Some motivations for Egalitarian Liberalism:

1. A purely consequentialist conception of justice won't work; people's basic rights and liberties should be protected.

       (Remember the Survival Lottery, or chopping up Ryan to redistribute his organs.)

2. A purely historical conception of justice won't work; we need some constraints on the end state.
       -Resources shouldn't be distributed on the basis of arbitrary, morally irrelevant factors like
       race, gender, sex, etc. – or even on the basis of natural talents or aptitudes. It should be *fair*.
       (Remember the sexist shopkeeper who only hires men.)

Rawls' two principles:

> 1. Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme for all.
>
> 2. "Social and economic inequalities" are to be arranged so that they are:
>   (a) attached to positions open to all under conditions of "fair equality of opportunity"
>   and
>   (b) to the greatest possible benefit of the least advantaged members of society (the "Difference Principle")

-(1) guarantees that we won't have survival lottery cases.
-But (1) by itself would allow discriminatory practices that systematically disadvantage certain groups; (2a) prevents that.
-And even with (1) and (2a), naturally talented people could still end up with a huge advantage, which Rawls thinks is unfair. (2b) prevents that.

Note: The first principle takes "**lexical priority**" over the second. That means that the first principle *must* be satisfied before we even worry about satisfying the second principle; there can't be tradeoffs between them. *No* inequalities are justified if the first principle is not satisfied.

Th e Original Position and the Veil of Ignorance:
In addition to thinking his two principles are independently plausible, Rawls also gives another argument for them: he argues that these principles would be the result of a particular process that guarantees a just outcome.

Rawls' method:

> Imagine that we are all rational agents in the "**original position**", behind the "**veil of ignorance**". This means that we don't know what many things about ourselves: for example, age, race, sex, physical abilities, mental abilities, religious values, and "conception of the Good". How would we agree to structure our society? Whatever principles we agree on are the right principles of justice.

The original position thought experiment is designed to do two things:

> (a) Ensure that the principles are ones that rational agents would all accept.
>> (Rawls' view is a **social contract theory**; for him, society is something we enter into for mutual benefit and it should be structured in a way that we can all agree to.)
> (b) Ensure that irrelevant factors don't influence the distribution.

According to Rawls, his two principles are what we'd agree on from the original position.

Rawls thinks that the fact that this method yields *plausible outcomes* provides support for the method; the fact that a *plausible method* yields Rawls' principles provides support for Rawls' principles. The process of balancing the method and its outcomes against one another, and revising each in light of the other, is called "**reflective equilibrium**".

Questions to think about:
1. Do Rawls' principles seem plausible on their own?

2. Is Rawls' thought experiment a good way to determine the right principles?
> -Does the original position abstract away from the right features?
> -Does it abstract away from too much? How can we agree on anything when we know so little about ourselves?

3. Would rational agents behind the veil of ignorance actually agree to Rawls' principles?
> -Why wouldn't they agree to maximize expected utility, for example?

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