

Sacred Value of Life



PHL 308
Elementary Ethics

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**