POLITICAL & SOCIAL THOUGHT

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The Value of Equality

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 premises, assumptions, reasons, evidence, and other important considerations 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 and justify accepting the author's conclusions as opposed to other ones.

Reading 📖

Scanlon, T. M. (n.d.). When Does Equality Matter? [Unpublished manuscript.] Retrieved December 27, 2018, from https://law. yale.edu/system/files/documents/pdf/Intellectual_Life/ltw-Scanlon.pdf. (Original work from c.2004.)

Questions ❓

1. What are the two features that Thomas Scanlon identifies with "genuine egalitarian reasons" (p. 7)?
2. In this paper, Scanlon considers five different reasons for rejecting inequalities. (He summarizes them on p. 18.)

    What are these five reasons? How are they different from each other? Which ones (if any) are supported by genuine egalitarian reasons and which (if any) are not?
3. Finally, Scanlon makes a "linkage" type of argument to show that "equality of opportunity [which Libertarians favor]… serves as an egalitarian Trojan horse" because it requires "if not 'equality of outcomes' then at least something much closer to it than we have seen" (pp. 22–23).

    What is Scanlon's argument to justify how greater equality of opportunity requires greater equality of outcomes?

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 (unless you miss or are late to class, and must then submit a written reading question review).

You do need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting. You may, during the following class, be randomly selected to present answers to these if selected to do so for a verbal reading question review.