Reflection Prompts Week 10

Last Friday/Monday Reading
Read Sartre’s ‘Bad Faith’ in Pojman and reflect on the following:

• What is consciousness? What is bad faith? What is sincerity and is it possible?

• Briefly describe Sartre’s example of the exchange between the homosexual and his friend/critic and explain how both exhibit patterns of bad faith. How could the homosexual give a good faith response to his critic? (pp. 505-506)

Wednesday/Friday Reading
Read Rawls’ ‘A Theory of Justice’ in Pojman and reflect any of the following:

• What are the features or characteristics of the person behind the veil of ignorance? That is, what does Rawls assume about their motivations? What do they know and not know?

• Both Nietzsche and Sartre criticize efforts of modern philosophers to recover quasi-Christian concepts of human nature and/or principles of social justice independently of theological claims. Is Rawls’ attempt to ground the basic principles of social justice on a hypothetical choice made behind the veil of ignorance subject to these criticisms? Why or why not?

• According to Rawls, how does the difference principle “transform the aims” of the basic structure of society such that its institutions no longer emphasize “social efficiency and technocratic values” (p. 430)?

• Would Heidegger agree that adopting Rawls’ theory of justice would transform the “emasculating of spirit”, which he took to be characteristic of American society? (pp. 495-496) Why or why not?