

John Rawls' version of contractarianism can be applied to the world of *The Evening and the Morning and the Night*. One must decide whether it is more just for society to have widespread cancer. Alternatively, we must consider if it is more just for cancer to be cured, but at the cost of introducing a genetic disease like Duryea-Gode Disease (DGD). While curing cancer benefits the majority, it creates a severe burden on those who inherit or contract DGD. Using Rawl's difference principle, inequalities are only just if they benefit the least advantaged members of society. In this case, individuals with DGD are not only disadvantaged, but they are subjected to institutionalized discrimination, forced sterilization, and involuntary confinement. In some cases, fear of DGD is so extreme that false alarms occur, subjecting even healthy individuals to discrimination. Their suffering neither improves their own situation nor provides them with the means to enhance their social standing. Therefore, the society depicted in the story does not meet the contractarian standard of fairness. A truly just society would ensure that the burdens created by the cure for cancer are not disproportionately placed upon a small, powerless group.

From behind the veil of ignorance, rational individuals may prefer a world where cancer remains, if only because the alternative results in a permanent underclass of DGD sufferers who face systemic injustice. However, this conclusion is not inevitable. If institutions existed to ensure equal rights, no-discrimination, and fair opportunities for DGD individuals, then society with DGD might be considered just. But as the story portrays, DGD sufferers are instead isolated, stripped of autonomy, and treated as a danger rather than full members of society, failing the contractarian test of fairness.

Lynn's position in the story further complicates contractarian reasoning. From behind the veil of ignorance, she would likely support the existence of an institution like the Dilg Center,

provided it genuinely prioritizes the well-being and autonomy of DGD sufferers rather than merely containing them. A just society would ensure that individuals with the disorder have institutions that support them rather than merely control them. However, contractarianism does not demand that any one individual bear the entire burden of maintaining a just society. While Lynn may feel a moral pull and have the abilities that make her well-suited to run the Dilg Center, contractarianism does not impose this duty upon her. A just society should provide incentives, not coercion or social manipulation, for individuals to take on necessary roles. Instead, the burden of running the Dilg Center should be distributed fairly, allowing individuals like Lynn to participate by choice rather than societal obligation. If Lynn were required to run the Center simply because she is capable, she would be subject to the same predetermined fate and lack of agency that the rest of society imposes on DGD sufferers. This would violate the fundamental contractarian principle that all individuals should have equal opportunity to pursue their own goals. A truly fair contractarian society would create systems that ensure the success of institutions like the Dilg Center without forcing individuals into roles they do not want.

Through the lens of contractarianism, the society in *The Evening and the Morning and the Night* is fundamentally unjust. The eradication of cancer does not justify the extreme suffering imposed upon DGD individuals, particularly given their lack of social power and autonomy. From behind the veil of ignorance, rational individuals would likely reject this social contract unless alternative institutions were in place to protect and support those burdened by DGD. For example, a government-supported DGD Rights Act ensuring non-discrimination, medical freedom, and voluntary leadership in institutions like the Dilg Center. A society following contractarianism would provide DGD individuals with the means to shape their own institutions and participate in society as equals, rather than coercion into predetermined roles.

Contractarianism, particularly Rawlsian principles, suggest that fairness must come first at the institutional level, ensuring individuals have the freedom to choose their own paths. Even if the benefits of curing cancer outweigh the harms of DGD, this would still not justify inequalities that fail to benefit the least advantaged, those with DGD. Society in the story fails this test, as DGD individuals like Lynn are left with few real choices, making the world Butler presents far from the just society that contractarianism envisions.