

Arguments in Thomson's Article - take 3

1 Again?

I don't know where my head was on Monday. I'm sure Kyle is wondering the same thing. Anyway, the third time's the charm.

2 The Basic Argument Against Abortion

1. Suppose P is a person.
 2. Every person has a right to life.
 3. Therefore, P has a right to life.
 4. Every person has the right to decide what will happen in and to his or her body.
 5. But a person's right to life outweighs another person's right to decide what will happen in and to her body.
 6. Therefore, killing P by denying P the use of one's body is morally wrong.
- 5a. If P has a right to life, then killing P is *always* wrong.

3 Validity and Soundness

An argument is *valid* if the truth of the premises guarantees the truth of the conclusion. An argument is *sound* if it is valid *and* the premises are true.

The Basic Argument Against Abortion appears to be valid. That means that *if* its premises are true, then the conclusion will always be true. But, Thomson argues, the conclusion is false at least once, in the violinist case.

If she is right about that, the argument cannot be sound *even if it is valid*. In this article, Thomson disputes the truth of premise 5.

4 Voluntariness plus dependency

1. Voluntarily doing something that you know could result in another person's entering something you own and depending on remaining there amounts to giving those persons who do enter and depend on remaining the right to remain there.
2. Suppose someone does D (a voluntary action), knowing that D could result in a person's entering O (something she owns) and depending on remaining there.
3. Suppose also that P does enter O and that P depends on remaining in O.
4. Then P would have a right to remain in O and the owner would not have a right to remove P from O.