Philosophy Bakes Bread Episode #4 with Dr. Manninen

“Shared Values in the Abortion Debate”

Transcription by Drake Boling, May 10, 2017

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[Intro music]

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Dr. Eric Thomas Weber: Hey folks, you’re listening to WRFL Lexington 88.1 FM, this is Dr. Eric Thomas Weber, and I’m here to join you with episode four of Philosophy Bakes Bread.

[Theme Music]

This week on Philosophy Bakes Bread, we have a special guest once again, as we have had in the past. We’ve got Dr. Bertha Alvarez Manninen joining us. This is, as I said, Philosophy Bakes Bread: food for thought about life and leadership. We’re going to be talking with Dr. Manninen about shared values in the abortion debate. I’m going to be joined shortly here by my colleague and co-host, colleague at another institution, Dr. Anthony Cashio, who is at UVA College at Wise. And he’s a very wise guy.

Before I jump in, I want to thank Sarah King, who kindly reached out to us and wrote, “Wow, my boyfriend and I listen to the show almost every time it airs. We love it. It’s almost as if you read our minds about our thoughts and opinions of the future to come to a T. Definitely something I’ll remember.” That was a line from Sarah King. Thank you so much for reaching out to us, Sarah. That is awesome, and that is inspiring for us.

Now as I mentioned, we have another episode of Philosophy Bakes Bread starting off in just a few moments. What we do is we pre-record interview segments and we do this over the internet, and so we had Dr. Cashio, who’s over in Virginia, Wise, Virginia. And we have Dr. Manninen, who’s over in Arizona, in Phoenix. And so, without further ado, here is episode 4 of Philosophy Bakes Bread. Again, food for thought about life and leadership.

[Starting pre-recorded interview:]

Dr. Weber: Hello and welcome to Philosophy Bakes Bread: food for thought about life and leadership, a production of the Society of Philosophers in America, aka SOPHIA. I'm Dr. Eric Thomas Weber.

Dr. Cashio: And I'm Dr. Anthony Cashio. A famous phrase says that Philosophy bakes no bread, that it's not practical. But we at SOPHIA and on this show, aim to correct that misperception.

Dr. Weber: Philosophy Bakes Bread airs on WRFL, Lexington 88.1 FM and is recorded and distributed as a podcast next, so if you can't catch us live on the air, subscribe and be sure to reach out to us. You can find us online at philosophybakesbread.com. We hope that you'll reach out to us on any of the topics we raise, or on topics that you want us to bring up. Plus, we have a segment called "You tell me". Listen for it, and let us know what you think.

Dr. Cashio: You can reach us in a number of ways! We are on twitter as @Philosophybb, which stands for Philosophy Bakes Bread. We're also on Facebook at Philosophy Bakes Bread, and you can check out SOPHIA's Facebook page while you're there at Philosophers in America.

Dr. Weber: You can of course, also email us at philosophybakesbread@gmail.com, and you can call us and leave a short recorded message with a question, or a comment, or praise, that we may be able to play on the show at 859-257-1849. That number is 859-257-1849. And if you're interested in learning more about SOPHIA, the Society of Philosophers in America, check us out online at philosophersinamerica.com.

On Philosophy Bakes Bread, we really want to hear from you, the listeners, about what you think. This is a dialogue we want to hold, we know we're on the radio, but you can reach us in all of the ways that we've told you. So please do reach out to us and tell us your thoughts, comments, questions, especially your responses to the prompts that we raise for the "You Tell Me!" segment. So, Anthony, you want to remind us about what we talked about before so we can jump in today with another segment?

Dr. Cashio: Sure, Eric. On a previous episode, we had the nice conversation with Dr. John Shook trying to answer the question about whether or not it should be legally required that someone wear a motorcycle helmet when driving a motorcycle. I guess you could wear one when you weren't driving a motorcycle, but that's your own business.

[Laughter]

But the point is, when we were discussing this back and forth, should the government have any role when we do certain things? The issue that came up is "Where do we draw the line?" with government intervention. Should the government, for instance, be allowed to say "It's illegal to smoke cigarettes," "It's illegal to drink alcohol"? We've tried that, didn't quite work out. So where is the line when we're drawing the line about government intervention in general? That's where we were, Eric.

Dr. Weber: That was from a caller from quite a few weeks ago, and we really appreciate that. Now in addressing this issue and tackling it, there's really basically three issues to think about. One is about the issue of drawing a line. Like, where do you draw the line? I know that's basically the question, but within that is sort of the issue that there could be a slippery slope. Right? And a slippery slope, we're going to talk about in just a second, I think is important to make sure we explain, because there are some slippery slopes that are things that we should worry about, and then there's others that are kind of fallacious to bring up, that it's a mistake to think that it's a problem, that there would be a slippery slope. And then

what principle stops the sliding down the hill, if you will, of the slippery slope problem people worry about. A line-drawing fallacy, here's what's at stake here: Let's say one says "Well, we can't say exactly where the government should and shouldn't intervene in our lives. We can't be very precise about drawing that line, therefore, government oughn't to be intervening in our lives." That's one of the kind of claims people make. But there's a lot of cases where you can't draw a perfect line, about, for instance: When is a person rich?

Dr. Cashio: I would like to know that. Life goals, where do we go?

Dr. Weber: Exactly. Well, there isn't a particular dollar amount, let's say you earn an income each year, or amount of money you have in your bank account, that that particular dollar amount is the threshold that makes you rich or doesn't make you rich. And that doesn't change the fact, of course, that you have poor people and you have rich people. Those are still meaningful things and we do need to make distinctions even though some are areas are places to draw that can be grey or arbitrary, even.

Dr. Cashio: Right. My favorite version of that is "When do we say so-and-so has a beard?" John shaves on Monday, when do we say John now has a beard? He just lets it grow, where do we draw the line between beard John and no-beard John? It's arbitrary, it's a false line.

Dr. Weber: And when you talk about political enfranchisement or disenfranchisement: When is someone technically an adult? Is somebody an adult at 16? Arguably some people are adults, in fact the courts even decide that a person should be treated as an adult at 16, though that person can't vote. And 18 is somewhat arbitrary as a line, and yet there is a certain space in which we make that distinction. But when it comes to government intervention, all this talk of grey, 'we're not entirely sure where to draw the line' stuff, that can still leave us worried about perhaps overextension of government intervention in people's lives. This leads us to the slippery slope question. Basically this just means "if you let people, let government intrude in this way, then Lord, tomorrow it will be here, and then here, and we won't have any freedom in life." That we call the slippery slope fallacy. There is something sort of right and true about thinking about slippery slope sometimes. For instance, if you set a precedent, well that precedent is set and other people will say "well you have to treat me fairly and let me do X", and so that is part of the real worry about slippery slopes.

Dr. Cashio: It's not a fallacy when it's actually true.

Dr. Weber: That's right, basically the way to think about it is: on your slide down the hill to despair, there can be a sort of plateau, there can be this limit, a principle you have that keeps you from sliding further down the hill. For example, "if you start smoking, then you're gonna be onto marijuana, and heroin, then pretty soon you're gonna be selling your body."

Dr. Cashio: I think we showed that right: "Milk is a gateway drug", in the show, that was a slippery slope argument.

Dr. Weber: (laughing) I don't remember that one! I like that.

Dr. Cashio: Oh yeah, it was in a court and the judge said, "By this argument, milk is a gateway drug… drug users all drank milk. It worked backwards to get the argument right.

Dr. Weber: So one can reasonably ask…what principle might we use, that third thing I wanted to talk about.

Dr. Cashio: So I'm going to reasonably ask Eric, what principle can we use to stop our slide down the slippery slope?

Dr. Weber: (laughing) Excellent question Dr. Cashio. That principle is the harm principle. When you're thinking about limiting liberty, the argument from John Stewart Mill goes that there is a clear moment when it is reasonable for people or the government to limit the liberty of others, and that's when they, those whose liberty we are going to limit, are hurting other people. That's called the harm principle. Now when it comes to motorcycles, the funny thing is it seems hard to say that I'm just riding my motorcycle without my helmet, It's none of your business, I'm not harming anybody. But we covered that in our discussion with Dr. Shook, insofar as no man is an island. If I do something riskier that raises healthcare costs for everybody, I'm harming everybody, I'm making everybody's costs higher. So that's the principle that we can refer to for trying to avoid sliding further down the hill.

Dr. Cashio: So it seems in the motorcycle case, the harm, then, would have to be in the economic sphere, almost completely.

Dr. Weber: That's certainly one of them anyway. As we said last time, there's other principles that we can draw on and refer to, but I don't know whether or not or how helpful they are for keeping us from sliding down the hill. But caring about other people doesn't mean we need to intrude always and use caring for people as a reason to require helmet use. But for instance caring that they not die in a situation that they're very likely—much more likely to die in, that's a more limiting case that every which interference. The point is that there are principles that we can look to [if] you might harm other ones. So when it comes to smoking, you brought up smoking, we do restrict other's freedom to smoke, and that's especially when their smoke will affect other people secondhand.

Dr. Cashio: Oh, good point, that is a great example.

Dr. Weber: Well thank you very much Dr. Cashio. I hope this helps answer some of the questions we had before because we did differ and say we're going to have to come back to the issue of "When/ Where do we draw the line?"

Dr. Cashio: Here we've got the line drawing fallacy, the slippery slope fallacy, and the harm principle. We're learning all sorts of fun things today.

Dr. Weber: And so listen folks, and consider sending us your thoughts and questions for the "You tell Me!" segment. We'll talk about your ideas and include your comments and remarks, and we look forward to hearing from you.

On today's show, we are tremendously fortunate to be joined by Dr. Bertha Alvarez Manninen, who is here to talk about bioethics and common ground in the abortion debates.

Dr. Bertha Manninen: Thank you for having me, I'm really honored and flattered to be here!

Dr. Weber: Well we're very glad that you are here. It's a fantastic topic, it's one that gets people talking and thinking, and so it's fantastic. Dr. Bertha Alvarez Manninen is associate professor of philosophy at the School of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies in Arizona State University's new college of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. She was awarded her PHD in philosophy from Purdue University in 2006, after winning a Purdue University Foundation Dissertation Grant, as well as a university doctoral level fellowship. Dr. Manninen earned an MA in Philosophy in 2001, from the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee where she was granted an advanced opportunity fellowship. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy an BA in English Literature from Florida International University in 1999. She joined the faculty at ASU's west campus in 2006.

Born in Miami, of Cuban heritage, Dr. Manninen lists as her scholarly interests: applied ethics, biomedical ethics, normative and meta-ethics, philosophy of religion, social and political philosophy. Her work has been chronicled in such prestigious peer-reviewed professional publications as *The American Journal of Bioethics, Philosophy, Ethics and Humanities in Medicine, Hypatia, Journal of Social Philosophy, International Journal of Applied Philosophy, and the Journal of Medical Ethics.*

Dr. Manninen has been prolific, and I realize in my notes to introduce her, I don't have the information about the teaching award I that I know she's received. She's a decorated teacher at the Arizona State University, but what I do have prepared in front of me is the fact that her first book is called *Pro-Life, Pro-Choice, Shared Values in the Abortion Debate*. And she's also recently edited a volume titled *Being Ethical*, which is coming out in 2017 with Broadview Press. Bertha, this first section is called "Know Thyself", and so we invite you to tell about yourself, about who you are, how you got into philosophy, and about what philosophical questions interest you, what drives you, what captures you in terms of your interest in philosophy? Share that with our listeners so that they could perhaps see that connection for themselves.

Dr. Manninen: OK. Thank you again, I am a child of Cuban immigrants, Cuban exiles in particular. I was born and raised in Miami Florida, in Little Havana. In particular, it's not at all as Scarface shows it to be.

Dr. Cashio: Thankfully

Dr. Manninen: yeah, thankfully. I like to begin this way because I think my students and people in general have an idea of philosophy being a very elitist kind of discipline. I was not a good student. I didn't do well in junior high, I didn't do well in high school. I remember I took an advanced English course, because I was a little better in English, but I didn't do very well in that either. Except when our teacher made us read *The Stranger*. And that was the only time that semester where I was really interested. *The Stranger* came away, and when we moved onto the next book, I kind of went back down into my shell. So I think a part of me was always—my dad says when I was little I asked questions about God, questions you couldn't really answer. I asked my mom what was the difference between holy water and regular water, could I drink holy water? What made it holy?

Ooh, that's a good question.

Dr. Manninen: Yeah, I got into trouble in Catholic school because of some of the questions I would ask. So I think it's always kinda been there, but I think it's there for most children. I see that in my daughters, already asking, my three-year old asks "Why does the moon follow us?" And my 8-year old asks questions about God as well. I think it's there—I know that's kind of the easy answer, it might seem self-serving because I am a teacher, the reality is that I just had really good teachers. I had a really good Philosophgy 101 professor, and I had another professor with whom I didn't take 101 with, but I took several classes with afterwards, who's been a mentor for 20 years, and I just had fantastic professors.

Dr. Weber: I really appreciate that you bring up a particular text, I want to make sure that folks who heard it but didn't quite catch what that is will be able to find that. I'm French, so I have to say it this way, the author's name is <thick French accent>"ALBERT CAMUS"<end of accent>, but Americans might say <jokingly>"Al-burt Cay-muss"<end of playfulness>. C-A-M-U-S. If you are thinking about philosophy and are enjoying this program, folks who are listening, check out *The Stranger* by Albert Camus. It's fantastic, and Dr. Manninen, Bertha, is saying that that was pretty important piece in her story.

Dr. Cashio: Classic work ending, existential creation.

Dr. Manninen: When I got to college I will tell you that I absolutely fell in love with the Platonic dialogues. The very first dialogue I read in my intro to philosophy class was *The Euthyphro* and it's still one of my favorites. Another one that I'd be able to chronicle my growth as a human being with was *The Crito,* which I also read in my 101 class. And it's funny because I'm 18 years old and reading *the Crito* and in the Crito Socrates gets imprisoned for corrupting the youth and his friend Crito tries to get him to escape. And his big argument is that just because the state has committed this injustice against me, and should I commit this injustice against the state? And I remember being 18 years old and agreeing and thinking that this is complete BS! Of course you should escape! (laughter) Right? Like this is ridiculous, I can't even understand this argument at all. And then like, almost 20 years later, after years of doing ethics and teaching students and having children, now I'm kind of like "Yeah, you know, he probably did the right thing to not escape". So I chronicle my growth as a human being by reading *the Crito*, and my reaction to Socrates' decision.

Dr. Weber: Well when you think about the influential people of the world, a bunch of them have been martyrs, you know?

Dr. Manninen: Yeah, I don't do it because I don't teach 101, but I have a professor here that will assign *the Crito* in conjunction with Martin Luther King's *Letters from a Birmingham Jail.*

Dr. Cashio: That's how I—when I teach the Crito, I assign *The Apology*, *The Crito*, and then *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, those together.

Dr. Weber: I want to back up and ask, you mentioned teachers were influential for you to love philosophy. What hooked you? What was it that you learned or heard from these people that really just motivated a whole career for you?

Dr. Manninen: So, as Eric knows, we recently were at the APA, and we had this discussion about how to attract first generation students.

Dr. Weber: The American Philosophical Association.

Dr. Manninen: The American Philosophical Association. In particular: How do you make philosophy attractive when it has a stereotypical low earning potential to students who quite reasonably want to get out of poverty. And the reason I bring that up is that one of the things I talked about in that paper when I gave that paper, being a first-generation college student, who also came from a poor home, while getting out of poverty was important to me of course, at the same time one thing that stuck with me is that my parents were very selfless. My dad was an actor in Cuba and he loved it, he still talks about it. But when he immigrated to Miami that wasn't paying the bills. He did a little bit here, it wasn't paying the bills so he quit! And so he did a variety of jobs that were there just to raise his children, as most people tend to do. For both my parents I saw that their work was… alienating, is a more philosophical term. But just they were miserable. They worked to make money to be able to live, and we never lived well, and they hated it. And I always told myself that of course I wanted to live well, but I also wanted to do a job that I thought was important, that gave my life meaning. And philosophy just did that for me. It wasn't just… I wanted to spend my life thinking about what it means to be a good human being, and what it means to live a good human life, and to think about the things that make human life worthwhile. Like religion, like ethics, like talking to your fellow men. To the issues of justice and virtue, and I just wanted my life to be mostly about that. Philosophy gave that to me.

Dr. Weber: Thank you so much, Dr. Manninen. We're going to come back after a short break and ask you some questions about the work that you've put out. But I think it's so helpful to get a picture of who you're hearing from, who you're talking to. And that's why we have this first segment called "Know Thyself". We'll be back in just a few minutes to talk about bioethics and shared values in the abortion debate.

Dr. Cashio: Welcome back to Philosophy Bakes Bread, this is Dr. Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber, and we're here talking with Dr. Bertha Alvarez Manninen. Our topic today is bioethics and shared values in the abortion debate. We're eager to hear from our guest! Bertha, what do you have to say about this? You wrote a book about shared values in the abortion debate. Is this a thing that can actually happen?

Dr. Weber: Isn't that the topic that divides people more than any other?

Dr. Manninen: I kind of want to use abortion as a stepping stone to deal with all these other divisive issues. I know that sounds a little like a lofty goal but…It is. And I think that one of the reasons that I'm "equipped" to talk about it is because I have evolved so much on this issue. And that evolution has given me perspectives where I think gives credit where credit is due on both sides of the issue. Which, I don't think we get a lot. I do identify, if I had to put a label on me, I do identify as pro-choice. But I don't think the pro-life side is unreasonable and I think the pro-life side brings up some very important ethical questions that need to be talked about.

Dr. Cashio: So when you say you've evolved, so you evolved from a pro-life stance to a more pro-choice, or what?

Dr. Manninen: When I was younger, I was pro-life because I grew up in a Hispanic Catholic household, we're like Irish Catholics in terms of birth control and all that. But I was just pro-life because everyone else was pro-life. It wasn't anything I gave a lot of thought to, honestly. And then when I started reading some more in college, then I started identifying more with the pro-choice perspective. But I kind of jumped from one side to the other. Like extremely. So when I was pro-choice when I was younger, it was a very, "Of course it was a woman's right to do it because fetuses are just"…Im sure I used the tissue and blobs of cells stuff all the time, right?

Dr. Weber: You mean the argument that that's all that is?

Dr. Manninen: Yeah, that's all they are, they're not even important, so why are we even having this discussion? This isn't even an issue. So that was that. And then in grad school I became a little more nuanced because I started doing more philosophical questions about identity, for example. Which I kind of think, issues of identity are pretty heavily married to issues in bioethics, I think. So when I teach euthanasia to my classes, we don't just do euthanasia policies. For example we begin with questions of "What does it mean to die? When do you die?", which are identity questions. So I delve more into issues of my identity: "When does the human identity begin to exist?", at which point I started paying more attention to pre-natal life, and when that happens. So I softened up a little bit in grad school, and you can see that in my dissertation. But really, honestly, and I like to say this because I think it illustrates how philosophy has an influence of everyday life: What really turned me on my head was having children, was being pregnant. We waited into our 30's to have children, and it wasn't as easy for me as it would have been for someone in their early 20's. So it was difficult. And when we did get pregnant, and I did have my first ultrasound with my first child, who will be 8 tomorrow…

Dr. Cashio: Happy birthday!

Dr. Manninen: Happy birthday. I was enthralled, I was in love, and I think we had our first ultrasound. I couldn't wait, it was a healthy…I probably shouldn't say this but I'll say it anyway. It was a healthy pregnancy, so my doctor was like "Well we don't need to have an ultrasound until like 20 weeks because it's healthy". I was like, "I can't wait until 20 weeks to see this baby", so I *might* have called my doctor saying that there was a little bleeding going on, just so I could get in there to see the ultrasound.

(laughter)

I really wanted to see my baby, I had spent like a year and a half trying to have this baby, and I wanted to see this baby! She was tiny, we're talking like 11 weeks, and I just stared at it. This entity means something to me, and I thought, well what does this say about--does this contradict the years of literature I've read and what I thought. And personally the [answer] was *Yes*. I can't continue defending abortion rights by saying that embryos and fetuses don't matter. I couldn't do that in good conscience anymore. So then I evolved into a much more nuanced position. How can I do both? How can I still defend a woman's right to get an abortion in a way that is still respectful and reverential of this entity of—do I think of this fetus as a person with full rights like you and I have? I don't know. At one point in my life I would have said yes, at another point in my life I would have said no. At this point, in my life don't know, I don't know anymore what counts as a person, what doesn't, when personhood begins, when it doesn't. I've read thousands of articles on this and my answer is that I don't know. So that's been my research from the last 7 years now. How do I combine the two? And this book is the culmination of that research.

Dr. Weber: So Bertha I want to back up for a second because you have said some interesting things. Basically, it sounded as though early on you were pro-life and you might qualify your beliefs as perhaps unexamined, you didn't think a lot about it, people around you were pro-life, and then you got exposed somehow to alternate ways of thinking, I guess in high school or college maybe. And those views are thinking of fetuses as clumps of cells and so on, didn't think of them as persons and so forth. And then you talked about how your views were refined. At what point did you start to really hear and think about the more serious arguments people make about personhood, the claims people make about individuality at conception, or having a soul at that stage and so on. When did you hear about that and how did that factor into the development of your thought?

Dr. Manninen: I did get some of that as an undergrad, I took a bioethics course, and the professor there gave us articles from both perspectives. So I did get some of it as an undergrad.

Dr. Weber: Your professor wasn't just trying to convert you into some view?

Dr. Manninen: No, I have never…Although I'm sure they exist, because nothing humanity does really surprises me anymore, but in my two decades of doing philosophy, I have never met the character professor that blatantly says "I'm here to brainwash you into my liberal ways". All my professors, when I took controversial issues made sure to give us different perspectives.

Dr. Weber: Of course, if we're going to brainwash you, the better way to do it is much more subtle, and to not make you realize we're doing it right? Ooooh, (laughter)

Dr. Manninen: That's not how the movies…in the movie the professor goes into the classroom and says "All you religious conservative people are stupid, and you…"

Dr. Weber: What was that movie?

Dr. Cashio: *God is Not Dead*

Dr. Manninen: That movie is so bad.

Dr. Cashio: I started teaching philosophy of religion yesterday, and I had to address that movie first day of class.

Dr. Weber: Immediately? How did you address it?

Dr. Cashio: Immediately. I just said what Bertha said. "This isn't the how philosophy classes work, and if they did it would be bad pedagogy.

Dr. Manninen: I created a seminar on the Problem of evil, and the very first time I taught it I had a student email me saying he wants to take the class but he just saw the movie *God is Not Dead,* and he's not sure if philosophy was for him. And that's heartbreaking to see it so caricatured. But no, that's not been my experience, neither as a philosophy student, nor as a philosophy professor.

Dr. Weber: So how do those arguments for the pro-life side you read factor into your thinking? Because as you say early on, when you were devoted to the pro-life stance, you hadn't really been exposed to argumentation about that, it sounds like. And you heard some perhaps, from the pro-choice point of view, and perhaps that swayed you. But then you heard both sophisticated arguments in college. What did you think about those arguments?

Dr. Manninen: Honestly back then I probably didn't think much. One thing that I like to—now that I'm older, especially where I work, my university encourages a lot of interdisciplinary work. So I like to think a lot now about how psychology influences philosophy and how people ascent to ideas or change their minds or things like that. So looking back on it, probably it didn't make an impression back then because I didn't want it to. There's probably some teenage rebelling going on, I wasn't Catholic anymore, probably looking for ways to piss off my mom, who knows. So they did not make a very big impression, but for reasons independent of the strength of the argument. They really started making more of an impression in graduate school.

Dr. Cashio: So Bertha, what kind of shared values are we talking about between the pro-life and pro-choice stances? You've kind of gone through both sides of the debate and back and forth as you have evolved in your thinking. What is shared? What is that common ground?

Dr. Manninen: So in my research, one of the things I've found, is that if you really sit down and you interview women who are pro-choice and some who have gotten abortions, who are not just pro-choice in theory, but in practice, and women who are pro-life, a lot of the things that they were saying have a lot of commonalities. One of the things that I highlighted in my book is that women on both sides take the idea of motherhood very seriously. They may differ on how to necessarily to express that idea. But the women that were pro-choice, particularly the one who got abortions, would routinely say things like "I want to be a mother, I just can't do it right now. I would be a bad mother, I couldn't give this child what he or she needed. It's not that I don't want this child, it's just that I couldn't provide that child with the emotional stability or financial stability or the life that the child deserves. It was always about the child. And it was about her too, but it was "I want to go to school, I want to work so that I can provide for my family later". And pro-life women of course, said similar things. It had to do with both of them, what they thought was best for their child. Someone who is pro-life is going to say being born is what's best for the child. And so they differ about what's best for the child, but they are both concerned with what's best for the child. Given that, I have a chapter where I talk about that. Like women in both of these groups care about children and care about motherhood and about how to be the best possible mothers, and that might differ to how that plays out, particularly when it comes to an unplanned pregnancy, but that is a very important shared value. Can we talk about this value as a way to humanize each other?

Dr. Cashio: Interesting.

Dr. Weber: Very good. We've been talking to Dr. Bertha Alvarez Manninen about shared values in the abortion debate, and generally the subject of bioethics and her evolution in thinking, your evolution, Bertha, in thinking over time. We're going to come back with another segment in just a few moments and ask you some further questions about this project, and about something interesting that you said early on, that Anthony will bring up about applicability of this not just in the abortion debate but elsewhere. So thanks to everybody for listening and we'll be right back.

[Short pause]

Dr. Weber: This is Dr. Eric Weber live in the studio and I just wanted to remind you that if you are interested in sending us any of your thoughts and comments and questions and so forth, you can reach us on twitter @PhilosophyBB, or on Facebook, if you search for Philosophy Bakes Bread, you should find us there. You can also email us at philosophybakesbread@gmail.com.

[Short pause]

Dr. Cashio: Welcome back, friends of wisdom! You're listening to Philosophy Bakes Bread, this is Dr. Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber, and we are speaking to Dr. Bertha Alvarez Manninen today about bioethics and the abortion debate and finding shared and common values between both sides of the debate, if you will.

Dr. Weber: Right, and so at the end of the last segment we just started scratching the surface about one of the key points about Dr. Manninen's book which has to do with shared values in the abortion debate. I think most people are going to sort of scratch their heads at—"Shared values?". People so heatedly disagree about abortion, and it's interesting that you've brought up some of the shared values, which have to do with mothers wanting what's best for their kids but in very very different ways. Can you tell us more about shared values? The obvious question that comes to my mind when you're thinking about mothers is "What about fathers? Where are all these shared values? What are all the shared values?" I know for a fact that you've got much more to tell us about that, but I think our listeners are going to have had their interest piqued, but they are going to want to know more now.

Dr. Manninen: Yeah, so I talk about fathers as well. I have my students to thank a lot for this book, because I wanted to write a book that would be accessible to non-philosophers as well as sufficiently academically rigorous for philosophers. I wanted to use my students in particular as "what is it that you are interested in talking about?" that perhaps sometimes philosophers might, being in the world of academia for so long, might lose touch with what the non-academics are thinking. One thing that came up repeatedly, and when I started doing research on it, came up in the research as well, is that even my pro-choice students thought that there were really bad reasons for having an abortion. Thomson, whom I love, Judith Jarvis Thomson, who is a philosopher who wrote a defense of abortion, she talks about that, but very quickly. She talks about, there is decent versus indecent abortions. But I have found that my students really wanted to talk a lot more about that. What I was wondering, and this is another shared value, what I was finding is that a lot of pro-life students were pro-life, not necessarily—you would hear things that to an untrained ear might sound kind of dead to you. "I am against abortion but I don't think it should be illegal. But I think a mother getting an abortion because it's just contraception is a bad idea. But I'm pro-life because I don't think that." Then I say like, "Do you think it should it be illegal, do you think we should have a law?" and they would say "No I don't, I think it should be legal". Right, OK, so that's not pro-life, that's pro-choice. It sounded like a mismatch of views that it might sound as if they are just being contradictory. But then I would hear the pro-choice students saying similar things in their writings: "I'm

pro-choice but I don't think you should use abortion for contraception" or whatever. I started talking more about that, like where there seems to be a common thread amongst both my pro-life and pro-choice students: Certain instances of abortion were acceptable and certain were not. I tried to divorce that, and I still do that in my classes for, "OK, Should it be legal, yes or no?" That's one question. And then I say "OK, given that it's legal, does that mean that there's nothing else to talk about? Have we solved the abortion issue?" No because morality is more than just a matter of legalities, right? So the analogy I pose to my class is that I think most of us, particularly as Americans, think that free speech is a really awesome thing, that it's a morally good thing, and on top of being a morally good thing, it is legally enshrined into our laws. But that doesn't mean that the Westboro Baptist Church are virtuous people for saying horrible things at people's funerals, even though they are exercising free speech. I use that to draw this distinction that we can that think a certain right to have is a good right, but think that there are bad exercises of that right. So like hate speech is a bad exercise of a good right.

Dr. Weber: But even in the law you can have subtleties. For instance, it is legal for me to go buy Sudafed, but I cant go buy 150 boxes such that I can create crystal meth. Even something being legal, what you're going to use it for, your motivations… I think sometimes we make legality versus illegality just sort of this on and off switch, but there can be shades. Your point is that even if that's the case, there's still, within what's technically legal within those parameters, ways of doing wrong.

Dr. Manninen: Right. I want to get students to the idea that there can be morally questionable exercises of a right that we otherwise think is a good right to have.

Dr. Cashio: So what would be, for our listeners, maybe an example of, as you mentioned, indecent abortions? From your research and your students, what did you come across?

Dr. Manninen: The one that students love to talk about, and when I hear "I don't believe in abortion for contraception", I'm like, "Well, let's talk about what that means. What do the studies suggest about, are there really women having 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 abortions just because they don't want to put on a condom, or they don't want their partner to put on a condom, or whatever?" It's true that there are some of those, nothing humanity does surprises me anymore. But it's not the norm. Research suggests that this is not the case. Women are not just having dozens of abortions out of laziness.

Dr. Weber: And it is not easy and convenient, that's for sure.

Dr. Manninen: Yeah, it's not easy and it's not convenient. We talk about that as well, when students say "I don't like abortions out of convenience", and I'll put convenience up on the board, I still have some chalk, so I'll put it up on the chalk board. What does that mean? These are terms that we love to use, use a lot. What does it mean to have an abortion out of convenience? We spend some time talking about what that means, what that doesn't mean. In general, the examples I have in my book, and these are real examples, and I think pro-choice people are hesitant to talk about these examples, but they are there. They exist, and it doesn't do our position any favors to act like it doesn't exist. So here are examples of abortion that I have personally met in real life. I know someone… for lack of better term, racist. But for some reason thought that although she's not fond of African Americans, was OK with having a sexual relationship with one. Got pregnant, and the only reason she gave for having an abortion was that she didn't like bi-racial children. That seems to be a really piss-poor reason for having an abortion, forgive my language.

Dr. Cashio: Arguably very immoral.

Dr. Manninen: Very immoral! Another reason I found in a book once which I thought was interesting was a woman who had an abortion because the child would have been born under an incompatible zodiac sign. This is true. She was one sign and according to astrology…whatever. And another one is that…she had an abortion because the child would have had a cleft palate that was purely cosmetic. She didn't want that. She wanted a beautiful baby. So I have no problem saying, these are really bad reasons to have an abortion.

Dr. Weber: Yeah, there are cases still around the world, where people want boys. There's no sign of some sort of biological unusual outcome, it's just going to be a girl. Sometimes that's the reason.

Dr. Manninen: I have another article, it's not in that book but I have an article that I wrote after that book where I tackled issues of abortion disability, because that's one that comes up a lot. And I try to tease out some nuances, because here's an illegitimate position: There's an article I give my students from a mother whose son had Tay-Sachs Disease. And she didn't know he was born with Tay-Sach's. And when the boy died, I think he died at 3 or 4, she wrote this article where she said "I absolutely loved him, and I loved my four years. Had I known, I would have aborted him." And I make them read it because she says in the same sentence, "I loved my son, I loved those four years, I still would have done it". I think students have a very difficult time seeing how that meshes. But I think there's a difference between saying "I would abort a disabled child because the disease is so horrible that it would cause a life of nothing but and suffering", versus someone that says, whom im also familiar with, "I'm going to abort this child because I don't want to deal with…I have a disparaging attitude towards mental disability". And it's a different reason. One is probably more morally justifiable than the other.

Dr. Weber: What I'm hearing, is as far as the shared values in the abortion debate, you can hear various reasons why folks who are pro-life or pro-choice might say that certain presently legal actions are troubling to them. There's reasons why, on both sides, folks can feel uncomfortable and thus can think there's something wrong in the practice that is legal. That's very interesting. I don't want to let you off the hook, however.

Dr. Manninen: No, go for it.

Dr. Weber: You said you would come back to the issue of fathers, and you've mentioned values that are shared among mothers in very different ways. Are there shared values that relate to fathers?

Dr. Manninen: When I was teaching at Kirkwood Community College, in Iowa City, I taught there for two years, and I had a young man come up to me and say "I need to be absent on the weeks that you're going to talk about abortion".

Dr. Weber: Wow.

Dr. Manninen: When I asked him why, he told me a story that he had a girlfriend that he got pregnant, and he was 19, remarkably mature 19-year-old man. He said "We had plans to get married, had plans to raise the baby, I was going to propose anyway, we just sped it up". And then they got a diagnosis that the fetus had Down's Syndrome. And so he said, "Alright, We'll deal with it", apparently his parents were very supportive, and she went and got an abortion without consulting him. It really tore him up, he said that he still had nightmares about it, it was still very painful for him. He even told her that "Look, me and my mom and my dad will raise this baby by ourselves if you don't want it. If you don't want it we won't even ask you for child support, but let me have him". And not only did she say no, she aborted him behind his back, essentially. He was clearly very affected by it. I'm an ethicist, I think that when there's pain, that pain needs to be addressed. So that got me thinking about what do we do in these cases. There's

already been a lot written about the converse: Are men morally required to take care of a baby that they don't want if the woman chooses not to have an abortion? There's already been stuff written on that. There's been a lot less written on the converse situation, what happens when the man wants the baby but the woman doesn't, and can a man force a woman to stay pregnant? I have a chapter in my book that deals with that case with my student's case in particular. I don't use his real name. How do we deal morally with this situation? To that extent is how I discuss fathers in particular.

Dr. Cashio: Thank you Bertha, this seems like a very complicated, difficult, nuanced and painful topic you've taken up here. You had indicated earlier that you want to use your…you're thinking about the abortion issue and the shared values in the research you're finding there as a jumping off point to other issues. I think you mentioned euthanasia before. Are there other issues where you can see this same approach working?

Dr. Manninen: In different ways, I think the more abstract philosophical issues of like, identity, and personal identity, does have a lot of implications for things like euthanasia, for questions about dementia: "Is the person suffering from dementia the same person as the person whom you first knew?" and those are issues that permeate not just abortion and euthanasia. Also questions about cloning, people are so freaked out about cloning: "If I clone myself will there be two of me?", well, No, right?

Dr. Cashio: We should do that at this show! That sounds like a fun…

Dr. Manninen: You are more than your genes! Do you ask identical twins if there's one of you? Things like that. These are the metaphysical issues that permeate all of it. But one of the things that I'm more concerned with this book is that we need to start, for all these controversial issues that we're talking about, abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage, rights in the transsexual community, everything--political issues, healthcare issues. I think the reason that we are at each other's throats is primarily because we have stopped humanizing each other. We use these terms to disparage the other--if you are in favor of universal healthcare you must be a communist, a horrible communist, bad. If you are against universal healthcare you're this uncaring sociopath, and nothing gets done, nothing gets talked about. So this issue of looking at shared values and using that as a scaffolding to build up--I think would solve a lot of problems. Maybe not solve them really but help them at least.

Dr. Weber: It's interesting, you brought up earlier, the fact that most people would say that one shouldn't be necessarily punished for having an abortion, even if you don't think it should be allowed. Our president-elect, however, has said that he favors some form of punishment, "There has to be some kind of punishment." We shouldn't jump into that right now, but we have one more segment, which we can come back to talk about that if you like, in the last segment. We've been talking to Dr. Bertha Alvarez Manninen, about shared values in the abortion debate and bioethics. Thank you so much for talking with us. We'll be right back.

[Radio Station Theme music]

Announcer: Who listens to the radio anymore? We do. WRFL Lexington.

Dr. Cashio: Welcome back to Philosophy Bakes Bread! We have been talking with Bertha Alvarez Manninen, and now have some final big-picture questions as well as hopefully some light-hearted

thoughts with a pressing philosophical question for our listeners, as well as info about how to get a hold of us for your comments, questions, criticism, and bountiful praise.

Dr. Weber: Well Bertha, you know, our program is called Philosophy Bakes Bread, so we want to debunk the idea that it doesn't. But i think that you're someone probably who has had plenty of experience around folks who deny that philosophy bakes bread--either outside of the academy, belittling philosophy. In fact, you spoke publicly about that directly to a fellow Cuban, you know what I'm talking about, so I'll ask you to bring that up. But also within the academy, I'm sure you have experience addressing people and knowing lots of people who don't think that philosophy bakes bread, if i'm not mistaken. I'll let you tell me what you think about that but I guess if that's the case, if you know people out there that doubt and deny that philosophy bakes bread, first of all, do you agree? And then secondly, if you don't, which it sounds like you don't, if you don't, what do you say to these folks who don't think philosophy bakes bread?

Dr. Manninen: Wow, so that's a really pervasive myth. You always get the "What are you going to do with that?" I'm getting a B.A. in philosophy, "What are you going to do with that?". There's a meme on Facebook something like a son is telling his father "I want to major in philosophy", and he says "Oh yeah, I hear that they're hiring at the new philosophy factory."

[Laughter]

Dr. Cashio: I've always thought we needed a handbook that we give to people: "So you've decided to major in philosophy. Here's how to talk to your parents.

Dr. Manninen: It's like a tract, one of those religious tracts. And i think the first mistake with that is assuming that because there isn't a 1-to-1 correspondence between your degree and a job, you're not going to find a philosopher necessarily, then that means that your degree is worthless. How many 1-to-1 correspondences are there for other degrees? How many people who major in biology find a job for biologists in the wanted ads? Same thing. So i think that's a little unfair to philosophy. There are two ways to answer this question Does Philosophy Bake Bread? Yeah, of course, not only does it bake bread, it bakes the most bread imaginable

Dr. Weber: The most important?

Dr. Cashio: And tasty bread

Dr. Manninen: I don't want to say the most important because I have a lot of reverence even for other fields that I don't understand. I'm not at all good at math, but it's awesome.

Dr. Weber: That's a good point.

Dr. Manninen: I think we're currently seeing the importance of studying history, and the ways that I probably didn't see when I was younger. So I don't want to say it bakes the most bread, but it bakes a lot of bread! And so I have two ways of answering it. Typically, at first I start out answering practically, "Well look, if you do even a little homework on this topic you'll realize that philosophy majors end up doing quite well in the job market, they have a good earning potential that employers want people who

can critically think" When we're doing Descartes, Rene Descartes in my class, I push my students to prove to me that they're really awake, and they're not being deceived by an evil demon. they're like "Why is this important?" I'm like "Here's why this is important. If you can't prove to me something so simple as being awake with any degree of confidence, how can you have any degree of confidence in what you believe about God, and what you believe about ethics, and how you're going to vote, and how you're going to raise your children. It's not just about the evil demon, it's about what it teaches us about how to work in the real world.

Dr. Cashio: And how to doubt well.

Dr. Manninen: How to doubt well! So that you're not manipulated by leaders, so that you're not manipulated into believing "fake news", or things like that.

Dr. Weber: Speaking of leaders, you responded to Marco Rubio.

Dr. Manninen: Yeah, so when Marco Rubio was a fellow Cuban American who grew up on the same streets that I did in Miami said that we don't need more philosophers, we need more, I think he said welders.

Dr. Cashio: Yeah, welders.

Dr. Manninen: At which point, you know, you can be both. I have had, I'll never forget, and I'm so grateful for these experiences, I stay late at night grading, and very very often get into deep philosophical conversations with the custodial staff. And, you know, they're thinking beings too. So this idea that you have to choose between being a welder and a philosopher, you can be both. But no, philosophy gives you a lot of practical abilities that will take you far in the job market. It's just false to think otherwise. I don't like stopping them because I don't want to reduce philosophy to its practicalities. If you had known me when I was 18, 19, 20, I am a vastly better human being because I studied philosophy. I am more skeptical. I think better, I don't just believe things, I look for evidence, almost knee-jerk reaction, I always look for evidence for everything. I'm a better writer. I'm a better person. I'm more compassionate, I want to see things from other people's perspectives before I make up my mind. I'm a better parent. I can't imagine not parenting in the way I do and I parent the way I do because of philosophy. And the way I treat my students has been infused by what I've learned in Plato, what I've learned in Kierkegaard. The way I raise my children has been infused by Aristotle and Kierkegaard, I love Kierkegaard. How I deal with people who oppose me politically has been infused by philosophy. It not only gives you skills, it does do that, it makes you a better human being, and...life is just so much more beautiful when you have philosophical glasses on. There's beauty and meaning in everything, and I know it sounds cocky, but it's really how I feel. I just see beauty everywhere now because of philosophy.

Dr. Weber: That's a lovely metaphor, having philosophical glasses on.

Dr. Cashio: Yeah, I like that...Bertha, your work, and what we discussed in the last section I think, is a great example of how philosophy is deeply practical. We've got this really difficult issue and by applying the philosophical methods to thinking about it, to clarify, sometimes to maybe muddy the waters where they need to be muddied to help people humanize others and to find that meaning in their relationships with other people.

Dr. Weber: Indeed, we are so so grateful to hear about all this from you, Bertha. Now, as i have told you before, and as folks who have listened to the show before know, we don't close without a bit of the lighter

stuff. We have talked about some pretty heavy things today, in thinking about meaning in life as we just did, as well as thinking about abortion and the hot topic that divides people. Yet we can find shared values in such debates. We therefore want a little bit of levity and people to see the lighter side of philosophy, the funnier side of philosophy. So we've got a segment within this last section called "Philosofunnies". We want to invite you, Bertha, to tell us a funny story about philosophy. In fact, I know you've got a good joke for us, would you tell us? Now, we had a little bit of discussion before this episode, because we like to tell jokes we like to try and relate them to the subject matter, but it was a pretty easy decision I think, for us to think "you know, we're not going to do jokes about abortion".

Dr. Cashio: I don't even want to know if they exist.

Dr. Weber: Yeah, we decided to skip that, but we do have jokes for you about a sort of pro / con, sort of being against and for versus, oh and another one on the issue of unity despite difference. And there's such difference on what people think about abortion. A joke about, disagreement, for instance, I think is apropos. Bertha, tell us, do you have a funny story or a joke for us?

Dr. Manninen: So, one of my most favorite passages in all of philosophy is in Kierkegaard Works of Love, where he talks about how...he makes this comparison with humans and he says "Take a lot of sheets of paper and doodle on each one of them and you just look at it that way, all the papers are different. But if you hold up each paper to the light, you will always see this common watermark.He uses that as an analogy to like, your differences are supposed to be irrelevant, are supposed to hang loosely, and you should focus on this common watermark. And we tend to do the opposite. We tend to let those doodles pretty much define how we see each other instead of the commonality. So this joke, I think, represents Kierkegaard in that sense. And it's a religious joke too, so it's even more relevant for Kierkegaard. Here's the story, it says: I was walking across a bridge one day, and i saw a man standing on the edge about to jump off. And so I ran over and I said "STOP! Don't do it!"

"Why shouldn't I?" he said.

And I said "Well there's just so much to live for!"

and he says "Well like what?

I said "Well, are you religious or an atheist?"

He goes "Religious!"

"Me too! Are you Christian or Buddhist?"

"I'm Christian."

"Me too! Are you Catholic or Protestant?"

"Uh, Protestant."

"Me too! Are you Episcopalian or Baptist?"

"Baptist."

"Wow! Me too! Are you the Baptist Church of God or the Baptist Church of the Lord?"

And he said "The Baptist church of God."

"Me too! Are you original Baptist Church of God or are you Reformed Baptist Church of God?"

He said "Reformed Baptist Church of God."

"Me too! Are you Reformed Baptist Church of God Reformation 1879, or Reformed Baptist Church of God Reformation 1915?"

"Reformed Baptist Church of God 1915!" he said.

"Die heretic scum!" and pushed him off.

(laughter)

So this idea that you can have all of these similarities, and still be willing to kill each other over this one teeny, insignificant difference.

Dr. Weber: That's the best long joke I've heard in a while.

Dr. Cashio: I'm going to show my ignorance. I did not realize there were so many different Baptist reformations.

Dr. Manninen: You have got to build up the commonalities in order to see the absurdity of the difference.

Dr. Weber: Anthony, you had a joke for me about pro / con?

Dr. Cashio: Yeah, we get this from John Stewart, I believe. If con is the opposite of pro, then isn't congress the opposite of progress?

Dr. Weber: Ba-dum-Tsssss

Dr. Manninen: Oh, John Stewart… I miss him so.

Dr. Weber: And on unity despite difference here we go: The Olympics reminds us that no matter what country you may be from, we all look dumb using an iPad as a camera.

(laughter)

Dr. Manninen: Oh that's funny.

Dr. Cashio: Alright, and last but not least, we want take advantage of the fact that today we have powerful social media that allow two-way communications even for programs like radio shows. So we want to invite our listeners to send us their thoughts about big questions that we raise on the show.

Dr. Weber: Given that, we would love to hear your thoughts, Bertha, about what question we should ask everyone for our segment called "You Tell Me!". Have you got a question that you propose we ask our listeners?

Dr. Manninen: Would people really want to live in a world where we don't study the humanities anymore? There seems to be a lot of push to getting rid of useless majors, “We don't need literature,” “We don't need philosophy,” “We don't need to talk about poetry anymore,” “We should just do practical things." Do you really want to live in a world where Plato is dead, where Shakespeare is dead, where we don't think about what it means to be a human being anymore?

Dr. Weber: Well I'm going to add to that question because it's yes or a no question, and we may just get "yes."

Dr. Manninen: I just can't believe that people would answer yes.

Dr. Weber: Well, they might, and so if you're going to answer yes you have to say why.

Dr. Cashio: And if you say no you also have to say why.

Dr. Weber: My addition to Dr. Manninen's question is just "And if so, why?"

Dr. Cashio: We want to hear your thoughts on this. Do the humanities bake bread?

Dr. Weber: Yeah, do you really want to live in a world in which the humanities are dead? Think about it. What are some countries that have sort of killed the humanities there. When you think of North Korea, is that a place to study the humanities? Or Iran, there was a philosopher who was locked up in Iran for a long time, there was a big story about that a while back, a number of years ago. Well anyway, thank you so much, Dr. Manninen, for your question, and we're going to tell everybody about how to get a hold of us with what you think about that question.

Dr. Cashio: Thanks everyone, for listening to Philosophy Bakes Bread: Food for thought about life and leadership. We are your hosts, Dr. Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber and we have been so lucky to have been joined by Dr. Bertha Alvarez Manninen. We hope listeners will join us again! Consider sending us your thought about anything that you've heard today that you would like to hear about in the future, or the specific question that we've raised for you.

Dr. Weber: Once again, you can reach us in a number of ways. We're on Twitter, @Philosophybb, which stands for Philosophy Bakes Bread. We're also on Facebook at Philosophy Bakes Bread. And check out SOPHIA's Facebook page while you're there, Philosophers in America. You can of course email us also, at philosophybakesbread@gmail.com.

Dr. Cashio: And you can also leave a short, recorded message with a question or a comment that we may be able to play on the show at 859-257-1849. That's 859-257-1849. Join us again next time on Philosophy Bakes Bread: food for thought about life and leadership.

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[Outro music]