while the man who exceeds in confidence is rash, and he who exceeds in fear and falls short in confidence is a coward."

Book Review:

I have always enjoyed my life to the fullest. For 20 years that I have been living, I experienced pain, misery, loss and failures. But I also had equal share of happiness, there were times that I felt satisfied and contented with the presence of my family and friends. I achieved success in my own little way. Aristotle, in this part, stressed out the "intermediate", meaning the half of an excess and deficiency. Enough is enough at all times. One must focus in making only the means for which we don't do any harm to ourselves and others. There are also times in my life where I exhibited excess or abuse in something I did. For example, there was this time when I had too much too drink. When I got home, all the gates were locked so I climbed my way up and it ended at me stumbling to the floor and my shorts got wrecked. The doors were locked too. I wasn't able to call help because my cell phone batteries were dead. So that left me no choice but to sleep outside. And I did, I slept on top of our car. I was like a feline in that night. I too, have exercised deficiency. There were those times when I felt lazy towards the completion of school works. I ended up getting poor grades. Aristotle taught me to limit myself of doing more and less in everything that I will do.

What I have learned:

I have learned that virtue acts as an intermediate, the mean in relation with excess and deficiency.

Integrity Questions:

1. Why is virtue important?
2. If a man is happy, is he morally correct in everything he does?

Review Questions:

1. What is happiness, according to Aristotle? How is it related to virtue? How is it related to pleasure?

- Happiness, as Aristotle described it, *“Happiness, above all else, is held to be; for this we choose always for itself and never for the sake of something else, but honour, pleasure, reason and every virtue we choose indeed for themselves, but we choose them also for the sake of happiness, judging that by means we shall be happy.”*

2. How does Aristotle explain moral virtue? Give some examples.

- Aristotle wrote, *“Moral virtue is a mean, then, and in what sense it is so, and that it is a mean between two vices, the one involving excess, the other deficiency, and that is in such because its character is to aim at what is intermediate in passions and in actions, has been sufficiently stated.”* My own example would be about choosing to spend more or lesser time working out in a gym. If you chose to lift weights more time than you normally would, your muscles are going to be strained. If you then chose to spend less time, your muscles will “sleep”.

3. Is it possible for everyone in our society to be happy, as Aristotle explains it? If not, who cannot be happy?

- No, Aristotle claimed that *“Animals have no share in happiness, being completely deprived of such activity...none of the other animals is happy, since they in no way share in contemplation.”*

Discussion Questions:

1. Aristotle characterizes a life of pleasure as suitable for beasts. But what, if anything, is wrong with a life of pleasure?

- Too much pleasure will drive a person to be dependent of that activity. We must know how to limit ourselves and be mature enough to impose such limitations. Too much of something is bad enough.

2. Aristotle claims that the philosopher will be happier than anyone else. Why is this? Do you agree or not?

- Philosophers achieved the gift of profound knowledge. He sees things in a different perspective compared to a commoner. He perceives truth and from that he exudes happiness and contentment in himself.

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Learning Expectations:

To broaden my view on rights

To value more my rights

Quote:

“In our age of organized labor, even this picture is now archaic; for almost every kind of exchange of service is governed by hard bargained contracts so that even bonuses can sometimes be demanded as a matter of right, and nothing is given for nothing on either side of the bargaining table. And perhaps that is a good thing; for consider an anachronistic instance of the earlier kind of practice that survives, at least as a matter of form, in the quaint old practice of ‘tipping’.”

Book Review:

Rights play a significant role in the study of morality. What could be the rights that would encourage ourselves to do the right thing? And which rights would lead us to wrongdoings. That answer, of course, depends on one’s perspective. It is a right of every child to have a proper education thus, enrolling someone who doesn’t have the financial capacity to do so, will yield the right thing. If you choose to join in rallies and protests of militant groups, you are just practicing your right to freedom of expression. But it would not be morally right if you resort to violence. The effects depend on how we use our own rights. We are doing the morally right thing if don’t abuse and misuse of our rights. Those rights are there for good reasons. I believe that the Philippine Constitution implements law that will benefit most of the population.

What I have learned:

I have given more importance to my rights as a human being and as a Filipino.

Integrity Questions:

1. What are your rights that apply to this reading?
2. Will you survive in Nowheresville?

Review Questions:

1. Describe Nowheresville. How is this world different from our world?

- According to Feinberg, Nowhereville is a place where no one has rights. The real world, our world, every one of us has rights.

2. Explain the doctrine of the logical correlativity of rights and duties. What is Feinberg's proposition to this doctrine?

- The doctrine states that, *"all duties entail other people's rights and all rights entail other people's duties"*. Feinberg proposed that *"...in the widespread but derivative, usage, 'duty' tends to be used for any action we feel we must do. It comes in short, to be a term of moral modality merely; and it is no wonder that the first thesis of the logical correlativity doctrine often fails."*

3. How does Feinberg explain the concept of personal desert? How would personal desert work in Nowheresville?

- Feinberg explained the concept of desert as, *"When a person is said to deserve something good from us what is meant in parts is that there would be certain propriety in our giving that good thing to him in virtue of the kind of person he is, perhaps, or more likely, in virtue of some specific thing he has done."* It is not existent in Nowheresville as Feinberg said.

4. Explain the notion of a sovereign right-monopoly. How would this work in Nowheresville according to Feinberg?

- Sovereign right-monopoly as said by Feinberg, *"The sovereign had a certain duty to treat his subjects well, but this duty was owed not to subjects directly, but to God, just as we might have a duty to the a person to treat his property well, but of course no duty to the property itself but only to its owner."*

5. What are claim-rights? Why does Feinberg think they are morally important?

- Feinberg wrote, *"Right is a kind of claim, and a claim is 'an assertion of right'". It is morally important in the sense that, "...There is no doubt that their characteristic [rights] use and that for which they are distinctively well suited, is to be claimed, demanded, affirmed, insisted upon. They are especially sturdy objects to 'stand upon,' a most useful sort of moral furniture. Having rights, of course, makes claiming possible; but it is claiming that gives rights their special moral significance."*

Discussion Questions:

1. Does Feinberg make a convincing case for the importance of rights? Why or why not?

- Yes, because he stated sound arguments about the importance of rights. s

2. Can you give a noncircular definition of claim-right?

- The capacity to hold authority over something.

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Learning Expectations:

To know why I should take my rights seriously

To learn much more about rights

Quote:

“The institution of rights against the Government is not a gift of God, or an ancient ritual, or a national sport. It is a complex and troublesome practice that makes the Government’s job of securing the general benefit more difficult and more expensive, and it would be a frivolous and wrongful practice unless it served some point.”

Book Review:

From the previous chapter, Joel Feinberg’s *The Nature and value of rights*, I learned the basic value of right. A brief background of rights encouraged me to practice them responsibly. The Constitution as implemented by the Government provides laws to maintain balance and justice to the entire population. There might be some people that will experience the flaws of law, but all in all, it is for the betterment of the many. People have the right to protest to some discrepancies of the law, but people must bear in mind the consequences and other possible effects of a rally. Militant groups here in the Philippines are stereotypically labeled as “enemies” of the government. This is not how it should be. We are all created equal in the eyes of God. All of us must be advocates of peace. Worse comes to worst we must achieve peace in the least violent way. Hostility never resolves anything, as much as war does.

What I have learned:

As the title of this reading says, I've valued my rights seriously.

Integrity Questions:

1. Does Dworkin's claim of the strong sense still plausible in today's society?
2. What are your claim-rights?

Review Questions:

1. What does Dworkin mean by right in the strong sense? What rights in this sense are protected by the U.S. constitution?

- Dworkin means that we should not interfere someone who has the right to do something. Dworkin gave the example, *"The claim that citizens have a right to free speech must imply that it would be wrong for the Government to stop them from speaking, even when the Government believes that what they will say will cause more harm than good"*.

2. Distinguish between legal and moral rights. Give some examples of legal rights that are not moral rights, and moral rights that are not legal rights.

- Legal rights are bounded by the law while moral rights are bounded by morality and conscience. Example of a legal right that is not a moral right would be the right of people to sentence death to a convict. An example of a moral right that is not a legal right is the right to help the needy and donate to charitable institutions.

3. What are the two models of how a government might define the rights of its citizen? Which does Dworkin find more attractive.

- As Dworkin proposed, the two models are as follows,

- *“The metaphor of balancing the public interest against personal claims is established in our political, and judicial rhetoric, and this metaphor gives the model both familiarity and appeal...the first model is a false one, certainly in the case of rights generally regarded as important, and the metaphor is the heart of its error.”*
- *“The second is the more familiar idea of political equity. This supposes that the weaker members of a political community are entitled to the same concern and respect of their government as the more powerful members have secured for themselves, so that if some men have freedom of decision whatever the effect on the general good, then all men must have the same freedom.”*

Dworkin favors the second model.

4. According to Dworkin, what two important ideas are behind the institution of rights?

- *“The institution of rights rests on the conviction that this is a grave injustice, and that it is worth paying the incremental cost in social policy or efficiency that is necessary to prevent it.”*

Discussion Questions:

1. Does a person have a right to break the law? Why or why not?

- No, all laws have very good reasons why they were implemented in the first place. It is for the benefit of the society.

2. Are rights in the strong sense compatible with Mill’s utilitarianism?

- Not necessarily because choosing not to interfere to a person who is doing something that you think is not right doesn’t necessarily mean that it is for the benefit of the majority.

3. Do you think that Kant would accept rights in the strong sense or not?

- Yes because I think Kant believes in neutrality.

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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.

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Learning Expectations:

What more of justice do we need?

How does this relate to Ethics?

How does this relate to Morality?

Quote:

“It is clear, I think, that the best moral theory has to be a cooperative product of women and men, has to harmonize justice and care. The morality it theorizes about is after all for all persons, for men and for women, and will need their combined insights.”

Book Review:

Baier stated the problems the society used to have. Racism and sexism were imminent back in the days. Black people are treated as slaves, women are to stay in homes and nurture the children. They were treated as the lower class in the community. Men and non-foreigners reigned as the “superior class”. Some leaders fail to treat his people equally. Bias sometimes hinders their moral judgment. But look at the leaders we have today, Barack Obama, an African-American is now the president of the United States of America, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, a womam, is the president of the Republic of the Philippines. Baier showed strong feminist views on how justice should be applied and obeyed.

What I have learned:

I have learned that all people must work together for the betterment of the society.

Integrity Questions:

1. Are men and women now equal?
2. Is care important as well as justice?

Review Questions:

1. Distinguish between the justice and care perspectives. According to Gilligan, how do these perspectives develop?

- Justice perspective refers to the approach in decision-making that takes into consideration legalities while the care perspective accounts for concern, mercy, etc.

2. Explain Kohlberg's theory of moral development. What criticisms do Gilligan and Baier make of this theory?

- Moral development as defined by Kohlberg, *"Moral development which saw it to progress from a pre-conventional level, where what is seen to matter is pleasing or not offending parental authority-figures, through a conventional level in which the child tries to fit in with a group, such as a school community, and conform to its standards and rules, to a post-conventional critical level, in which such conventional rules are subjected to tests and where those tests are of a Utilitarian, or, eventually, a Kantian sort."* Gilligan and Baier wrote that it is one sided, and only referred to men.

3. Baier says there are three important differences between Kantian liberals and their critics. What are these differences?

- *The first was its dubious record. The second was its inattention to relations of inequality or its presence of equality. The third reason is its exaggeration of the scope of the choice, or its inattention to unchosen relations."*

4. Why does Baier attack the Kantian view that the reason should control unruly passions?

- Baier said that we don't have to worry what passions persons have, as long as their rational wills control them.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Baier mean when she speaks of the need “to transvalue the values of our patriarchal past”? Do new values replace the old ones? If so, then do we abandon the old values of justice, freedom, and rights?

- She means that we have to take account of the teachings of people from the past. New values are “enhancements” and “improvements” of the old ones.

2. What is wrong with the Kantian view that extends equal rights to all rational beings, including women and minorities? What would Baier say? What do you think?

- Because according to Kant, women are not considered as rational beings.

3. Baier seems to reject the Kantian emphasis on freedom of choice? Granted, we do not choose our parents, but still don't we have freedom of choice about many things, and isn't this very important?

- It is how we adapt to changes and thinking independently. Attitude of parents play a major role here, but personal development will decide on things.

Problem Cases:

1. Lying

For me, lying is optional and it is clearly a matter of choice. Each lie told and done has its own consequences. I hold my own bias to such things called love. I would choose to lie if it means saving the relationship I share with my loved ones. More importantly, if it's a matter of life and death situation, I would not think twice about lying. But as far as professionalism is concerned, I would try my best not to lie. Some people go by the saying, "It is better to deceive than to be deceived". I could achieve success without resorting into lying.

2. The Colt Sporter and Handguns.

I believe that semi-automatic guns like the Colt Sporter should only be available for use by people with authority like lawmen. Even a person with enormous wealth should not have the right to own one for personal protection. The only reason why a rich man would want to own one is because he might have made numerous enemies in his path to wealth. True security can be achieved through morally right acts. No one should threaten you and your family if you did the right thing. Handguns would just be enough for them. I hope that the government will do a better job in controlling the ownership of these tools of violence.

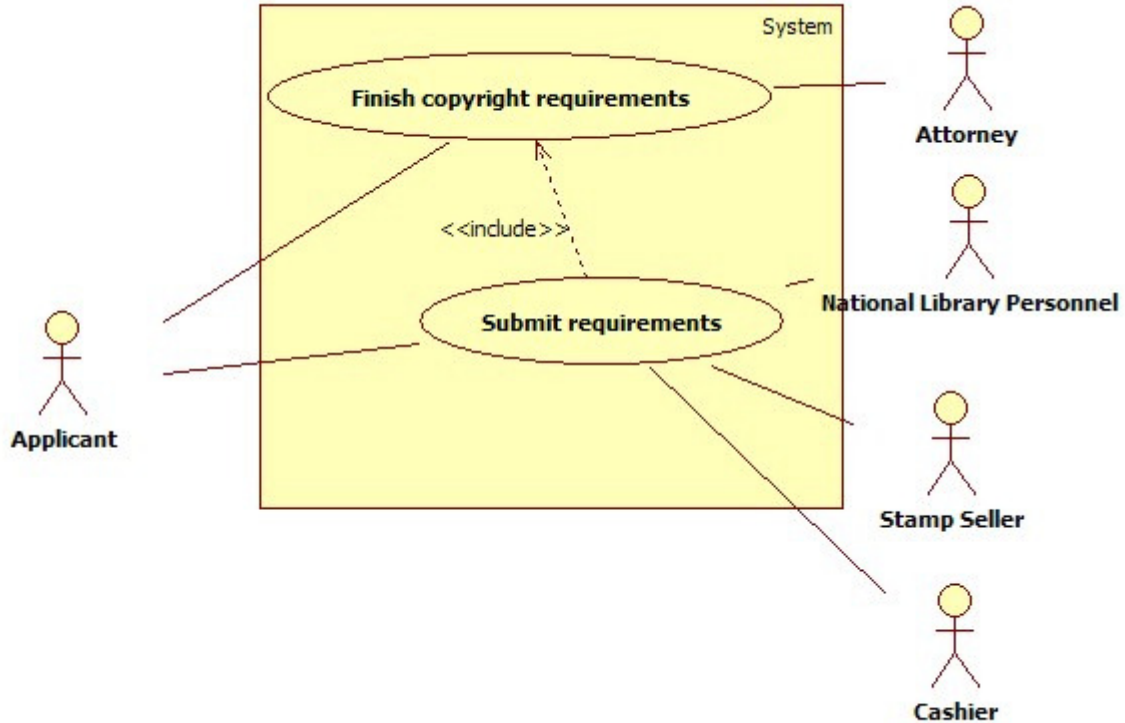
3. A New Drug

I might get tempted at first in trying and using this new drug. But, money is not everything, at least for me. I can be happy and contented with my life without money. I would not result into such immoral actions. God had a very good reason why he made the human body the way it is. It is because He wants balance. Performance-enhancing drugs will only turn the user to a vile corrupted beast, unmanly creature.

4. A Case of Human Cloning

Bob and Mary did the wrong thing. Each person is created with their own entity. Copying an entity is like plagiarizing a text. Bob should be rightfully sanctioned because he meddled with the law of life. Bob is not God, nor will he ever be. "What done is done, what we can only do is move on".

Existing Copyright System



Use Case Narratives: Existing Copyright System

IDENTIFICATION SUMMARY

Title: Finish Copyright Requirements

Summary: This use case involves the printing of 2 copies of the book to be published and having the copyright application form notarized.

Actor(s): Applicant, Attorney

Creation Date: June 18, 2009

Version 1.0

Created by: Jino Raymundo

FLOW OF EVENTS

Precondition: The material to be copyrighted must be completed and printed to two copies

Main Success Scenario:

1. The applicant must have completed the whole book.
2. The applicant prints 2 copies.
3. The applicant produces a copy of copyright application form.
4. The applicant fills out the necessary information on the application form.
5. The applicant submits the filled-out form to the Notary Public.
6. The Attorney will notarize the form.
7. The Attorney will ask for the amount to be paid.
8. The applicant will pay the required amount.

Error Sequence:

1. The applicant filled the copyright application form incorrectly.

2. The Attorney will ask the applicant to correct the errors.

Post Conditions:

1. The book is ready to be submitted to the Copyright Office.
2. The copyright application form is notarized.

IDENTIFICATION SUMMARY

Title: Submit Requirements

Summary: This use case involves the book being copyrighted

Actor(s): Applicant, National Library personnel, Stamp seller and cashier

Version 1.0

Creation Date: June 18, 2009

Created by: Jino Raymundo

FLOW OF EVENTS

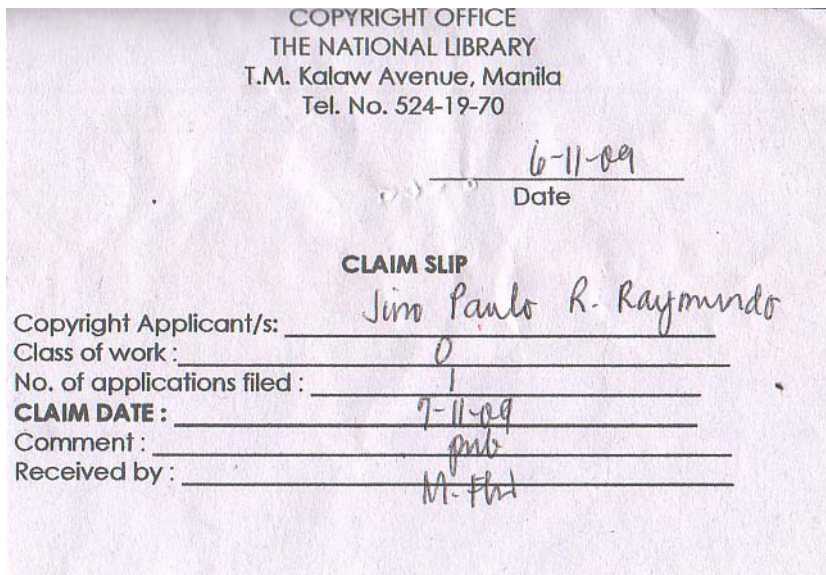
Precondition: The book and copyright application form must be both accomplished.

Main Success Scenario:

1. The applicant will go to the National Library
2. The applicant will submit the 2 copies of the book and the notarized form to the National Library personnel.
3. The National Library personnel will order the applicant to purchase 2 stamps and pay the copyright fee.
4. The applicant will buy two stamps from the stamp seller.
5. The applicant will pay the seller.
6. The applicant will proceed to the cashier.
7. The applicant will pay the copyright fee of 200php.
8. The cashier will give the applicant the receipt.
9. The applicant will show the National Library personnel the receipt.

Post Conditions:

1. The book will now be copyrighted.
2. Applicant will come back after one month to claim the copyrighted work.





Official Receipt
of the
Republic of the Philippines
THE NATIONAL LIBRARY
T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila

No 0110751

Date _____ Fund _____
Payor **June 11, 2009** **101**

Jino Paulo R. Raymundo

Nature of Collection	Account Code	Amount
1 Copyright	628	200.00
		200.00
TOTAL	Two Hundred And 00/100 Pesos	

Amount in Words

Type of Payment: **Cash**

<input type="checkbox"/> Cash	Drawee Bank	Number	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Check			
<input type="checkbox"/> Money Order			

Received the amount stated above. **NOBIA C. BUMANLAG**

Collecting Officer

Note: Write the number and date of this receipt on the back of check or money order received.