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Chapter 3 Review-Louis Pojman

1. How does Pojman link ethnocentrism to relativism? Ethnocentrism is the uncritical belief in the inherent superiority of one’s own culture, as a variety of prejudice tantamount to racism and sexism. Today we condemn ethnocentrism, which has led to a decline in the belief of the idea of moral objectivism. The aim of relativism is to oppose the objectivity of values. In Louis Pojman’s essay, he is saying the condemnation of ethnocentrism has also led to fewer people believing in objectivism, which has led to a rise in relativism.
2. How does Pojman explain the way that the diversity thesis and the dependency thesis lead to relativism? We will start with the diversity thesis. Also known as cultural relativism, the diversity thesis is an anthropological thesis that holds to the fact that moral rules and values differ from society to society. There is enormous variety in what may count as a moral principle in a given society. If there are any moral principles held in common by every society, there are very few, at best. Now the dependency thesis states that individual acts are right or wrong depending on the nature of the society from which they emanate. What is considered morally right or wrong must depend on the goals, wants, needs, and history of the society in question. Trying to see things from an independent, non-cultural point of view would be the same as taking out our eyes to examine their contours.
3. How does Pojman explain the connection between cultural relativism and the idea of tolerance? From a relativistic point of view, there is no more reason to be tolerant than to be intolerant, and neither stance is objectively morally better than the other. If valid criticism supposes an objective or impartial standard, relativists cannot morally criticize anyone outside their own culture. So long as they are culturally accepted, Adolf Hitler’s genocidal actions were as morally legitimate as Mother Teresa’s works of mercy. If conventional relativism is accepted, racism, genocide of unpopular minorities, oppression of the poor, slavery, and advocation for war are all as equally morally acceptable as their opposites.