

Sweatshops & Insulting Offers

Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, it is *information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible position on an issue, rather than another.

Reading

Meyers, C. (2004, Fall). Wrongful beneficence: exploitation and third world sweatshops. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 35(3), 319-333.

Comment

You may find Chris Meyers' example of an insulting offer in this article to be sexually explicit, though Meyers' language itself is clinical. In any case, I will not go into all the graphic details of this example during class. However, we will spend at least a little time discussing what purpose Meyers might have for using such an extreme example in his argument.

Questions

As you read, keep these questions in mind:

1. Chris Meyers presents four conditions (P1, P2, P3, and P4) that seem to justify the morality of sweatshops.
What are these four conditions? Why might sweatshops seem to satisfy them all? (Hint: this should all be extremely familiar from our discussion of Ian Maitland's defense of sweatshops.)
2. Meyers examples revolve primarily around a hypothetical person named Jason and his entrepreneurial enterprise, The Desert Rescue Service.
Why do Jason's interactions with his "customers" (like Carole) seem to satisfy P1-P4? Even so, what is Meyers' argument that Jason's actions are nevertheless immoral and exploitative?
3. Meyers repeatedly says that his use of the example about Jason is not an argument by analogy.
If this is true, what does Meyers' example of Jason have to do with sweatshops? In particular, how is this example supposed to show that sweatshops exploit their workers?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.