

Sacred Value of Life



PHIL 102
Ethics, Politics, & Law

Dworkin's Argument, so far

- **We must distinguish derived objections (concerns) to abortion from detached**
- **In spite of the rhetoric, the most plausible reading is that most people's reservations are based on detached concerns**
 - **Polls**
 - **Religious concerns**
 - **Feminists' concerns**

What "Everybody" Believes

- Life is precious
- Death is significant
- Abortion is a morally significant decision
- Why do we hold these attitudes?
 - Religious grounds?
 - Cultural grounds?
 - Legal grounds?
 - Self-evident grounds?

Derivative Concerns

- The significance of all human life and death is **derived** from a person's interests and their right to life
- Must be people and have interests
- Rights apply all or none to everyone equally
- When does personhood begin?
- When does it end?

Detached Concerns

- The significance of some human life and death is **detached** from interests and rights to life
- Some living humans are people with interests and rights to life
- Not all living humans are
- But the lives and deaths of all humans remain morally significant
- Human life is sacred

Implausibility of Extreme Derivative Position

- Person from conception to death
- Spontaneous abortions
- Abortions to save the mother
- Abortions for rape
- Attitudes about late term abortions
- Decisions about the end of life

Sacred Values

- **The flag**
- **Great works of art and architecture**
- **Cultures**
- **Biological species**
- **Human life**
- **Associative value**
- **Creative value**
- **Religious inspiration**
- **Secular values**