Lecture 19  Reading Questions

“Justice & the Social Ethos”

Reading:

“The Basic Structure Objection.”

Chapter 3 in “Rescuing Justice and Equality” by G.A. Cohen

(1) What does Cohen mean when he claims that “the personal is political”?

(2) According to Cohen, the “incentives argument” for inequality involves a distorted application of the difference principle. Why?

(3) What is the justification for making the basic structure of society the “primary subject of justice”? Does this justification warrant the claim that only a society’s basic structure can be just or unjust?

(4) Can a society be more or less just depending on the (lawful) career choices people make? Can a society be more or less just depending on the (lawful) marital practices people adopt? Can a society be more or less just depending on the attitudes that parents adopt towards male and female children?