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**BOOK REVIEW: ETHICAL THEORIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS
TO INDONESIA
(TEORI-TEORI ETIKA DAN SUMBANGANNYA BAGI INDONESIA)**

Johny Christian Ruhullessin: Sleman; 2020; 978-979-21-6686-6; Xiii + 162

The book entitled *Ethical Theories and Their Contributions to Indonesia*, written by Johny Christian Ruhullessin, aimed to rethink ethical ideas from leading ethical figures, such as Stanley Hauerwas, Max L. Stackhouse, Charles McCoy, Ronald Thiemma, and Robert N. Bellah. The ethical ideas of these figures have become very popular in the social and political fields, especially in sciences and theology. However, there is an impression that ethical education refers to studying the Bible as the only standard of life. Of course, it is not wrong, but ethics cannot be understood only by standards and the law. Ethics is a scientific disability, a theory that evaluates the effectiveness of actions based on responsibility or obligation (1).

The author writes the book to give so much knowledge to or all levels of society and various religions. What is the goal of the book for those who believe in religion? According to the author, faith was born of ethical culture to be successful in conversation with men at the highest level, so religion does not belong to the community only, but the people in general.

The book provides new information for the review related to the *social gospel* in Latin America. According to the authors, *the social gospel* contributes significantly to Christianity in Amerika. The *social gospel* is called a uniquely American movement established as a reaction to the significant influences of modern industrial society and a reaction to the thinking developed in American Protestantism during the half-century after the Civil War. Besides, everyone who

reads the book will feel a fresh atmosphere regarding the history and concepts of ethics, especially that of the United States. Some of the thoughts mentioned are based on the social conditions of American society. It was undoubtedly so exciting about how America is known as a liberal country, but there are also religious issues that have accompanied the history that country.

It is important to review a book by Johny Christian Ruhlessin because it includes many aspects of social ethics. Besides, it is important because the book's contents could open people's minds and give an insight that ethics is not just rooted in religion and the Bible. In addition, to its complex use of stereotypes, the book is so important to be reviewed, especially for the Indonesian people, because the discussion is concerned about how ethical theories contribute to Indonesian society from a historical perspective. The results of this review can be used as a reference for looking at ethical and social issues in Indonesia through various examples presented, such as historical parables and Christian examples.

Overall, the book does not complete the reader-specific needs or targets set by the author. The author aimed the book at people in general and from various religions. But, in the other hand, the book often uses Christian parameters only. This is not totally wrong. However, if it refers to the targeted group, the book will be irrelevant.

Although the book has an irrelevant point, it provides interesting information about *the social gospel* in America. Nowadays, America is a free or liberal country, where people's freedoms are highly respected. However, it should be noted that there are many issues related to religion, especially about ethical concepts derived from religion and the experience of thinkers such as Reinhold or, like Gustavo, who inherited from group problems. This, of course, is interesting, given that America is known today as a free nation. However, behind the scenes, there are still religious issues that consider the country's history.

For the reader, the book has a considerable influence, especially in opening up perspectives. The influence can be seen from both sides. First, there is an understanding that shows that ethics is not limited to religious values. As Reinhold points out, "understanding ethical concepts requires discovering social science, ideology, and theology." Then, there is the second influence: the book invites the

reader to open the fact that history and social experience can influence people's thoughts. In addition, Reinhold's ethical ideas that are influenced by the socio-political changes, his experience, and his observations in the community also be an interesting part of the book.

Then, how does this story influence the reader's mind? For readers, the impact is that the book could open up ideas and insights widely. For example, in terms of ethical concepts, one can often see that ethical ideas are associated with the growing religious values in the community or group of people who practice them. However, the author tried to give more knowledge to the readers that ethics is not limited to theological sciences. According to Reinhold, in understanding the ethical concept, it is also necessary to go along with the socialist, ideological, and scientific discoveries of historical experience for this understanding to become valid. In other words, the reader should understand that ethical thinking is not limited to religious values.

With the theoretical hypothesis said that ethics is not only limited to academic values, there is also some evidence related to these theories and statements. Examples of Reinhold's linguistic theory of love-justice, e.g., Linguistic science occurs when the foundations of culture, social order become shaky. Reinhold is known for his critique of freedom, which refuses to recognize human limitations. He also criticized democracy. Reinhold's theory of democracy states that an open society with checks and balances is opposed to power. This is in line with what he says is the essence of Christian truth, that human capacity for justice makes democracy necessary, but human tendency to act unjustly makes democracy even more critical.

The accuracy of this evidence should undoubtedly be credited because there are still many examples that emerge in the realities of society. Just as people constantly torment influential people, this can certainly be seen through the ethical patterns in science and society. It is the same with liberalism, which may be considered a departure from religious ethics because people often transcend the limits of freedom that lead to violations of religious rules. As well as the social environment, their rules often violated because they are considered a restriction of rights and freedoms.

According to this writing, the ethical theory was divided into six figures. Those figures agreed to think that ethics is not limited to the sciences, but the social changes can affect it. For example, based on Reinhold Niebuhr's opinions, the ethical theory came up with the idea of the eternal language form of a *love-the-eternity* of Jesus's ethics. As mentioned in the first part of page 25, the ethics of Jesus is the ethics of the individual, not the ethics of the individual. Jesus's ethics is an ethic of love and, it was a symbol of social relations. In addition, regarding the Bible's position in Reinhold's ideas, the Bible is a source of true faith or belief, but the Bible is not the final solution for judgment or moral judgment.

The second figure stated in the book is Gustavo Gutierrez, with thoughts on science liberation. On page 39, the book stated, although Gustavo was a theorist, Gustavo's vision was undoubtedly focused on the problems of oppression and poverty in Latin America. Third, Stanley Hauerwas with the same idea as Reinhold's Christian Realism. It was stated on page 67, Christian Realism contributes much to the issue of moral discrimination.

Then, there are Max Stackhouse and Ronald Thiemman. Both have socially ethical directions represented in theology and public ethics. Part of their activity is to make the church a forum to promote science and public ethics as a legal basis for society and institutions. The fifth is Robert N Bellah, an Asian-focused ethicist. Public ethics is based on tradition and on the individual, as mentioned on page 99. Finally, it was Charles McCoy who proposed a "covenant" approach to his public ethics. This approach depends on the loyalty of the group and the individual. The treaty is still rooted in Latin American tradition. He compares this covenant to godly devotion in Christianity and the responsibility to fulfill personal obligations.

According to the writing style, the author writes all of the content in a simple way. Then, in terms of systematic writing, the book is divided into several sections, which describe the character and the ideas of each figure. However, if it refers to its general target audience from various religions, this book will be a challenge because there are many Christian languages and strange words.

In general, there is one thing that writers need to complete. It was the contribution of ethical theory to Indonesia in particular. Lack of education and facts explaining the ethical problems in Indonesia so that the ethical theory of the figures

above can make such a significant contribution. There are only a few issues of ethics and social policy in Indonesia described in the book. It is only said that the book will challenge readers in Indonesia to explain the social, cultural, historical, and eclectic gaps of Indonesia's various ethnic groups.

The advantages of reading Johny's book are that the paradigm used is not limited to one paradigm. Instead, the paradigm used is the philosophical paradigm, specifically about ethics and the historical paradigm. This is shown from the respective sections that describe the thoughts and individuals of a firm in terms of philosophical thinking and their respective histories. In addition, the use of language that is packaged in a simple language style is one of the added values, considering that this book is intended for ordinary audiences from various groups.

However, behind these book's advantages, there are several weaknesses too. First, the philosophical paradigm used is more towards the Christian philosophical paradigm. This is somewhat inaccurate because the target readers of this book are people from various religious groups. In addition, the contribution of ethical theories to Indonesia is still not substantial. The last section discusses "The Relevance of Ethical Thinking," which is not described well and also not complete yet. The studies, facts, and implementation of ethical theories for Indonesia are also not mentioned in detail. This can be a source of confusion for the reader.

To improve and perfect this paper and subsequent writings, the reviewer provides some suggestions and criticisms that are expected to be helpful for the author. First, there seems to be an adjustment of the writing paradigm with the target audience. If the writer chooses a target with a high plurality, it would be better if the book's paradigm is expanded. Second, it is necessary to reinforce the crucial points in several parts of the book. In this context, there is no strengthening of studies, facts, and implementation of ethical theories and their contribution to Indonesia. These points can be crucial and beneficial points for readers, especially for the Indonesian people.

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The author of a book entitled Ethical Theories and Their Contribution to Indonesia is Pdt. Dr. Johny Christian Ruhlessin, M.Sc., was born in Amahai, Maluku, January 24, 1957. He is a senior lecturer at the Theology Faculty of UKIM Ambon. He is active as Chair of the Maluku Red Cross (PMI) and has served as Chair of the GPM Synod in 2005-2010 and 2010-2015. Dr. Johny has written various books, including *Menggali dari Tradisi Pela di Maluku* (2005), *Pluralisme Berwajah Humanis* (2007), *Gereja dan Kepemimpinan Publik* (2016), *Mencari Cita Ke-Indonesiaan* (2018), *Organisasi dan Misi Gereja*, and *Teori-Teori Etika dan Sumbangannya bagi Indonesia* (2020).