The Challenge of Cultural Relativism Reading Notes

* Different Cultures Have Different Moral Codes
  + “Sophisticated outlook should appreciate between cultures”
  + What is thought as right in one group may horrify members of another group
  + If we assume that our ethical ideas will be shared by all cultures, we are merely being naive
* Cultural Realism
  + There are no universal moral truths
  + To call a custom right or wrong would imply that one can judge that custom by a standard of right or wrong not connected to a certain culture
  + Every standard is culture-bound
  + Claims made by cultural relativists
    - Different societies have different moral codes
    - The moral code of one society determines what is right and wrong in that particular society
    - No objective standard
    - The moral code of one society is not better than another
    - Arrogant to judge other cultures but alway be tolerant
  + Cultural relativists take pride in their tolerance
* Cultural Differences Argument
  + Employ a certain form of argument
    - Begin with facts about cultures and end by drawing a conclusion about morality
  + For a good argument to be sound, its premises must all be true and the conclusion must logically follow them.
* What Follows from Cultural Relativism
  + Consequences
    - No longer determine that customs from other cultures are morally inferior to ours
    - No longer criticise the code of our own society
    - The idea of moral progress is called into doubt
  + These consequences have lead to many rejecting the idea
* Why There is Less Disagreement That It Seems
  + Cultural Relativism= watching cultures differ in views of right and wrong
    - Differences can easily be exaggerated
  + Many factors work together to create the customs of a society
  + Society values are not only important but so are religious and factual beliefs and the environment
  + “Cultures may differ in what they regard as legitimate exceptions to rules but disagreement exists against a broad background of agreement”
  + Not every moral rule varies from society to society
* Judging a Cultural Practice to Be Undesirable
  + Does this practice promote or hinder the welfare of the people affected by it?
* What We Can Learn From Cultural Relativism
  + Warns about the danger of assuming that all practices are based on a universal rational standard
  + Keep an open mind
  + Many of the practices and attitudes we find natural are really only cultural products
  + Avoid arrogance and be open to new ideas