

# Famine, affluence, and morality

[Philosophy](#)



Article Review: Peter Singer Q1. In this article, Singer aims to bring the reality of the poverty situation to light. He indicates that poverty is a phenomenon that can be rectified without much effort on the part of developed countries. In third world countries, adequate services and infrastructure are not readily available. Disaster response is also limited, reducing the countries' ability to provide for its people. Contributing towards these eventualities is considered charity, which means the voluntary diversion of funds towards such assistance. In his opinion, helping one another is human nature and we should scrap the notion that helping other people in itself means going out of one's way to do so (Singer, 1972). In his argument, Singer explains that the concept of charity is there to protect interests that do not need protecting. Instead, helping out should be incorporated into standard human behavior, but only in cases where such help is not detrimental to the person offering help or their family. In essence, he tries to push the idea of a global race and delimiting the tackling of global issues on basis of geographical boundaries. Q2. Giving without compromise would mean sacrificing one's own luxuries for the elevation of someone else's lifestyle. In the case of modern charity, there is the issue of geographical and racial boundaries that separate the more privileged countries from the ones that need their help. This, however, should not be an issue, owing to our singular goals as humanity. Considering the disparities in the quality of life between these two and the push for the standardization of this value, we should strive to improve access to services across the board. He argues that we should not, however, significantly detriment our own lifestyles and those of our dependents when striving to attain this equilibrium. Economic growth is a principle whose necessity is preached by <https://assignbuster.com/famine-affluence-and-morality/>

economists in every country. The issue of economic growth and its impact on the continued marginalization of some countries, however, does not come up when discussing global poverty. Singer recognizes the fact that economic differences are the cause of the poverty gap between nations and recognizes the need for a reformation of our social frameworks. The establishment of processes to equitably distribute world wealth is one of the key ways in which this end can be achieved. Human beings are conditioned to think of their personal well-being before making decisions that affect the external world. This selfishness and need to establish one's dominance in the economic scene is one of the leading reasons for the economic pyramids that formulate our economies. In his argument, Singer stipulates the contribution formula that would best handle this phenomenon. According to Singer's argument, the continued contribution of a little cash from the budget of every well-off employed individual would reduce the economic gaps substantially. Q3. Singer's concept of marginal gain bases its concept on the fact that charity to assist the less privileged would start with a slow reception. With continued efforts directed towards a new form of charity, the marginal utility rule stipulates that the need for charity would reduce with an increase in the amount of charity work done (Schmidtz, 2000). His theory revolves around the fact that continued support would render the need for such support unnecessary. Subsequently, his theory depends on the continuation of this support and the selflessness of the individuals that are funding this support system. Q4. In a sense, the world depicted in Singer's article proposes a semi-utopian world in which we all empathize with the suffering of other people. In a sense, his ideas would mean the establishment of new frameworks for the enhancement of economic

activities with emphasis on individual economic well-being. We would also have a reduction in personal earnings and a decreased emphasis on the economic power on a county-to-country level. While these are drastic changes to consider, the result would be an equitable society with a standardized quality of life across continents. Q5. The disparity between different countries in today's society is the cause of most of the problems that we experience today. Singer presents the idea of a world without boundaries, where problems are tackled according to their global importance, not according to the geographical proximity. Achieving this, however, is a whole other matter. People are innately positioned to consider their own well-being ahead of others (Chao, 2010). The issue of boundaries also limits how proximal people feel an issue is to them, limiting their willingness to act. The implementation of Singer's idea requires a lot of change in the way we deal with global issues. It will surely come under fire in its initial stages but if we were to adopt the approach suggested in this paper, we will be well on our way to the true image of globalization; equitability on all fronts and access to adequate services for all. References Chao, R. (2010). Does Singer's " Famine, Affluence and Morality" Inescapably Commit Us to His Conclusion? . *The Journal of Philosophy, Science & Law* . 3, 1-10. Schmidtz, D. (2000). Diminishing Marginal Utility and Egalitarian Redistribution. *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 5, 263-272. Singer, P. (1972). Famine, Affluence, and Morality. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. 1, 229-243. Walzer, M. (2011). On Humanitarianism: Is Helping Others Charity, or Duty, or Both? *Foreign Affairs*, 2, 69-80.