



Critical Social Justice Hub

Telos vs The Oppressors



Where does the problem lie?

There are problems that this world creates. The natural habitat of mortality is rife with problems. It is not a fair playground. We are meant to learn and navigate through this life through faith, repentance, and growing toward our God-given potential. This requires work on ourselves.

"Instead of being judgmental about others, we should be concerned about ourselves. . . We are children of God, and it is possible for us to become what our Heavenly Father would have us become."

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks

What is Telos?

The ability to grow, to learn, to repent and to become more like the Savior. This is an internal, personal problem that magnifies the direct relationship we have with our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ. This objective lies at the heart of the Plan of Salvation and is an infinitely higher value than the problem that lies "out there." Telos is moving toward the end like in the Temple. Growing from phase to phase and line upon line.

Telos is taking personal responsibility for the opportunity of our potential. It is accepting that growth requires growing pains. It is faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for each of us individually. It is hope in a "final cause", state of becoming, and destination. It is Charity toward others in helping them progress through their own telos.



“This is My Work And My Glory”

Our “telos” is God’s purpose. “This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” For the Religion of Academia, this would be replaced with something like, “This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the emancipation and liberation of man from the oppressors.” This is what Critical Social Justice teaches. This shows us very succinctly how it would not only change the meaning of our lives but change God Himself.

*For Aristotle, the end (telos)
was also the cause.*

*Telos is the “supreme end
of man’s endeavor.”*

- Cicero

The Plan of Salvation & The Problem of Injustice

There is another problem. It is unfairness and the injustice of mankind or even natural law. The question is, what is the context of such adversity? Is the overthrow of such injustice the greatest purpose of life? Or is it our reaction and growth through the adversity? Both exist. Which do we focus on? Which is most important. When the rubber hits the road, which do we place at the top of the meaning of our existence? Jesus and His gospel teach that the primary problem lies in your own personal salvation first. Nothing trumps your own agency and personal responsibility for who you are becoming.

Critical Social Justice seeks to invert these values and places the primary problem and objective of our existence “out there” instead of within ourselves.

Fallen Man & Values Hierarchy

Granted, there is oppression. There are injustices. To deny that is to deny reality. However, Critical Social Justice teaches that the primary focus is “justice” over your own agency. We can think about it this way-- We are all fallen beings, is the primary purpose of the Plan of Salvation to deflect from my own agency and personal responsibility as a fallen man or woman and convert my purpose to blaming other fallen men and women and their agency?

If the adversary can keep us distracted with others' faults and choices, then it can keep us from taking control of our own agency. Our own lives. What need do I have of introspection, faith, repentance, and spiritual growth if I can see the world through a lens of blame assigned to others? If I can be “antiracist” and fight for “justice” I am placing the problem of fallen man off of my own shoulders while attempting to feel moral by changing, fixing, even compelling others.

This is the difference between personal responsibility and blaming others. Blaming others is a way of deflecting responsibility and placing the blame on someone else. It's a form of victim mentality that keeps us from taking control of our lives and making positive changes.

The order in which we place these issues, and to which we primarily give our focus, effort, time, and energy, determines how we live our lives and where we place the problem of fallen man. Is the problem of our journey first other fallen men and women and their decisions, or is it first me as a fallen man or woman and my own “becoming”? My own agency?

Placing The Problem “Out There”

With Social Justice, the problem isn't primarily with you, rather it is “out there”. The problem is in the systems and therefore we can remove it from our own shoulders. If I can put the problem onto others, then I deflect my own personal work toward salvation.

We are all fallen together but now I can worry less about sacrifice, repentance, etc. It' others that need to repent and their systems that need to be changed. My new identity then is as an ally or direct victim of others who seek to hold back my “liberation” of all things. My “true” nature. My “truth”.

Conclusion

So, where does the primary problem lie? Is it with the oppressors who keep us down, or is it with ourselves? When we invert these values, we lose truth, purpose, and identity.