

Reading Questions for September 17

These questions cover some excerpts from Onora O'Neill's article "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems." The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to do the reading more than once to get the answers.

1. O'Neill is focused on what I have called the humanity formula, which she calls the formula of the end in itself. In this formula, Kant talks about using someone simply as a means. What, according to O'Neill, does Kant mean by using someone as a mere means? Does the humanity formula, interpreted in this way, seem right to you?
2. What is the distinction between duties of justice and duties of beneficence and why is it important for Kantians? How does this seem to cause a problem for the Kantian approach to famine relief? How does O'Neill try to solve this problem and is her solution successful?
3. In section 26, "Kantian Deliberations on Famine Problems" O'Neill describes some differences between Kantians and Utilitarians. One of them has to do with intentions. What is this difference supposed to be? Who is right, Kantians or Utilitarians?