

Chapter 1: James Rachels: Egoism and Moral Skepticism

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

Quote: “The object of our attitude is the attainment of that goal and we must want to attain the goal before we can find any satisfaction in it.”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the relevance of egoism and moral skepticism.

Review:

Egoism and Moral Skepticism, are related things. These are words we don't hear everyday. So these are their meanings. Egoism according to the dictionary, is the view that morality ultimately rests on self-interest. While moral skepticism is a diverse collection of views that deny or raise doubts about various roles of reason in morality. These topics both talks about morality, self-interest, and doubts regarding morality. Let's talk about self interest. All of us have a desire for something, regardless of how big or how small. And we will do anything to get what we want. And sometimes we act selfish just to get the things we want. That's Psychological egoism. People who never act unselfishly. And another scenario is when we choose to become unselfish despite of not getting what we want. That is what we call Ethical egoism. People that acts unselfishly. That is the two types of egoism. And these types of egoism will help us to relate egoism to moral skepticism.

What I learned:

- Relevance of egoism and moral skepticism.**
- Psychological and ethical egoism.**
- Importance of egoism and moral skepticism**

Integrative Question:

- 1.) How is egoism related to moral skepticism?**
- 2.) What are the types of egoism?**
- 3.) What is psychological egoism?**
- 4.) What is ethical egoism?**
- 5.) How are these topics important?**

John Arthur: Religion, Morality and Conscience

Amazon link: N/A

What I expect to learn:

- **To know the connectivity of the three terms**
- **To understand the terms fully**
- **To know where these terms are they applicable**

Quote: “An eye for an eye”

Review:

Religion, morality, and conscience are relevant things to talk about. First, let’s talk about Religion. For me, religion is the things we believe in. Some believes in God, some believes that God is nature. We have different beliefs. So therefore, I can say that our morality and conscience depends on the things we believe in. There are things that seems to be right for some people, but wrong for others. So it really depends on the things we believe in. As human beings, we do things based on what we believe in. And we only believe because we are convinced on what people teach us. And as we grow older, we often stick to the things that was taught to us. And it becomes our character. And our character is sometimes the basis of the things we do right and the things we do wrong. So it is important to build up good character among young people so when the time comes that they will decide for their own, they will have a good basis of what to do everyday.

What I have learned:

- 1. Relevance of relationship, morality, and conscience**
- 2. People must know what is right and just**
- 3. More issues aside from the three terms mentioned**

Integrative questions:

- 1. How are the three terms related?**
- 2. How do you make someone believe something?**
- 3. What is religion?**
- 4. Why is character sometimes being a basis of what’s right and wrong?**
- 5. Why is it important to build up good character among young people?**

Friedrich Nietzsche: Master and Slavery Morality

Amazon link: N/A

What I expect to learn:

To know what master-slave morality is

To know where they can be applied

To know if they play a big role

Quote: "Wotan placed a hard heart in my breast"

Review:

Friedrich Nietzsche defined master morality as the "morality of the strong-willed". Nietzsche criticizes the view, which he identifies with contemporary British ideology, that good is everything that is helpful; what is bad is what is harmful. He argues that this view has forgotten the origins of the values, and thus it calls what is useful good on the grounds of habitualness - what is useful has always been defined as good, therefore usefulness is goodness as a value.

Unlike master morality which is sentiment, slave morality is literally re-sentiment revaluing that which the master values." This strays from the valuation of actions based on consequences to the valuation of actions based on intention. As master morality originates in the strong, slave morality originates in the weak. Because slave morality is a reaction to oppression, it villainizes its oppressors. Slave morality is the inverse of master morality.

What I have learned:

- 1. People should know how to follow**
- 2. Slave morality originated in the weak while Master morality originated in the strong.**
- 3. Slave morality is not related to master morality**

Integrative questions:

- 1. What is master morality?**
- 2. What is slave morality?**
- 3. How are they different?**
- 4. In what ways are they different?**
- 5. In master-slave morality, who is right?**

Trying Out One's New Sword

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

Quote: "Nobody can respect what is entirely unintelligible to them."

I expect to learn the true meaning of respect in my personal life and others' too.

Culture is something very vital in a society. It is a way of living and or a lifestyle. One can not really deal with life without a culture because as simple as it is, culture is automatic in a person's life. In everything that we do it is basically cultural in every view of life. There are times that we become careless of our actions especially if for others the action is not right or moral. We tend to be in denial just to belong or to be fit in a society. As for me, I believe that culture is something to be valued and should be something that someone can boast off simply because it is what helped the person be he or she is.

The question now is how can we humans pay duly respect to each others' lifestyle and or culture in a way that it would not be offensive to others and our own society. We should be respectful to other cultures so that they will also return the favor. The sad thing about this is that not all humans pay respect to other cultures but the next question now is what must be done in order to at least make other people aware of being respectful to other cultures.

I believe that it can be sometimes tolerable but most of the time uncontrollable, simply because we can not explain to everyone and or educate everyone about the different cultures and how to respect it. For me, the best thing we can do is by starting with ourselves, we should pay respect to other cultures and through that if everyone may see it then for sure it will become a big deal and eventually they will realize everything. It has to start somewhere and I think it should start from us who is aware and knowledgeable.

What I learned:

- How culture is important o a person's life
- Giving respect and getting it
- Culture and respect goes together

Integrative Questions:

1. How can we make other people aware of others' culture?
2. Who is James white?
3. Can respect be earned or demanded?
4. How can respect be valuable in a society?
5. What is the relationship of respect and culture?

John Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism

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

Quote: “Pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends.”

I expect to learn what principle utility really is and how it is essential to one.

Everyone, of course wants their own freedom from anything and also experiencing sheer pleasure but especially if that is escaping from pain, but as humans, it is all part of life’s cycle but we should be aware that there’s got to be more to it. Through John Stuart Mill, he explained how it is valuable and at the same time he was able to stand up for what his thoughts are really about. Basically, utilitarianism is all about experiencing joy in each of us and I believe it is essential to one’s survival in this world especially we are a social human being.

The principle of utilitarianism is pertaining to mainly happiness, in relation to the quote, Happiness for me can be achieved but there are consequences or something in return should occur first, everything happens for a reason and sometimes we are blinded by our pleasures, but we should realize that there’s always better things that can happen after sorrows and or trials which includes pain.

Having all these kinds of emotions in our hearts and minds, I believe that we should be able to experience it wisely and with a better outlook in life and holding in ourselves the truth that there will always be hope.

What I learned:

- The relationship of happiness and pleasure**
- Experiencing pain and pleasure at the same time**
- What can be good things to do to achieve happiness?**

Integrative Questions:

- 1. What can be good things to do to achieve happiness?**
- 2. Who is John Stuart Mill?**
- 3. How can be freedom related to bondage**
- 4. What are the things happiness can not fulfill in a person?**
- 5. Can someone be able to cope up with happiness and freedom with pain?**

James Rachels: The Debate over Utilitarianism

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

Quote: “Is happiness the only thing that matters?”

I expect to learn how happiness can be a key to life.

When it is about utilitarianism or happiness, there should not be a debate over it simply because we all know how it is valuable or key to a person’s life and or how he can fulfill it through happiness. I believe that utilitarianism is something valuable but I also think that there is more than just experiencing happiness. One is faith or religion and another is how a person should be sociable in its own way. Utilitarianism is should be something that we humans should believe in and we should be practicing it in our own way possible. We can not make it as a moral issue because in our lives happiness or joy is something that must be experienced in a way that they should be able to connect every action they are doing and making themselves happy and it can eventually make them have a positive outlook in life.

We should consider happiness valuable or key to our lives if it makes our whole outlook in life positive. Happiness is sometimes misunderstood, some people has their own way on acquiring happiness which tends to be wrong for others and I believe that these are essential to them but not to us, in relation to the previous article of John Mill I believe that it all boils down to respect and understanding of one’s culture. What is right to us can sometimes be wrong to others and what is right for them is sometimes wrong for us.

Furthermore, I see utilitarianism as something as a key to life. We should value our own happiness and search for it so that we can have a better understanding in life. Of course it will not always be joy and happiness in a human’s life but if at least we try then for sure the way we deal with life is better and it will all be because of happiness.

What I learned:

- How Happiness is important to a person’s life**
- Giving and taking**
- Utilitarianism is something to be valued and not debated**

Integrative Questions:

- 1. How can we make other people aware of others’ culture?**
- 2. Who is James Rachels?**
- 3. Can happiness be replaced?**
- 4. Is happiness the only thing that matters?**
- 5. Can happiness be a source of ingenuity?**

Immanuel Kant: The Categorical Imperative

Quote: “Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”

I expect to learn what to do when it comes to acting upon what you desire.

Primarily, this chapter talks about the importance and value of a good will. We all know that a good will is something that a human being should do in order to have a better life, but some miss the point of actually even seeing the clear view of it that it is not just about wealth and or riches. Some tend to not even value its importance and think of themselves quite wholly. We should realize that it is an act where in two ends meet and value for sociability and relationship is a key ingredient. A good will is something inside of us humans, it should be practiced and nourished, it can just work on its own, we should do also our part on at least planting a seed in it and starting somewhere which will eventually lead to mastering the art of doing good.

With what I’ve come up with on researching about categorical imperative, it is basically being aware of what is right and what is wrong. It is just like a thing about morality and I believe it is connected or related to each other. Still, it is based on the action of humans. One should be aware; you can not just go through life without being responsible enough in doing well in the society.

What I learned:

- How important Categorical Imperative is**
- Understanding ones actions**
- Being aware of our actions**

Integrative Questions:

- 1. How can one be aware of his/her actions?**
- 2. Who is Immanuel Kant?**
- 3. Is there such a thing as carelessness when it comes to good acts?**
- 4. How can one understand each other’s actions?**
- 5. How important is it to value a good act?**

Aristotle: Happiness and Virtue

Quote: "Life of the rational element"

I expect to learn the real meaning of rationality when it comes to life.

Happiness and virtue are two of the things that every one desires to achieve. It is something immeasurable and should not be asked if one needs or wants it because the answer is quite obvious. Everyone wants a better life, whether it maybe through wealth and riches or by simply surviving each day just as long as you have people around you that you desire to be surviving with, but if I were to be asked, I would definitely choose to be on the path where happiness and virtue is valuable. Without it I believe one will be desperate either way, eventually they will realize it soon enough that something is missing in their life. Happiness and virtue are two things that are lasting. The process may be long but it something that we will never regret.

When it comes now to virtue, I believe that virtue is an action which leads us to fulfilling our happiness. If we strive for happiness then for sure we need virtue, otherwise it will definitely NOT work. Virtue is essential to human's life cycle simply because it our ticket for success and happiness which I also believe a key ingredient in living in a good life.

What I learned:

- How important Happiness and virtue is**
- Happiness and virtue's direct relation**
- A person's need of happiness.**

Integrative Questions:

- 1. How can virtue be important to happiness?**
- 2. Who is Aristotle?**
- 3. How can virtue be important to happiness?**
- 4. Can happiness be achieved without virtue?**
- 5. Can a rational act related with happiness and virtue?**

Joel Feinberg :Nature and value of Rights

Quote: “Earned gratuity”

I expect to learn what the value of rights are.

This chapter is primarily focused on the story of the Nowheresville people which I think represents us people of today. The Nowheresville people back in the days had no rights or at least something to believe in simply because they are not allowed to which for me is very wrong considering the fact that God made us humans to have rights and ethics. As humans we should be able to achieve everything that we desire especially if it is for wellness and for the good of all. The question now is how we can even achieve such if we are condemned or held back of what we want and need by others who are in position.

That for me is the sad part about the Nowheresville people thinking that everything they do is controlled. There is no sense of freedom and liberty which I think is very essential to human life. If we are created by God to have rights then other should just let things happen in each of us’ way rather than controlling us and or doing what is unethical

What I learned:

- How important Values and rights are**
- Nowheresville people’s history**
- A person’s need of freedom and liberty.**

Integrative Questions:

- 1. How did the Nowheresville people survive the mishap?**
- 2. Who is Joel Feinberg?**
- 3. How can freedom and liberty be important to human beings?**
- 4. Can freedom and liberty taken from human beings by other human beings too?**
- 5. How can one know if what they are doing is ethically correct when it comes to human rights?**

Ronald Dworkin :Taking Rights Seriously

Quote: “If the government itself is not taking right seriously, then they do not take the law seriously either”

I expect to learn how we should take rights seriously through our government .

This chapter talks about the importance of rights and how we should deal with especially when we relate our rights with our government or people in authority. There will be times that we citizens do not even get the point why people in authority take advantage of where they are without really doing what they are required to do. The people of course have their own questions if the leaders they anointed deserve the position where in fact it seems that they are getting away with anything especially abusing citizens of their right to know or right to information which I firmly believe contradicts our rights as humans.

In that case, if the government or people in authority does not value or take rights seriously then for sure the law is something they would also try to ignore. Our government should be the ones doing something or assure the citizens or people that rights and laws are given importance for it is their duty and responsibility especially that their job description is to take care of the people and exercise self-value and human rights in a proper way linking to the law and government.

What I learned:

- How important people in the government are**
- That rights should be taken seriously**
- People in authority should value the people they are serving**

Integrative Questions:

- 1. How can citizens sense that they are not taken care of?**
- 2. Who is Ronald Dworkin?**
- 3. Should rights be taken that much value?**
- 4. Can the government do something about the impression they are making?**
- 5. Is there a way to make people or citizens believe that the law is served?**

John Rawls :A Theory of Justice

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.”

I expect to learn liberty and wealth joined together .

This chapter talks about liberty and wealth primarily. When it comes to liberty, it is simply defined as people’s equal rights and how it should be taken advantage with. Of course all of us have their own rights but some tend to over look that liberty is not all about individuals but the right of many to everything. Some tend to think that liberty is not as valuable as freedom but I say it is almost the same and the weight of value and importance is evident. Liberty should be exercised by all and it should not be taken away from people.

On the other hand, when it comes to wealth, people can not be wealthy by mere judgment of their moral status or social status. One can be wealthy especially if there is dedication and also perseverance. It is all about working hard and earning not only money but there are so many intangibles. One good example is happiness; you can not buy happiness with money, same as friends. These are the things that make people wealthy.

What I learned:

- How important it is for people to know the importance of liberty and wealth**
- That wealth and liberty can not be bought**
- Happiness is essential to wealth**

Integrative Questions:

- 1. How is liberty and wealth connected?**
- 2. Who is John Rawls?**
- 3. Will it be the same if liberty be taken away from people?**
- 4. Will there be times that wealth can be measured?**
- 5. Can wealth change a person’s social and moral status?**

Chapter 12: The Need for More than Justice

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

Quote: “For “care” is the new buzz word.”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the message this chapter.

Review:

Justice is the quality of being righteous or fair. Many philosophers, theologians and others define justice as the proper ordering of people and things. Behind the concept of justice lies the notion of balance—that people get what is right, fair and appropriate. Justice also includes the notion of upholding the law, as in the work of police, judges and the court. I believe that this definition of justice is true and has something in connection with this chapter. It tells that justice is the concept of notion of balance. Judges should be balance in deciding and no biases are accepted. No status in life should also be involved because equality is what we are talking about. As a summary of this chapter, the need for more justice talks about justice which brings order to our places and to us people.

What I learned:

I learned that justice should be balanced.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) Why should justice be balanced?**
- 2.) What is justice?**
- 3.) What is the importance of justice?**
- 4.) What is the relevance of justice to order?**
- 5.) How can our leaders practice justice?**