

Abortion activists beg the question

by Dennis Monokroussos

Part one in a two-part observation

If some women may die in attempting to murder their children, does that mean we have an obligation to allow them to do so safely?

I think that one of the most misunderstood positions in moral and political debate is that of pro-life.

The arguments contained in the pro-choice position fail because they ignore the claim that pro-life makes: from the moment of conception, an unborn entity constitutes human life and deserves full legal protection with certain unalienable rights, particularly a right to life.

For pro-choice to be successful, a pregnant woman would have to refute the central premise of the pro-life position.

The following are several pro-choice arguments which fall into the category of arguments which "beg the question" (a fallacy which occurs when one assumes).

An example statement of an argument that begs the question could be "The UNLV football team is the best team in college football because no team is better." The supposed reason no team is better is really only a restatement of the conclusion, "The UNLV football team is the best team in college football." No independent reason is given, which is necessary for a valid proof to occur.

Pro-choice advocates say:

(1) If you don't want an abortion, don't have one. (2) The threat of back-alley abortions will be great if there are no longer professional clinics. (3) Bodily autonomy is an individual's right. (4) The argument for viability espoused by Supreme Court Justice Blackmun is valid.

The first argument seems to be an appeal to the deities of tolerance and pluralism: "If you don't like hamburgers, don't eat them. If you don't like George Bush, don't vote for him. And if you don't want to have an abortion, don't have one."

This presupposes that abortion is morally justified. To a pro-lifer, however, it sounds somewhat like the following: "If you don't want to kill a Jew or own a slave, then you don't have to. After all, it's a free country." What needs to be decided first is whether abortion is morally acceptable. If it is, then this response is justified. If not, then the argument is pointless.

Another pro-choice argument is: if abortion is illegal,

women will have unsafe abortions and some will die. Therefore, abortion should remain legal. Again, the pro-choice advocate sidesteps the issue regarding the humanity of the unborn. This is equivalent to arguing that because some women may die in attempting to murder their children, we have an obligation to allow them to do so safely.

A third argument is the appeal to bodily autonomy. Since the unborn dwells within the body of the mother, then the unborn's rights are essentially only those which the mother chooses to grant. Again, this argument assumes that abortion is not the unjustified killing of life. In other words, if one has a right to the sanctity of her body, then if the unborn is fully human, then the child too has the same right.

As the cliché states, the right to swing my fist ends where your face begins. Conversely, of course, if the unborn is not fully human, then the above argument is more plausible.

The last argument to be addressed here is Justice Blackmun's viability argument. He argues that at viability, the state has an interest in protecting "potential human life." Why? Because at that point, the fetus becomes less dependent upon its environment. Prior to viability, the fetus has no interests or rights.

In other words, the fetus has no rights or interests prior to viability because the fetus has no rights or interest prior to viability. This obviously circular argument, stating that the fetus has no rights prior to viability because it is not viable, is horrendous reasoning, even if it came from the pen of a Supreme Court Justice.

Again, pro-choice arguments that skirt the question of the "humaneness" of the unborn all beg the question, that is, they assume what they are trying to prove. This does not mean that all pro-choice arguments commit this fallacy, nor does it mean that all pro-life arguments are valid, either.

Instead, this article has sought to return the focus to the primary question which shall be addressed in the second part of this series: are the unborn fully human?

WALTZING

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important enough to be brought before the council, it should be allowed and considered with courtesy and respect.

The public often has little opportunity to see what City Hall can and cannot actually do, but in this instance, they did a good job of showing us how they send their constituents to their room without explicitly saying so.

It is my observation that when politicians like Higginson repetitiously use the words "public servant" in defense of an issue, it means that they believe that they are the public and that what they think must be what the public thinks; otherwise, there must be something wrong.

What Mayor Jones and her council fail to realize is that what they hold is a job like any other. They get paid. They have obligations. They may not consider their work a business, but rather a public service. But every business has to do with serving the public. Any job has to do with exchanging one thing for another, and it didn't look like the "Royal Committee" had what Jones referred to as "the appetite" to make an exchange and do their job.

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