# Contemporary Moral Problems

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Book Reviews

#### James Rachels: Egoism and Moral Sceptism

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)

Library Reference: N/A Amazon Reference:

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

**Quote:** "The legend of Gyges is about a shepherd who was said to have found a magic ring in a fissure opened by an earthquake. The ring would make its wearer invisible and thus would enable him to go anywhere and do anything undetected. Gyges use the power of the ring to gain entry to the Royal Palace where he seduced the Queen, murdered the King, and subsequently seized the throne."

#### **Learning Expectations:**

- to understand want egoism and moral sceptism is all about
- to be aware of philosophical terms
- · to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- · to determine how should morality inclined with ethics
- to learn new ideas about philosophers

#### Review:

This chapter talks about ideas coming from an American philosopher named James Rachels, who happen to be well-known in the field of ethics. At the first few paragraphs of the chapter, Rachels discussed something about egoism and moral sceptism. He was able to distinguish and determine the commonalities of the two - both of them are quite insignificant. There were some parts of her discussions that he tried to object, making her responses from psychological egoist's claiming that people never act in unselfish manner - they react on things they think what they are doing is something that the 'majority' would usually does.

Rachels also explained and argued that it is the object of an action that creates meaning or determines whether a certain action is selfish or not. She argued that if people want to prosper on the way they think and on the way they live, they should do certain action, based on their desires, without turning the situation in a selfish act.

In this chapter, it was also discussed how egoists react on Rachels' stand. It would still be a question why would people become so 'big-hearted' in the first place; well in fact, there's no reason at all in the first place. However, what Rachels standpoint makes everything clear. She talked about the welfare - the human welfare that we need - which is something we must possessed and we must value. There should be reasons why would a person do something or perform something, thinking if he would allow himself others or not.

According to Rachels, the best argument against ethical egoism is its unacceptable arbitrariness. The egoist finds his interests come before those of others but in fact, no person matters that much more than others - a selfish act. Just as well as explained, egoism is like racism. Racism assumes that the interests of one race count more than the interests of others, for no good reason.

Self interest is something that should be highlighted in this chapter. No matter how 'good' or 'bad' we execute our tasks or actions, at the end of the day, we shouldn't feel guilty about it. What is done is done. If egoists would reject with what Rachels wanted to point out, probably, that person never cares at all. That kind of person won't be bothered whether his actions brought something that could affect other people in different ways.

#### What I've learned:

- Egoism is a selfish act, based on what I've understood.
- Whether it is ethical or not, egoism is still egoism
- There are two kinds of egoism: psychological and ethical egoism
- Egoism creates a kind of 'leveling' for two parties/individuals.

#### **Integrative Questions:**

- 1. What is egoism?
- 2. What is moral sceptism?
- 3. What are the differences between egoism and moral sceptism?
- 4. How should people respond in ethical egoism?
- 5. How morality should be balanced in a way that everyone uses it 'fairly'?

#### **Review Questions:**

- 1. Explain the legend of Gyges. What questions about morality are raised by the story?
  - The Legend of Gyges talks about a shepherd who happened to found a magic, yet mystical ring, which makes a person wearing it invisible. Gyges happened to be 'selfish' in a way that he used his 'ability' to get his own interests - he seduced the queen, kill the husband, and made himself the king.
  - What a man of virtue and a bad guy would do with the magic ring? "What reason is there for him to continue being "moral" when it is clearly not to his own advantage to do so?"
- 2. Distinguish between psychological and ethical egoism.
  - Quoting White and Rachels, "psychological egoism holds that all human actions are self-interested."
  - "Ethical egoism says that all actions ought to be self-interested."
- 3. Rachels discusses two arguments for psychological egoism. What are these arguments, and how does he reply to them?
  - o "It is the object of a want that determines whether it is selfish or not."
  - "If we have a positive attitude toward the attainment of some goal, then we may derive satisfaction from attaining that goal."
- 4. What are the three commonplace confusions does Rachels detect in the thesis of psychological egoism?
  - Self-interest being a selfish act.
  - Actions done either of self-interest or other motives.
  - o Care for one's self is different from caring for 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 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."
  - "What he advocates and what he does are both calculated as means to an end (the same end, we might note)."... "He cannot be refuted by the claim that he contradicts himself."
- 6. According to Rachels, why shouldn't we hurt others, and why should we help others? How can the egoist reply?
  - o Simply this human welfare for everyone.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. Has Rachels answered the question raised by Glaucon, namely, "Why be moral?" If so, what exactly is his answer?
  - No. He got a different answer, quoting, "the majority of mankind is grossly deceived about what is, or ought to be, the case, where morals are concerned."
- 2. Are genuine egoists rare, as Rachels claims? Is it a fact that most people care about others, even people they don't know?
  - Egoists are those people who are left out, 'forsaken' in a way, lonely people.
     People need people. What they are doing is 'far' from what reality is. They should be called as 'outsiders'.
- 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?
  - o It depends on the situation especially if it involves morality.

#### John Arthur: Religion, Morality and Conscience

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)

Library Reference: N/A Amazon Reference:

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

**Quote:** "It seems wrong to conclude, automatically, that morality cannot rest on anything but religion. And it is also possible that morality doesn't have any foundation or basis at all, so that its claims should be ignored in favor of whatever serves or own self-interest."

#### **Learning Expectations:**

- to understand how John Arthur defined religion, morality and conscience
- to be aware of philosophical terms
- to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- to determine how should morality inclined with ethics
- to learn new ideas about philosophers

#### Review:

In this chapter, John Arthur, argued a major issue between religion, morality and conscience. Arthur was able to contrast morality and religion by asking what would be the society look like if there's no presence of what we called as 'moral codes'. Perhaps, the concept of justice and 'being fair' would become a great issue to most people. John Arthur clearly defined what religion is all about. Religion is something essential for providing 'motivation' to morality. He also noted that religion serves as a 'guidance' to lead a person from what is right and what is wrong. Although religion doesn't really provides guidance straightforwardly, it reminds us that in every actions that we do or done in the past, we are responsible for it - people have their own convictions.

This chapter also discussed something about the Divine Right Theory, which is quite relevant to what religion wants to portray. Without that 'someone' who will serve as the 'law-maker', things might be different from now. People commit themselves to follow these 'decrees' they have received from their respective religions. Without this 'higher authority' that will lead them, morality won't be something we have right now - understanding the difference from good to bad.

Arthur was able to discuss how morality became socially important. Morality can and will influence people to another people, and vice versa. One's morality affect other's - same goes to the other. In this chapter, he discussed four ways how morality is social: first, morality involves language. Second, morality involves in a group of people - a community should I say. Third, people criticize each other's morality - whether negative or positive feedback. And fourth, morality has something to do with 'conscience' - on how people react on it.

What Arthur wants to point out to readers is that morality is something we should take seriously - and how we handle it in our own little way. As far as individuality is concern, we are still different when it comes to dealing the 'social nature' of our morality. Everybody is still dependent on thinking what morality is for them.

#### What I've learned:

- Divine Right Theory
- · How we should look into religion, morality, and conscience
- What are the issues we are facing right now in accordance to the chapter

#### **Integrative Questions:**

- 1. What is religion according to John Arthur?
- 2. What is morality according to John Arthur?3. What is conscience according to John Arthur?
- 4. How do these three affect an individual perception in life?
- 5. What is moral knowledge?

#### **Review Questions:**

#### 1. According to Arthur how are Morality and Religion different?

- o Morality is "to tend to evaluate the behavior of others and to feel guilt at certain actions when we perform them." and it "involves our attitudes toward various forms of behavior typically expressed using the notion of rules, rights, and obligation."
- In religion, it "involves beliefs in supernatural power(s) that created and perhaps also control nature, the tendency to worship and pray to those supernatural forces or being, and the presence of organizational structures and authoritative texts."

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

"Religion is not necessary for moral motivation because people also consider other perspectives in relation to doing what is right."

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

- there are a lot of moral teachings about religion and revelation
- people are having difficulty in interpreting the revelation
- people are caught in a dilemma of which revelation is the "word of God" or the Bible

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

- "The divine command theory, would mean 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."
- According to Arthur, "having to follow God's command and just being right is not the same. The basis of what is right cannot be solely based by commanding it. Next, there is this confusion that only those that are commanded by God are right."

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

"The morality of people is more or less influenced by religion."

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

- people have the sense to be social in their choices to think of the effect of their actions
- morality is social
- people are meant to give their opinions and reactions to the actions of the other people

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. Has Arthur refuted the divine command theory? If not, how can it be defended?
- 2. If morality is social, as Dewey says, then how can we have any obligations to nonhuman animals? (Arthur mentions this problem and some possible solutions to in footnote).
  - We treat them as their own. We only eat what we should only eat spare the others. Help them reproduce and make everyone beneficial.

- 3. What does Dewey mean by moral education? Does a college ethics class count as a moral education?
  - "Thinking education, that listening to others, reading about what others think and do, and reflecting within ourselves about our actions and whether we could defend them to others".
  - Yes. It counts. And it helps.

#### Friedrich Nietzsche: Master and Slavery Morality

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7th Edition)

Library Reference: N/A **Amazon Reference:** 

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

Quote: "The noble type of man regards himself as a determiner of values; he does not require to be approved of; he passes judgment"

#### **Learning Expectations:**

- to understand what master and slavery morality is all about
- to be more aware of philosophical terms
- to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- to determine how should this philosophical moral problems are important
- to learn new ideas about philosophers

#### Review:

This chapter discussed about morality that is 'defined' by a German philosopher named Friedrich Nietzsche in two ways. This chapter was one of Nietzsche's main themes of some parts of the book, On The Genealogy of Morality. In this chapter, Friedrich Nietzsche argued that there are two types of morality, which is master morality and slavery morality.

In master morality, the 'power of the will' takes place. It requires more actions than those from slavery morality, thus weighing itself from what is bad is what is harmful. Master morality comes from 'strong-willed' men - they create noble acts. They categorize weak and cowardice as something 'bad', and consider nobility and powerful as something 'good'. They believe that morality is something that is created in such a way that it protects people who have 'strong-willed' values. What makes master morality different from slavery morality is that master morality stands for itself - they take full credit and recognitions to their works or actions - which make himself think that he value himself so much. According to the discussion, a man's values determine on what he's experiencing being a 'noble man' - without questions asked. Bottom-line, they are perceived as the 'creator of values'.

On the other hand, slavery morality is far different from master morality. They are the ones being oppressed. They are considered as weak in a sense that they heed the 'morality of principles' rather than 'morality of persons', which master morality acquires. Weak-willed, what they think are weak are good, which in the case, they think that what are strong are bad. They maybe called self deceptive people, but these people chose this kind of path where equality cannot clearly be observed. What makes them different probably is how obsessed they are looking for equality and freedom.

#### What I've learned:

- Master morality is almost the same as egoism.
- Will power makes the world more meaningful.
- Learn to fear from masters, allowing yourself to follow on the rules

- 1. What does master morality mean?
- 2. What does slavery morality mean?
- 3. What should people do about it?4. Do the two types of morality affect the welfare of the citizen?
- 5. What should be done in order to create a 'balance' between slaves and masters?

#### **Review Questions:**

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

 "A good and healthy society, allows superior individuals to live their desired life whether it is subjected to bad side. In this society, there exist master- and slave- morality."

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

"To avoid injury, violence, and exploitation is not acceptable. In order for a person to survive, he/she must injure, bring violence, and exploit others or else he/she will be in that place."

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

- o Master-morality "emphasizes power, strength, egoism, and freedom".
- o Slave-morality "calls for weakness, submission, sympathy, and love"

#### 4. Explain the Will to Power.

- 'Cosmic' inner force acting in and through both animate and inanimate objects."
- o "It refers to the superiors having to exercise their power towards the inferior"

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. Some people view Nietzsche's writing as harmful and even dangerous. For example, some have charged Nietzsche with inspiring Nazism. Are these charges justified or not? Why or why not?
  - Yes. Nietzsche's definition of master slavery inspires Nazis fed by injury, violence, and exploitation.

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

 "He honors whatever he recognizes in himself". You take every action counts for everybody.

#### Mary Midgley: Trying Out One's New Sword

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7th Edition)

Library Reference: N/A Amazon Reference:

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

Quote: "Morally as well as physically, there is only one world, and we all have to live in it"

#### Learning Expectations:

- to understand what the term 'trying out one's new sword' depicts
- to be more aware of philosophical terms
- to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- to determine how should this philosophical moral problems are important
- · to learn new ideas about Mary Midgely

#### Review:

In Mary Midgley's 'Trying Out One's New Sword', she was able to explain what moral isolationism is all about. As what she defined it, moral isolationism "consists in simply denying that we can never understand any culture except our own well enough to make judgments about it" (Midgely). She also shared some of her insights with regards to morality. She state that, "those who recommend this hold that the world is sharply divided into separate societies, sealed units, each with its own system of thought". (Midgley).

In this chapter, Mary Midgely was also able to explain that the people who take up this idea of moral isolationism think that it is being respectful to other cultures and societies. "Nobody can respect what is entirely unintelligible to them." (Midgely) She disagreed to that kind of notion people are thinking. According to her, "to respect someone, we have to know enough about him to make a favorable judgment, however general and tentative. And we do not understand people in other cultures to this extent. Otherwise a great mass of our most valuable thinking would be paralyzed" (Midgley).

Mary Midgley was able to illustrate her arguments in this chapter. First, she argued that "there is a contradiction between the claim that we cannot understand these rules, and the claim we must respect them." (Midgely) This only means that we, ourselves, can understand people in other cultures. In the following paragraphs, Midgely was able to illustrate some relevant examples to explain the importance of analyzing other culture's morals in order to form educated judgments about them. She gives an example of ancient Chinese samurai warriors whom before going off to battle would test the sharpness of their swords on innocent strangers. (Midgely)

Midgely was able to introduce the important distinctions between judgments - two judgments - one talking about being 'crude' and one talking about judgment itself. She also pointed out that "there is much that we don't understand in our culture too." (Midgely) In this kind of thinking, we allow ourselves conclude that we cannot judge within our culture we still don't understand - just as asking our self "if we can't we judge other cultures, can we judge our own?" (Midgely)

Midgely was able to clearly explain herself that 'isolating barriers simply cannot arise" with this kind of notion. Accepting something that is 'moral truth' from others, which are 'morally' approved' by foreigners or other countries, is something inevitable. The chapter also explained that ethical relativism is internally self-contradictory. There might have diversity between cultures and principles, in the end, we must learn to take each one of them seriously.

#### What I've learned:

- What is moral isolationism?
- What is the distinction between crude judgment and judgment itself
- What are isolating barriers?
- Is it moral to intervene with other's culture?

#### **Integrative Questions:**

- 1. What is moral isolationism?
- 2. What is ethical relativism?
- 3. What does judgment takes a meaning?
- 4. What is a crude judgment?
- 5. What 'moral truth' should people face and understand?

#### **Review Questions:**

- 1. What is "moral isolationism"?
  - It is defined as "the view of anthropologists and others that we cannot criticize cultures that we do not understand."

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

- "The Japanese custom tsujigiri involves an owner of a sword and a traveler; the situation is that this owner will have to try out his/her sword to any traveler. This is to check if the blade is really that sharp and that the sword can really kill someone in just a single blow."
- "Would we ourselves be qualified to deliver such an indictment on the Samurai, provided we could spend two weeks in ancient Japan?" and "If I want to say that the Samurai culture has many virtues, or to praise the South American Indians, am I prevented from doing that by my outside status?"

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

"Moral isolationism leaves no room for moral reasoning or argument. It prevents people from giving out opinions or comments."

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

- People don't have the chance to express their thoughts or ideas to other's culture.
- As far as morality is concern, it allows us to criticize other's culture, which
  gives us the freedom to address our concerns.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. Midgley says that Nietzsche is an immoralist. Is that an accurate and fair assessment of Nietzsche? Why or why not?
  - Yes.
  - Midgley's judgment to Nietzsche as an immoral without stating the reasons is quite unacceptable.

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

Yes, I believe that cultures are a mixture of other cultures and that one way or the other there is a connection in each of them. The only difference here is that people have successful manage to alter a mixed of culture so that it would fit into their people's character.

#### John Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism

Book: Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7th Edition)

Library Reference: N/A Amazon Reference:

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

**Quote:** "Principle of Utility or the Greatest Happiness Principle, says that the ultimate end, with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable, whether we are considering our own good or that of other people, is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible from enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality."

#### Learning Expectations:

- to understand the definition of utilitarianism
- to be more aware of philosophical terms
- to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- to determine how should this philosophical moral problems are important
- to learn new ideas about the philosopher

#### Review:

This chapter talks about John Mill's definition of utilitarianism. According to Wikipedia, "Utilitarianism is the idea that the moral worth of an action is determined solely by its contribution to overall utility: that is, its contribution to happiness or pleasure as summed among all persons. It is thus a form of consequentialism, meaning that the moral worth of an action is determined by its outcome: put simply, the ends justify the means. Utility, the good to be maximized, has been defined by various thinkers as happiness or pleasure (versus suffering or pain). It may be described as a life stance, with happiness or pleasure being of ultimate importance."

Mill also discussed two concept of utilitarianism: rule utilitarianism and act utilitarianism. Act utilitarianism states that, "when faced with a choice, we must first consider the likely consequences of potential actions and, from that choose to do what we believe will generate most pleasure." On the other hand, the rule utilitarian begins by "looking at potential rules of action. To determine whether a rule should be followed, he looks at what would happen if it were constantly followed." The distinction between act and rule utilitarianism is therefore "based on a difference about the proper object of consequentialist calculation — specific to a case or generalized to rules."

#### What I've learned:

- Some facts about Hedonism
- Why does Hedonism considered as 'anti-happiness'?
- Difference between Hedonism and Utilitarianism

- 1. What is Hedonism?
- 2. What is Rule Utilitarianism?
- 3. What is Act Utilitarianism?
- 4. How hedonism does affect human lives?
- 5. Who defended the classical utilitarianism?

# 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 ultimate end, with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable, whether we are considering our own good or that of other people, is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible from enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality."
- It is so obvious that doing delict acts could eventually create a negligence of care to other party, causing them not to be pleased, thus, losing the happiness they already established among themselves.

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

o "The sources of pleasure of a human being and a swine are the same, the rule of life which is good enough for the one would be good enough for the other. The comparison of Epicurean life to that of the beasts is degrading because a beast's definition of pleasure is not the same as of human's conception of happiness."

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

 "A being of higher faculties requires more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering, and certainly accessible to it at more point than one of an inferior type."

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

 "A utilitarian standard is not the agent's own greatest happiness, but the greatest happiness altogether."

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

- "Happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end; all other things being only desirable as means to that end."
- "An object is visible is that people actually see it, and so of the other sources of our experience."

#### James Rachels: The Debate over Utilitarianism

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7th Edition)

Library Reference: N/A Amazon Reference:

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

**Quote:** "The utilitarian doctrine is that happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end; all other things being desirable as means to that end"

#### **Learning Expectations:**

- to understand the definition of utilitarianism
- to be more aware of philosophical terms
- to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- to determine how should this philosophical moral problems are important
- to learn new ideas about the philosopher

#### Review:

This chapter talked about the propositions declared by the author, James Rachels, about his debate over utilitarianism:

The first proposition is when we judge our actions base on what we know is right and wrong. Hedonism is about pleasure and nothing is bad when your action is came from pleasure because you just satisfying your needs as a human being. "The respond of the defenders of utilitarianism to hedonism is their two doctrines the good and the right."

Second proposition is when we think about the consequence of our action after we judge it and thus making the right actions the greatest producers of balance of happiness over unhappiness. "Utilitarianism is about pleasure but what is good and right pleasure in a human being to have."

Third proposition is calculating the happiness and unhappiness that we felt after our action. Justice, rights, and promises are being done because they don't want to have scandals and riots. In short justice, rights, and promises are done to have peace and order in the society. "The act utilitarian considers the consequences of the act while the rule utilitarian considers the consequences that result of a rule of conduct. Utilitarianism reply to the objections by analyzing first the problem, then judge whether that action is right or not before thinking the consequence to the action made."

#### What I've learned:

- What is utilitarianism
- Take considerations first before doing an action
- · Utilities are not compulsory to live in this world

- 1. Why James Rachels make a debate?
- 2. What is utilitarianism?
- 3. What were his arguments about utilitarianism?
- 4. What is universal?
- 5. What is the basis?

#### **Review Questions:**

- 1. Rachels says that classical utilitarianism can be summed up in three propositions. What are they?
  - Actions are judged right or wrong solely in virtue of their consequences
  - In assessing consequences, the only thing that matters is the amount of happiness or unhappiness that caused.
  - In calculating happiness or unhappiness that will be caused, no one's happiness is to be counted as more important than anyone else.

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

- Hedonism is the belief of a something that if it is good then it will be called, happiness but it misunderstands the meaning of happiness because happiness is not something that is recognized as good and sought for its means of bringing it about. Instead, happiness is a response as goods, independently and in their own right.
- Defenders of utilitarianism suggest that in order to over ride Hedonism, we must utilize our resources and other good things in order for us to be happy.

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

 The objection for justice is a fair judgment. The objection for rights is not valued especially to racisms on a community, promises are be likely to be broken in promising a fair judgment, and rights are valued.

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

- Rule Utilitarianism, the new version of Utilitarianism modifies the original theory, Act utilitarianism, so that individual actions will no longer be judged by Principle of Utility. Instead, rules will be established by reference to the rules.
- Rule Utilitarianism is actions conform in to the rules that will lead to greater good.
- Act Utilitarianism states that the right action is one that will give happiness to a person.

#### 5. What is the third line of defense?

Act Utilitarianism

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- 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. Human beings mostly follow the Divine Right Theory. Moreover, people have convictions whether what they are doing is good or wrong.

# 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?

- People who are 'illiterate' when it comes to morality should be considered first.
- 3. Rachels claims that merit should be given moral consideration independent of utility. Do you agree?
  - o Yes.

#### Immanuel Kant: The Categorical Imperative

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7th Edition)

Library Reference: N/A **Amazon Reference:** 

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

Quote: "There is therefore only a single categorical imperative and it is this: "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."

#### Learning Expectations:

- to understand what categorical imperative is all about
- to be more aware of philosophical terms
- to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- to determine how should this philosophical moral problems are important
- to learn new ideas about philosophers

#### Review:

In this chapter, the author, Immanuel Kant, discusses about "The Categorical Imperative". As what he defined it, it is a kind of morality where people affirm that each one of them has his own obligations and duties in life. According to Kant, he "believes that our moral duty can be formulated in one supreme rule, the categorical imperative, from which all our duties can be derived." There should be one supreme rule for morality so that all of the people can go with it and live their lives with it.

Categorical Imperative instills the mind of a person to understand first how to deal with issues or concerns, by simply thinking. As we all know, it's better to think first before we act on something we are unsure. Usually, when we experience this kind of 'decision-making', we choose between our conscience and our convictions in dealing with them. Categorical imperative sometimes create this wrong notion that people do actions selfishly, however, what categorical imperative wants us to understand is that we create or do something based on the welfare of others.

People will always undergo with this kind of situation wherein we are challenged between right and wrong. No matter how hard it is to choose what should be done, we must remember that we keep our morality fit in. Morality makes situations more constrict in a way that they could alter the laws that are already been put into practice. At the end of the day, your actions would always reflect your character as well.

#### What I've learned:

- Kant explained how the standards of rationality from which all moral requirements were derived.
- The categorical imperative breaks the idea of utilitarianism
- Ideas explained by the 'maxims'

- 1. What is The Categorical imperative?
- 2. How does it affect the morality thinking of people?
- 3. Which should be followed by many the first or the second formulation? Why?4. What does the account of the good will all about?
- 5. Why categorical imperative became an issue to Contemporary Moral Problems?

#### **Review Questions:**

- 1. Explain Kant's account of the good will.
  - "A good will is not good because of what effects or accomplishes because
    of its fitness for attaining some proposed end: it is good through its willing
    alone that is, good in itself."
- 2. Distinguish between hypothetical and categorical imperatives.
  - o "A hypothetical imperative compels action in a given circumstance: if I wish to quench my thirst, I must drink something."
  - In categorical imperative, "act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."
- 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 concludes that a moral proposition that is true must be one that is not tied to any particular conditions, including the identity of the person making the moral deliberation. A moral maxim must have 'universality'".
  - "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means to an end." Every person has its own 'perfect duties' that should be done for the sake of humanity.
- 4. State the second version of the categorical imperative (using the language of means and end), and explain it.
  - "If any person desires perfection in himself or others, it would be his moral duty to seek that end for all people equally, so long as that end does not contradict perfect duty."

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- Are the two versions of the categorical imperative just different expressions of one basic rule, or are they two different rules? Defend your view.
  - Different rules perfect and imperfect duties.
- 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.
  - o Agree.
- 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?
  - I think. "Since it depends somewhat on the subjective preferences of humankind, this duty is not as strong as a perfect duty, but it is still morally binding."

#### Aristotle: Happiness and Values

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7th Edition)

Library Reference: N/A Amazon Reference:

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

**Quote:** "But such a life would be too high for man; for it is not so far as he is the man that he will live so, but in so far as something divine is present in him; and by so much as this is superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of virtue."

#### **Learning Expectations:**

- to understand the relevance between happiness and values
- to be more aware of philosophical terms
- · to learn new ideas about Aristotle

#### Review:

In this chapter, the great philosopher Aristotle discussed different types of virtues and how an individual can achieve happiness. According to the first few paragraphs, Aristotle explained that happiness coming from the humans is a "life long process." He also added that happiness is something that isn't constant - it keeps on going and going until the 'purpose' of it is finally met. Happiness, as what he explained, is an 'activity of the soul' on which actually, virtue takes place to the soul's potential.

In the next few paragraphs, Aristotle defined virtue. According to him, being virtuous is 'self-sufficient in itself', which later leads to human happiness. Aristotle was able to clearly define the difference between the two kinds of virtue: the moral virtue and the intellectual virtue. As when he stated, "Moral virtue comes from training and habit, and generally is a state of character that is a mea between the vices of excess and deficiency." This talks about the means and the extremes of a certain action. On the other hand, Aristotle defined intellectual virtue as a virtue that "produces the most perfect happiness and is found in the activity of reason or contemplation."

.There were ideas coming Aristotle which are mainly discussed, such as having a behavior should be imposed in a person, where a relative mean is present in his action/s. This relative mean is between two extremes - one is for deficiency and another for excess. For a person to be ethical in his virtues, he/she should learn how to master these extremes, controlling them, in any circumstances might happen. The ability to 'balance' between the two is quite challenging for most people. Usually, people end up working with either of the extremes, rather than keeping themselves intact in the relative mean.

Aristotle addressed his ideas about intellectual virtues. Intellectual virtues create a 'separation' between human forms to animals - making us humans have the ability to rationalize. Humans think and reason, while animals can't. What Aristotle wanted to tell his readers is that we should make ourselves more virtuous as we face the daily challenges of life. Being virtuous is self-fulfilling and self-rewarding - it makes you feel delighted and contented on what you are doing.

If we allow ourselves to experience this in a very long time, in Aristotle's eyes, we can achieve true happiness.

#### What I've learned:

- How Aristotle defined happiness
- What are the kinds of virtue and what is a relative mean
- Learning to become virtuous makes a person happy

#### **Integrative Questions:**

- 1. How can one person achieve true happiness?
- 2. Is pleasure automatically calling itself as being happy?
- 3. How does virtue/s affect happiness? In what sense?
- 4. How does happiness affect the way people think about morality?
- 5. How one can be called as 'insensible'?

#### **Review Questions:**

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

- According to Aristotle, "happiness is not pleasure, honor, or wealth, but an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue." Most people think happiness can be obtained if they have attained physical fulfillment, and they are wrong. In addition, the book stated that happiness then is "the best, noblest and most pleasant thing in the world".
- Happiness is related to virtue in a way that it is attached from happiness.
   True happiness comes with a virtue. A right kind of disposition in life makes a person happy. People who aligned their happiness with virtue are in harmony; they prosper and in the same manner, they are contented.
- O Pleasure, on the other hand, is defined as "a state of a soul". Most people have misconception when the term happiness is to be defined. People define happiness in a subjective form rather than being objective. They mislead happiness to a "physical desire or fulfillment" whether it comes from physical, financial, or materialistic means.

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

- According to Aristotle, "Moral virtue cones from training and habit, and generally is a state of character that is a mean between the vices of excess and deficiency." It is a balance between 'rational' and 'irrational'.
- o For example, given in the book, "the virtue of courage as a mean between the extremes of rashness, an excess, and cowardice, a deficiency."

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

 Yes, it is possible for everyone in the society to be happy. Individuals have their own definition when it comes to happiness. Happiness is evident to those people who have contentment, fulfillment, and goals in life.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

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

People are starting to become self-seeking, self-righteous and envious. These pleasures become their obsessions, which may result into negative impact. Money becomes their gods and what make their world go round are the materialistic things that have short term value.

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

 It depends. No matter what kind person you are, whether a philosopher or not, you deserve to be happy. You make things happen to make yourself delighted and be contented. You create your own happiness.

#### Joel Feinberg: The Nature and Value of Rights

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7th Edition)

**Library Reference:** N/A **Amazon Reference:** 

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

**Quote:** "Having rights, or course, makes claiming possible; but it is claiming that gives rights their special moral significance."

#### **Learning Expectations:**

- to understand what nature and value of rights
- to be more aware of philosophical terms
- to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- to determine how should this philosophical moral problems are important
- to learn new ideas about philosophers

#### Review:

One thing that this chapter talked about is about how nature of value works. In our society, every person has its own rights and own deeds to be done. Having the right of a human person keeps the community in tact. In every rights we have, we also have responsibility to take care of our actions. Creating rights for people creates common good, or simply, common ground. People will be more aware of what actions should be done to avoid violating the rights of a person.

Having the right doesn't mean you can do everything you want. In this democratic country that we have, we have freedom to express our feelings to everybody else. Each person is capable of expressing his thoughts, opinions, suggestions and other views in the community. Having a right means responsibility, you should do actions according to your conscience and what is implied in the law.

What Feinberg wants to reiterate is the idea that a person could defend for his or her rights. Every body has a balanced authority to defend themselves against the threats of others. That's why we have our local authorities today. They are the ones who are responsible in enforcing the law provided. These groups of people are responsible for keeping the community peace, safe, and in order. As long as you feel harassed by someone, fight for your right.

People should learn how to value the rights of other people – same as people respect their own rights. People should respect just like they wanted to be respected by every one else. It's a cycle out there. We should learn how to adapt in a way the every human person would create a big difference in the community.

#### What I've learned:

- The nature of value of rights
- Learn to value and respect other's right
- Treat everyone as equal human being

- 1. Who is Joel Feinberg?
- 2. What is nature of rights?
- 3. What is value of rights?
- 4. What is the difference between the two?
- 5. How does Nature and Value of rights affect the way people live?

#### **Review Questions:**

- 1. Describe Nowheresville. How is this world different from our world?
  - According to him, "In this world, there are no rights."
- 2. Explain the doctrine of the logical correlativity of right and duties. What is Feinberg's position on this doctrine?
  - "All duties entail other people's rights and all rights entail other people's duties."
- 3. How does Feinberg explain the concept of personal desert? How would personal desert work in Nowheresville?
  - "When a person is deserving on something, that person deserves it."
- 4. Explain the notion of a sovereign right-monopoly. How would this work in Nowheresville according to Feinberg?
  - "Sovereign right-monopoly is different from other rights present."
- 5. What are claim-rights? Why does Feinberg think they are morally important?
  - "Claim-rights are morally important because it keeps balance in the world. Fairness and equality will not be an issue with rights."

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- Does Feinberg make a convincing case for the importance of rights? Why or why not?
  - Yes. It taught me how morality balances the idea of the importance of rights.
- 2. Can you give a noncircular definition of claim-right?
  - I can't find of any definition because it is impossible.

#### Ronald Dworkin: Taking Rights Seriously

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7th Edition)

Library Reference: N/A Amazon Reference:

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

Quote: "If people have the right to do something, then it is wrong to interfere with them."

#### **Learning Expectations:**

- to understand how we should take rights seriously
- to be more aware of philosophical terms
- to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- to determine how should this philosophical moral problems are important
- to learn new ideas about philosophers

#### Review:

In this chapter, the author, James White, and written by James E. White, Ronald Dworkin, a university professor of Jurisprudence, Oxford University and professor of law in New York University, talked about the concept behind The Right of Freedom. According to them, "If people have a right to do something, then it is wrong to interfere with them." For me, everybody is entitled to have their equal rights and I believe nobody should take it to someone. As a human being, each person should learn how to respect other rights. If people take away other's right, obviously, the person already violated the rights of other person, thus, making him guilty against the law.

Just like media – everyone has the right to express their thoughts using various technologies that we have these days. That's what freedom of expression is all about. They are free to do these things without infringing other's right. However, a lot of people fail to respect other's right. Ever since the hierarchy system was invented, people are not treating as equal as they can be. Minorities were affected a lot. Higher authorities do the job to keep everyone in order. Unfortunately, they were the ones guilty of harassing people. Authority and power started to become a factor. People are getting abused because few people with powers can do what they want. What they don't realize is that they are ruining the lives of many.

What this chapter wants us to realize is that we should learn how to treat these rights seriously. If we learn how to treat every one as equal, there won't be a problem. Having a right means a responsibility. And having a responsibility calls for an action. We must be aware of these things in order to keep our community at peace.

#### What I've learned:

- People should understand how we should take rights seriously
- With respect and taking the rights seriously, people also takes seriously the laws being implemented.
- Respect.

- 1. What is morality?
- 2. What is ethics?
- 3. What is rationality
- 4. What is law
- 5. What is equity?

#### Questions:

- 1. What does Dworkin mean by rights in the strong sense? What rights in this sense are protected by the USA Constitution?
  - "If a people have the right to do something, then it is wrong to interfere with them."
  - Freedom of speech. Demonstrators are allowed to have their demonstrations giving them freedom to express their opinions, ideas, knowledge, etc. against/ for the state.
  - "The American provides a set of individual legal rights in the First Amendment, and due process, equal protection, and similar clauses."

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- 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 right is the right of a citizen protected by a constitution."
  - "Moral right is right of a person according to his morality and conscience."
  - Some examples: euthanasia and abortion
- 3. What are the two models of how a government might define the rights of its citizens? Which does Dworkin find more attractive?
  - First model recommends striking a balance between rights of the individual and the demands of society
  - Second recommends that the government inflates a right.
  - Dworkin finds the second model more attractive because the first one is false in a sense that the right is important but unfortunately not.
- 4. According to Dworkin, what two important ideas are behind the institution of rights?
  - Act of faith by the Majorities and Minorities

#### John Rawls: A Theory of Justice

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7th Edition)

Library Reference: N/A Amazon Reference:

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

**Quote:** "The rights and liberties referred to by these principles are those which are defined by the public rules of the basic structure."

#### Learning Expectations:

- to understand how the theory of justice works
- to be more aware of philosophical terms
- to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- to determine how should this philosophical moral problems are important
- to learn new ideas about philosophers

#### Review:

This chapter talks about the distinction between two principles of justice, stated by John Rawls, a professor of philosophy at Harvard University. The first principle involves equality in basic liberties. The second principle involves the arrangement of social and economic inequalities. These principles are those of which people are accepting all over the world. It is widely accepted by a lot of people because of which it is beneficial to all. That is the goal of justice, to make all people equal in their own rights. Equality and fairness is what all people want for them to be able to have peace with other people.

The balance that people wants is sometimes very difficult to obtain because there are some people who is selfish and is against equality. All they want is for them to be much up ahead compared to others. There is some situations where people who are having difficulties in life gets the notion that if they would take something from people who are fortunate than them, it is ok for them to take it. It is ok for them because they think that it is a way for them to be equal to those who are not less fortunate. This notion is the cause of imbalance in a place where equality and fairness is of the most sacred rule.

Justice is given to us the state and develops by other humans like us who sees to protect the interest of our well being. We need to know and renew and apply those values of the past to our present. We do not need to abandoned the old ones we only to rethink it and apply it if needed. The wrong thing about Kantian extends that equal rights to all ration beings including women and minorities is that they over extend it and did not put boundaries to it. I think he would say that is only right to have equal rights to all.

#### What I've learned:

- Theory of Justice is used by people worldwide to enforce equality and fairness towards each other.
- Justice will always prevail

- 1. Who is John Rawls?
- 2. What are the two principles of justice?
- 3. What is justice?
- 4. What is the difference between the two principles?
- 5. How do these principles affect the way people live?

#### **Review Questions:**

- 1. Carefully explain Rawls's conception of the original position.
  - Rawls' conception of the original position is to have complete equality and fairness towards all people.
- 2. State and explain Rawls's first principle of justice.
  - Rawls' first principle of justice is that each person must have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for other people.
- 3. State and explain the second principle. Which principle has priority such that it cannot be sacrificed?
  - Rawls' second principle of justice is that social and economic inequalities are needed to be organized to avoid any difficulties.

#### **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 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?
  - Yes, people can do anything they want as long as they aren't interfering with others.
- 2. Is it possible for free and rational persons in the original position to agree upon different principles than give by Rawls? 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?
  - It depends on the preference and beliefs of a person.

#### Annette Baier: The Need for More Than Justice

**Book:** Contemporary Moral Problems by James E. White (7th Edition)

Library Reference: N/A Amazon Reference:

http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/

**Quote:** "Let me say quite clearly at this early point that there is little disagreement that justice is a social value of very great importance, and injustice an evil."

#### **Learning Expectations:**

- · to understand how it is important to have justice
- to be more aware of philosophical terms
- to understand how important it is to view morality in different ways
- to determine how should this philosophical moral problems are important
- to learn new ideas about philosophers

#### Review:

In this chapter, Annette Baier, teacher of philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh, noted some of here insights about the perspective of Giligan during her studies on the moral development of woman. She also distinguished other concepts coming from other philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and Rawls.

According to her, "justice and care should be harmonized with each other. Harmonization between the two would form something that will take care of people even when they do something to other people. The harmonization of justice and care is the same as the harmonization of man and woman. The cooperation of the two will form something that will be beneficial for the both parties." The bonding of both characteristics would produce a chance where manly ethics and knowledge can be shared to womanly ethics and knowledge which in time will produce an outcome that will benefit a lot of people."

The author disagreed to some ideologies she thinks not applicable and not helpful for human beings. Justice, I believe, is something to be done according to the betterment of the community. Justice will only prevail as long as people meet up in a common good. Justice is something everyone should earn and strive for. It isn't just something we beg from others, it is something we work really hard. Persevering in doing our commitments to stay justice in line is important.

Learning to care for justice is essential for each person. Just by simply caring for one another, it only shows how people are valued by anybody. "Caring for others is something that comes from virtue or morality in life. People who grew up with someone who care for them tends to gain this characteristic and share it to others."

Care with justice is just saying that even though a person committed something that is unacceptable for the society, it doesn't mean that the person who committed the act should be treated like trash or waste. Proper care should still be present because that person who committed the act still has the right to be human.

#### What I've Learned:

- People change as well as the society and justice
- Justice is something we should persevere on
- People needs justice, just like people needs food
- Fairness is important

#### **Integrative Questions:**

- 1. Who is Annette Baier?
- 2. What are the things she wanted to harmonize together?3. Whose work this she followed?
- 4. How does care affect the way people live?
- 5. What does care have to do with Annette Baier?

#### **Review Questions:**

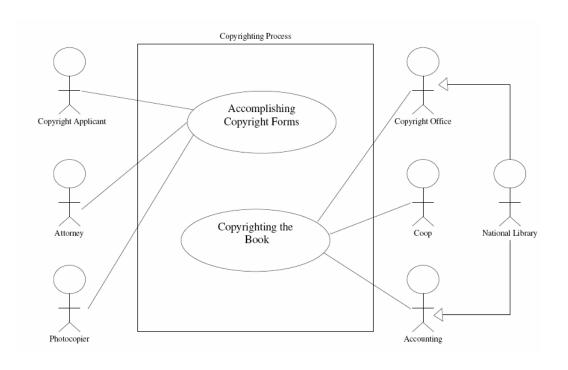
- 1. Distinguish between the justice and care perspectives. According to Gilligan, how do these perspectives develop?
  - "The morality it imparts to the people helps it to develop and the harmonization of justice and care also helps."
- 2. Explain Kohlberg's theory of moral development. What criticisms do Gilligan and Baier make of this theory?
  - "It 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, had conform to its standards and rules, to a post-conventional critical level."
- 3. Baier says there are three important differences between Kantian liberals and their critics. What are these differences?
  - Relationships between equals or those who are deemed equal in some important
  - Relationships between those who are clearly unequal in power, such as parents and children.
  - Relationships between unequal and of the morality of our dealings with the more and the less powerful.
- 4. Why does Baier attack the Kantian view that the reason should control unruly passions?
  - She is disagreeing with that view because of the consistency of the concept of other ideologies.

#### **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 right?
  - People know how to balance morality and rationality. People are becoming wiser when it comes to dealing with the values of freedom, justice and right.
- 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?
  - o Baier agrees because rights are granted equally to the people so that the world will be fair for all human beings.
- 3. Baier seems to reject the Kantian emphasis on freedom of choice. Granted, we do not choose our parent, but still don't we have freedom of choice about many things, and isn't this very important?
  - Freedom of choice of important as long as we are doing it for the goodwill of the community.

# Topyright Processing:

**Use Case & Activity Diagram** 



#### Identification summary

Title: Accomplishing Necessary Forms

Summary: This use case is for the completion of all the necessary documents before

going to the National Library.

Actors: Main: Copyright Applicants, Secondary: Attorney, Photocopier Creation Date: February 27, 2009 Date of Update: N/A Version: 1.0 Person in Charge:

#### Flow of Events (mandatory)

#### Preconditions:

- 1. The Copyright Applicants should have a book
- 2. The applicants should have the Copyright Form

#### Main Success Scenario:

- The Applicants will write the accurate information being asked by the form
- 2. The applicants should make the form Notarized
- 3. Produce additional copy of the form

#### "Alternative Sequences:

#### A1: Put wrong information on the form

1. Print another copy of the copyright form

#### **Error Sequences**

#### E1: the book was not created by the Applicant

1. The applicants should not make the application

#### PostConditons:

1. All the necessary forms are completed.

#### Identification summary

Title: Copyrighting

Summary: This use case is for the process of the Copyrighting the Applicants own book.

Actors: Main: Copyright Applicants, National Library

Creation Date: February 27, 2009 Date of Update: N/A
Version: 1.0 Person in Charge:

#### Flow of Events (mandatory)

#### Preconditions:

1. The Copyright Applicants should accomplish the necessary documents

#### Main Success Scenario:

- 1. The Applicants go to National Library
- 2. The applicant purchase the stamp
- 3. The applicant pay the fee

#### "Alternative Sequences:

A1: the applicantcan't locate the Coop

1. Ask the guard on the ground floor

A2: the applicant can't locate the Office

1. Ask the guard on the ground floor or the information desk

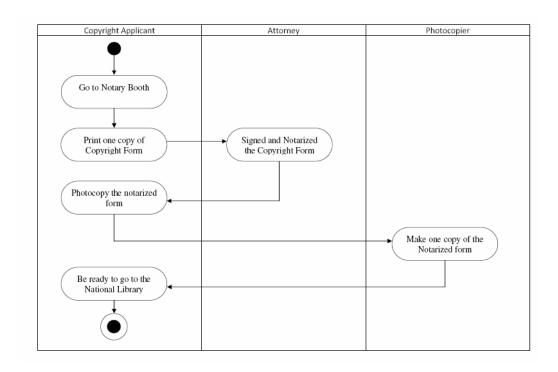
#### Error Sequences

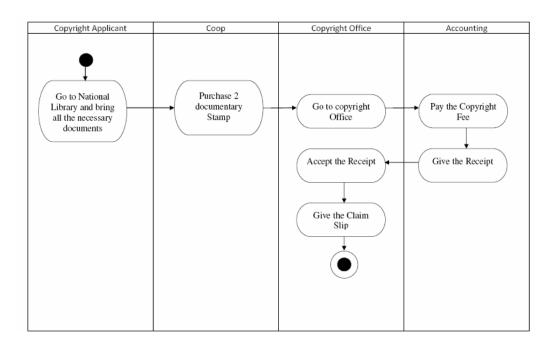
E1: the book was not created by the Applicant

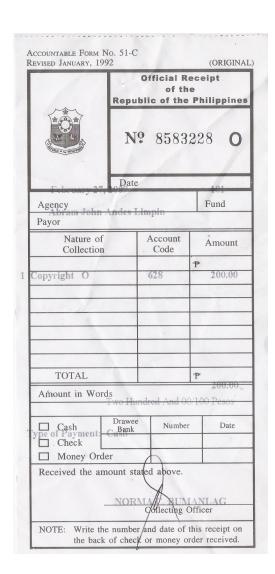
1. The applicants should not make the application

#### PostConditons:

1. The Applicant received a Claim Slip.







# Official Receipt

# Claim Slip

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