

Advanced Pro-Life Apologetics

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Session #1: Foundations of a Pro-Life Worldview

Session #2: Bodily Rights and Appeals to Autonomy

#1: Foundations (overview): While the street-level debate over abortion rages on, a serious intellectual discussion about the foundation for human rights continues almost unnoticed. What makes humans valuable? Can secularism provide an adequate grounding for basic human rights? How do natural rights differ from merely positive (legal) ones? These questions are foundational and must be addressed persuasively lest the dehumanizing ideas of the ivory tower become true for the culture at large. In this session, we'll examine the underlying worldview assumptions that both academic and lay people bring to debates over abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and cloning and why the Christian worldview in particular does a better job accounting for intrinsically valuable human beings, fundamental human rights, and objective moral rules.

A. Summary of the pro-life case:

1. Science: Embryos are distinct, living, whole human beings.
2. Philosophy: SLED test--There is no essential difference between the embryo you once were and the adult you are today that would justify killing you at that earlier stage of development.

B. The religion objection (3 popular claims):

1. Pro-life view that humans have intrinsic value is inherently religious
2. Controversial religious claims involve metaphysics and thus cannot be proved empirically or argued for rationally. You must take them on faith.
3. Thus, religiously informed beliefs about the unborn have no place in the public square.

C. Response #1: Ask two "Columbo" questions to level the playing field:

1. **Ask**, "What do you mean by religion?" You'll be told it involves blind faith, metaphysics.
2. **Ask**, "Why does anything have value and a right to life?" The answer will inevitably be grounded in metaphysics, some comprehensive doctrine about the nature of human beings and their place in the world that cannot be proven empirically.
3. **Explain** that although the pro-life view is implicitly religious, it is no more religious than alternative explanations of human value. Everyone is asking the same exact question: What makes humans valuable in the first place? Science can't answer that question because science only deals with things we can measure empirically through the five senses. To get an answer, you'll have to do metaphysics.

D. Response #2: Explain why the "religious" objection (which is really a dismissal) just won't work:

1. Non-believers can recognize that humans have value in virtue of the kind of thing they are. Meanwhile, pro-lifers present a philosophic case that must be answered.
2. Just because the pro-life view is consistent with a particular religious viewpoint doesn't mean it can't be defended without with arguments exclusive to that view.

3. The claim that a human embryo has value *is no more religious* than saying an infant or toddler does. (It's also no more religious than saying it doesn't have value.) Indeed, can a thoroughly materialistic (secular) worldview tell us why anything has value and a right to life? Can it account for rationality?
 - (a) According to materialism, everything in the universe came about by blind physical processes and random chance. The universe came from nothing and was caused by nothing. Human beings are thus cosmic accidents. In the face of this devastating news, secularists simply *presuppose* human dignity, human rights, and moral obligations. (See, for example, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.) But on what naturalistic basis can human rights and moral obligations be affirmed? Why think that impersonal, physical, valueless processes will produce rights-bearing persons?
 - (b) Just because an atheist can *recognize* moral truths does not mean he can *ground* them ontologically within his own worldview. Objective moral truths need an objective moral law-giver. So again, what's the evidence that purposeless, impersonal, and amoral materialist or naturalistic processes can give rise to intrinsically valuable, personal, and moral beings? Seriously, is the fundamental difference between Mother Theresa and Joseph Stalin one of chromosomal makeup?
 - (c) Materialism also struggles to explain rationality, claiming as it does that man is nothing more than a machine programmed by blind natural forces. He's hardwired to think a certain way, meaning his thoughts and beliefs—including his thoughts and beliefs about morality, religion, and evolution—are strictly predetermined. How can rationality exist in such a world? Thus, there is no point to Dawkins, Dennett, Hitchens, Harris, et al, trying to convince religious people they're wrong, since none of us are free to think any differently than we do. Moreover, if our minds are the result of blind and irrational forces, why trust them to give us the truth about anything, including materialism? Evolution isn't concerned about truth, only preserving the adaptive behavior necessary for survival.
4. Why should anyone suppose that religious truth claims don't count as real knowledge? The Declaration of Independence, Martin Luther King's "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," and Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address all have their roots in the concept of *imago dei* (humans bearing the image of God). Are these documents irrational?
5. The Christian faith is not blind, but trust based on evidence (Acts 1:3; 2:32,36; 17:2-4; Mark 2:10-11; Hebrews 11:1). It's historical in nature (1 Cor. 15:1-15).
6. The "imposing religion" objection is not an argument, but a ramrod used to silence Christians. Leftists appeal to religion when advancing universal healthcare, stem cell research, and anti-war propositions. Moreover, Christians aren't imposing their ideas; they're proposing them in hopes their fellow citizens will vote them into law. That's called democracy.
7. Arguments for abortion as a fundamental right assume a transcendent grounding point. Where does the right to an abortion come from?" If it comes from the state, the abortion-choice advocate can't complain if the state takes that right away. But if it's a fundamental right that transcends the state, it's got to come from a transcendent source.
8. Debates over God's existence are no different in kind from other philosophical arguments. Do secularists demand that those favoring legal abortion and gay marriage refrain from advocating their positions simply because their arguments are not universally accepted? Why the constant harping on the separation of church and state but not secular metaphysics and the state? Where in the Constitution does it say religious considerations get no hearing in the public square?

#2: Bodily Autonomy Argument (overview): Does a mother have no more duty to her own child than she does a total stranger who is unnaturally hooked up to her? In her famous 1971 essay entitled "A

Defense of Abortion,” MIT professor Judith Jarvis Thomson bites the bullet: She concedes for the sake of argument the humanity of the unborn. However, she contends that no woman should be forced to use her body to sustain the life of another human being. Just as you have no right to demand use your neighbor’s kidney should yours fail, the unborn, though human, does not have the right to use the woman’s body if she wishes to withhold such support.

- A. Summary of Thomson’s famous violinist argument: Just as one may withhold support and detach himself from the violinist (we are asked to assume), so too the mother may withhold support and detach herself from the child. Abortion is such a detachment.

You wake up in the morning and find yourself back to back in bed with an unconscious violinist, a famous unconscious violinist. He has been found to have a fatal kidney ailment, and the Society of Music Lovers has canvassed all available medical records and found that you alone have the right blood type to help. They have therefore kidnapped you, and last night the violinist's circulatory system was plugged into yours, so that your kidneys can be used to extract poisons from his blood as well as your own. The director of the hospital now tells you, 'Look, we're sorry the Society of Music Lovers did this to you--we would never have permitted it if we had known. But still, they did it, and the violinist now is plugged into you. To unplug you would be to kill him. But never mind, it's only for nine months. By then, he will have recovered from his ailment, and can safely be unplugged from you.' Is it morally incumbent on you to accede to this situation? No doubt it would be nice of you if you did, a great kindness. But do you have to accede to it? What if it were not nine months, but nine years? Or still longer? What if the director of the hospital says, 'Tough luck, I agree, but you've now got to stay in bed, with the violinist plugged into you, for the rest of your life. Because, remember this. All persons have a right to life, and violinists are persons. Granted you have a right to decide what happens in and to your body, but a person's right to life outweighs your right to decide what happens in and to your body. So you cannot ever be unplugged from him.' I imagine that you would regard this as outrageous.

- B. Analysis and refutation:

1. **Ask**, Are the parallels parallel? For Thomson’s argument to work, a woman being forcibly hooked up to the stranger violinist must parallel (in morally relevant ways) a mother who is hooked up to her own child. Are there important differences between pregnancy and kidnapping? Yes, many.
 - (a) Thomson's argument tries to justify abortion as merely the withholding of support. But it is also something else--the killing of a child through dismemberment, poison or crushing. As Beckwith points out, "Euphemistically calling abortion the 'withholding of support' makes about as much sense as calling suffocating someone with a pillow the withdrawing of oxygen."
 - (b) Thomson assumes that a mother has no more obligation to her own child than she does a total stranger (or a burglar). Clearly this is mistaken. What if the mother awoke to find herself hooked up to her own child instead of the violinist? We may not have the obligation to sustain strangers who are unnaturally plugged into us, but we do have a duty to sustain our own offspring, both legally and morally. As Schwarz points out, "The very thing that makes it possible to say that the person in bed with the violinist has no duty to sustain him; namely, that he is a stranger unnaturally hooked up to him, is precisely what is absent in the case of the mother and her child."
 - (c) Pro-abortion philosopher Mary Anne Warren poses one other objection to Thomson's analogy: Other than in the case of rape, a woman cannot claim that she is not responsible for the pregnancy. Hence, she is not like the woman who finds herself plugged into the violinist against her own will.

2. Present counter examples that challenge bodily autonomy claims:
 - (a) Dr. Rich Poupard's "thalidomide" example
 - (b) Accutane example
 - (c) Abortion-choice blogger "Paul W"
 - (d) Melissa Ann Rowland
 - (e) Amputee (voluntary)

- C. Eileen McDonagh: Abortion is self-defense. Just as a woman has a right to use deadly force against a rapist who invades her body without consent, so she may use deadly force against a fetus who invades her body without consent. For McDonagh, consent is everything! That is, just because a woman consents to sex does not mean she consents to pregnancy.
 1. Response to McDonagh:
 - (a) Why should anyone think that a rapist has the same relationship to the mother's body as does her own child?
 - (b) Pregnancy is not violent assault. It changes the mother's body in ways it was designed to handle.
 - (c) McDonagh is mistaken about the nature of consent and pregnancy. Can I consent to a winning lotto ticket? A successful surgery? We consent to initial behaviors, not outcomes. Fathers must pay child support to children they never consented to conceive.

- D. Key problem for McDonagh: Her parallels fare no better than Thomson's.

- E. David Boonin's Defense of Thomson: We must distinguish between being responsible for someone's neediness and being responsible for the fact they exist, with the *result* that they are needy.
 1. Problems with Boonin's argument:
 - (a) Patrick Lee's "speeding boat" example
 - (b) Rich Poupard's "mother in cabin" example: If a mother is in a secluded cabin and gives birth to a child she consented to conceive, but not sustain, can she leave it to starve to death (refuse to use her body to breast feed it) on grounds that although she is responsible for the child's existence, she is not responsible for its neediness?

 2. Review of why bodily autonomy arguments in general fail to persuade:
 - (a) Abortion is not merely the withholding of support, but the direct killing of a child. If the only way I can withhold support is to kill another person, I may not do it.
 - (b) We may not have the obligation to sustain strangers who are unnaturally hooked up to us, but we clearly do have a duty to sustain our own offspring.
 - (c) Even if the child is an intruder, that only justifies removing her from the woman's body, not killing her. If the only way I can remove an intruder from my home is to kill him by throwing him off a cliff, I may not do it.
 - (d) It is unfair for Thomson and McDonagh to portray pregnancy as a nine-month prison bed. Many women enjoy the experience.
 - (e) We clearly do have certain moral obligations to others even if we do not voluntarily assume them. Since Thomson assumes that the unborn child is human, why should the parent's duty to care for the child differ before birth?

Below is Scott Klusendorf's response to an atheist friend. The friend wrote a blogpost in reply to one of Scott's talks and though he liked parts of the presentation, disliked Scott's claim that humans have value because they bear the image of their Maker. Scott explains why atheism has difficulty grounding human value and moral obligations.

Jim,

A reply that begins with “humans have no more a right to life than crabgrass” and later concedes that everything in the universe is the product of blind random chance will have great difficulty explaining 1) why anything should have value and a right to life, and 2) why we should trust our minds in the first place.

To borrow from my friend Paul Copan, you move from purposeless, impersonal, and amoral materialistic or naturalistic processes to—viola!—the emergence of intrinsically valuable, personal, and moral beings. Again, I simply do not see how your worldview has the ontological resources to bring about this remarkable transformation.

You reply that science can explain morality and human dignity—that the coding found in our DNA gives us a biological imperative to sustain ourselves, meaning our intuitions about moral behavior are almost entirely genetic. Theists, atheists, indeed, even monkeys—recognize and act on these moral inclinations. For you, that's enough. We can be good without God!

Yes, you can be. But your task is not done. Just because an atheist can recognize moral obligations and human worth epistemologically (a point I fully concede) does not mean he can ground them ontologically within an atheistic framework. That is to say, merely being aware of the content of morality and the dignity of human beings does not furnish you with a basis for saying why we are beholden to them. Atheist Simon Blackburn, for example, confesses a preference for human dignity and objective moral values, but finds that nature offers no grounds whatsoever for either. “Nature has no concern for good or bad, right or wrong...We cannot get behind ethics.” In short, if we are the products of mindless and valueless processes, it's difficult to see how value could emerge. Why shouldn't we live selfishly (with a nod to Ayn Rand) and subject weaker people to our whims?

Sure, I realize that you, Michael Shermer, and others try to get around this problem by reducing morality to biological drives. Morality rides on the genes, as it were. Thus, Shermer writes that asking “Why should we be moral?” is like asking “Why should we be hungry or horny?” But if this is true, all he can do is describe how humans presently function; he can't prescribe how they ought to behave in the future since both morality and hunger are products of evolutionary hard-wiring.

To press the point further, suppose I'm told I should not be selfish because it hurts the group. But as Greg Koukl points out, that answer itself presumes another moral value or rule, namely, that we ought to be concerned about the health of the group. My reply: Why ought I care about the health of the group? Suppose I'm told that if the group is harmed, the species is harmed. To which I could reply (and I think you can see where this is going): Why the heck should I care about the health of the species? The problem with all of these evolutionary responses that purport to justify or explain morality is that they depend on prior moral rules. Therefore, they cannot be adequate explanations for morality.

Again, I'm not the only one to point this out. Atheist J.L. Mackie once said, “moral properties constitute so odd a cluster of properties and relations that they are most unlikely to have arisen in the ordinary course of events without an all-powerful god to create them.” True, one could say that I should care about the species because if it dies, I die. But, writes Koukl, this only makes matters worse. The argument now is that I ought to be unselfish because it is better for the group, which is better for the species, which is better for me. So what's my ultimate reason for thinking I ought to be unselfish? Because it's better for

me. “Looking at what is better for me is selfishness. We’re left with ‘I morally ought to be unselfish so that I can be more thoroughly selfish.’” Odd indeed.

Your claim for monkey morality fares no better. One cannot infer actual moral obligations by merely observing a chimp’s actions. That is to say, morality cannot be reduced to behavior. You must factor in motive and intent. For example, stealing and borrowing look the same, but no one thinks they’re morally equivalent. To the contrary, we judge these acts according to the intent and motive of the actor. (For that matter, surgery and mugging both involve cutting, but no one thinks they’re the same. A boy who trips an old lady provokes our rage, until we learn he did it to keep her from getting hit by a bus.) Thus, one can talk descriptively about a monkey’s behavior, but you can’t conclude from this that he ought to share his bananas.

There are epistemic problems with your view as well. Moral choices, by their very nature, depend on free moral agents. Yet according to materialism, man is nothing more than a machine programmed by blind natural forces. He’s hardwired to think a certain way, meaning his thoughts and beliefs—including his thoughts and beliefs about morality, religion, and evolution—are strictly predetermined. How can rationality exist in such a world? Thus, there’s no point in Dawkins, Hitchens, Harris, Shermer, et al, trying to convince religious people they’re wrong, since none of us are free to think any differently than we do. Moreover, if our minds are the result of blind and irrational forces of nature, why trust them to give us the truth about the world? Dawkins concedes in “The God Delusion” that since we are the product of natural selection, we can’t completely trust our own senses. Evolution, in other words, is concerned with preserving adaptive behavior, not giving us an accurate picture of the world. Patricia Churchland (atheist) puts it this way: “The principle chore of [brains] is to get the body parts where they should be in order that the organism may survive....Truth, whatever that is, takes the hindmost.” (So, is her own view true or just a trick of biology to prolong the species?) Darwin himself writes: “With me, the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man’s mind which has been developed from the mind of lower animals are of any value or are even trustworthy.” In short, if our cognitive faculties only tell us what we need to survive, not what is true, why trust them about anything at all?

So again, what’s the evidence that purposeless, impersonal, and amoral materialistic or naturalistic processes can give rise to the emergence of intrinsically valuable, personal, and moral beings? Seriously, is the fundamental difference between Mother Theresa and Joseph Stalin one of chromosomal makeup? If so, how can we praise the former and damn the latter? Yet our moral intuitions scream that we must do that. Indeed, our entire legal system assumes that genes and environment do not excuse criminal behavior. But if genes and culture determine what we think and do, why think we’re morally responsible for our actions? Atheist Thomas Nagel sees this: “There is no room for agency in a world of neural impulses, chemical reactions, and bone and muscle movements.” Nevertheless, we do hold people accountable. We do cast blame. We do offer praise for a job well done. As atheist Theodore Dalrymple points out, “metaphysics is like nature: though you throw it out with a pitchfork, yet it always returns.”

And return it does, with a roar, when you make this claim: “In your talk you said the woman who had no legs had intrinsic value because she was made in the image of God. I don’t agree. That is not why! The Constitution says that every man has the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I do agree! There is nothing there I can argue with!”

Are you sure?

First, it’s Declaration of Independence that recognizes these basic human (or natural) rights, not the Constitution. Funny, you forgot to mention how the founders grounded these basic rights to which you appeal. One thing they didn’t do is pluck them out of thin air. Jefferson and company write: “We hold

these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed *by their Creator* with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. --That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” So where do basic human rights come from? According to our founders, they don’t originate with government, whose job it is to simply recognize the rights we already have in virtue of our humanity. Rather, these basic rights come from our creator.

Can we say metaphysics, anyone?

I’m also unclear about this statement of yours: “I don’t want religious principles determining public policy.”

What do you mean by that?

Do you mean the federal government should not establish a state church (denomination) or do you mean that believers have no right to bring their values to the public square and argue for them, like everyone else does? If the former, I agree. If the latter, what’s your constitutional support for such a claim? Consider this: The Declaration of Independence, Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address, and Martin Luther King’s Letter from the Birmingham Jail all have their metaphysical roots in the biblical concept of *imago dei* (i.e., humans bearing the image of God). If pro-lifers are irrational and unconstitutional for grounding basic human rights in the concept of a transcendent creator, these important historical documents—all of which advanced our national understanding of equality—are irrational and unconstitutional as well. Absurd.

For the record, it may comfort you to know that although most religious conservatives, following Jefferson, ground their claims for human dignity in a transcendent creator, they don't want a theocracy or “Christian” nation that imposes theological doctrines. What they want is a more just nation, one where no human being regardless of religion, gender, size, level of development, location, or dependency is denied basic human rights. They also want judges who respect the rule of law rather than legislate from the bench. Given a choice between a "Christian" President who works against justice for the unborn or an agnostic one who promotes basic human rights for all, including the unborn, religious conservatives will opt in mass for the agnostic. In other words, religious conservatives care more about a candidate’s worldview and judicial philosophy than they do his specific theology and doctrine.

In the heat of battle, I once turned the tables on a secular critic and said: “Show me an argument for abortion rights that doesn't assume some transcendent grounding point.” Here's the problem for the strict secularist: Where does the right to an abortion (or right to life) come from? If it comes from the State, he really can't cry foul if the State decides to revoke that right. After all, the same government that grants rights can take them away. Predictably, he replied that the right to abortion is fundamental, meaning women have that right even if it’s not respected by the State. Yet how can fundamental rights of any kind exist without a transcendent source of authority that grants them? Thomas Jefferson recognized this problem and promptly grounded basic human rights and human equality in the concept of a transcendent creator, as noted above. Of course, this by itself does not prove that Christianity, Judaism, or any other world religion is true, but it does make them consistent with the idea of human rights.

Can atheism offer an equally plausible starting point for basic human rights? In the case of my critic, the answer was no. He could not get his own claim for fundamental abortion rights off the ground without borrowing from the very theistic worldview he so despises.

I'll end by clarifying a couple of points. First, none of what I say above means that Christians have airtight answers and no mysteries to solve. We could be mistaken. Nevertheless, I'm convinced the biblical worldview best explains human dignity and moral obligations. Instead of emerging from purposeless, impersonal, and naturalistic processes, humans have value because they bear the image of a transcendent creator—one that died for their sins when they rebelled against him.

Second, I agree with you that not all public presentations of the pro-life view require delving into metaphysical assumptions. Some audiences are satisfied with the syllogism you referenced earlier. But then again, some aren't. Anecdotally, I can tell you that in a typical abortion debate, the pro-life advocate will be grilled incessantly on every one of his starting points. His critics both in the audience and on stage will demand to know how a right to life can stand apart from fundamental religious underpinnings, why those underpinnings should be allowed to inform public policy, and why anyone should suppose that just because I exist as a human, I have a right to life others are obliged to respect. If you think I'm kidding, consider this chilling example from philosopher David Boonin at the University of Colorado. Boonin argues that although you are identical to the embryo you once were—meaning you are the same being now as you were then—it does not follow you had the same right to life then as you do now. Being human is nothing special, meaning your right to life is strictly accidental. You have it because of some acquired characteristic you have that embryos do not. To make sure we get the point, Boonin makes it personal:

“On my desk in my office where most of this book was written and revised, there are several pictures of my son, Eli. In one, he is gleefully dancing on the sand along the Gulf of Mexico, the cool ocean breeze wreaking havoc with his wispy hair. In a second, he is tentatively seated in the grass in his grandparents' backyard, still working to master the feat of sitting up on his own. In a third, he is only a few weeks old, clinging firmly to the arms that are holding him and still wearing the tiny hat for preserving body heat that he wore home from the hospital. Though all of the remarkable changes that these pictures preserve, he remains unmistakably the same little boy. In the top drawer of my desk, I keep another picture of Eli. This picture was taken...24 weeks before he was born. The sonogram image is murky, but it reveals clearly enough a small head tilted back slightly, and an arm raised up and bent, with the hand pointing back toward the face and the thumb extended out toward the mouth. There is no doubt in my mind that this picture, too, shows the same little boy at a very early stage in his physical development. And there is no question that the position I defend in this book entails that it would have been morally permissible to end his life at this point.”

So what makes us equal? Here's Boonin's problem: If humans only have value because of some characteristic they possess in varying degrees, those with more of it have greater rights than those with less.

Despite your best hopes, science won't convince Boonin of that because science can't say why anyone has value and a right to life. (Contrary to what you said, I did not use science in my presentation to establish value for the unborn. I used it to determine the kind of thing the unborn is.) That's because science only tells us what *is*, not what *should* be. If you want to take-on Boonin and a host of others like him, you'll have to do metaphysics.

Science, by itself, also won't convince the Supreme Court to protect fetuses, despite your claim to the contrary. Here's why. In both *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the Court ignored the scientific evidence for the humanity of the unborn and punted to relativism in the first case and post-modernism in the second. In *Roe*, the Court simply stated there was no agreement among experts in religion, science, and philosophy as to when life begins. Therefore, abortion, for all practical purposes, must remain legal through all nine months of pregnancy. (Thus, the Court really did decide when life begins in that it decided it didn't begin before birth!) In *Casey*, a majority of judges signed onto the infamous “mystery

passage” penned by Anthony Kennedy: “At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.” That is, human nature is not fixed, but determined subjectively. But if that is true, there can be no fixed rights that arise from that nature, including a fixed right to an abortion. So why can't a future Court just arbitrarily decide that women don't have a right to an abortion? The Court didn't say.

So what are left with? The Court has affirmed the right of a person to define his own concept of existence, the meaning of the universe, and the meaning of human life. But, writes Hadley Arkes, "was there any reality or truth attaching *to him*? And what was there about him that commanded the rest of us to respect these decisions he reached about himself and the universe?" Why can't we just make him up to be someone who has no rights if that fits our own concept of meaning and human life? In short, the Court's infamous “mystery passage” assumes the very thing it denies. By demanding that we respect a person's judgment about human life and the meaning of the universe, the Court assumes that the human being in question actually exists, whether my own concept of the universe admits him or not.

To sum up our current legal environment, modern jurists have forgotten two foundational truths understood by their early forefathers. First, the purpose of government is not to create rights, but to secure ones that we already have by nature. Second, one cannot speak seriously of things that are truly rightful or of human rights in general without assuming moral realism, the belief that right and wrong are real things and not merely constructs of human opinion or culture. Put simply, if objective moral truths do not exist as a foundation for law, then law itself becomes merely a system of raw political power accountable to no one.

But science alone can't convince anyone of that. If you want to change the Court, you'll have to do your metaphysics.

In short, think twice about using that pitchfork.

Best Regards,
Scott

PS—I'll give you the last word for now. My busy Spring speaking schedule is kicking into full gear and with my book being released in a couple of weeks, I'm pretty tied up. I'll certainly read any follow-up posts of yours, but it will be some time before I can reply. Thanks for good exchange of ideas, Jim. I look forward to meeting up with you in L.A. soon.