

Health, Development & Human Rights

Oh Dearism

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the readings:

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 conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

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.

Reading

- Dale Jamieson, “Duties to the Distant: Aid, Assistance, and Intervention in the Developing World”.

Questions

1. According to Dale Jamieson, what are the difference between humanitarian aid, development assistance, and humanitarian intervention?
2. Why is Jamieson skeptical of these three common ways of discharging a duty to help those in extreme poverty?
3. Adam Curtis, a British documentarian and writer, coined the term “oh dearism” to refer to the helplessness that people feel when confronted with the stark realities concerning foreign aid and the complexities surrounding its seeming ineffectiveness. Do Jamieson’s arguments encourage a feeling of oh dearism? Can his two principles, presented at the end the article, help overcome such a pessimistic view?