

Abstract

The aim of the present thesis is to answer the following question: How does the relationship between the individual and society change in Rawls' work? Does the link between the individual and society strengthen, weaken or change in another way? The author discusses other questions, too, namely the specifics of Rawls' theory and his liberalism as well as the criticism of Rawls. The author focuses on two crucial texts – *The Theory of Justice*, Rawls' debut book, and *Political Liberalism*. In order to answer these questions, the author first analyses *The Theory of Justice* and the relationship between the individual and society in this work, and then places this relationship within the context of a philosophical debate, which stems from the criticism of the work. It is liberals and communitarians who engage in this debate. The author also mentions Robert Nozick, a representative of libertarians, and his critique. Liberals (Rawls) hold the view that one's identity is more significant than society, and thus advocate the individualistic image of the universal man who has appropriate rights. Communitarians, on the other hand (MacIntyre, Sandel, Taylor, Walzer), advocate the image of a person whose identity is a priori derived from the society that the person belongs to. Hence, communitarians strive for the good of the entire society rather than the good of the individual. The author then proceeds to an analysis of the main ideas contained in another work of Rawls', *Political Liberalism*. The relationship between the individual and society is analysed with respect to this text. In conclusion, the author draws a comparison between the two types of relationships as they are described in the corresponding texts, and explains how they have changed. Other research questions are answered as well.