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An Investigation on Rawls' Theory of Justice and Its Relationship to Metaphysics

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Introduction

In the past, though the split between metaphysical and political philosophy does exist, it is also obvious that political philosophy was based on metaphysical principles. For instance, in Plato's *Utopia*, it was because of Plato's view of justice, a metaphysical view, that he suggested the type of society which he described in the book, which is a political theory. A similar trend can also be seen in Aristotle's *Politics*. Aristotle's *Politics* originated from the book of *Nicomachean Ethics*, which is a piece of work mainly focused on ethics. These works, in a very similar way, show how political theories were based on metaphysical principles.

However, since modern era, philosophers starting from Hume and Kant started this new way of thinking, which transfers from metaphysical to pure political philosophy. Metaphysical philosophy became more of a background knowledge that need no more explanation and this trait could be seen even more clearly when it comes to contemporary era. Today, political philosophy seems to stray away from metaphysical philosophy. It no longer requires a solid metaphysical principle. For instance, John Rawls' political theory focuses on existing social structures and adjusting current social baselines to increase equality among all human beings, rather than focusing on metaphysical principles. He drew upon ideas such as the veil of ignorance and gaining the largest level of social equality, which are not metaphysical commitments. Therefore, John Rawls shows that it is possible to create a political theory without involving metaphysical principles. Despite this possibility, philosophers such as Michael Sandel and Alasdar Macintyre rejected such ideas and argued that political theories should be based on a solid metaphysical principle.

In this thesis I would like to investigate on this separation between political philosophy and metaphysical philosophy. This trace of division could be seen clearly since modern philosophy. However, I would like to test on the feasibility of such division and if political philosophy could be as reliable as it is today if all metaphysical ideas are put aside.

To be able to do so, I would like to use John Rawls as the example of the philosophers who believe that political philosophy could be separated from metaphysical discussions. On the other hand, I would use Michael Sandel and Alasdair MacIntyre as the opposing opinion, which believes that political philosophy could not be convincing without metaphysics. I will firstly investigate on John Rawls and his attitude toward Metaphysics; after going through Rawls' theories regarding metaphysics, I will then focus on the criticisms to Rawls' theories provided by Sandel and MacIntyre. After investigating both sides of the debate, I hope I could get to a conclusion about whether or not metaphysics is irrelevant to political philosophy.

Part I—Rawls

John Rawls' theory of political philosophy and his opinion toward the relationship between metaphysical philosophy and political philosophy is different from most other forms of social judgments. This uniqueness is due to his rejection to the involvement of metaphysics into political philosophy. Most philosophers from past to today would consider metaphysics as the base or foundation any philosophical discussion. As what Plato argued in his Republic: "quotation". Thus, these metaphysical backgrounds would need to be clarified so that the latter discussion built on these backgrounds would be solid. However, although Rawls also admitted such a relationship between metaphysical

philosophy and other forms of philosophical thinking, he rejected the idea that political philosophy could not be complete without some underlying metaphysical claims. To Rawls, metaphysical ideas are not necessary for political philosophy, as not only metaphysics could not help defining most questionable definitions but rather lead to a more controversial state to political theories. As Rawls argued in his article *Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical*, "No political view that depends on these deep and unresolved matters can serve as a public conception of justice in a constitutional democratic state."[1] Here Rawls meant to argue that a clear political theory fit for a constitutional democratic state needs to avoid metaphysical commitments because of the complexity of metaphysical definitions. Metaphysical ideas could not easily reach to a convincing conclusion and thus makes the discussions regarding these metaphysical ideas complicated and controversial. Rawls held that a public conception of justice should serve as the foundation for "social cooperation on the basis of mutual respect…."[2] Rawls would like to focus solely on the political facet of social rules and hope to reach to a definitive answer because most metaphysical discussions could not get to a definitive conclusion yet there must be some solid foundation on the philosophical base of a democratic society. Rawls holds that he need not settle the ongoing metaphysical debates because his theory of society is a practical theory that is intended to be neither universal nor ahistorical. Rawls theories, according to his own appraisal, is a political theory that should be applied to contemporary democratic societies and democratic societies alone. This could also be seen in his article *Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical*, as

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[1] Rawls, John. "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical." Philosophy & Public Affairs 14.3 (1985): 223-51. P224

[2] Rawls, Justice as Fairness, P225

he wrote "In particular, justice as fairness is framed to apply to what I have called the "basic structure" of a modern constitutional democracy."[3] Rawls did not mean to target all forms of societies, nor did he want to establish a theory that should apply to all the facets of people's lives. On the contrary, his target is quite limited as he focused only on the basic structure of society, its most important political, social and economic institutions. As he wrote in his **A Theory of Justice**, "The correct regulative principle for anything depends on the nature of that thing."[4] John Rawls meant to say here that anything, including social theories, are created only because there's certain need that only these certain social theories could fill. Thus, these rules should and only should be applied to this certain society. His theory of justice could be applied to contemporary democratic society because there's a need in the nature of this form of. In Rawls' theories, the need for justice precedes the need of a conception of the good. A conception of the good, to Rawls, in other words, means a theory of "good life", which is often encouraged by certain kinds of societies. A conception of good often targets what is commonly considered "a good life" and also how people should behavior in a society in order to be "good". For instance, European societies in the middle-ages would consider that only when one believes in Christianity, that person would be admitted as "good". If one would not believe so, his existence became wrong and thus was no longer protected by the social rules at that time period. However, in another form of society, it is highly possible that such need does not exist, but some other needs would appear. Although he did not make this clear in his earlier work, Rawls ultimately, in "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical" and in his **Political Liberalism**, makes explicit that his

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[3] Rawls, Justice as Fairness, P225
[4] Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard UP, 1971. P5

theory of justice is not mean to be universally valid/applicable but is offered to fit the nature of liberal democratic society.

However, what does Rawls mean when referring a certain range of questions as metaphysical, ones that he chose not to avoid in his theory of justice? According to Rawls in his "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical," it is easy to see that Rawls wanted to establish something that would not require people to answer "disputed philosophical, as well as disputed moral and religious, questions."[5] These questions, according to Rawls, are the questions that are both too important and too difficult to resolve politically. Thus it is safe to say that what Rawls abandoned or tried to evade, namely the discussions regarding philosophical, moral or religious issues are all what he considered as metaphysical. These questions, as what Rawls believed, have no definitive answer and each time the answers to these questions change, it would cause great change in not only the conception to social institutions but even the point of view regarding societies as well. Also, because of the high difficulty and extremely low possibility of giving a definitive answer to these questions under a political frame, Rawls chose to evade these questions and focus solely on the questions regarding practical social problems and the ways people may be able to solve these questions.

In both of his books, **A Theory of Justice** and **Political Liberalism**, Rawls began by stating some fundamental features of his theories. In **A Theory of Justice**, John Rawls started by explain the basic role of justice, which according to him is "the first virtue of social institutions as truth is of systems of thoughts."[6] Rawls believed justice as the basis

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[5] Rawls, John. "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical." Philosophy & Public Affairs 14.3 (1985): 223-51. P229
[6] Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard UP, 1971. P3

for any social institutions because of the need of justice for all citizens. As Rawls argued,

"Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of

society as a whole cannot override."[7] To Rawls, what people cannot give up even for the

welfare of whole society is justice. This kind of understanding to human beings, in other

words, is the model of right over the good. Rawls argued that even if it is good for more

people in a society, people would not consider sacrificing a few people's right as justice

and would not approve it. The only situation, for Rawls, that people could not find a

better solution. In other words, only because there could only be more injustice could

people allow a certain level of injustice to happen. For instance, the existence of

liberalism society itself is an example of the situation Rawls stated. Liberalism, though

not being the most just and equal form of society, is still better than many other forms of

societies to many philosophers. Thus, the injustice happening in liberalism society would

be necessary because if we do not follow liberalism, to those philosophers, there may be

even more injustice to happen. However, the very idea of justice seems to be very

metaphysical idea because it is hard to say what is just and what is not. Justice is more

like a combination of all the right and wrongs people consider of in social institutions.

However, as Rawls argued, his theory of justice is not meant to provide the definitive

metaphysical account for justice but rather the portion of justice that could be used to the

subject of political justice. This leads to a question: what is the subject of justice, for

Rawls?

  According to Rawls, "the primary subject of justice is the basic structure of

society, or more exactly, the way in which the major social institutions distribute

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[7] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P4

fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social

cooperation."[8] Here John Rawls listed major social institutions as the

> political institutions… and the principal economic and social arrangements. For instance, the basic structure of society would include arrangements such as the legal protection of freedom of thought and liberty of conscience, competitive markets, private property in the means of production and the monogamous family[9].

According to Rawls, in his article "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical," the

basic structure is the subject-matter of a political conception of justice. Rawls writes,

> While a political conception of justice is, of course, a moral conception, it is a moral conception worked out for a specific kind of subject, namely, for political, social, and economic institutions. [10]

The Basic Structure, to Rawls, is the first subject of justice. However, why is basic

structure the first and primary subject of justice?

Basic structures, as John Rawls later explained in his Justice as Fairness: Political

not Metaphysical and Political Liberalism, "liberty and equality are best realized in the

basic structure of society."[11] Because of the limit Rawls put on his theory of justice, as it

is a political theory applied only to contemporary democratic society, basic structure

could make the most liberty and equality among all the social theories. Similar opinion

could also be seen in A Theory of Justice, as Rawls argued that "The basic structure is the

primary subject of justice because its effects are so profound and present from the

start."[12] He explained later as the basic structure contains all the different social positions

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[8] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P7

[9] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P8

[10] Rawls, John. "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical." Philosophy & Public Affairs 14.3 (1985): 223-51. P225

[11] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P18

[12] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P18

that men are born into, thus, gives men different expectations of life determined, in part,

by the political system as well as by economic and social circumstances. Basic Structure,

according to Rawls, defined the starting point for all human beings in a contemporary

society and at the same time in a certain level help define their life goals as well.

> Basic structures are important because they give way to the pervasive and
> predetermined inequality among human beings and these notions of inequality
> could not be turned against by human beings because they have been determined
> even prior to the birth of a human being.[13]

For instance, it is much harder for a child in a poor family to be treated as well as a rich

boy economically; it is also impractical to imagine a minority race could compete a

majority race in the political field of the society. Thus, Rawls argued that "it is these

inequalities, presumably inevitable in the basic structure of any society, to which the

principles of social justice must in the first instance apply."[14] Not only are the basic

structures important to Rawls because of the inequalities they provide to all different

forms of societies and thus make the basic structures the primary source of some of the

most fundamental social problems, the problems lying within the basic structure of

society give Rawls a good starting point and idea on how to solve these problems. As he

then argued in A Theory of Justice,

> "These principles, then regulate the choice of a political constitution and the main
> elements of the economic and social system. The justice of a social scheme
> depends essentially on how fundamental rights and duties are assigned and on the
> economic opportunities and social conditions in the various sectors of society."[15]

From this point of view, Rawls introduced the notion of Justice as Fairness. Rawls' idea

of fairness here, according to himself, is that "All social values-liberty and opportunity,

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[13] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P61
[14] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P62
[15] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P64

income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect ----are to be distributed equally unless

an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone-s advantage"[16]. In

other words, fairness, to Rawls, is a equal distribution to all the social goods while if

unequal distribution would be more beneficial to all the participants in the distribution.

> According to Rawls,

> "the guiding idea is that the principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the object of the original agreement. They are the principles that are free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association. These principles are to regulate all further agreements; they specify the kinds of social cooperation that can be entered into and the forms of government that can be established."[17]

This kind of description, to Rawls, is to describe the subject which justice as fairness

would apply to. Justice as Fairness, to Rawls, is a kind of theory that would apply to the

basic structure of society. Thus, it is obvious that justice as fairness is used to fight

against those predetermined inequalities and thus makes it most important among all the

principles that will be discussed in latter discussion. Just as the basic structures of society

is the primary subject of Rawls' theories, justice as fairness could be considered as the

origin of all his solutions because justice as fairness could regulate all further agreements

and all the following principles have to be thought under the limits and restrictions

provided by justice as fairness.

As Rawls argued in the "Main Idea" section of **A Theory of Justice**, his theory

was not meant to answer the metaphysical questions people may have about the reasons

people form societies but rather under what basic non-metaphysical principles people

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[16] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P64
[17] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P61

could find the most of justice and the least of unjust within social institutions. Just as what discussed before, because of the nature of the basic structures of a society, metaphysical discussions may not be able to help form a solid basic principle of social institutions that could evade the inequalities created by the basic structures. In such case, his theories should be concise and non-metaphysical, as Rawls held that one can arrive at legitimate principles of justice without invoking or presupposing any inherently controversial metaphysical principles.

However, as Rawls argued in the beginning of A **Theory of Justice**, some of the most fundamental inequalities exist because of the basic structures of a society. Yet he wishes to establish a principle that could achieve justice from the basic structure of society. If achieved, Rawls would be able to find the most fundamental way of solving the problems regarding the distribution of social goods and thus provide people with the proper environment so that they could pursue justice over goodness. Thus, Rawls would need a solid starting point that could help him reach that state. To be able to do so, Rawls introduced this idea of Original Position. Original Position, according to Rawls, corresponds to the state of nature in the traditional theory of the social contract. In Traditional theories of social institutions, a state of nature, which was firstly argued by Hobbes, was used to explain the reason why people would want to form societies. In the state of nature, people would find no security in such state and wanted to form society so that they could seek help from one another and protect themselves from the horror of the natural insecurity. The similarity between Original Position and state of nature is that they both required a non-existence of government in the first place, though in Rawls' Original Position, the non-existence of government is only imaginary. Rawls' Original

Position, unlike the state of nature, did not intend to create an environment of insecurity but only to make sure that people would know nothing about the arbitrary facts that would affect their decisions regarding social theories. As Rawls argued, this original position is not thought of as an actual historical state of affairs, nor could it be a historical state of affairs. Rawls argued that this Original Position is a purely hypothetical situation characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice. The Original Position, as Rawls introduced, is a situation in which "no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune nor the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like."[18] From here Rawls further states, "I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities."[19] This Original Position, as Rawls described, is a kind of situation that people would know nothing about the meaning behind their social positions. People have no knowledge on the subject of the structure of society, the main stream culture, or the definition of good and bad in such state of mind. Thus, there's no way people could know if their social position is in advantage or disadvantage before they could make a decision. Under such circumstances, the predetermined social status could no longer affect the choices people make in the least extend. Because of the uncertainty to the social situation people live in, it is unlikely that people would risk raising up new social policies that could harm any social classes because these social policies may in fact endanger their own profit. However, why is the Original Position so important to Rawls in his Theories of Justice?

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[18] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P18
[19] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P18

As Rawls argued, he would like people to be able to think in the way "which insures that the fundamental agreements reached in it are fair."[20] Here is where Rawls raised this definition of Original Position. According to Rawls, the conditions that constitute the original position were meant to

> "establish that taken together they impose significant bounds on acceptable principles of justice. The ideal outcome would be that these conditions determine a unique set of principles; but I shall be satisfied if they suffice to rank the main traditional conceptions of social justice."[21]

Here because of the innate flaws of the current basic structures of societies, the presupposed good could not solve the social problems existed in contemporary society based on the observations Rawls made. In other words, Rawls described a kind of social principle that could reach some level of justice. However, Rawls expected more in Original Position. Rawls wanted the societies to reach the most of justice. To Rawls, most other forms of societies, could not be successful because of the lack of security to justice as fairness and thus people would not be in an actual equal state with one another. Since Rawls considered justice as fairness being the best option for the solution to the basic structures of societies, Rawls argued that it is important that people need to reach a certain level of fairness from the starting point of thinking. In other words, Rawls would like to eliminate as much inequality brought by the different social positions and the different attitudes people have toward all the different social positions. To achieve such an outcome, Rawls argued that

> "it is reasonable and generally acceptable that no one should be advantaged or disadvantaged by natural fortune or social circumstances in the choice of

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[20] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P17
[21] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P18

principles. It also seems widely agreed that it should be impossible to tailor principles to the circumstances of one's own case."[22]

Rawls did not want the predetermined social positions to determine anything more than the names to distinguish people into different kinds. The meanings behind the social positions should not be able to define any predetermined advantage or desirable attributes. In other words, though people may have different social positions, people should not favor one social position rather than the other or give unfair advantages or disadvantages in political, economic, or social institutions. Being in a minority group, for example, in a society and being in a majority group in a society should not give predetermined, and therefore unfair, advantages or disadvantages in a society. However, here Rawls also admitted that such basic principle is weak in its own form because of all the facets it needs to protect. Though Rawls had already argued that under the principle of Original Position, people need to forget about all the predetermined advantages or disadvantages different social positions would provide, it is natural that people would want to protect the social positions they themselves are in. By protecting their own social positions and provide ideas that would in favor of their own social positions, people could still guarantee their own profits gained from the society. Thus, only thinking under Original Position is not enough for Rawls.

How, then, could one achieve such state of mind so that he or she would choose not in favor of his own interests and circumstances but rather the option that is fair for all persons? To answer this question, Rawls developed the idea of the "veil of ignorance". As John Rawls mentioned when he firstly introduced the veil of ignorance, "the idea of

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[22] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P18

the original position is to set up a fair procedure so that any principles agreed to will be just."[23] As Rawls also found out, only by pretending not knowing the predetermined social advantages or disadvantages any certain social positions could provide could not establish the highest level of justice in a society. In order to establish the highest level of justice and the greatest extend of fairness, people need to not only forget about the advantages of different social positions, but also their own position in the whole social structures. As what Rawls mentioned in **A Theory of Justice**, "(the veil of ignorance) ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances."[24] This idea of no one being advantage or disadvantage by natural chance or social circumstances is crucial to his idea of fairness and to his view of the Original Position. Here Rawls meant to establish the veil of ignorance because that he believes under the frame of veil of ignorance and the Original Position, people could in their best eliminate the predetermined advantage or disadvantage provided by the basic structure of societies and could thus establish a social principle that is truly fair and just. Also, to be able to do so, John Rawls argued that "we must nullify the effect of specific contingencies which put men at odds and tempt them to exploit social and natural circumstances to their own advantage."[25] Thus, a veil of ignorance would be needed. John Rawls explained this procedure as such:" They do not know how the various alternatives will affect their own particular case and they are obliged to evaluate principles solely on the basis of general considerations,"[26] then, according to John Rawls, "the parties do not know certain kinds

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[23] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P136
[24] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P137
[25] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P137
[26] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P137

of particular facts. First of all, no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status; nor does he know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence and strength, and the like."[27] From this point of view, John Rawls proceeded, "Nor does anyone know his conception of the good, the particulars of his rational plan of life, or even or liability to optimism or pessimism."[28] Not only does John Rawls limit the range of knowledge a single person could acquire, but also the range of knowledge people could acquire in social life: "More than this, I assume that the parties do not know the particular circumstances of their own society. That is, they do not know its economic or political situation, or the level of civilization and culture it has been able to achieve."[29] People under such situation would not even know what generation they belong. Rawls explained later that these restrictions are to make the presupposition of original position to be as fair as possible.

With this basic presupposition being settled, Rawls introduced the important principles that Rawls believed will be chosen in the original position. There are two important principles of justice that Rawls aims to establish. In **A Theory of Justice**, he stated that "First, each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others."[30] And "Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all."[31] These two principles are important because they are applied primarily to the basic structure of

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[27] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P137
[28] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P137
[29] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P137
[30] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P60
[31] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P60

society. These two principles are to govern the basic rights citizens would be able to gain from the whole society. Not only do these two principles define the basic rights people should have in a society, Rawls argued that under these two principles people should acquire a fair share of these basic social goods from the whole society.

Basic social goods, which could also be called "primary goods", are an important component in Rawls' social theories. To Rawls, primary goods are the goods that people would try to achieve under no matter what kind of place they are in in a society. People would try to get more the primary social goods rather than less in a same society and this pursuit for more primary social goods is concerned same to all the citizens within a society.

Speak back to the two principles of justice, the first principle, as Rawls argued, focused on the basic social good of liberty while the second principle focused on the fair distribution of the basic social goods of income, wealth, and opportunity. These rights and liberties, according to John Rawls, are rather political and non-metaphysical. For instance,

> "the basic liberties of citizens are political liberty(the right to vote and to be eligible for public office) together with freedom of speech and assembly; liberty of conscience and freedom of thought; freedom of the person along with the right to hold property; and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure as defined by the concept of the rule of law."[32]

These definitions, as Rawls pointed out, are all non-metaphysical definitions and do not require metaphysical discussions to clarify. As what Rawls argued later, these two

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[32] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P61

principles are distinct from one another and are arranged in a serial order. The two

principles, as Rawls pointed out,

> "presuppose that the social structure can be divided into two more or less distinct parts, the first principle applying to the one, the second applying to the other. They distinguish between those aspects of the social system that define and secure the equal liberties of citizenship and those that specify and establish social and economic inequalities".[33]

By establishing such two basic principles of justice as fairness, Rawls divided the social

institutions into different parts that each hold different duties regarding the liberty and

equality of citizens living in such societies. Rawls then introduced the required duties

each section of social institutions must have so that the equality of citizens could be

achieved. According to Rawls, the first principle requires the social institution could

> "secure the basic political liberty together with freedom of speech and assembly; liberty of conscience and freedom of thought; freedom of the person along with the right to hold property; and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure as defined by the concept of the rule of law".[34]

These rights, as Rawls argued, are the basic liberties any citizens should have and should

be secured in a society so that the first principle could be achieved. Also, in this first

principle, Rawls emphasized on the equality between these points he mentioned in the

principle. Rawls argued that liberty and freedom of all human beings the second principle

applies to the distribution of income and wealth. Here Rawls mentioned that unlike the

first principle, according to which equality among all the basic liberties must be met, the

distribution of wealth and income need not be equal. However, if not equal, then this way

of distributing wealth and income must be in everyone's favor and could bring more

benefit to everyone compared to the equal distribution of wealth and income. Here Rawls

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[33] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P61
[34] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P61

also argued that positions of authority and offices of command must be open to everyone in the society. This way power would not be distributed in an unequal state while the ones who do not have the right to gain access to position of authority could not be in advantage from any perspective.

As Rawls then argued, these two principles also are established in a serial order. Rawls explained in A Theory of Justice that "this ordering means that a departure from the institutions of equal liberty required by the first principle cannot be justified by, or compensated for, by greater social and economic advantages."[35] Rawls' view is that, under the framework of the original position, people would not sacrifice their basic rights in liberties in exchange for improvements in wealth, income, or opportunity. The second principle, which emphasizes wealth and income, should not be put before equality of basic liberal rights and thus should only be pursued after the basic liberal rights are achieved. Here, just as Rawls emphasized in the beginning of **A Theory of Justice**, people would not give away liberty just because by doing so the welfare of the whole society could be increased. (John Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P3) This correspondence to the importance of justice and the realization of the importance of basic liberal rights proves that justice as fairness, accompanied with the two principles of social justice, are the core elements of Rawls' theory of justice. As what could be seen in Rawls' A Theory of Justice, the two principles, as Rawls explained later, have become the main targets of his examination to all social institutions. Also, by doing so, Rawls argued that the matter

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[35] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P61

of priorities which, in this case refers to Rawls' conception of justice over goodness, is recognized, and an effort made to find principles to deal with it.

Also, here we see once more how Rawls considers the relationship between people and societies. Here Rawls chose not to discuss anything that involves the basic definition of human beings such as what human beings inherently are, or what human beings are considered as not in society as a single person. Human beings, due to John Rawls limiting to his own theory as a social political theory, should only be considered as social beings, which in another word, citizens. The nature of human beings metaphysically to Rawls, just as he argued in the first part of A Theory of Justice,

Here John Rawls introduced another main definition of his theory: the definition of citizens. According to John Rawls, citizens, other than the common characteristics of humanities, which are inherently self-interested.[36] After defining the role of citizens in a society, John Rawls started to state how citizens in a society could reach his political justice.

First thing to be clear is that John Rawls does not believe himself to be in any defined group of philosophers, neither should his theories be put under any categories other than his own theory. Though Rawls admitted that his theories are developed from the Kantian conception regarding human beings and social institutions, Rawls' theories developed from Kantian conceptions and to Rawls have prevailed Kant's notions. Also, as Kant's notion of human beings are still mostly metaphysical, Rawls argued that his own theories are not metaphysical in most perspective. To Rawls, metaphysical

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[36] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P395

discussions are to be avoided and as Rawls argued, his theories or justice are purely political and practical. These theories are not meant to address what human beings are, but rather, what should people do as citizens in a society despite their innate metaphysical characteristics. Also, as Rawls' supporters argued, Rawls's theories are to be called as liberalism, which should be distinguished from the prior liberalism theories created and developed by philosophers such as Locke, Kant and so on. Here neo-liberalism does not mean the strict hierarchy of private sector over government, but rather a tendency of viewing government more as assistance rather than guidance of citizens within a society. To Rawls, his theory is limited to practical political usage, which means that he would not try to answer the metaphysical facet of his theories but rather focus only on the practical use of his theories. His supporters, Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift argue. in "Rawls and Communitarianism," that John Rawls held a rather complicated theory of social justice that is more comprehensive when compared to other traditional liberalists. Contrary to the views of most communitarian philosophers, Rawls, according to Mulhall and Swift, did not fully reject communitarian ideas but rather tried to make the communitarian theories better by using liberalism theories to modify and adjust those theories. Mulhall and Swift called John Rawls' theories "Neo-liberalism" in order to make a contrast to the traditional liberalism point of view or communitarianism ideology. According to Mulhall and Swift, Rawls, though disagreed with the opinion that he modified his theories based on objections, especially communitarianism ideas, admitted that he modified some of his earlier ideas and those modifications look like they were based on communitarianism ideas. However, though his supporters do believe that there are certain changes John Rawls did in respond to the critiques given from

communitarianism philosophers, John Rawls he himself refused to admit so and announced in public that all the changes happened between A Theory of Justice and Political Liberalism should not be connected to the charges communitarianism philosophers given.

Communitarianism refers to a kind of acritical reaction to the theories Rawls argued about. As the philosophers would like to argue against Rawls' theories and are thus called as communitarianism by Rawls. This kind of philosophers would most likely argue for a certain goodness within the contemporary society.

There are of course some changes regarding Rawls theories of social construction and social function between those two main pieces of work, **A Theory of Justice** and **Political Liberalism**. For instance, in earlier period Rawls, though not clearly expressed, implied a kind of universal rational choice which leads to an implication to the rationality of human beings. This way of thinking, according to Rawls, could be understood as an attempt on getting rid of the metaphysical background of all civilizations and discover something in common that should not be related to metaphysics. Since most civilizations were created based on a certain metaphysical background, it would prove that metaphysics could be abandoned if he could find out something in common that all societies had and not related to metaphysical ideologies. Such theory could be found in Rawls' A Theory of Justice around P450. However, in his later pieces of work, John Rawls rather clearly limited his theory into "a political account on contemporary liberal society"[37] (**Political Liberalism**) alone. Here it is obvious that John Rawls changed

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[37] Rawls, John. Political Liberalism. Expanded ed. New York: Columbia UP, 2005. Columbia Classics in Philosophy. P10

greatly regarding his theory on the foundation of societies and his point of view regarding the involvement of metaphysics in political philosophy could also be considered changed. Yet, John Rawls, in his Political Liberalism, still rejected the idea that metaphysics should be taken into account. However, John Rawls did not try to directly reject metaphysics anymore but rather tried to evade most of the questions that would lead to metaphysical discussions.

The first kind of attempt Rawls made to evade metaphysics is to redefine human beings. In most attempts, what consists a human being greatly influenced the formation of social construction theories because after all, a society is made up by human beings. Thus, if a society could not even fit some of the characteristics that human beings have, how could such society be admitted in the first place? This kind of question, to John Rawls, also exists. However, unlike most philosophers who tried to answer such question from metaphysical perspective, John Rawls made a rather daring attempt by limiting the definition of human being to a very non-metaphysical definition. As Rawls argued in his **A Theory of Justice**, his theory was a solely political social theory. Thus, he would not need to discuss the difference between human beings and citizens but rather focus only on the social side of human beings. Thus, we could avoid the metaphysical discussion about the difference between human beings and citizens. According to Rawls in his **A Theory of Justice**, citizens are innately self-interested and autonomous. Here autonomous means that citizens are to be self-sufficient beings that they could define the goodness for their own lives on their own.[38] All citizens, under Rawls' theories, may have different ideas regarding what is good for their own lives and would thus have

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[38] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P 513

different plans to their lives based on the goodness they seek. This might seem to be a

contradiction to John Rawls' earlier theory that societies being a scheme of social

cooperation, as people may not be seeking a similar goal in a society and thus would not

need to cooperate with each other. This way of thinking could be considered came from

Kant, who firstly argued that the final stage of human beings is to recognize oneself as

autonomous and rely not on the others. However, does the autonomy means the same for

John Rawls and Kant should not be concluded too soon because John Rawls' theories are

much less metaphysical and there are more realistic meanings rather than metaphysical

meanings when John Rawls used the word "autonomy". These two definitions are well-

defined and involved not so much in metaphysical ideologies. As Rawls argued, all

human beings expect what is good for them to be more rather than to be less while human

beings could be free on their own and do not necessarily need the others to accomplish

most of the jobs they need to do to be able to survive.[39] To Rawls, the liberalism he seeks

is nothing more than the ability of individuals to control their own plans of life. Unlike

Kant, who gave autonomy much more credit and spent much more time on such topic, as

discussed before, Rawls' theory regarding autonomy is a practical theory and thus argues

for nothing more than a neutral government in which citizens are free to choose

whichever plan they would like for their lives. The main reason Rawls called this way of

life "autonomy" is because of the lack of restraint from government or any predetermined

goodness for citizens in a society. In other words, the autonomy Rawls seeks focuses

more on the government rather than the individuals themselves. Only if the governments

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[39] Rawls, John. Political Liberalism. Expanded ed. New York: Columbia UP, 2005. Columbia Classics in Philosophy.P35

do not try to push citizens into a certain form of good life could citizens under such government be truly autonomy.

Yet, Rawls believed that human beings, despite their characteristics as self-interested and autonomous, have some other important characteristics that makes the formation of societies possible. Rawls argued that rationality being one most important properties people should have when being considered under his theory of justice. Rationality here is used, as Rawls later explained, to be able to let people choose the best option that could benefit them under the veil of ignorance and original position. As what Rawls argued, "I postulate that they accept the account of the good touched upon in the preceding chapter: they assume that they would prefer more primary social goods rather than less."[40] The reason people would only want to maximize the amount of primary social goods in the Original Position is because that under the veil of ignorance, "while they (people) know that they have some rational plan of life, they do not know the details of this plan, the particular ends and interests which it is calculated to promote."[41] Rawls here argued that under the veil of ignorance, anything other than the primary social goods lost their meaning because nothing other than primary social goods could be as beneficial to all citizens as the primary social goods. Thus, the only reliable things for people to pursue are the primary social goods and people would want more rather than less of them under the two principles of justice. Rawls admitted that this level of rationality could only be called as a "thin level of definition of rationality". However, such level of rationality, for Rawls, is enough for him to make sure that people would make rational choices when

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[40] Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard UP, 1971. P20
[41] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P74

in society and under the veil of ignorance. As far as Rawls concerned, under the veil of

ignorance, people have face with the problem of rational choice under uncertainty and

that the solution to that problem is to maximize one's minimum outcome. People are not

concerned to maximize their outcomes overall but only to ensure that their worst outcome

would better than the worse outcome that could get under a basic structure organized

under different principles of justice.

Another important property people have is reasonableness. Reasonable persons,

as Rawls argued,

> "are not moved by the general good as such but desire for its own sake a social
> world in which they, as free and equal, can cooperate with others on terms all can
> accept. They insist that reciprocity should hold within that world so that each
> benefits along with others." [42]

One another important characteristic of reasonable citizens is the importance of fairness,

or in other words, the sense of justice. As Rawls argued, "Reasonable citizens have the

capacity to abide by fair terms of cooperation, even at the expense of their own interests,

provided that others are also willing to do so. In justice as fairness, Rawls calls this

reasonableness the capacity for a *sense of justice*."[43] Here Rawls stated that reasonable

citizens would realize the importance of justice as fairness and would even would like to

sacrifice their own interest in order to maintain the fair terms of cooperation. On the other

hand, Rawls explained that unreasonable people would "violate such terms as suits their

interests when circumstances allow."[44] Combining these two definitions, Rawls argued

that citizens who follow the two principles of justice would agree with the idea of

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[42] Rawls, John. Political Liberalism. Expanded ed. New York: Columbia UP, 2005. Columbia Classics in Philosophy.P48
[43] Rawls, Political Liberalism, P51
[44] Rawls, Political Liberalism, P51

Rationality and Reasonability. Rational beings would make rational choices regarding social principles so that everyone would benefit from such principles while reasonable beings would honor these principles along with taking the responsibilities that are connected to these principles even if some of these rules may not be benefitting themselves in the greatest extend for a short period.[45] Rawls' explanation to reasonable also implied the reason why he believed under such societies people are not likely to commit crimes because reasonable agents would not choose to violate the cooperative schemes and would choose to benefit everyone together but not benefit oneself alone.

Also, as Rawls explained, there's another important facet of the definition of human being, which is that human beings are after all citizens. This definition was raised up ~~in~~ later in **A Theory of Justice** and **Political Liberalism**. Here it seems like there's a contradiction between this part of the being of human beings and the first part of the definition of human beings. Why would human beings become citizens if human beings could survive even without other people? To John Rawls, the answer is quite simple: human beings require others because it fits the first principle of human being, which is that people would always want what's good for them more rather than less. To be able to do so, people would naturally form society because it would not only benefit the others but also benefit oneself. However, here comes another question: If human beings want what's good for them more but rather than less and human beings are quite self-sufficient, why would human beings corporate with the others but not take what's good for themselves from the others in the first place? To John Rawls, it is because that John Rawls set the cooperation between human beings as the presupposition of his social

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[45] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P52

construction theories and all these definitions regarding human beings are defined after human beings are considered as citizens. Thus, it was not because of the nature of human beings that human beings form societies, but rather human beings discover their being in societies. In other words, John Rawls did not want to establish something regarding the metaphysical definition of human beings as individuals, but rather as Rawls explained, "a practical social theory that could be applied to contemporary liberal societies." [46]

Also, according to Rawls, one important feature of human being is that the people he was talking about are reasonable and rational citizens living in a contemporary liberal society. Under such category, people would tend not to use violence but rather civilized weapons such as negotiation or discussion to solve problems or gain profits. As Rawls argued, "The idea that citizens are reasonable is familiar from political liberalism. Reasonable citizens have the capacity to abide by fair terms of cooperation, even at the expense of their own interests, provided that others are also willing to do so."[47] By defining citizens as reasonable beings, Rawls argued that citizens would not try to violate others' properties because they not only value the primary social goods but see justice as fairness even more important than their personal gain or loss. This limit was not seen in the beginning of **A Theory of Justice** but became rather important later in his **Political Liberalism**. As Rawls argued in **Political Liberalism**, even his definition of "good" is connected to this rationality of citizens. Being rational and civilized is very important to John Rawls because part of his basic background of social construction is democratic thought. Under such frame of mind, citizens are free equal persons. Thus, the reason for

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[46] Rawls, Political Liberalism, P7
[47] Rawls. Political Liberalism, P50

people being free and equal become important. Most philosophers used metaphysical definitions to explain these two terms. However, John Rawls could not do so because he had abandoned metaphysics in his ideology in the first place. Thus, he had to go from another perspective, which is that from moral powers and the powers of reason. Moral power aside, the powers of reason consist judgement, thoughts, and inference connected with these powers. Here rationality and reasonable citizens are important because only these citizens could use their power of deliberation in the way Rawls would like to see.

Also, Rawls, in order to explain why his theory of societies could work, introduced a term called Overlapping Consensus. According to Rawls, Overlapping Consensus is a rather complicated theory which could help people understand why people would still choose to live in a same society even after the veil of ignorance is removed. In other words, Overlapping Consensus is used to explain why under the principles of justice and after constructing social principles under the veil of ignorance, even under different, or even contradicting moral or political opinions people would still choose to live in a same society. Rawls argued that, in Overlapping Consensus, people are motivated by the "thin level of rational choice" that though they may have different reasons to do certain things, they all agree that such behaviors would be beneficial to all citizens in the society and would not choose to violate the rules.[48] For instance, the reason for a Muslim believer and a Hinduism believer to do a same thing is different from one another, yet they both recognize this behavior as not violating their moral beliefs while being the most beneficial for others to do the same. Thus, they would not reject to do this though their reason for doing this same thing may be different. On the other hand, their

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[48] Rawls, Political Liberalism, P144

religious beliefs may lead them to a same choice because after rational thinking, this choice would be in the best interest for both parties though the process of thinking may be different. In other words, under Rawls' theories, people need only to agree on same choices or behaviors but not all the moral reasonings behind the choices or behaviors. To Rawls, Overlapping Consensus is important because only under this frame of mind would one be able to achieve the Original Position. This point of view is much like a middle stage between the veil of ignorance and the Original Position. By achieving overlapping consensus, people would be able to see only from the practices themselves but not the metaphysical backgrounds which supports the practices. Thus, Original Position could be achieved. Overlapping Consensus, as Rawls stated in Political Liberalism, "citizens are members of various associations into which, in many cases, they are born, and from which they usually, though not always, acquire their comprehensive doctrines."[49] Overlapping Consensus is a simplification to the numerous doctrines people may hold independently/ It would also be easier for Rawls to make social rules as he does not need to find a common theory that would apply to all needs people have. Instead, Rawls would only need to find a common place where all the different social doctrines overlap, and that overlapping place would be enough for citizens to live together and cooperate with each other.

The moral powers, which Rawls mentioned in Political Liberalism, are harder to explain because they consist something very metaphysical: A capacity for a sense of justice and for a conception of the good. However, Rawls tried his best to distinguish these terms without stepping into metaphysical realm. To Rawls, a capacity for a sense of

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[49] Rawls, Political Liberalism, P144

justice is the capacity to understand, to apply, and to act from the public conception of justice which characterizes the fair terms of social cooperation. Also, in a sense of justice, Rawls put also the willingness, if not the desire, to act in relation to others on terms that they also can publicly endorse. Here we could see how Rawls attempted to evade metaphysical terms yet tries to explain the questionable realms his theories may contain. Because of this sense of justice, especially because of the willingness of following rules that others would also endorse, people are not likely going to commit crimes in order to get what is good for them because the others would not endorse such behaviors and oneself would not enjoy such behaviors even he himself became the victim of a crime. Another part that is important is the conception of the good, John Rawls defined it as the capacity to form, to revise and rationally to pursue a conception of one's rational advantage or good[50]. Here we could see once more how important rational is to John Rawls' theories. Though in Rawls' theories, moral powers do not seem to be metaphysical, to me, it should be considered otherwise. As Rawls pointed out, what he believed as metaphysical would inevitably contain arguments regarding the goodness of human beings. However, to Rawls, his justice as fairness have overcome this topic and by putting justice prior to goodness, which would mean to achieve an equal distribution to primary social goods before making citizens achieving a certain form of good life, Rawls believed that the moral power under his definition should also be non-metaphysical. However, to me, even if one points out that the only virtue for human being is freedom, this theory is no less a metaphysical theory as this theory still push people toward a certain direction, which is to choose his or her own goal of life

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[50] Rawls, Political Liberalism, P52

There is one more way of explaining this cooperation instead of hurting each other: the level of citizens' feeling about safety of their social status and social hierarchy in John Rawls' theories of social construction. Thus, one most important theory: The Veil of Ignorance, was provided by John Rawls. The Veil of Ignorance was introduced in **A Theory of Justice** and was one most important feature in that book. This theory, as we could see, influenced greatly on John Rawls and could be seen as a central connection to almost all his theories. This theory is also one most attacked theory because it shows the key to John Rawls' ideologies while also showed people where the weak points of John Rawls' theories, if any, may exist. This theory requires people to ignore all about their prior social hierarchy or any of their identities that could bring them advantages or disadvantages in the society.[51] Under such circumstances, people would not know if they are in the advantage group or disadvantage group. Thus, it become less likely that they would make judgements in favor of any specific group but rather focus on the balance between different groups so that everyone would not lose too much to other groups. Here another definition was introduced: Original position. Original position could be seen as the starting point and presupposition of The Veil of Ignorance. Original Position is not like a state of nature which people knew nothing about society and human beings; rather, people under Original Position have some basic ideas regarding the society they live in.[52] However, people could not know about themselves but only the whole picture of society. From here people could start to build a society, according to John Rawls, in his A Theory of Justice, that is fair and just.

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[51] Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard UP, 1971. P137
[52] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, P20

Also, to John Rawls, citizens in a society would need some primary social goods: rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, and income and wealth. These three dimensions define most resources a democratic society would need to make its citizens satisfied. Rights and liberties, according to John Rawls in **A Theory of Justice** and **Political Liberalism**, is the basic rights such as freedom, equality and so on. Opportunities are the equal opportunities to pursuit the basic social goods such as wealth, income and power while on the same time, as Rawls argued in the two principles of justice: the pursuit of opportunities should not exceed the limit of having the environment of an equal level of basic political liberties; last but not least, there are basic social goods that all people would want more than less, which one most important part is income and wealth. These three dimensions are important to John Rawls because these definitions help him construct a stable society without greatly involve in metaphysical discussions. The only questions people may ask about are freedom and equality, which helped construct any form of democratic society. Freedom and Equality, as what John Rawls argued in both of his main pieces of work, are the foundation of democratic society. Thus, he would not need to explain such presupposition because his theories are built upon such democratic background, but he would not need to investigate on them. This no need for further investigation is caused by John Rawls later realization to his theories. In his book **Political Liberalism**, John Rawls argued that his theories were meant to serve as "applied theories regarding political construction in a contemporary democratic society".[53] His theory was not focused on why a society should be like that but rather how one could improve the quality of a society under a certain circumstance. It is not a

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[53] Rawls, John. Political Liberalism. Expanded ed. New York: Columbia UP, 2005. Columbia Classics in Philosophy. P7

philosophical investigation but a guideline for people who would like to develop a fairer society under democratic background.

Rawls' theories, though having a great number of supporters, have to face some direct critiques at the same time. To some philosophers, especially the communitarian philosophers, what Rawls argued in his theories could not hold and needed to be corrected. In the next part of this work, I would introduce two philosophers, Michael Sandel and Alasdair MacIntyre. These two philosophers, each provided a strong objections to Rawls' theory of justice from different perspectives. Though both philosophers chose to reject Rawls' theories, their focus of flaw was not the same. To Sandel, Rawls' theories is wanting in its own regarding the evasion of metaphysical discussions, especially in Rawls' theories of human beings, or in Sandel's choice of words "subject of desires". To MacIntyre, on the other hand, Rawls' mistakes were not caused by some mistaken ideologies in his own theories regarding the need of metaphysical discussions but rather wrong because of a wrong chain of logic which Rawls inherited from his predecessors. Rawls' theories, according to MacIntyre, is rather an inevitable outcome for the mistakes that lie within the foundation of modern political philosophy and thus could be seen more like an example of how these fundamental mistakes would damage philosophical thinking rather than a mere wrong form of philosophical thinking.

Part II—Sandel and MacIntyre

Sandel:

I shall start by examining Sandel's arguments against Rawls' theories, especially his rejection of Rawls understanding of Human Beings. As Sandel argued in his **Liberalism and the Limits of Justic**e, "it is this liberalism that I propose to challenge."[54] This liberalism, according to Sandel, is the form of liberal social theory Rawls argued for in both A Theory of Justice and Political Liberalism. Also, later Sandel stated that "The limits I have in mid are not practical but conceptual. My point is not that justice, however noble in principle, is unlikely ever fully to be realized in practice, but rather that the limits reside in the ideal itself."[55] What Sandel argued here is that there's something fundamentally wrong about this "deontological liberalism." According to Sandel, what he meant by "deontological liberalism" is a very specific form of liberalism and which he believed was the form of liberalism that John Rawls offered in both **A Theory of Justice** and **Political Liberalism**. To Sandel, "'Deontological liberalism' is above all a theory about justice, and in particular about the primacy of justice among moral and political ideals."[56] Sandel then argued that "what justifies these regulative principles above all is not that they maximize the social welfare or otherwise promote the good, but rather that they conform to the concept of right, a moral category given prior to the good and independent of it."[57] Here what Sandel meant to argue is that deontological liberalism is a theory that insists on the primacy of justice, in other words a theory that emphasizes the importance of justice without any conditions. What Sandel meant is that under such principles, there's no presupposed conception of the good or primary social principles

[54] Sandel, Michael J. Liberalism and the Limits of Justice. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge UP, 1982. P1
[55] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P1
[56] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P1
[57] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P1

which determine the goodness of citizens in a society. Thus, the citizens in such societies are free to decide for themselves what should be pursued as their life goals. These philosophical commitments could all be found out in Rawls' **A Theory of Justice** and **Political Liberalism**, where Rawls continuously emphasized the importance of free choice of the citizens and the importance of justice.

In Sandel's point of view, Rawls' theory of justice contains two especially important elements: the object of desire and the subject of desire. The object of desire, according to Sandel, refers to the primary social goods Rawls pointed out, which in other words, what goodness is to Rawls or what individuals want for themselves. Subject of desire, on the other hand, targets the human beings, or citizens themselves. In other words, the distinction lies between what people want(object of desire) and what people are in their nature(subject of desire). To Sandel, what Rawls did not explain clearly is not the object of desire but rather the subject of desire. What subject of desire refers to; how could subject of desire be unpacked; and how one could achieve the ideal subject of desire as Rawls described are all problematic to Sandel.

Sandel, in the first part of his book, pointed out one possible flaw that lies within this deontological liberalism. As he stated in the introduction of Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, he understood the liberalism Rawls stood for as "society, being composed of a plurality of persons, is best arranged when it is governed by principles that do not themselves presuppose any particular conception of the good."[58] And later Sandel argued that "I shall argue for the limits of justice, and, by implication, for the limits of

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[58] Sandel, Liberalism and the limits of justice, P1

liberalism as well. The limits I have in mind are not practical but conceptual."[59] To be specific, Sandel targeted the form of liberalism people may find in John Rawls' theories. This flaw, as Sandel also pointed out, is not because of some factual mistake but rather conceptual mistake. Here, Sandel firstly pointed out the definition of subject of desire and a most fundamental controversial question lies within the definition of subject of desire: What subject of desire refers to. As Sandel argued, "If certain 'big questions' of philosophy and psychology are beside the point of deontological liberalism, it is only because it locates its controversy elsewhere."[60] Sandel here is saying that even if Rawls avoids controversial, or metaphysical claims about the object of desire, he cannot at the same time avoid such claims about the subject of desire. Sandel seemed to argue that liberalism could not evade metaphysical questions eventually. Even though Rawls intended to evade the metaphysical discussions regarding citizens in a society, there's always a certain perspective could not be evaded. Just as what Sandel pointed out later, the controversy could be that "it concerns not the object of human desires but the subject of desire, and how this subject is constituted."[61] This, as discussed above, is the place where the other controversy locates to Sandel. Here what Sandel argued is that John Rawls could not escape metaphysical philosophy because by escaping certain metaphysical problems, Rawls actually put himself into some controversial metaphysical assumptions. Namely, to the subject of desire. Metaphysical questions, to Sandel, as argued above, targets not the object of desire, but the subject of desire. The subject of desire, according to Sandel, is the nature of human beings or the reasons behind those

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[59] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P1
[60] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P24
[61] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P25

desires. To Sandel, Rawls' account for the "solution that involves no metaphysical discussion" could address the nature of the subject of desires but could only "evade" the questions regarding object of desire. As Sandel pointed out, a key assumption that Rawls' theory made is that his theory requires "no particular theory of human motivation"[62]. This, from Sandel's point of view, helped Rawls escape the question regarding the object of human desires. If human beings have no determined motivation, it is thus highly likely they would try to develop their own personal ends due to their life experiences.

However, this denial to predetermined goodness, as Rawls argued in his theory of justice over goodness, which referred to a denial to the hierarchy of a predetermined goodness encouraged by government or societies, could not help Rawls escape the metaphysical discussions as he expected but would lead to more metaphysical questions regarding his subject of desire instead. As Sandel pointed out,

> "For justice to be primary, certain things must be true of us. We must be creatures of a certain kind, related to human circumstance in a certain way. In particular, we must stand to our circumstances always at a certain distance, conditioned to be sure, but part of us always antecedent to any conditions. Only in this way can we view ourselves as subjects as well as objects of experience, as agents and not just instruments of the purposes we pursue. Deontological liberalism supposes that we can, indeed must, understand ourselves as independent in this sense." [63]

Sandel pointed out that Rawls here have presupposed a certain kind of subject of desire, which is a kind of being who would freely pursue what is best for him or her and not restricted by social encouragements. Here "independent" could be referred back to Rawls' definition of "Original Position", which means the state of mind that one could think of justice without consideration of personal or social positional goodness in the first

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[62] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P24
[63] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P17

place. This kind of independence of justice from goodness, which refers to the consideration of justice even without a certain concept of the goodness in a certain form of society, is the kind of state of mind Original Position would be able to provide according to Sandel. This state of mind is independent because under such state of mind human beings could detach themselves from the social positions or identities they were It is this independence from all kinds of goodness encouraged by governments that Sandel is referring to. This explanation to the subject of desire Sandel here also explained the most fundamental flaw he believed lies within the theories Rawls introduced. This subject of desire, as Sandel pointed out, is exactly the kind of issue that Rawls could not manage to evade even if he could evade the questions regarding the objects of desire. This understanding of human being in terms of the subject of desire, according to Sandel, as the foundation of Rawls' primary theory of justice, could not actually support his theory and would thus endanger the primacy of justice.

To be able to better unpack the questions regarding the subject of desire, the next thing Sandel addresses is referred to as "the circumstances of justice", which could also be seen as the basis for Rawls' theory of subject of desire. Because of the relationship between Rawls' definition of subject of desire and the relationship between justice and subject of desire, it is important to investigate the reason which could make justice prior to personal good possible. As what Rawls argued, human beings are inherently self-interested. Thus, other than predetermined goods, which have already been denied by Rawls, there should be other reasons for justice so that human beings would not pursue social goods but justice in the first place. This could be referred back to what Rawls mentioned in the first part of his As Sandel explained, the circumstances of justice "are

the conditions that prevail in human societies and make human co-operation both possible and necessary. Society is seen as a co-operative venture for mutual advantage, which means that it is typically marked by a conflict as well as an identity of interests."[64] Here Sandel not only explained what circumstances of justice are but also mentioned partially the reason for human beings to form societies as well. According to Sandel, the circumstances could be seen as one most important reason for human beings to cooperate with each other. Societies, on the other hand, could be seen as a huge cooperative collection of human beings. What Sandel argued here also is that human beings not only form societies because of an identity of interests but also because of certain conflicts between interests. Thus, the importance of the circumstances of justice would be revealed as human beings did not fight against each other when having conflicts between interests but rather cooperate with each other to maximize the interest. The circumstances of justice, to Sandel, involve not only the cooperation when interests are the same but also under the situations when the interests are in some kind of conflict. However, to Sandel, Rawls' account for the circumstances of justice could not fully explain the situations of conflict. Sandel even argued that Rawls' account for the circumstances of justice could not even explain the situations when citizens seek cooperation with each other. To Sandel, Rawls only sees society as motivated by the advantages that he can produce, advantages that otherwise would not be available to us, and that he fails thereby to see that society is also about dealing with conflicts of interest between citizens. These conflicts may themselves stop the process of forming a society as people may not see the advantage override all the disadvantages society could bring about.

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[64] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P28

There are two kinds of circumstances of justice: objective and subjective. The objective circumstances, according to Sandel, "includes such facts as the moderate scarcity of resources, whereas the subjective circumstances concern the subjects of cooperation, most notably the fact that they are characterized by different interests and ends."[65] Here the objective circumstances mean that there have to be certain lack on social resources so that citizens would need to cooperate with each other to distribute the social resources to reach, as what Rawls mentioned in A Theory of Justice, the maximum level of satisfaction. This lack of social resources, to Sandel, determines the subjective circumstances of justice because only when people realize what is the thing that they need to communicate or argue in order to get, could they know what they desire in a certain kind of society[66]. To Sandel, this lack of resource could be the predetermination for Rawls' social theory as it is a distributive social theory. If no one ever lacks anything he or she needs, there would be no need to worry about how things should be distributed because everyone could get enough resource that would make them satisfied. The subjective circumstance, according to Sandel, is an explanation to the idea regarding human beings as self-interested beings. As what Rawls summarized "one can say, in brief, that the circumstances of justice obtain whenever mutually disinterested persons put forward conflicting claims to the division of social advantages under conditions of moderate scarcity. Unless these circumstances existed there would be no occasion for the virtue of justice, just as in the absence of threats of injury to life and limb there would be no occasion for physical courage." Rawls then argued that because of human society being characterized by the circumstances of justice and circumstances of justice being the

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[65] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P47
[66] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P82

circumstances that give rise to the virtue of justice, thus, the virtue of justice is required. However, to Sandel, Rawls' account for the citizens seems conflicted in the first place. As Rawls argued in his books, human beings are naturally self-interested and wish the best for themselves rather than others. However, under the circumstances of justice, it seems like that Rawls wanted to prove that when in a society, citizens could automatically become disinterested and take care of not only their own interests but also try not to harm others' interests. This conflict between "one would get whatever he or she needs" and "one would value equality even prior to his or her needs" seems problematic to Sandel. How could one be called as self-interested if one would want to protect others' rights or properties even with the risk of endangering their own profits?

Also, according to what Sandel argued, these circumstances of justice are mere empirical conditions. These conditions being empirical, according to Sandel, could greatly endanger the whole system Rawls intended to create in his books. As Sandel argued, "for if justice depends for its virtue on certain empirical preconditions, it is unclear how its priority could unconditionally be affirmed.[67]" Also, as Sandel pointed out, "To establish the primacy of justice in the categorical sense Rawls' claim requires, he would have to show not only that the circumstances of justice prevail in all societies, but that they prevail to such an extent that the virtue of justice is always more fully or extensively engaged than any other virtue."[68] Here Sandel seems to imply that Rawls, if wanted to proceed in the direction he established, could not escape at least some metaphysical explanation rather than only empirical discoveries because of the lack of

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[67] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P16
[68] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P17

persuasion empirical discoveries could offer. As what Sandel mentioned, if Rawls could

not provide evidence that the virtue of justice must prevail in all societies and proceeds

all other virtues, "he would be entitled to conclude only that justice is the first virtue of

certain kinds of societies, namely those where conditions are such that the resolution of

conflicting claims among mutually disinterested parties is the most pressing social

priority."[69] By stating this, Sandel intended to point out how Rawls' theories could be

limited if not provided with proper metaphysical explanation to some of the fundamental

ideas he introduced in his theory of justice. Sandel argued that the

> "non-metaphysical theory Rawls intended to provide was no less a metaphysical
> theory in its first stage. It presupposes a universal characteristic for all human
> beings, which is the need for justice, and then constructs all his theories upon this
> foundation that justice being the most needed characteristics in a society and the
> first condition a society should secure."[70]

This circumstance, however, "fixes on the sense in which justice appears as a remedial

virtue, whose moral advantage consists in the repair it works on fallen conditions. But if

the virtue of justice is measured by the morally diminished conditions that are its

prerequisite, then the absence of these conditions- however this state of affairs might be

described – must embody a rival virtue of at least commensurate priority, the one that is

engaged in so far as justice is not engaged." [71]This argument may seem a bit unclear and

obscure, and thus Sandel then listed,

> "To invoke the circumstance of justice is simultaneously to concede, implicitly at
> least, the circumstances of benevolence, or fraternity, or of enlarged affections,
> whatever the description might be; such are the circumstances that prevail in so
> far as the circumstances of justice do not prevail, and the virtue to which they give
> definition must be a virtue of at least correlative status."[72]

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[69] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P19
[70] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P24
[71] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P24
[72] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P28

This concept of human beings being self-interested and at the same time willing to follow social bindings is in itself a controversial metaphysical explanation. Sandel argued that if not given a convincing explanation on the firm ground of why justice being the most primary and important feature of a society other than only empirical discoveries, it could also be recognized that there are other forms of virtues that could be weighed as important or even more important in comparison to the importance of justice. Thus, there's no guarantee that one could benefit the most from the existence of justice if not provided with a firmly explained presupposition. However, it seems that without some metaphysical explanation, such mission could not be done, and the importance of justice could be easily denied by other virtues. To Sandel, the importance of a metaphysical account for the deontological theory of the priority of justice lies within the metaphysical implication the theory provides. In other words, this theory of human beings presupposed a certain point of view of the subject of desire by only empirical discoveries. However, the supposition was more of a metaphysical and universal one than a mere empirical discovery. Thus, the lack of metaphysical account for the subject of desire, especially the reason for the certain nature Rawls put on the subject of desire, according to Sandel, should not be ignored.

One another important point Sandel argued against Rawls' theories is toward the theory of veil of ignorance itself. The veil of ignorance, as Rawls explained, is the most valid way if one wants to reach the Original Position, which could be considered as the ideal subject of desire. The ideal form of subject of desire would not only be able to understand his desires but could at the same time pursue justice in the first place. As explained, human beings are innately self-interested, thus, it is natural for people to

pursue the best for them no matter what is the "goodness". However, to Rawls, it seems that justice could prevail This theory of veil of ignorance could be seen as another attempt Rawls tried to make account of the subject of desire. According to Sandel, what Rawls argued in the process of the veil of ignorance is not as political and practical as Rawls himself argued to be. Rather, according to Sandel, this theory of veil of ignorance itself is metaphysical and thus could not help evading the metaphysical discussion as he hoped. As Sandel argued, Rawls' veil of ignorance could do nothing but create a shadowy unencumbered self. This unencumbered self, according to Sandel, is referred to the state of mind which Rawls stated in the veil of ignorance. As Rawls argued, by veil of ignorance, people would not be able to know what group of people they are in or what kind of society they are in. The only things they know are the most fundamental knowledge regarding the nature of society in general, this state of mind, to Sandel, is nothing more than an unencumbered self. Here unencumbered means basically the same as what Rawls defined as the veil of ignorance, which means that people get rid of the natural or social characteristics the society put on them and could realize the whole society in a different perspective. However, this form of recognition, according to Sandel, is still a metaphysical recognition because here people are conceived of as prior to their ends that the ability to choose one's conception of the good takes such a prominent and supposedly neutral place in Rawls' theory of justice. This recognition itself could not be explained by mere empirical or political observation but need also a certain metaphysical background to support. To be able to become beings prior to their ends, human beings would have to have a certain metaphysical recognition even prior to their beings were established so that this recognition could overcome human desire. To Rawls, this

recognition is the need for justice, however, he did not give a metaphysical account as for why human beings have to have a sense of justice prior to their ends and their desires could not surpass their need for justice. This explanation is needed urgently to Rawls because he also stated that human beings as self-interested beings. Thus, these two presuppositions have to have a certain level of hierarchy that one could not surpass the other even though both of these characteristics to Rawls are innate in human beings. As what Sandel argued in the article, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self,": "What they do presuppose is a certain picture of the person, of the way we must be if we are beings for whom justice is the first virtue. This is the picture of the unencumbered self, a self-understood as prior to and independent of purposes and ends."[73] This definition of human beings, Sandel argued, is still a kind of metaphysical understanding as it unavoidably is still a kind of understanding to the being of human beings. As what Sandel then argued, "It means there is always a distinction between the values I have and the person I am. To identify any characteristics as my aims, ambitions, desires, and so on, is always to imply some subject 'me' standing behind them, at a certain distance, and the shape of this 'me' must be given prior to any of the aims or attributes I bear."[74] Here Sandel emphasized again on the metaphysical implication Rawls' Veil of Ignorance provides. To Sandel, Rawls' view presupposes that a distinction can be made between the person as the holder of certain goal or goodness of life and the person as stripped of all of this and that his view presupposes that what a person most fundamental is has to do with the latter rather than with the former. The issue of whether

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[73] Sandel, Michael J. "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self." Political Theory 12, no. 1 (1984): 81-96. P87
[74] Sandel, The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self, P87

it is possible to distinguish the human being into these two parts aside, Sandel argued that this kind of understanding to human existence is no less metaphysical than other kinds of understandings of human beings. As what Rawls argued when he firstly tried to explain the reason for the evasion of metaphysical discussions, he argued that the main purpose for this evasion is because those discussions are too important and too easily fall into endless argues that might not be able to get a commonly agreed conclusion. However, what Sandel suggests here is that this theory of Rawls could also bring people into the same kind of metaphysical discussion Rawls would like to avoid because of this metaphysical implication Rawls provided for the Veil of Ignorance and Original Position.

Also, as what Sandel later argued, this unencumbered self could even endanger the idea of community due to this priority of justice before the good. Because of the freedom of the self, that we are unbound by ~~the~~ social characteristics or identities, we could think in a free way and consider our ends unconnected to our values. However, as what Sandel pointed out, such kind of understanding has its own consequences, "What is denied to the unencumbered self is the possibility of membership in any community bound by moral ties antecedent to choice: he cannot belong to any community where the self itself could be at stake."[75] This kind of denial to any kind of community that may be able to endanger the freedom of self would commonly be considered as a kind of denial to all the religious or metaphysical communities as most of them presupposed a nature of human being and a connected end that is relative to that nature. This kind of self-

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[75] Sandel, The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self, P87

understanding and the connection this kind of understanding provided between self and society, according to Sandel, could not support the liberalism Rawls would like to form.

Sandel then proceeded to another foundation of justice: the priority of plurality. The plurality of citizens is also an important feature of the subject of desire. In Rawls' theories, a society without plural number of citizens, or plural number of opinions is invalid. As he argued the plurality of human subject as one main reason he rejects utilitarianism. To Rawls, utilitarianism ignores the plurality of human beings and thus "conflates diverse systems of justice into a single system of desire, and so fails to take seriously the distinction between persons."[76] Here Rawls argued that it was because of the lack of recognition of human beings in a society as plural subjects that makes utilitarianism less convincing. This need for plural subjects of human beings in a society seems very important to Rawls that only by this plurality of persons could one realize any account of the moral subject, in this case, human beings. As Rawls argued, "if we assume that the correct regulative principle for anything depends on the nature of that thing, and that the plurality of distinct persons with separate systems of ends is an essential feature of human societies, we should not expect the principles of social choice to be utilitarian."[77]Here Rawls intended to argue that if all other systems are followed by an acceptance to the plurality of human beings, it is not right for people to think that many persons could be understood as one same being and different people are just different lines from a same origin.

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[76] Sandel, Michael J. Liberalism and the Limits of Justice. 2nd ed. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge UP, 1998. P51
[77] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P51

However, to Sandel, such priority of plurality itself seems problematic. To Sandel, it seems that Rawls' theory could not even support his need for plurality in its own. As what Sandel argued, "whether unity as well as plurality might appear as an essential feature of the moral subject, equally necessary a presupposition of the view that man is a creature capable of justice."[78] As he later explained, "While it is true that the principle of unity has an important place in justice as fairness, it is a mistake to accord it an equal priority with plurality; it is not essential to our nature in the same way."[79] As what Sandel argued, "for Rawls, our individuating characteristics are given empirically, by the distinctive concatenation of wants and desires, aims and attributes, purposes and ends that come to characterize human beings in their particularity."[80] He then stated,

> "Each individual is located uniquely in time and place, born into a particular family and society, and the contingencies of these circumstances, together with the interests and values and aspirations to which they give rise, are what set people apart, what make them particular persons they are."[81]

Here Sandel stated that human beings are born with the characteristics which Rawls considered would endanger the system of justice as fairness. It is because of these natural or predetermined backgrounds that created us and made us different from one another. However, the same question remained as what Sandel questioned to the priority of justice over other forms of virtues: This form of priority of plurality could not be proven to be over time and space but only targeting a specific group of societies. The fact that this form of priority was only a priority based on empirical observations and thus could not prove itself to be a universal characteristic for all human beings in all forms of societies.

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[78] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P52
[79] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P52
[80] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P52
[81] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P57

Here what Sandel seems to argue is that human plurality as a necessary feature of the human condition could not support itself because there seems no further proof to this theory other than empirical discoveries. If plurality's importance needs not to be explained in a metaphysical way, why the plurality of human beings must be the necessary presupposition of human societies?

Moreover, according to Sandel, this background of human beings as plural subjects rather than one single subject could not be evaded as long as Rawls would like to stand for human beings being the subject of justice. To Sandel, there's a conflict between Rawls' expectation of plurality and the actual implication Rawls of his theory. As Sandel argued, "Justice could not apply in a world where only one subject existed. It could only have place in a society of beings who were in some sense distinguishable one from another."[82] The implication here Sandel wanted to make is that justice, in other words, presupposes a certain kind of interaction between different subjects. By having only one subject, or to see every human being as one subject all together, it would be impossible for people to justify any decision because there would be no difference in the consequences that would happen to the subjects. For instance, in a society which all human beings are considered as one same subject, any decisions this subject makes regarding human beings in this society could not hurt anyone but this subject itself. There would be no other subject to harm and thus there's no unjust behavior to determine. Another justification Sandel made regarding this priority of plurality is that "for there to be justice, there must be the possibility of conflicting claims, and for there to be conflicting claims, there must be more than a single claimant. In this way, the plurality of

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[82] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P105

persons can be seen as a necessary presupposition of the possibility of justice."[83] Here the implication seems to be that only different subjects could form different kinds of opinions or could guarantee different kinds of opinions. In other words, only by different subjects, could there be existing conflicting ideas that need to be justified. Otherwise, there would be no need for justification regarding different opinions since there would not necessarily exist conflicting claims. Here we might need to look back into the original position and the veil of ignorance. According to Rawls, the original position and veil of ignorance both emphasized on the inability of knowing anything of that society. Thus, all the knowledge citizens may be able to know is some of the most common knowledge of that society and no other things. In this form of understanding to societies, people could only reason from a same starting point. Here as Sandel argued, this form of understanding presupposed all citizens a understanding to good before they know their ends. Here, because all people share a same kind of conception to the good and have no predetermined different ends. Also, since there's no other kinds of presupposition the citizens could reach out to considering the situation of society and the characteristics of citizens themselves, it becomes natural that all people would think in a same way rather than different ways. Also, since there's no possibility of different opinions, it is unlikely that people could form any agreements or disagreements. Sandel, in the discussions above, essentially states that Rawls' Original Position with its veil of ignorance cancels social plurality? The original position by stripping us of all particularity means that we all necessarily reason the same and have the same interests. Rawls says that

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[83] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P64

utilitarianism does not take the distinction between persons seriously and Sandel is saying that this criticism applies equally to Rawls' own perspective.

Last but not least, Sandel argued about the legitimacy of the deontological vision of human beings, As Sandel argued, "the deontological self, stripped of all possible constitutive attachments, is less liberated than disempowered. As we have seen, neither the right nor the good admits of the voluntarist derivation deontology requires. As agents of construction we do not really construct, and as agents of choice we do not really choose."[84] Then he concluded, "For the parties to the original position, as for the parties to ordinary deliberative rationality, the liberating moment fades before it arrives; the sovereign subject is left at sea in the circumstances it was thought to command."[85] Here by constructing nothing Sandel referred to his question raised in earlier chapter, which targeted the original position as whether under such situation any true bargaining or discussion could happen. According to Sandel, since the parties within a society are similarly situated, they are guaranteed to reason in the same way, and have no basis for bargaining. Bargaining, according to Sandel, requires some difference in interests or preferences or power or knowledge of the bargainers, but in the original position, as Rawls stated that every party are given same backgrounds, there could be no such differences. Thus, there could be no bargaining. Also, as Sandel questioned, they may also no basis for agreement. According to Sandel,

> "What does the agreement add once the discovery has been made? Suppose that everyone, after due reflection, found that he preferred a particular conception of justice, and suppose further that everyone knew that all preferred the same one. Would they then go on to agree to this conception? What would it mean for them to make this discovery first, and then go on to make an agreement about it? Even

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[84] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P13
[85] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P13

> if we could imagine what it would mean to make an agreement under such circumstances, what would the agreement add to the discovery that all preferred the same conception? Would the conception be justified after they 'went on to make the agreement' in a way that it was not justified when they saw that all preferred the conception but before they 'made the agreement'?"[86]

Here, Sandel seemed to argue that no matter what kind of agreement Rawls wanted to establish, there's no need for such kind of agreement because it lacks any meaning to the whole society or to any citizens within that society. In other words, though Rawls constructed this system of constructing agreements and free choices, citizens are rather within these choices and discover them. Rawls' theories, according to Sandel, could not in fact support the conclusion because many of the ideas Rawls raised up in the original position could not be realized because of the lack of metaphysical theories or discussions. Because of the lack of metaphysics, once a same empirical situation is settled, the way people may react to the situation is also settled and thus could not lead to any differences which would lead to discussions or disagreements. Though Rawls wanted to argue for a theory that could explain the formation of a most balanced agreement, what Sandel argued is that under the condition Rawls constructed, it is most likely that no agreement could be formed because there's no possibility for any different opinions and thus there's no environment for the formation of discussions or agreements.

Macintyre:

Unlike Sandel, who focused solely on Rawls and his theory of justice, especially on Rawls' views on the subject of desire, MacIntyre, though also rejected what Rawls argued in A Theory of Justice and other pieces of works metaphysically, pointed out that there has been a fundamental mistake in the whole modern system of political

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[86] Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, P106

philosophy. This mistake that lies within the root of modern political philosophy caused the whole understanding of the relationship between metaphysical philosophy and political philosophy to be mistaken. Rawls' theories, to MacIntyre, are but a representative of the results caused by this wrong interpretation to the whole system of viewing political philosophy and metaphysical philosophy. Thus, it is not surprising to MacIntyre that Rawls' theories contain a lot of mistakes he believed have been committed by all the prior philosophers Rawls followed. To MacIntyre, what Rawls argued about contemporary society, especially Rawls' ideology of citizens of a society could not be realized because of the wrong starting point Rawls took.

To MacIntyre, unlike Sandel, who focused on the lack of understanding to "the subject of desire", looked from a broader sense of contemporary liberal society. To MacIntyre, as mentioned above, the basic wrongdoing lies not in the lack of understanding or neglect to the metaphysical understanding to human beings in contemporary political philosophy. Rather, this neglect to metaphysical understanding by many philosophers is rather a result of a long logic chain that went wrong since the beginning. As what MacIntyre argued in his After Virtue, the foundation of modern liberal society itself is problematic because of the abandon of metaphysics in the first place. [87] This abandon, or denial to metaphysics, could be seen in Rawls as well. As Rawls explained in his Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical, metaphysical ideas are too important and too hard to get to a convincing conclusion and thus he would leave metaphysical ideas aside and focus only on the things that he believed "could be solved".

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[87] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, https://www.iep.utm.edu/p-macint/

To MacIntyre, though Rawls admitted the importance of metaphysics, he still chose not to discuss metaphysical ideas because of the complexity of metaphysics. This form of denial, to MacIntyre, is exactly the reason why he could not accept contemporary liberal societies. To MacIntyre, the final problem lies both within the liberal societies and the liberal thought which created such form of societies. However, from MacIntyre's perspective, just as Rawls means only an example of this failure in the liberal thoughts, liberal societies may also be seen as such a result as the liberal society itself is a representation of what liberal philosophers believed as the best form of societies.

As what MacIntyre concerned, metaphysics has a very specific kind of relationship to political philosophy. As what he believed:

> "What philosophers primarily do is study the actual world in which they live – its politics, traditions, social organization, families and so on – and try to find the ideas and values that must underlie those institutions and practices, even if the members of the society cannot articulate them or cannot articulate them fully"[88].

To MacIntyre, these ideas and values which underlie the social institutions and practices are what should be focused by contemporary philosophers. These ideas and values, though to MacIntyre are important, are considered unsuitable to discuss to Rawls as they are considered "metaphysical". To Rawls, these ideas and values are exactly the ones he would not try to touch because of their "controversy". Controversy, to Rawls, refers to the discussions which would lead not to a clear conclusion but rather further debates. Rawls believed that most metaphysical discussion could not lead to a convincing conclusion and may in the end endanger the whole system of his political theory. By viewing society from such perspective, MacIntyre argued that "philosophers would be

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[88] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre

able to see the inconsistent ideas and then be able to propose new ideologies that would

be consistent with the old theories and at the same time improve the old theories".[89]

MacIntyre expected philosophers, especially political philosophers, would view any form

of society as a changing system that is not only changing for the citizens but also

changing the citizens at the same time.[90] Thus, it is important for philosophers, according

to MacIntyre, "to continuously evaluate the social institutions and practices to figure out

the values and ideas that may have changed during the process of social progression."[91]

As any changes that happened throughout human histories, there could be successful ones

just as the mistaken ones; and to MacIntyre, it is important for the philosophers to check

if there's any mistaken changes done to either the practices of human societies or even

the values or ideas behind the practices.[92] This kind of recognition, according to

MacIntyre, have long been denied by contemporary philosophers because of the

controversy and further debates they brought. If philosophers would do nothing but

debate around the metaphysical discussions, there may not be any kind of certified social

rules that political theories could be based upon. Thus, to philosophers such as Rawls, it

is more important to firstly make the system work rather than to think if this process is

correct. This denial, according to MacIntyre, has caused a lot of problems within

contemporary society and these reasons, however, according to Macintyre, could not

support the denial to metaphysics.

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[89] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre
[90] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre
[91] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre
[92] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre

MacIntyre believed that philosophers should try not only to construct political theories based on what the prior philosophers left behind but also try to understand the historical reasons behind those prior philosophical ideologies and improve them based on the currently situation and the changes happened to the reasons behind those behaviors. As discussed above, MacIntyre expected philosophers to understand that even metaphysical ideas are neither universal nor ahistorical. As MacIntyre argued, "Morality which is no particular society's morality is to be found nowhere"93. Most social rules and the background reasons behind such social rules are continuously changing to MacIntyre and to MacIntyre, a lot of philosophers today have forgotten such characteristics and followed blindly on the prior materials. As MacIntyre argued, "Although philosophers can and should learn from the work of earlier philosophers, this is not their main source of ideas when they are doing their job properly"[94]. The reason that MacIntyre believed that contemporary societies, especially liberal society failed is because of the lack of such understanding. Philosophers are continuously trying to define metaphysics as something necessarily controversial. Because of the lack of understanding to the characteristics of metaphysics, namely non-universal and ahistorical, philosophers believed that in metaphysics people could not find a convincing understanding. Thus, it becomes common for philosophers to try to escape metaphysical discussions in contemporary societies. However, escaping the discussion of metaphysics in the contemporary society is unacceptable to MacIntyre in the beginning, as this evasion of metaphysics would

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[93] MacIntyre, Alasdair C. After Virtue : A Study in Moral Theory. 3rd ed. Notre Dame, Ind.: U of Notre Dame, 2007.. P1
[94] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, https://www.iep.utm.edu/p-macint/

result then in the uncertainty of the reason for the construction of social institutions and the specific problems regarding those social institutions.

The first thing that MacIntyre identified as a fundamental mistake in contemporary political thought is the separation between metaphysics and political philosophy. This separation between metaphysical and political philosophy could be seen from the arguments above, in which MacIntyre argued that discussing metaphysics without paying attention to the social and political background of the metaphysical understanding to philosophical questions is wrong. As what MacIntyre said: "They act as though all past philosophers are contributing to the same argument, seeking timeless and eternal moral truths. But this is wrong, because philosophies are in large part derived from sociologies and are specific to particular societies."[95] Here what MacIntyre intended to say is that philosophical backgrounds, which may seemed metaphysical and irrelevant to the political background of a particular time period, are actually connected to one another. This kind of understanding, as discussed above, is exactly the kind of argument that Rawls failed to notice. To MacIntyre, just as Rawls, most contemporary political philosophers never tried to connect metaphysics to political philosophy. Rather, they chose to pick one among all the past metaphysical theories and tried to fit contemporary society into the frame of that particular metaphysical idea. Thus, it is not surprising to MacIntyre that contemporary philosophy would automatically fail because using older metaphysical ideas to improve a newer political system could not result in good outcomes since these old metaphysical definition was rooted in the old political system.

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[95] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre

One may understand MacIntyre's theory as a kind of philosophical relativism which requires a continuous rethink between metaphysics and political institutions. In his After Virtue, MacIntyre writes: "Morality which is no particular society's morality is to be found nowhere."[96] As explained before, MacIntyre expected philosophers to realize that only by studying old philosophy could not make the contemporary society into its best shape. The old philosophy theories targeted on their time periods and the social situation at that time is not the same as the situation today. They would face different problems as we do while they would also not have the same kind of advantages in their social institutions as we do. This statement seems pretty much like what Rawls stated in the beginning of A Theory of Justice, as Rawls also stated: "The correct regulative principle for anything depends on the nature of that thing."[97] Rawls here seems also pointed out that social theories could not be universal, as the nature of old social institutions may not be the same as the nature of social institutions today. However, these two statements are actually targeting the contrary directions. To Rawls, the metaphysical definition of things has already been defined and all he needed to do is to base that metaphysical definition to construct new social theories that would best fit those definitions. Though Rawls would like to evade metaphysics completely, he could not completely evade from metaphysical discussions and thus chose to not use metaphysical definitions as much as possible. As we could see from Part I, Rawls still defined human beings as "inherently self-interested and self-sufficient", which according to Sandel, are still metaphysical definitions to human beings. However, to MacIntyre, as stated above,

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[96] MacIntyre, Alasdair C. After Virtue : A Study in Moral Theory. 3rd ed. Notre Dame, Ind.: U of Notre Dame, 2007. P1

[97] Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard UP, 1971. P5

this kind of understanding is just the one he chose not to follow. To MacIntyre, metaphysical understanding should not be considered as universal or ahistorical just as political theories. Not only because metaphysical definitions would change naturally from time to time, but because metaphysical ideas are not only changing political theories but also being changed by political institutions at the same time. Due to the progress of social institutions, people would reevaluate the metaphysical understanding to all the existing metaphysical definitions and most of the time this reevaluation would lead to change in the understanding of metaphysical definitions.

Thus, to believe that there could be some universal metaphysical definition that remained the same from time to time is unrealistic. Just as the definition of citizens have changed for numerous times throughout history, different places today still consider citizens in different fashions. These differences would then lead to different social institutions as the nature of citizens would determine what kind of social rules are required for the flourish of citizens in such society. Not only MacIntyre did not agree with the idea that political philosophy could be determined solely by the existing metaphysical definitions, MacIntyre at the same time argued that metaphysical definitions would need to be changed in the first place so that proper adjustments to political institutions regarding the change in metaphysical definitions would be possible. In other words, a flaw in political philosophy would also reflect upon metaphysical philosophy and if no proper treatment to metaphysical mistakes, the political philosophy could never reach to a satisfying state.

What MacIntyre believed that caused this separation between metaphysics and political philosophy is due to the lack of complete record of prior philosophy theories. As

MacIntyre suggested, the current situation for contemporary philosophy is more like a bunch of scientists who have already lost most of the knowledges from previous time periods and created a new form of science based on the existing fragments. The same situation, he believed, also happened to philosophy, as most of the western philosophy which comes prior to Enlightenment has already gone and what philosophers today are still studying are only the fragment of those materials. The result, as MacIntyre argued, is that "People in the modern liberal capitalist world talk as though we are engaged in moral reasoning, and act as though our actions are chosen as the result of such reasoning, but in fact neither of these things is true."[98] He then explained further: "Philosophers and ordinary people are working today with bits and pieces of philosophies which are detached from their original pre-Enlightenment settings in which they were comprehensible and useful."[99] To MacIntyre, the whole philosophy theory should be put together with one another but not separated simply as metaphysical and political. The lack of understanding to the background which metaphysical discussions were created would means a futile attempt of applying metaphysics to current situation. This situation, to MacIntyre, would be like putting on clothes that do not fit and neither the clothes nor the people wearing it would be considered appropriate.

However, why, then, if the "suit" is inappropriate, would philosophers still try to apply moral theories which would not fit to contemporary societies? To this question, MacIntyre argued that "On the other hand, because certain characters, settings, and bits of narrative would reappear throughout, it would seem as though the story *could* cohere,

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[98] MacIntyre, Alasdair C. After Virtue : A Study in Moral Theory. 3rd ed. Notre Dame, Ind.: U of Notre Dame, 2007. P1

[99] MacIntyre, After Virtue, P1

and much effort – ultimately futile – might be expended in trying to make it do so."[100] In other words, here the coherence between past and current philosophy discussions is just an illusion. The reason behind such seemingly coherence is because of some coincidentally overlap between the use of words or definitions. This coincidence, to MacIntyre, should not be considered as the same without a double check and taking all these definitions for granted would end up to the lack of understanding to current social and political situations.

The consequence of this separation between metaphysics and political philosophy is an endless debate within the system of philosophy and even caused some chaos in politics as well. Here MacIntyre directly introduced the theory of Rawls and his debate against Robert Nozick. However, to MacIntyre, it is not because of any specific mistakes Rawls made in his arguments that attracted MacIntyre but because of his debate against Robert Nozick made it clear that no political theories today could have a stable and strong argument compared to another form of political theory. To MacIntyre, both of these philosophers could point out the flaws of the other but cannot defend their own position against each other. As what MacIntyre argued,

> "the incompatibility of Rawls's and Nozick's accounts does up to a point genuinely mirror the incompatibility of A's position with B's, and that to this extent at least Rawls and Nozick successfully articulate at the level of moral philosophy the disagreement between such ordinary non-philosophical citizens as A and B; but that Rawls and Nozick also produce the very same type of incompatibility and incommensurability at the level of philosophical argument that made A's and B's debate unsettlable at the level of social conflict."[101]

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[100] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, https://www.iep.utm.edu/p-macint/

[101] MacIntyre, Alasdair C. After Virtue : A Study in Moral Theory. 3rd ed. Notre Dame, Ind.: U of Notre Dame, 2007. P246

Here the debate between A and B is a conflict between their conceptions of justice, as A argued that "He claims to have a right to what he has earned and that nobody else has a right to take away what he acquired legitimately and to which he has a just title. He intends to vote for candidates for political office who will defend his property, his projects and his conception of justice." [102]This kind of argument, according to MacIntyre, could be from A, who comes from a certain level of poverty and struggled to save enough from his earnings to pay for some medical care of buy a small house. To B, however, in MacIntyre's argument, had a higher vision to the whole society and Thus would argue in the following fashion: "He believes more generally that all inequality stands in need of justification and that the only possible justification for inequality is to improve the condition of the poor and the deprived- by, for example, fostering economic growth. He intends to vote for candidates for political office who will defend redistributive taxation and his conception of justice."[103] MacIntyre used this example in order to show that even if some of the conclusions between two arguments are the same, the reasons behind the conclusions may be actually very different from one another and one could always find out the flaw behind these reasonings because of the lack of stable metaphysical foundations.

To philosophers, MacIntyre believed that it was the same case as contemporary philosophers could not reach to an agreement on the moral discussions because there's no right answer for any metaphysical backgrounds. Thus, to MacIntyre, there's something negative in common in all contemporary philosophers' arguments as in the example of

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[102] MacIntyre, After Virtue, P244
[103] MacIntyre, After Virtue, P245

Rawls and Nozick: "Neither of them make any reference to desert in their account of justice, nor could they consistently do so."[104] Neither Rawls nor Nozick recognized the possible flaw in their arguments and they still intend to focus on solving existing political problems based on the fragmented metaphysical arguments they found that would be in use of their theories. This kind of treatment to political philosophy, to MacIntyre, is useless and could not reach to any strong conclusions at all. As MacIntyre stated, "the protest and indignation hallmarks of public "debate" in the modern world. Since no one could ever win an argument – because there's no agreement about how someone could 'win' – anyone can resort to protesting; since no one can ever lose an argument – how can they, if no one can win?" From this perspective, contemporary philosophical debate could no longer provide any outcome since the arguments would always remain unclosed because of the lack of convincing reasons. Just as the debate between Rawls and Nozick, there's no right and wrong between these two theories because the possibility of getting a "right" metaphysical background for any political theory has already been denied in the first place. Thus, to MacIntyre, political debates today are just like an emotional expression to one's feelings. It is not like that one could get a convincing answer to any metaphysical discussions any more. The metaphysical discussions today could only show the emotional tendency. It is no easier than distinguishing which food flavor is right compared to distinguishing whether a political theory is valid anymore.

However, just as Rawls argued in his **Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical**, the reason he chose not to engage in metaphysical discussions is because of the uncertainty metaphysical discussions would lead to. Those questions, to Rawls, are

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[104] MacIntyre, After Virtue, P246

too important and too difficult to reach to any agreements. However, to MacIntyre, it is

not such the case. MacIntyre called this way of thinking emotivism, in normative

discourses like political philosophy and ethics. Here MacIntyre started to argue about the

flaws regarding the recognition to human beings in modern political philosophy.

Emotivism, according to MacIntyre, is "the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and

more specifically all moral judgments are *nothing but* expressions of preference,

expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character."

[105]In other words, emotivism, just as its appearance in today's society, has changed

philosophy and moral judgements into emotional expressions that anyone could simply

stand against each other. This form of "freedom" could also be seen in Rawls' theories as

one of his reasons behind the evasion of metaphysical discussions is due to his rejection

to the unsolvable metaphysical discussions. However, to MacIntyre, it would not be the

case. As MacIntyre stated,

> "because we can in fact rationally determine the best possible life for human
> beings and therefore can have moral judgments that are more than mere
> preferences, but it is nevertheless a doctrine that many people today subscribe to,
> and they act as though it is true. Because so many people act as if it is true, it
> takes on a degree of power in the world." [106]

MacIntyre believed that there should be a common recognition to the best life for human

beings and this best way of determining what one should do would greatly change the

current situation of political philosophy and metaphysical philosophy as philosophers

would no longer be able to insist on his or her own ideas if is contradicts the best way of

life. Also, this part of MacIntyre's understanding to the possibility of getting the right

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[105] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, https://www.iep.utm.edu/p-macint/
[106] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre

theory of goodness for human being could also be connected to his argument against on the over-emphasize on the past philosophy theories. Because of the emphasize on a conception of "good life" from past to today that made it impossible to think of a proper conception universally and ahistorically. However, it would be much easier for philosophers to think about a proper definition of good life if they would be concentrating on the contemporary societies alone. In fact, to MacIntyre, it would be unnecessary to think about the past definitions of good life and debate over them. Those definitions are out of date and should not be taken into account for today's situation anymore. Also, if one could really find out the best way of living, it would also be the case that Rawls' theories become unrealistic because the theories Rawls made lacks such a convincing metaphysical background and was based on only a possible way of understanding the relationship between citizens and social institutions.

Not only emotivism could be used against Rawls's theories from the future possibility, to MacIntyre, emotivism could also be used to explain the selfishness of human beings argued by Rawls. As what MacIntyre stated, "the key to the social content of emotivism....is the fact that emotivism entails the obliteration of any genuine distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations."[107] How could we live in a society which shows nothing but selfishness since there's no persuasive moral principles that could be used on everyone? To MacIntyre, the way we treat each other in today's society is predetermined by this lack of moral reflection or deep investigation to the current metaphysical background. Because of the lack of agreed moral principles, which then led to emotivism, human beings found it hard to agree with

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[107] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre

each other on the moral basis and thus there's no agreement in moral choices. Thus,

internally people could not see each other as a same species and would not recognize

each other in any other ways other than the recognition of each other as mere tools to

each other. Since there's no possibility that one could reach moral agreements with

others, the only way left is to see each other as either in the controlling party or the

controlled party. Just as MacIntyre stated,

> "Because I cannot persuade people, and because we cannot have any common
> good that is not purely temporary and based on our separate individual desires,
> there is no kind of social relationship left except for each of us trying to use the
> others to achieve our own selfish goals. Even for someone who did not want to
> live this way, the fact that others would be trying to gain power over them in
> order to manipulate them would mean that they would still need to seek as much
> power as they could simply to avoid being manipulated." [108]

This form of society, to MacIntyre, is caused by the undetermined moral answers and

people could not see the relationship with each other correctly, which could also be seen

in Rawls' theories, as Rawls simply chose to evade the metaphysical discussion exactly

because of the consequences discussed above. Though in Rawls' opinion, it is still

possible for people to forge agreement without any forms of metaphysical agreements, to

MacIntyre, the only reason that Rawls believed that human beings are innately selfish is

because of the lack of a right recognition to contemporary human beings. To MacIntyre,

evading metaphysical discussion could not get to a satisfying answer of the human

nature. The innate selfishness Rawls believed could only because the lack of a right

metaphysical understanding to human beings. It is not because of the innate selfishness of

human beings that caused the finding of agreed moral theories hard but rather the

opposite. Because human beings lack a right moral understanding, they have no other

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[108] MacIntyre, Alasdair C. After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory. 3rd ed. Notre Dame, Ind.: U of Notre Dame, 2007. P120

choices but to see each other as only tools and thus lead to a seeming selfishness of human beings. The natural selfishness could be proven wrong innately and thus make Rawls' whole theory collapse because the presupposition of human nature could no longer be convincing enough to support Rawls' theories anymore.

Another possible metaphysical flaw MacIntyre argued that caused the current chaos in political philosophy and metaphysics is the lack of recognition of the specific nature of internal goods. According to MacIntyre, there are two kinds of goods in the practice of social institutions: internal goods, or goods of excellence, and external goods, which he later called as goods for effectiveness. First of all, one must understand what "practice" means to MacIntyre. According to MacIntyre,

> "by a practice I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended"[109].

In the definition itself we could see this emphasize on the internal good of a practice. In other words, a practice is the social activity that would help people find the internal good and how human beings could achieve goodness by committing such activity. The external good, or goods of effectiveness is the desire for prize after the winning. This kind of good, to MacIntyre, could motivate people to start train for chess playing but at the same time would make cheating natural.[110] If the prize of the game is all one wants, it is natural that one would want to acquire it sooner rather than later. Thus, it is not enough if one

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[109] MacIntyre, After Virtue, P187
[110] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, https://www.iep.utm.edu/p-macint/

wants to proceed in the practice of playing chess. Also, the external goods could be gained from not only one way, as it is only a payment that could be earned from not only chess but also any place else. Thus, how would one keep playing chess if external good being the only reason for him or her to do so? This is when MacIntyre introduced internal good, or in other words, goods of excellence. As MacIntyre then argued in the example: "Internal goods are the goods that can only be achieved by participating in the practice itself. If you want the benefits to be gained by playing chess, you will have to play chess. And in pursuing them while playing chess, you gain other goods as well – you will get an education in the virtues.[111]" To MacIntyre, eventually people would need to turn from external good to internal good if one wants to stick to a certain practice.

Also, another important difference between external good and internal good, according to MacIntyre, is the difference in distribution. As what MacIntyre explained: "External goods end up as someone's property, and the more one person has of any of them the less there is for anyone else (money, power, and fame are often of this nature). Internal good is characteristic of them that their achievement is a good for the whole community who participate in the practice."[112] These two forms of goods could be correlated to the different ways of understanding human relationships. As if one pursues only the external goods, they would easily fall into the relationship which emotivism described, as he or she would only see others in a relationship as either controlling or controlled because one would not want his or her distribution of external goods to become reduced.[113] In a world which no internal good would be well defined, the only

[111] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre
[112] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre
[113] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre

way people may find secure is to gain higher social position by taking more power, fame or money. As could be seen from Rawls' theories, it was exactly these external goods, or "primary social goods" that he wished to establish in his social theories. As Rawls argued, the primary social goods are the things that people would want no matter under what metaphysical backgrounds, no matter what they might value in life and therefore not matter what their aims and ends might be. This definition means almost the same thing as external goods. As these two definitions both point to specific goods that does not involve in the practices themselves; and these definitions require not a certain metaphysical background to realize as important; and last but not least, that these goods could be achieved from more than one practice. To Rawls, in his social theories, there's no place for internal good because internal goods would necessarily involve metaphysical discussions, which have been chosen to forget by Rawls. However, just as what MacIntyre described, if a society requires no internal goods but only external goods, social cooperation may not happen at all because innately external goods could not be realized in its greatest extend unless one would like to take the external goods from others.[114] The only way which seems possible for social cooperation to happen under such situation is by law enforcements. However, in Rawls' theories, people would not need law enforcements but only some assistance from public agencies. Thus, to MacIntyre, the possibility of forming a society in Rawls' theory is problematic.

MacIntyre believed that politics should be a practice of internal good rather than external good. As he argued that external good is only situational and should not be used as a long term currency if a society wants to flourish. Without internal good, as

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[114] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre

MacIntyre argued, "there is no good achieved that is good for the whole community; cheating and exploitation are frequent, and this damages the community as a whole.[115]" Because of the lack of a common benefit for all the citizens in a society, external good simply put everyone into a position that everyone else are nothing but rivals. There's no common interests and the only way to maximize my benefit is to hurt yours. Also, external good of a practice does not always require study in that practice, as external goods are values given from outside of that activity and thus make the practice itself meaningless. People only want the prize but not the involvement of the practice itself. Thus, cheating and exploitation are common because these are both easier ways to gain external goods compared to focusing on the practice itself. To MacIntyre, this kind of social institutions should only be taken in the earliest state of practice, as he stated: "A practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods.[116]" In the earliest state of practice, one as a new comer does not know how to evaluate his own effort by the internal good and he does not know his own value as well. Thus, with the help of external good, one could quickly find how much he lacks and thus makes progressions. However, without the support of internal goods, the practice itself would then become unimportant. Then cheating or plagiarizing would be common because one only wants the external good. This, to Rawls, would be a great denial as his social theories focused only on the external good and thus would ended up in corruption and chaos eventually. If a society, according to MacIntyre, does not have a strong metaphysical explanation to the goodness of human beings regarding their lives and works, they would find no purpose in doing their jobs and they would see their jobs

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[115] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre
[116] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre

as only a means to an end that does not involve the job itself. Thus, they would not pay attention to their jobs anymore and they would find "easier" ways to gain the external goods compared to focus on their practice, which could be the result of Rawls' social theories if one follows MacIntyre's argument.

From another perspective, MacIntyre's theory of internal good could also be understood as a kind of primary social good. As explained before, primary social goods are the things that people would want no matter what kind of social position or job they do. Thus, if one lives in the ideal society as MacIntyre imagined, internal good would then become the primary social good because no matter what job people do, people would always find the goodness in the practice itself and thus would want more rather than less of that goodness.[117] However, here comes another problem: if one follows such understanding to primary social goods, Rawls' theory seems to be contradicting itself. As Rawls hoped, primary social goods would necessarily involve in metaphysical discussions. From such perspective, Rawls' theory of primary social goods would either ended up ruining the society he tried to construct, or he has to allow internal goods take over the control of the theory of primary social goods, which would ended up in involvements of metaphysical discussions.

Part III—Conclusion

As Sandel and MacIntyre argued, Rawls' theories, though intended to evade the metaphysical discussions because of the uncertainty and complexity of metaphysical issues, still could not evade the metaphysical discussions because of some fundamental

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[117] Political Philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre

problems lying both within his own theories and the metaphysical backgrounds he used. Though Sandel and MacIntyre treated Rawls and his theories in different perspectives, agreed on the issue that Rawls treated the whole system of metaphysics in a wrong way. To Sandel, Rawls' theories stands as his own theories.

Sandel understands Rawls' theories in its own. As Sandel argued, what he would like to do in the Liberalism and the limits of justice is to investigate on the liberalism, especially the form of liberalism Rawls argued for. To Sandel, Rawls answers regarding questions on the "subject of desire" are unclear. Also, some of the points of view Rawls argued are controversial and cannot be convincingly explained without the help of metaphysics. The questions Sandel argued are mostly from metaphysical perspective and could not be easily answered except in a metaphysical way. According to Sandel, Rawls' explanation to the subject of desire is too empirical to be realized. What Sandel expected is a more metaphysical and philosophically convincing explanation to the reason behind the subjective circumstances of justice but not a mere observation regarding existing societies. Also, to Sandel, when Rawls argued that justice could prevail any presupposed goodness within human societies, he was actually presupposing a goodness himself, which is justice. As Sandel argued, to be able to make people believe that justice should be prior than goodness, Rawls would need to explain it from a metaphysical perspective rather than mere empirical observations. In other words, just because we would not want unjust to be done in society even for our benefit does not mean that justice has firmly overrode the priority of goodness. Also, in this case, justice itself could be a predetermined goodness but Rawls failed to recognize so.

Also, to Sandel, Rawls' expectation to the plurality of citizens in a society is problematic. By executing behind the veil of ignorance, Sandel argued that what people could not do is exactly to recognize their plurality. To be able to realize the plurality, differences must be recognizing in the first place. However, in Rawls' case, since all the predetermined characteristics of citizens in a society have been wiped out, and the citizens could not even know the social rules and predetermined goodness in the first place, there seems no possibility that one could make a conclusion different from another citizen and thus plurality of the subjects could not be recognized. Since there's no different points of view, there would be no disagreement; and with no disagreement, contracts and other social exchanges could not happen because all people would think in the same way and make the same conclusion in the end. Thus, the system Rawls constructed would become one he refused in the first place.

In MacIntyre's case, however, Rawls stands in a different position compared to where he is at in Sandel's understanding. To MacIntyre, Rawls is more of an example of the wrong path modern philosophy has taken and this mistake would inevitably endanger the whole system of contemporary philosophy, especially political philosophy. As MacIntyre argued, what philosophers should do is to summarize the characteristics of the society he or she is living in and based on the conclusion to see what is good and what is not for the whole society. After doing that, philosophers should redefine the definitions that may have changed during the change of societies. By having the definitions refreshed, philosophers could form new social theories based on the metaphysical characteristics they discovered in their time period. However, since modern period, philosophers, especially political philosophers, abandoned the seek of metaphysical

definition due to the "complexity and difficulties of having a convincing metaphysical definition to social institutions". This difficulty, to MacIntyre, is because of the lack of recognition of the temporal characteristic of metaphysical definitions. To MacIntyre, as argued above, even metaphysics would change from time to time. Thus, trying to define the society by using past metaphysical definitions could be a guaranteed failure because the old definitions could not grasp the true nature of new society and thus would cause difficulties in forming correct social theories. Rawls, as MacIntyre, argued, is a best example for such misunderstanding as Rawls only used the past metaphysical definitions blindly to prove the "flaws" in contemporary societies. However, because of the lack of understanding in the metaphysical facet of the societies, his arguments could not be convincing as other philosophers could always find the flaws within his theories.

Also, to MacIntyre, some philosophers have stepped into the mistake called "emotivism". Emotivism, as MacIntyre explained, is a kind of understanding of metaphysics which emphasized on the difficulties of metaphysics and thus give up upon metaphysics in the first place. Emotivism also denied the possibility of a right metaphysical definition to the whole society. To MacIntyre, such understanding could even be called laziness because they would not want to study on the change in societies and would not want to spend time rethink on the universality of metaphysical definitions. As MacIntyre argued, all things are temporary and thus even metaphysical definitions could not be ahistorical. During different time period, there could be different understandings toward a same metaphysical definition and both of them could be right in their own time period. Thus, it is possible for us to think of the correct metaphysical definition; while this definition is correct only in our time period. After 100 years, maybe

there could be new understandings to the same metaphysical issues and they could also be correct in their time period. Thus, not studying metaphysics is unacceptable to MacIntyre and Rawl, unfortunately, argued that metaphysical discussions is to be avoided because of the "lack of a convincing conclusion". Thus, from this perspective, MacIntyre refused Rawls.

Also, to MacIntyre, Rawls' theories could not reach the ideal state because he may miscalculate the human motives when doing something. By providing only the external goods, the citizens in Rawls' societies may not be working properly as he expected but would want to obtain more of the external goods by cheating or alternative ways. To Rawls, providing the primary social goods is enough for the citizens to work. However, as MacIntyre pointed out, primary social goods, just as all other names of the external goods, are only circumstantial and could be obtained from all different ways. For instance, one could both gain money from working in a factory and teaching in a school. However, these two different positions would provide different amount of social goods and they require different kinds of knowledge. To MacIntyre, if the external goods are the only purpose for citizens to do things, why would anyone want to do some job that could make them get less external goods? Also, since external goods are the only purpose of one's need for work, why would people keep work by rules but not try to cheat to get more? To these questions, MacIntyre argued that only by having the internal goods introduced and make people would like to pursue not only the external goods but also the internal goods, would people want to keep doing their own jobs in the right way because internal goods could only be obtained by properly doing the job they want to further the

internal goods. Rawls failed to recognize the importance of internal goods and that is another reason which MacIntyre refused the ideology of Rawls.

To me, what Rawls argued about metaphysics, though pointed out some of the long-lasting problems within the system of metaphysics, for instance, its controversary and lack of solid proof from one point of view to another. Also, some of the ideologies Rawls argued for is convincing and could be operated in our societies. The Veil of Ignorance and the Original Position it brings could help people see better about the inequalities and other flaws in a certain society. However, just as Sandel and MacIntyre pointed out, the whole system Rawls theories still rely heavily on the metaphysical backgrounds even if Rawls believed that his theories could operate without further metaphysical investigations. As Sandel and MacIntyre both argued, Rawls' priority of justice over goodness is still a metaphysical investigation rather than an empirical observation. The priority of justice could not be evaluated in a metaphysical way and thus could not convince other philosophers that justice could prevail goodness in contemporary societies. In another perspective, the pursuit of justice itself is still a pursuit of goodness. Though Rawls later argued that in his theory, justice should be considered as fairness, which is to pursue equality in external distributions and to gain the best outcome out of the worst situations, the reason for this priority has to be metaphysical. What exists in contemporary society does not necessarily mean that they are right or should be kept. In other words, though justice seems to be the first priority of citizens in contemporary societies, it could be the case that because of the lack of a convincing pursuing of goodness for everyone and left human beings no other choices but to respect the pursuit of each other instead. Thus, it seems that contemporary societies could operate

without a common goal of goodness and people would proceed with justice prior than goodness.

Also, just as MacIntyre argued, even to the same metaphysical terms, in different time periods, the meanings behind those terms could be different from one another. For instance, the definition to citizens have changed so many times from past to today and these differences have made our societies into a more comprehensive and equal system compared to the ancient societies. We no longer consider adult males as the only citizens or consider one certain religion as the only allowed belief in society. Thus, investigating contemporary societies based on old metaphysical definitions without further observation to its changes or viability could not bring a correct answer to the social problems. Rawls himself, though have discovered that some of the flaws of contemporary societies are within its "basic structures", chose not to touch the most fundamental part of the basic structure, which is the metaphysical background of contemporary societies. Just as MacIntyre pointed out, philosophers based on the observation to the metaphysical background to change the social theories and the change in social theories would then in return change metaphysical conceptions of the society. It is more of a mutual evolution for both political philosophy and metaphysical philosophy. However, what contemporary political philosophers, just as Rawls and Nozick, chose not to do so because they believed in the old metaphysical definitions did not need to change. Instead, Rawls chose to focus only on the external appearance of contemporary society and that could not bring any real change to the situation societies.

In all, what Rawls argued about the evasion of metaphysics by political philosophy has its own limits and the attempt of doing so could not bring political

philosophy complete, especially in contemporary society, as the whole system of contemporary political philosophy is an outcome of a long-lasting series of philosophical theories which wrongly interpreted the relationship between metaphysics and political philosophy in the first place. Political philosophy, to me, could not escape the continuous investigation given by metaphysics and only by this investigation of political philosophy could metaphysics continue to flourish. Thus, by having progress in metaphysical philosophy could people understand better about the political philosophy and bring real changes to the societies. The changes Rawls made are not totally futile, but the ones could really make changes to the society still rely on metaphysical explanations, which Rawls failed to give and thus makes his theories less convincing than it could be. In other words, the escape from metaphysics did exactly the opposite of what Rawls expected to do and what Rawls would want to establish could not be complete without the help of metaphysics.

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