

Reading Questions for February 15

These questions cover a reading by Mary Anne Warren and is called “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion.” The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

On Monday we read an article by Thomson in which she was willing to grant that fetuses were persons. This article by Warren challenges the idea that fetuses are persons.

*Questions:*

1. On pages 75-6 Warren states what she calls “the traditional argument.” What is this argument? She then distinguishes between the moral sense of human being and the genetic sense. What is this distinction and why does she think it’s important in connection with the traditional argument?
2. Warren then switches to talking about personhood. Why does she make this switch? She then offers an account of what it takes to be a person and argues that fetuses are not persons. What does she think it takes to be a person? Why does she think fetuses are not persons? Do you agree; why or why not?
3. What is Warren’s main point in the section entitled “Potential Personhood and the Right to Life,” a section which starts on page 79? Do you agree? Why or why not?