

Anti-Life

Why would *Life*, a group that opposes abortion because they see themselves as "pro-life", also **oppose in-vitro fertilisation (IVF)**? IVF is a medical technique which, for some couples, makes the difference between their being able to have a child or not. One might think that simple arithmetic would say that the forces of good and life are one up on such a deal since one life is more than none. But not according to *Life*. Why?

Life director Nuala Scarisbrick says that even the fulfilment of a couple's dream of parenthood does not justify what goes on inside the fertility clinic...

Guidelines limit the number of embryos that can be implanted into a patient at two, or three in exceptional circumstance - but often, a woman can produce many more than this number.

Once those considered to have the "best chance" of producing a pregnancy are selected, the rest are either frozen for later use, donated for research, or simply destroyed.

To most infertile couples, their desperation makes this an uncomfortable, but in the end unavoidable trade-off.

Nuala told BBC News Online: "You are deliberately setting out to create human beings - and then destroy them..."

The woman in charge of regulating IVF treatments in UK for much of the last decade, Dame Ruth Deech said that the argument was not necessarily so clear-cut.

She told BBC News Online: "I was told by one of the leading fertility researchers that, in nature, a sexually active woman will produce many fertilised embryos that fail to implant and are lost.

"When I heard that, I found it quite comforting with regard to this question."

Nevertheless, say *Life*, it presents a terrible ethical dilemma for any woman contemplating IVF - and one in which her desperation for a child may cloud her

judgment.

Life is similarly outraged by the idea of using **eggs from aborted fetuses** for fertility treatment and also disapproves of **stem cell research**.

Do you begin to see a pattern here? Can you think of an appropriate name for this pattern? **IVF, embryonic stem cell research** and similar treatments have the potential greatly to increase the quality of life of thinking human beings with hopes, dreams and aspirations and to create new thinking human beings where none would have existed otherwise. We find it chilling that some people are willing to sacrifice this for the sake of an entity with no more humanity than a nail clipping or a used condom.

Their position is anti-life.

Wed, 07/23/2003 - 20:50 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

Sides are talking past each other

Groups and individuals like *Life* feel that it is immoral to kill one, many, or any human beings in order to give life to one. Their opinion is that "killing for life" is a contradiction. You write that the "entity" has no more life than any piece of human DNA lying around. Pro-life groups disagree.

by [Rob Michael](#) on Thu, 07/24/2003 - 19:48 | [reply](#)

Yuck.

Rob is right in the title of his response:

Only through a particular understanding of what "life" means--yours, naturally--does your conclusion make sense. But that conceptual understanding of what constitutes life is the very thing at issue. Your reasoning there is a bit circular. (You also mischaracterize the pro-life position as one whose aim it is to promote the highest sheer number of warm bodies, which isn't the case.)

It's also more than a little self-serving. I should emphasize that I'm pro-choice myself, before going on.

Even the most liberal availability of fertility services, like in vitro, will never outweigh the number of abortions that happen in a given year. The demand for the former won't ever outweigh that of the latter. So even your factual claim--that fertility services of the kind you mention will bring on a new era of life, life, everywhere--seems to be suspect.

The reasons for this are simple, and obvious. We are, individually, far more likely to be fertile than not, and far more likely to produce an unwanted pregnancy than to be unable to produce one at all. To

call their position "anti-life" is empirically and conceptually

dishonest.

Compare places which have very liberal law concerning birth control and widely available fertility services to places which have neither of those things. Whose rate of population growth is higher?

To pro-lifers, the value of life isn't a numbers game, and it says nothing good about the pro-choice position that its adherents can't even separate out these simple conceptual issues without loading them down with their own presuppositions. As a pro-choice person myself, I'm dismayed at how incoherent a moral and philosophical position is in evidence in posts like these. It is one reason among many that the pro-choice movement is starting to lose ground.

by a reader on Thu, 07/24/2003 - 20:22 | [reply](#)

Slippery Slopes

It might not apply to this group, but I think many people oppose advanced research with human embryos because they are afraid that even good techniques today might make "bad" techniques more likely to be acceptable in the future.

This is the "Slippery Slope" argument. There *are* cases where these sorts of arguments are valid. I agree with **The World** that *this is certainly not one of them*.

Eugene Volokh wrote a lengthy [analysis of slippery slope arguments](#) that might interest some readers.

by [Gil](#) on Thu, 07/24/2003 - 21:04 | [reply](#)

Mischaracterization

"A reader" above is correct, and it's strange to see such a bizarre mischaracterization of the pro-life position on this normally rational site.

Master of None

by [Michael Williams](#) on Thu, 07/24/2003 - 21:40 | [reply](#)

A story

"Mummy, where do I come from?"

"Well, dear... I was hoping you would ask that one day. Are you sitting comfortably? (Mummy starts) Once upon a time there was this dead abnormal foetus which is a creature that is not quite a baby yet (shows picture) and they sliced it in bits, took some eggs from it, mixed them with a bit of random sperm, and you got to be one of the lucky eggs that was fertilised, isn't it wonderful?"

by a reader on Thu, 07/24/2003 - 22:27 | [reply](#)

Re: "Mummy, where do I come from?"

there was this dead abnormal foetus which is a creature that is not quite a baby yet (shows picture) and they sliced it in bits, took some eggs from it, mixed them with a bit of random sperm, and you got to be one of the lucky eggs that was fertilised, isn't it wonderful?"

And before it was a yucky abnormal creature that was not quite a baby yet, it was a bunch of chemicals. And before that, it was various pieces of chewed-up cow. And before that, grass. And before that, mostly just air and water. And out of all that miscellaneous stuff which otherwise no one would give tuppence for, because of the knowledge and creativity and skill of various people, a couple who would otherwise not have been able to have a child, now do.

And yes, all of that *is* absolutely wonderful. What part of it isn't?

by [David Deutsch](#) on Thu, 07/24/2003 - 22:56 | [reply](#)

Re: "Mummy, where do I come from?"

Hmmm....I suppose that in the case of ordinary conception this cheerful little tale would go something like:

"Once upon a time there were two special gametes(which are really little creatures that aren't quite a baby, yet(shows diagram), so Mommy and Daddy joined their bodies together just below the belly, made a lot of noise, caused the neighbors to wonder if someone was being tortured, and, at the end of all this, Daddy managed to squirt his little creature into Mommy(along with about 100 million similar ones that just ended up being discarded), where it joined with Mommy's little creature (thus preventing that creature's excretion about two weeks later) and started growing and dividing and eventually became you."

So? What is the point here? It is conceivable(pun only slightly intended;-) that this story is what it appears to be on the surface(a simple explanation of how the child came to be) but, given the use of rather loaded terms and the sarcastic tone of the whole thing, it is probably meant to implicitly reinforce the idea that This is A Very Bad Thing That Was Done, and we should press our all-wise shepards in DC, London, Brussels or wherever to Do Something About It, preferably with huge fines and long prison terms attached for Evil People who dare to defy The People's Will in the matter. Apart from being an atrocious message to give a child who was conceived in such a way, it promotes the now-commonplace silliness about stem cells/cloning/biotech/anything remotely similar or related. It promotes the idea that there is something inherently mysterious or incomprehensible about how humans develop, and that nothing good can come from modifying or interfering with the process in any way.

And this is perniciously wrong, since it gets in the way of creating very important knowledge, namely how to create new people under

various circumstances, and keep them(and already-existing people)

alive, happy, and healthy for longer and longer.

Brian

by [bk_2112](#) on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 01:25 | [reply](#)

The Strange Ironies of Life

'Only through a particular understanding of what "life" means--yours, naturally--does your conclusion make sense. But that conceptual understanding of what constitutes life is the very thing at issue. Your reasoning there is a bit circular. (You also mischaracterize the pro-life position as one whose aim it is to promote the highest sheer number of warm bodies, which isn't the case.)'

You don't find it even a little bit ironic that a group that chooses to name itself *Life* is undertaking a policy that systematically makes the quality of life of many people a lot poorer than it would be otherwise? (For such is the real point if you had bothered to read it closely enough.)

To quote:

'IVF, embryonic stem cell research and similar treatments have the potential greatly *to increase the quality of life* of thinking human beings with hopes, dreams and aspirations *and* to create new thinking human beings where none would have existed otherwise.'

'To pro-lifers, the value of life isn't a numbers game, and it says nothing good about the pro-choice position that its adherents can't even separate out these simple conceptual issues without loading them down with their own presuppositions. As a pro-choice person myself, I'm dismayed at how incoherent a moral and philosophical position is in evidence in posts like these. It is one reason among many that the pro-choice movement is starting to lose ground.'

The pro-choice position is not incoherent. Anything that thinks, i.e. - creates new knowledge, counts morally anything that doesn't think doesn't count morally. Hence, embryos, cows and rocks don't count, but thinking people do.

Nor would anyone sensible deny that anti-abortion types don't see morality as a numbers game, the argument above counts on them not seeing it that way, since quality of life comes into the argument. However, since they draw the moral line in the wrong place their views have rather uncomfortable moral consequences, like being willing to allow people to die or go childless rather than destroy a small clump of cells, hence the characterisation of their position as pro-life seems a bit inappropriate.

by [Alan Forrester](#) on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 01:31 | [reply](#)

Re: Ironies

Alan, by your reckoning of what "counts morally" children and

mentally disabled people don't count. It isn't a stretch at all to say that the same requirement - creating new knowledge - would rule out people who are comatose or senile. Are you really ready to say that children, Down syndrom people, and the elderly don't have moral worth?

And, since you used the ability to create knowledge as a measure of when something has moral worth, could you perhaps tell me when an embryo is advanced enough to have crossed that line and attained enough worth to deserve the protections we afford other moral worthies?

by **Rob Michael** on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 02:46 | [reply](#)

my fucking god

have you noticed the point of IVF is to take sperm and egg cells that would NOT become a person and put them 2gether to make a person?

if that's not sufficient, then i have a question for the pro-lifers (so i won't mischaracterise your position :-D): are condoms murder?

-- Elliot Temple

<http://curi.blogspot.com/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 06:48 | [reply](#)

children don't think????

Dear Rob Michael,

Are you seriously suggesting that children, Down's Syndrome people and the elderly don't think? People start creating knowledge the moment they emerge from the womb, and stop when their hearts stop beating. Not all of them are writing novels or splitting atoms, but that doesn't mean they aren't thinking.

Sheesh.

Emma

by a reader on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 09:33 | [reply](#)

Elliot and reader

Elliot,

Pro-lifer's aren't objecting to making and carrying to term one fertilized egg. They're objecting because IVF requires the making of many fertilized eggs that are then destroyed while only one are two are implanted. Pro-lifers believe that each conceived person (fertilized egg) deserves to be brought to term.

Oh, and Elliot, using a condom wouldn't be murder because its use doesn't kill a human being. It only prevents the conception of one (which is also regarded as morally wrong, though less wrong than

murder).

Emma,

How do you know babies start creating knowledge from the moment they emerge from the womb?? They can't show it. Why is a baby outside the womb creating knowledge and a baby at the beginning of the third trimester not creating knowledge? You, like Alan, are drawing a line at birth that does not exist.

by **Rob Michael** on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 14:29 | [reply](#)

A Question

Are "pro-life" women queueing up to host and raise the fertilized embryos that would otherwise be discarded?

It seems to me that if they really believed that these are human beings, if they had any interest in being parents they'd want to rescue these children and prevent their murders. Since adoptive parents prefer to get children as young as possible, this seems ideal.

Are they doing this?

I realize that the natural parents might object to this, but I suspect that many wouldn't.

by **Gil** on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 16:41 | [reply](#)

fertilised eggs

Can you explain why the moment the egg becomes fertilised was chosen for when pro-lifers consider it a person? It seems arbitrary to me.

-- Elliot Temple

<http://curi.blogspot.com/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 18:25 | [reply](#)

Roe, Roe, Roe Your Boat....

Gil,

You write that pro-lifers don't actually believe that embryos are children. You proceed to that conclusion by stating that if pro-lifers did believe, then they would be clamoring to "adopt" the embryos in order to preserve them. Even if we were to set aside the question of who "owns" those embryos and who has rights over those embryos (such as the court-created right to interact with one's genetic offspring),

you would still face the question of responsibility. If I were to go to a town hall meeting and shoot at the mayor, no one would support my defense that my fellow townspeople should had a responsibility

disarm me and that I am therefore not responsible for the moral

harm that I have caused (whether I hit him or not).

It would be a charitable act to "adopt" the embryos and charitable acts are *by definition* not a duty or responsibility owed to society at large. Your contention that a charitable act would prove the integrity of pro-lifers does not support the position that IVF is morally permissible.

And it seems a rather nasty policy to attack a group's sincerity in order to cast doubt on their message. I see very few pro-lifers attempting to say that "everyone really knows that humanity begins at birth, those pro-choice folks are just too wrapped up in being right to admit it." An attack like that on the group *Life* or even on the Catholic Church through the ongoing scandal is not just an attack on the integrity of the organization, but an attempt to nullify in the public eye the values and point-of-view that underlie it.

Elliot,

The moment of conception (chosen by pro-lifers as the starting of personhood) is no more arbitrarily chosen than the moment of birth (chosen by pro-choicers and others as the point at which we acknowledge basic human rights owed). Christian pro-lifers who rely on the scripture as a source of guidance would refer you to Jeremiah 1:5 "*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.*" For non-Christian pro-lifers, it becomes a question of what rights are owed to whom and when. The general answers are that human rights are possessed by *humans* (duh) and that they possess these during their life, but not before it and not after it. The endpoint of life is perhaps less difficult to pin down than the beginning, owing to technology that helps us pinpoint heart failure and brain-death and cessation of activity, but even then our doctors and health-care providers find opportunity to delineate the point at which a person no longer has the right to control their own destiny (as when hospitals and insurance providers order the removal of feeding tubes and hydrating drips to save money).

So, human rights are possessed by *living* humans. The relevant question for us is: are embryos alive and are they human. They are unquestionably alive. The smallest bacteria (and viruses too, say some scientists) are accorded the label "life." If you're willing to grant that an embryo is alive then the question is narrowed even further to whether or not it is human. Clearly a single piece of DNA is not human. It is a piece of a human. How many pieces make up a human? This is an unanswerable trick question -- after all, a person does not lose rights if he loses a piece of himself, say a toe or a hand. He doesn't even lose rights if he loses a piece of his brain or ceases brain-functioning completely (in many cases it is said that such people can be "brought back" from the edge). Even total disruption of brain processes does not remove a human from his or her rights (as in an epileptic fit). The reason I took the time to point all this out is to demonstrate that humanity does not rest solely on one body part or any sum total of human pieces. In the absence, then, of any clear biological guide to when a human life begins, many people err on the side of caution, deciding that it is better to not accidentally kill people. Even unknowingly killing someone is

generally frowned upon in our society. Along similar lines, I personally believe that a duty is owed to (or a right possessed by) any probable-humans (such as embryos). So many times when referring to someone who has died young we hear that "They had such a life in store for them that they will never get the chance to have..." Clearly, the potential for life is valued in our society. This is an even better indicator that potential humans (like embryos) possess some right.

by [Rob Michael](#) on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 20:25 | [reply](#)

My Question

Rob,

I didn't write what you say I wrote. I understand how you could infer what you did, but I was genuinely curious if this was happening.

I didn't mean to suggest that a lack of this adoption would prove that "pro-lifers" don't believe what they say. I just thought that such a belief would lead to an interest in such adoption, and if it isn't happening, that would require some explanation (and I can think of a few, but none incredibly compelling).

So, again. Is it happening? And if not, why not?

by [Gil](#) on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 21:00 | [reply](#)

who does the thinking?

Dear Rob Michael,

Leaving aside the question of EXACTLY when life begins (I said that humans are thinking as soon as they leave the womb not so much to define a starting point for life, but because all of us can agree that we can see them doing it from that point on), may I ask the question again that I really wanted an answer to?

Were you suggesting that children, Down's Syndrome people and the elderly don't create new knowledge? [way up in a comment entitled Ironies]

Emma

by a reader on Fri, 07/25/2003 - 22:01 | [reply](#)

Thinking as a rule...

Gil,

I'm sorry I took your comments the wrong way. To my knowledge, no attempts to "adopt" unwanted embryos have been made. As for explanations, the most readily that come to mind are (as I mentioned above) questions of ownership of embryos and the

possibility that the genetic parents may come to feel that they have

a right to see their genetic offspring. Also, it is not generally recognized that people who advocate conventional adoption should adopt every home-less child they can. That in no way diminishes their advocacy of adoption. For instance, though I support adoption, I am in no position to raise a child. Though I lack the opportunity to raise a child, my support of adoption as a general principle is not diminished.

Emma,

My comments in "Re:Ironies" were directed at Alan who claimed that anything that thinks (creates knowledge) has moral worth. I think its arguable that babies, the mentally infirm (through disability or age), and the comatose don't have thoughts like the rest of humanity. The difference may be in brain structure or brain function, but in either case the brain is not functioning normally. I wrote that to point out that the lack of normal brain function does not mean those people do not have rights. In the same way, people having epileptic fits are also regarded as human life that has rights, even though they are not thinking during their fits and their brains lose all "normal" functioning. All of my discussion of thoughts and thinking is to provide examples of why thinking as a general rule of the measure of moral worth is not a particularly defensible principle. Using "thinking" as the rule may have unintended consequences for people who want to declare birth the point at which human life begins. In fact, our technologies are advanced enough to get EEGs of unborn babies. These show that there is brain activity very early in the development of a foetus. Thus, Alan's rule that thinking marks moral worth would extend moral worth to unborn children at least to some point father back in their development than birth.

by **Rob Michael** on Sat, 07/26/2003 - 06:48 | [reply](#)

abortion

Rob Michael,

i agree pro-choicers who think birth = human are arbitrary. however, some of us prefer thinking=human, because that is the defining characteristic of humanity.

i also agree we should err on the side of caution. but if a foetus doesn't yet have a brain with electrical impulses in it, we know it doesn't think yet, so we are erring on the side of caution very strongly.

if it does not yet think, it is just a mishmash of chemicals that can't be upset by being destroyed anymore than a rock. its moral value, until it does think, comes only from actual people (namely its parents) wanting to have a child. if they don't, as a libertarian, i acknowledge they have a legal right to have an abortion (just like my neighbors could destroy their TV instead of keeping it, or instead of giving it to me, even if I want it). whether this was the right decision is another question (but in the general case of

accidental/unwanted pregnancy, i say it *is* the right answer).

to disagree I'm fairly sure you need to believe in souls or somesuch...

-- Elliot Temple

<http://curi.blogspot.com/>

by [Elliot Temple](#) on Sat, 07/26/2003 - 18:53 | [reply](#)

Quick! Kill it before it thinks!

Somewhere during this discussion two qualifiers were established in order to determine if a foetus possessed the rights afforded to living humans. The fact that a foetus is a living organism was not questioned. The second qualification was discussed in Rob Michael's post 'Roe Roe...' above. From that it has now been asserted by Elliot that a foetus does not possess thought and thus does not have moral worth. This is, in my opinion, a bad deduction for two reasons.

The first reason is a catch twenty-two scenario. Elliot demonstrated that a foetus doesn't think and thus has no moral value other than the value placed on it by wanting parents. This doesn't change the fact that the foetus will grow, will develop a brain, and will think. By killing the foetus before it can think doesn't mean it was never going to think. Given time, the foetus will develop thought and be of worth to more than just wanting parents. To absolve a person from wrongdoing concerning the destruction of a foetus simply because it was not thinking at the time does not allow that the foetus was eventually going to think. A harsher understanding; killing an undeveloped foetus who doesn't think and killing a five-year-old child who does think accomplish the same thing: the destruction of a living organism **capable** of thought.

The second reason involves an understanding of moral worth. Both Rob and Elliot fail to address the possibility that an organism/animal/human might have moral worth simply because it is alive and not because of any inalienable rights. For instance, who among pro-lifers would kill a stray dog? The dog has no owner who values the cast out. It is even debatable that the beast has thought, at least in the manner that makes human thought valuable. Despite this apparent lack of value most people would find it morally wrong to kill the dog. Why? Because the killing of an animal (except for food) is unarguably wrong. It has been ingrained into most people that it is wrong to kill anything. Some go as far as to say that ending a tree's life is wrong. Obviously trees can't possess thought and yet they have an apparent worth.

For these two reasons I reject Elliot's assertion that unwanted fetuses can be aborted simply because they are mishmashes of chemicals that can't be upset. I attest that a foetus will become **capable** of thought and is worth more than dogs, trees, or Elliot. I'm just kidding Elliot. I apologize. I couldn't resist.

by [Tom Anthony](#) on Sun, 07/27/2003 - 07:30 | [reply](#)

Can fetuses become human alone?

no, they can't. they need active help from the mother.

"this doesn't change the fact that the fetus will grow, will develop a brain, and will think." -- no, all it takes to kill one is to fail to help it w/ nutrients, housing, etc

also i don't see the content in the claim that a fetus is "alive". are computers alive? cats? what's it matter? the standard use of the word has a lot to do with motion, but in an age of cars that seems kinda silly.

"Because the killing of an animal (except for food) is unarguably wrong." -- oh, well if it's *unarguable* i guess you win...

-- Elliot Temple

<http://curi.blogspot.com/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Sun, 07/27/2003 - 18:50 | [reply](#)

Good Point

Tom Anthony makes a very strong case against the idea that a fetus starts to have moral value when it begins to think like a human.

After all, if he himself "couldn't resist" insulting Elliot in an online post that permits previewing and editing before posting, then perhaps humans don't have a mind that can create knowledge and control the actions of the body. Perhaps they *are* just slaves to simple electro-chemical reactions just like trees and stray dogs.

by **Gil** on Sun, 07/27/2003 - 19:17 | [reply](#)

I can't leave for a minute...

Maybe we could get back on track.

Specifically, I'd like to address Elliot's post "abortion." He writes that "thinking is the defining characteristic of humanity." I only have a slight problem with his formulation and I promise I won't resort to the existence of souls to disagree. When you say "thinking" I'm pretty sure you are referring to "human thinking" and maybe even "normal human thinking." After all, dogs, rats, and apes think, but they don't possess rights. This idea that human thinking should entitle one to human rights is a bad standard for several reasons. I mention many of them above, but it seems that I wasn't clear enough.

According to the "human thinking" standard, one has to fulfill two requirements to have human rights. They must be human and they must be thinking. The question of whether a fetus is human was addressed in the last paragraph of my comment "Roe, Roe, Roe your boat...." and was not met with any opposing comments. I will

simply refer you there for consideration of this first part of the "human thinking" standard.

The second part of this standard is the most important. Basically, it states that thinking things possess rights in accordance with their type. Thus, thinking humans have human rights (and maybe thinking dogs have canine rights -- whatever they may be). The reason I phrase it like this is because it is not clear whether proponents of this standard believe that thinking humans possess rights *because* they are thinking or that the fact that they are thinking is merely an indicator that they have rights and the thinking part is not necessarily the source of the rights. On the one hand, I am inclined to believe that proponents believe the latter because obviously people retain their rights when they are sleeping/comatose/vegetative/having an epileptic fit (and thus not thinking) and therefore the source of the rights is not in their thought. On the other hand, it could be that we're playing a little fast and loose with words and when proponents of the standard wrote "thinking" for "human thinking" they meant "human brain activity." With this clarification, human rights would then be possessed by things by reason of their human brain activity. As I mentioned in a previous comment, legal rights are still retained by people in a vegetative state -- in other words, *when they have no brain activity*. It seems that most people believe that human rights are retained as well.

This, at the very least, makes clear that rights are not associated with human thinking/brain activity *alone*. It is much more reasonable to believe there is something else either by itself or in addition to human thinking that indicates the possession of human rights.

As for Elliot's comments on life in his post "Can fetuses become human alone?", I don't seriously believe that his position rests on the idea that fetuses are not alive. This, too, has already been covered without rejection in my post "Roe, Roe, Roe your boat." Fetuses clearly are alive. The real question that Thomas was trying to address was whether the state of being alive gets them anything (like rights). I'm also puzzled by Elliot's remark that fetuses rely on the mother and therefore do not possess rights. That is equally true of a baby and yet the baby has rights. It is a real stretch to say that dependency on another negates rights.

by [Rob Michael](#) on Mon, 07/28/2003 - 00:57 | [reply](#)

Life or Something Like It

In Rob Michael's post 'I can't leave for a minute...' he briefly touches on a concept of animal rights (though his post is in no way is about animal rights.) In his words,

'...maybe thinking dogs have canine rights -- whatever they may be.'

I bring this up because I think it is important to note that in our

fifty states and the District of Columbia animals are afforded anti-cruelty statutes. All fifty states and the District have these statutes that are intended to prevent the mistreatment of animals, wild or tame. While these statutes don't confer any rights upon animals, they do indicate that the mistreatment or destruction of a living organism will not go unpunished. It is from these statutes that I gather the population of the United States believes in the inviolability of living creatures as I stated in a previous post.

'...the killing of an animal (except for food) is unarguably wrong.'

A refusal to see a fetus as a living organism, even one lacking humanity, is a way in which people can assuage their inherent dislike of killing living things. Those that don't outright disregard fetuses as being alive find other methods of assuaging their feelings. For example, the flippant manner in which Elliot disregards the importance of whether a fetus is alive or not.

by **Tom Anthony** on Mon, 07/28/2003 - 06:26 | [reply](#)

Logical Fallacies Are Fun

the subject line auto-completed *g*

anyway, the majority of ppl in the USA thinking somethign doesn't make it true.

and you haven't told me A) what "alive" means and B) what that matters

-- Elliot Temple

<http://curi.blogspot.com/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Mon, 07/28/2003 - 08:27 | [reply](#)

Who said anything about truth???

Life is a property of all plants and animals until the time of their death. Life is a period of time, from creation until death. 'Alive' means life in existence or operation, though not in the sense that computers and cars operate. This is important because, like I said earlier, killing living things is wrong, human or animal or other. This is not something new or unheard of. Thousands of years of religious morals and hundreds of years of American statute indicate that this concept isn't unusual. In case you didn't know, the majority rules in this country (in general) and statutes that reflect the majority opinion are upheld as 'right' in this country.

That's what I mean when I say alive and why it is important.

by **Tom Anthony** on Tue, 07/29/2003 - 19:10 | [reply](#)

truth

oh, my bad about truth. next time you assert something i'll just

assume you mean it's *false* instead.

anyway, A) how do you decide what is or is not alive?

B) if 'majority rules' is how we decide what is true, how do we decide which propositions got a majority? it can't be by taking a vote on that, because of the infinite regress issue.

-- Elliot Temple

<http://curi.blogspot.com/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Tue, 07/29/2003 - 19:53 | [reply](#)

Sanctity of life? Really?

The question of "life" is ridiculous. Plenty of things that we do not hesitate to kill are "alive." Bacteria are alive. Mosquitos are alive. Cockroaches are alive. Ticks and mites and tapeworms... all life. Only certain people on the fringes revere this life so vehemently that they refuse to kill these innocent creatures.

The only difference between the life of a cockroach and the life of a zygote, embryo, or early stage fetus is genetic makeup. Please argue the relevant points and not broad concepts like "life" that have no specific bearing. Everyone knows that a fetus is comprised of living cells. So what?

by **grs** on Wed, 07/30/2003 - 05:24 | [reply](#)

i think ur being being a bit

i think ur being being a bit one sided and selective in your description there. asshole.

by a reader on Tue, 05/17/2005 - 02:12 | [reply](#)