

Professor Card

Thought Questions: Rachels, “What is Morality?”

1. First, recap the essential points of the case of Baby Jane Doe discussed by Rachels. The arguments bearing on this case are: Benefits Argument Again, Sanctity Argument, and the Discrimination Argument. Pick two of these arguments: explain the reasoning in these arguments, then explain the discussion/criticism that Rachels offers for these arguments. What are the strong points, and weak points, of these arguments in your view?
2. First, summarize the essential points of the case of Tracy Latimer case. The argument bearing on this case is the Slippery Slope Argument—explain the reasoning in this argument, and then explain the discussion/criticism that Rachels offers in relation to this argument. What are the strong points, and weak points, of this argument in your view?
3. Professor Rachels ends this reading by discussing what he calls the Minimum Conception of Morality. First, summarize the minimum features that Rachels believes must be part of any acceptable philosophical morality. Then, explain what you think these minimum features really mean in your own words. Finally, discuss in your group what you believe are the strong points, and weak points, of these minimum features of an acceptable morality—can you find fault with any of these ideas?

