

Reading Questions for September 5

These questions cover pages 158 to 163 of John Arthur's article, "Rights and the Duty to Bring Aid." 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. On page 159, John Arthur mentions two different versions of Singer's second principle. Then on page 160 he says he is going to be discussing whether (1) this principle is plausible and (2) if true, whether it establishes the duty to provide aid.

Let us start with his discussion of what he calls the "weaker principle." This occurs on pages 160-1. What is the weaker principle? In class, we reconstructed a version of Singer's argument that used this principle. Arthur seems to think this argument is unsound. Does he think it is invalid or that one of its premises is false (or both)? And why does he think this? Is he right?

2. Now let us look at his discussion of the "stronger principle." This occurs on pages 161-3. What is the stronger principle? In class, we reconstructed a version of Singer's argument that used this principle. Does he think it is invalid or that one of its premises is false (or both)? And why does he think this? Is he right?