

# Human conduct and value final exam

[Philosophy](#)



11 December Human Conduct and Value Final Exam Why does James Rachels believe we should be vegetarians? How is Mark Bittman's argument different? Which moral theories inform each author's argument? There are two reasons that James Rachels believes we should be vegetarians. First, the production of meat protein is inefficient and results in the waste of enough protein-rich grain to solve the world's hunger problems, because the process of turning the grain to meat is 87.5 percent wasteful (184-5). Second, the treatment of animals that the United States uses for the food supply is predominately cruel and abusive (186-90). The methods of productions are justified as a means to an end and because they are "economical" (190). Rachels believes that the meat production industry uses Kant's theory of "The Categorical Imperative", that morality only applies to human beings, to justify their actions (187). However, Rachels' argument supports Utilitarianism by spreading the protein across the world to even out consumption and deliver the greatest good for all. Mark Bittman's argument focuses on the costs of meat production. Bittman measures the costs not only in terms of dollars, but also in terms of what mankind sacrifices in the process of producing the meat. He states that "these assembly-line meat factories consume enormous amounts of energy, pollute water supplies, generate significant greenhouse gases and require ever-increasing amounts of corn, soy, and other grains" (Bittman). Social Contract Theory informs Bittman's argument. Everyone would need to agree to consume no or less meat in order for it to work. The basis of this act would be informing and creating an understanding of the challenges and by-products of meat production to allow people to make informed decisions about personal eating habits.

2) Why does Don Marquis believe abortion is immoral? Don Marquis

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believes abortion is immoral because he defines it in terms of extreme and irreversible individual loss. He first asserts that the reason murder of an adult is wrong is because it “ deprives one of all the experiences, activities, projects, and enjoyments that would otherwise have constituted one’s future” (110). Marquis indicates that if this is true for adults, than it must also be true for children and infants, “ for we do presume that they have futures of value” (112). Marquis asserts that the reasoning which leads one to apply the logic to children and infants should lead one to include fetuses in the argument as well and that “ it follows that abortion is prima facie seriously morally wrong” (113).

3) Why does Mary-Anne Warren believe abortion is morally acceptable? How does she define personhood? Mary-Anne Warren believes that abortion is morally acceptable because the rights of a woman who is a present, fully aware person outweigh “ whatever right to life a fetus may have by virtue of its potential personhood” (105). Warren asserts that even a fully developed fetus does not meet the criteria of personhood, and that “ neither a fetus’s resemblance to a person, nor its potential for becoming a person provides any basis whatever for the claim that it has any significant right to life” (105). Mary-Anne Warren defines personhood by five minimum criteria: 1) consciousness, including the ability to feel pain, 2) a developed ability to reason, 3) self-motivated activity, 4) a capacity and proclivity to communicate in a variety of ways, and 5) self-awareness (100). While Warren concurs that not all five must necessarily be met to determine personhood, she states “ that any being which satisfies none of (1)-(5) is certainly not a person” (101).

4) Why is Garrett Hardin against helping the poor? What ethical concept from class does he use to make his argument? Garrett Hardin is against helping the poor because he

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believes that doing so disrupts the natural order of life on earth. He asserts that withholding aid would allow the world's population to stabilize (5). One example he gives is the current population growth in India, stating that “ every Indian life saved through medical or nutritional assistance from abroad diminishes the quality of life for those who remain, and for subsequent generations” (6). Hardin believes that our obligation should be to future generations and ourselves, and that responsibility for maintaining a reasonable standard of living resides within the government of each country. Natural Law Theory, the idea that there are universal edicts that govern behavior, supports Hardin's argument. People acting out of self-preservation and unable to rely on others for sustenance would make choices that support survival. Additionally, under the application of Social Contract Theory, everyone working under the same rules for the same outcome would allow a mutually advantageous result. 5) Explain Peter Singer's shallow pond analogy in “ What Should a Billionaire Give.” What theory is he utilizing in this example? The shallow pond analogy in “ What Should a Billionaire Give?” discusses the obligation of society to step in and make morally appropriate decisions even when those decisions cause minimal inconvenience or trouble. In the example, one's shoes may be ruined by saving a child who has fallen into a shallow pond and is drowning (271). Later in his article, he poses the idea that the extent to which the right choice creates inconvenience should not matter and that one should not base one's decisions on what others do or do not do, when posing a situation of fifty children drowning versus just one. In this example, fifty adults present at the event could save one child each, but only half accept the task. Singer asserts that it is still morally wrong to let the other children drown, even though “ we <https://assignbuster.com/human-conduct-and-value-final-exam/>

have done our fair share” (279). If others do not step up and make the right moral choices, but it is still in one’s power to act appropriately, one should do so. Singer’s example embodies Utilitarianism. Saving a child is a worthy action and superior to not ruining one’s shoes. This choice, when compared to the alternatives, maximizes overall happiness. 6) In “ Billionaire” Peter Singer encounters a cab driver who believes that people shouldn’t feel morally obligated to give to the poor. Explain Singer’s response to this argument. In “ Billionaire”, the cab driver who believes that people should not feel morally obligated to give to the poor asserts that each individual is entitled to do whatever he wants with the money that he earned.

Conversely, Singer believes that a person’s earning potential is largely due to “ favorable social circumstances” which are often outside that person’s control (270). He argues that not helping the poor when one is wealthy is morally wrong, because one has the choice to make a difference and assist but does not (271). 7) Why does Jonathan Rauch believe that gay marriage benefits straights and gays? What theory of marriage is he advocating?

Jonathan Rauch believes that marriage benefits straights and gays because it accomplishes two key objectives in society: “ domesticating men and providing reliable caregivers” (177-8). In addition, heterosexual couples may be able to have children, but this limitation should not preclude gays from marriage. Rauch defines marriage as a contract between the couple and society, indicating that the obligations arising from the union extend beyond the couple in a social responsibility that requires spouses to hold each other in check (180). His argument suggests that disallowing gay partners to marry hinders the ability of part of the community to accept this responsibility, which eventually could place more of a burden on society when things go

physically or emotionally wrong. Rauch's position is indicative of Social Contract Theory. In his idea society, marriage of any sort of couple willing to accept the accompanying social responsibilities would be acceptable in light of the benefits returned to the community. 8) What do you believe is the most significant point in bell hooks's "Liberating Marriage and Partnership?" Is her argument convincing? The most significant point in bell hooks' "Liberating Marriage and Partnership" is that "patriarchal male domination in marriage and partnerships has been the primary force creating breakups and divorces in our society" (84). Her argument includes examples of sexual independence, parenting and motherhood, calling out the societal norms that define the differences for the male and female roles. However, she makes a compelling argument for "equal participation" in child rearing, indicating that it "makes parenting a more positive and fulfilling experience for all parties involved" regardless of whether the parents are together or not (82). Additionally, she believes that the "feminist critique of sexist notions of sexual pleasure" has resulted in better and "more satisfying sexual relationships" (81). Both of these points support the idea that a level of equity in a relationship is healthy and desirable.