

**2008 FALL SYMPOSIUM**  
**ONE NATION UNDER GOD?**  
*The Role of Religion in American Public Life*  
November 22, 2008, Robsham Theater, Boston College

**SESSION 3: Religion, Morality and the Law**

BEN BIRNBAUM: If I can call this unruly crowd to order, my name is Ben



*Ben Birnbaum*

Birnbaum. I'm Special Assistant to the President at Boston College, and editor of Boston College Magazine, and other things, and the most pertinent thing about my role here today is that I have for four years been the conjoiner of Mass Humanities and Boston College, and I'm pleased to be that. And I've even been invited to be on the Mass Humanities board this year, so that really makes me a conjoiner.

I am very pleased to introduce the members of the panel I think perhaps have the most difficult job here today. Politics is one thing, culture is another, personal behavior is a real third rail. From my left, Stephen Carter. Carter is a Professor of Law at Yale, and he's the author of a vast number of books, including *A Meditation on Law, Religion, and Loyalty* and *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion*. I will say he's also the author of a very good novel called *The Emperor of Ocean Park*, and it's a novel that Ward Just, writing in the *Sunday Times*, said was evidence "that in Stephen Carter, the black upper class has found its Dreiser." I hope he accepts my condolences on that. (laughter)

To his left is Jean Bethke Elshtain, the only person in this room, I'm sure, to be a native of Timnath, Colorado, population of 145 when she started out. Eighty-five, forgive me. She's a political philosopher at the University of Chicago. She holds a chair there. She's the author of a great number of articles and books on American religious and public life, including *Religion in American Public Life: Living with Our Differences*, of which she is a coauthor. And I discovered online that she once said of herself that "she hovers between Wittenberg and Rome." I hope she pulls that trick off today on our stage.

Michael Sandel, who is our moderator today, is a Professor of Government at Harvard University and the author of many, many wonderful books, including one I particularly like called *The Case Against Perfection*, which is something I've always thought was a great case to make. *Ethics in the Age of Genetic Engineering*. I will say his course titled *Justice* at Harvard University, which is an introduction to political and moral philosophy,

regularly packs Sanders Theater there, so he's an extraordinary teacher as well as a great scholar.

Daniel C. Dennett, Professor of Philosophy at Tufts. He's the author of, most famously, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*, and one of the four horsemen of atheism, along with Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens. I'm not sure if he likes pulling that wagon, but that's where he is. In a recent conversation, I will say a debate, on religion with Alister McGrath, he said something I liked very much, that if "passion, devotion, and large amounts of energy were evidence of religion, the NFL would stand beside Christianity, Judaism, and everything else as a significant American church." (laughter)

And finally, Susannah Heschel holds the Eli Black Chair in Jewish Studies in the Department of Religion at Dartmouth. She's a prominent interpreter of feminism in Judaism, and a scholar of Germany during the Third Reich. Her new book, which is available out there in the lobby, along with books by all of our participants, was published this month. It's called *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany*.

And I am delighted to have all of you here, on behalf of Boston College and Mass Humanities. Please begin. Thank you. (applause)

SANDEL: Well, thank you very much. Our topic is religion, morality, and the law, so I would like to start with a question about the Constitution that bears on religion and morality. We all know that the Constitution provides for the separation of church and state. It says that Congress shall not establish a religion, and it also provides for religious liberty, the free exercise of religion. Let's begin, if we could, by discussing what the separation of church and state means. Does it mean – and I'll put this first to Stephen Carter – that it would be wrong for the law to reflect or to be justified by the religious convictions of citizens in a democracy? Should citizens in a democracy refrain from voting on the basis of their religious convictions?



Michael J. Sandel

CARTER: Well, the way you've put the question is almost too easy, I think. The answer is no. The law should reflect ideally – it's hard sometimes – the considered judgment of large numbers of people, I hope of diverse views, coming together and arguing over them. Historically and in the present day, sometimes many of those people act out of religious sentiment, and I think as long as religion is a strong force in America, that will be true, and I think it'd be undemocratic to suggest that there's something wrong with it being true.

The separation of church and state, which actually isn't mentioned in the Constitution, evolved in the early American usage as a way of protecting the church from an overwhelming culture, not as a way of protecting the culture from the church, and was never, I think, thought to be a way of separating religion from the state, just the formal church. Having said that, it strikes me that many times people are upset because they think that there's a particular position that some people justify on religious grounds, they don't like the position. Then it strikes me the argument isn't, the position's wrong because you're religious, the argument is the position's wrong because it's a bad idea, and let me tell you what is wrong with it.

SANDEL: Go ahead, Jean.

ELSHTAIN: I'm just going to second my colleague Stephen Carter, and to indicate



*Jean Bethke Elshtain*

that I think we make a big mistake if we try to take the logic of church-state separation, we have a secular state, and then to, in a sense, plant that over the far more fluid and complex area or arena of religion and politics, or religion and American civil society. And I take that as another way of underscoring what Stephen Carter said, namely that, if you look at the long history of religion and politics in American life, so much of our history, so much of what ushered finally into law, into, if you will, public morality

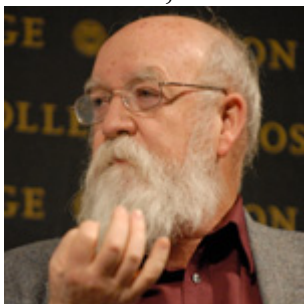
embodied in law, began with religious revivals, religious movements, religiously-inspired ideas and ideals. We've heard a bit about that already today. So it strikes me as important to keep the distinction between no established faith, a secular state, but not a thoroughly secularized society within which, if you will, civil society has been scrubbed clean of religious conviction and fervor and ideas.

SANDEL: So, Jean, you, along with Stephen, would distinguish between the separation of church and state, on the one hand, and the separation of religion and politics on the other.

ELSHTAIN: Yes, yes.

SANDEL: Dan, do you agree with that distinction?

DENNETT: Yes, I think so, but I think the – Stephen said one word that I want to pick up on and amplify, and that was the word argue.



*Daniel Dennett*

I think that, if we look at different religious traditions, we see they have different ethical precepts, they have different views. And I think as long as everybody's religious views are in the conversation, where we can argue about them, and where people

can defend their religious views – not as religious views, but as this is the right thing to do – then everything is fine. What we can't have, what we mustn't have – and this is as much a separation of religion and politics as religion and state – is anybody playing the faith card. Anybody –

SANDEL: What does that mean exactly, playing the faith card?

DENNETT: It means saying, look, I'm an Xist – I'm a Catholic, I'm a Jew, I'm a Muslim, I'm whatever – and we Xists believe this, and it's just not negotiable because that's what our holy book says.

SANDEL: Well, that would be dogmatic. That would be dogmatic.

DENNETT: Indeed it would, and if you say that, I think we should accept that basically you're saying, I am disabled for this conversation. I am unable to argue for this, to defend my view, and what the rest of us should say is, OK, sorry you can't join us, we will do our best to look out for you, but you're simply not part of the discussion.

SANDEL: Could I push you a little bit, because I don't think there'll be any disagreement on rejecting dogmatic assertions –

DENNETT: Yes, there will.

SANDEL: – blind assertions. (laughter)

DENNETT: Yes, there will, but –

SANDEL: All right, well, go ahead. All right, then, before I push him, react to that.

CARTER: I believe in argument, but I'm a conversational anarchist, in the sense that I think people need to be free to bring to the table whatever may animate them. And if someone speaks from a perspective that you look at and you say, but you have no basis but this strange holy book that I disagree with, then you won't be persuaded. But that doesn't mean that they've made a bad argument. It doesn't mean anything else than that.



*Stephen Carter*

I see this a lot. I see this with economists who come to the table, some of them speaking a language that I myself often don't understand. I deal with experts in a variety of sciences and other fields, and they come and explain why this is so.

SANDEL: You would welcome them too, Stephen? You go further than I would.

CARTER: But I'm not persuaded by the mere fact that if they speak in a way that I can't understand, I can't pretend I'm persuaded by it. But there's a difference, I think, between saying we should shut people out of the conversation because the premises of their conversation seem to us very foreign and perhaps very absolutist. I'm saying we may be unpersuaded, that's all I'm saying.

DENNETT: We're not going to shut them out. We're just going to say, I'm sorry, that doesn't advance the conversation at all. If you feel you have to say that, go ahead and say that.

ELSHTAIN: Well, that holds for dogmatic atheists as well. You'd just say, I'm an atheist, ergo – yeah, so –

SANDEL: Sure, but – here was going to be my – what I thought would be the harder version of a moral or a political argument informed by faith, but not dogmatically so. Take, for example, the debate about just war, or about abortion, where someone says, my religious tradition sheds this light, has this tradition of reflection on what a just war is, or on the moral status of the fetus, and then proceeds to lay out a moral theological tradition of reflection on just war, or how to deal with poverty or abortion. You wouldn't consider that dogmatic, or would you?

DENNETT: No.

SANDEL: That would be fine.

DENNETT: That's fine.

SANDEL: Susannah, do you want to get into this?

HESCHEL: Well, speaking as a historian of German Jews, my problem would be this. You speak of separation of church and state. Church is established, church I understand. But as Jews, we live as a minority in a dominant Christian culture, so what are the limits that you see on Christianity? In other words, I see an all-pervasive Christian culture that Jews live in, and I think that the presence of minority Muslim communities brings this to the fore even more. We live with a calendar established according to Christian holidays and so forth, so I don't see the kind of separation of spheres, nor do I use the term "secular" to refer to our present-day culture. I think that we as Jews have to survive in a Christian world, and we have, as a result, to some extent, Christianized Judaism. And that I find problematic. I



*Susannah Heschel*

know – and sometimes wonder to what extent is this Judaism, or is this the Christian version of it.

ELSHTAIN: Susannah – may I just clarify something, Michael?

SANDEL: Sure.

ELSHTAIN: I said we have a secular state, but not a thoroughly secularized society in which religious symbols, arguments, reasons, and so on are invisible to the public square. And I think that would hold for – again, for any religious group within the society to step forward and to make arguments based on their faith seems to me entirely legitimate thing to be doing, as long as, again, one is open to trying to persuade others, and oneself open to persuasion from others. So that's the point I was trying to get across.

SANDEL: Stephen?

CARTER: And I agree with what Susannah said, but I think it's also the experience in different ways of lots of different religions, and even lots of sects within Christianity. And so, for example, if you look at, say, something as seemingly obviously Christian as Christmas, but in America the history you have is of the Protestant churches for 100 years not wanting to celebrate Christmas, thinking, this is either weird, a commercial thing – which I guess it turned out to be – or that somehow it's this decadent European Pagan quasi-Catholic invention, which is the way it was demonized in a lot of Protestant preaching. But in the end, they gave in. And I think that there's a battle constantly – a tension, I should say; that's too strong a word – with the culture and each religion. And you're right, that the culture is more Christianized, or I think Protestantized is a better word, than it is religiousized in any other way. But even the Protestant churches, from the most progressive, to use the word someone was using earlier, to the most traditionalist evangelical, they're constantly being changed by their encounters with the culture. And so I don't know that it's an avoidable phenomenon, but it is a phenomenon that is experienced by lots of groups. And even, as you said, the newer communities, not only in Islam. This has actually been an interesting problem. People in Buddhist communities in the United States have written about this problem as well.

HESCHEL: What's interesting, the question of Christmas came up, I think, in some court cases I'm sure you're familiar with about 15 years ago, when the Lubavitch movement in Judaism brought cases to court to put a menorah on the city front lawns together with a Christmas tree. So one question for Jews, in fact, in Germany they were known as Weihnachtsjuden, Christmas Jews, because they celebrated Christmas and Hanukkah. Someone published a book recently called Weihnukah, combining Christmas and Hanukkah.

(laughter) So what do Jews do? Do you have both holidays, in which case, in some sense, you reduce Christmas to something meaningless. It's almost contemptuous, devoid of religious content.

But in that sense, I'd also like to bring up something else, which is, what do we mean when we speak of religion? Does it – does religion have the same meaning in the context of Judaism that it has in the context of Christian –

SANDEL: Before we get off the question of the culture – we began by talking about law, and then we talked some about moral and political argument, and then, Susannah, you raised the question of the culture; that Jews live in the United States, and to a large degree in the West generally, within a Christian culture. You referred even to the Christian calendar. Do you think it would be possible, and if possible, do you think it would be desirable, to imagine a kind of public culture that were wholly secular, and not Christian and not Jewish and not Islamic, but just neutral, secular? Could there be such a public culture, do you think? And if so, would it be desirable? Would you rather have such culture, if we could imagine it?

HESCHEL: First, I don't think it's possible. I think that we've inherited too much culturally, and sometimes without realizing it. So I would say instead, I would like to recognize the historical background of what we call cultural, and then decide if we want to accept, let's say, that a certain image that we call secular is actually derived from Christian iconography. Once we become better aware, we can make those decisions in an informed fashion. But simply to label something secular without recognizing how centuries of, say, Christianity have informed European civilization, that's a mistake.

SANDEL: Understanding even of the secular.

HESCHEL: So it's too simple to say, this is secular.

SANDEL: Would you – Dan, do you have a view about this, about the shape of the culture generally, whether it should be informed by religious sensibilities?

DENNETT: Informed, certainly. But I think what I would like to see, and listening to the earlier sessions here today, what I achingly would like to see is something that removes the systematic hypocrisy from our political and cultural life.

SANDEL: Hypocrisy?

DENNETT: Hypocrisy.

SANDEL: What do you have in mind?

ELSHTAIN: Good luck.  
(laughter)

DENNETT: Well –

SANDEL: Which of the  
various ones are you  
taking aim at?



*Stephen Carter, Jean Elshain, Michael Sandel, Daniel Dennett, and  
Susannah Heschel*

ELSHTAIN: So many.

DENNETT: People ask me, you know, do you think we'll ever have an atheist president? To which my answer is, we've had lots of atheist presidents, they just wouldn't admit it. (laughter) And I think that's manifestly true. If you look at Congress and ask how many atheists in Congress – who knows? The fact is that, in America now, you pay lip service to religion. We are hyper-respectful of religions, and this has some really bad consequences. John Meacham earlier today mentioned this, to me, lunatic and obscene idea that Barack Obama is the Antichrist. I think that is a view which deserves no respect at all, and I think that any Christian group that provides protective coloration for that sort of idiocy has a real problem, and should be made to confront that problem, and recognize that this is toxic, that it is irrational, and that it has no place in the public discussion.

HESCHEL: I agree –

SANDEL: Not because it's hypocritical. It's the idiocy, not the hypocrisy, that you disliked about that.

DENNETT: No, but the hypocrisy is that we bite our tongues and do not criticize, we do not hold religious discourse to the same standards of rational criticism that we hold political –

SANDEL: Well, let's see, what do you think, Jean? What do you think?

ELSHTAIN: I don't think that's true. I think the most effective response to these bizarre sort of conspiracy theory type groups that get going on the Internet, including the Obama Antichrist business, the strongest responses or actions against that come, in fact, from religious groups, from other Christians who've been in the forefront of attacking this kind of nonsense, or this group that claims to be Christian. So it strikes me that – you're quite right, that's toxic, it needs to be attacked, and it is being very effectively attacked. And in fact, it's such a small and sort of insignificant number that they're not going to play any significant role in public life.



DENNETT: Well, I don't know –

ELSHTAIN: They haven't stepped forward to make a case. It's an Internet conspiracy theory model. But let me – may I get to – hold on –

DENNETT: According to some polls –

ELSHTAIN: Yeah?

DENNETT: – I don't know, something like 25% of American Christians believe in the Rapture.

ELSHTAIN: Well, let's not go from the Antichrist to the Rapture for a moment, all right? I want to say something. I want to – they're quite different stories. Yeah, quite different stories. You can believe in the Rapture and not at all think Barack Obama's the Antichrist. (laughter)

So the – let me go to the culture question. It seems to me, Michael, that one of the glories of American society, when it's working well, is in fact its pluralistic nature, that you have plural communities, different sites of authority, power, and understanding, that they bring these ideas, they bring their identities, as we like to say now, into public discussion, into public debate, and somehow, in some rough and ready, messy way, we tend to sort of sort it out.

One of the attempts in Europe to try to scrub the public arena of religious conviction, of course, is the French experiment with *laïcité*, which began with the law in 1905. And as you know, that's run into considerable amount of trouble in recent years, in part over controversies about whether Muslim schoolgirls could wear the scarf to school. That wouldn't be an issue here at all. It's an issue there, and the effect has been, as we know from the articles that have been coming out, including a big report in the *New York Times* a couple of weeks ago, that many thousands of Muslim schoolchildren have been alienated from the public schools, the state school system. Some of them have wound up in very good, academically speaking and so forth, Catholic schools. Others have wound up in these rather more narrow sectarian kinds of religious schools, where, again, there's a kind of retreat from integration into French life, and the education they're getting is not very good. So just for strategic reasons, if you're concerned about integration into public life, I think that hard *laïcité* is not in fact the way to go. And Sarkozy, of course, has been arguing against it rather vigorously, so –

SANDEL: I'd like to take us to – I'd like to put to the panel a certain view about the relation between religion and politics, and then take a quick poll by show

of hands whether you by and large agree or disagree with this view, and then whoever raises his or her hand the highest gets to go first in elaborating.

But this is from the famous speech that John F. Kennedy gave in 1960 to try to put to rest the religious issue in Houston. And I'll read just a short excerpt. Agree or disagree. "I believe in a President whose religious views are his own private affair. I want a Chief Executive whose fulfillment of his presidential oath is not limited or conditioned by any religious obligation. Whatever issue may come before me as President – on birth control, divorce, censorship, gambling, or any other subject – I will make my decision in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be in the national interest, without regard to outside religious pressures or dictates. A President whose religious views are his own private affair." Broadly speaking, do you agree or disagree with that view of the relation between – proper relation between religion and politics? How many agree? I just meant that as illustrative of how you vote. How many – and how many disagree? Two to one with one abstention.

CARTER: I don't – yeah. I don't think the question can be answered.

SANDEL: Well, we'll see. My three colleagues who can, you agree?

DENNETT: Well, I agree with what John F. Kennedy said there, because he was very explicit. The condition for it being private is that one undertake, as he very explicitly did, to put the welfare of the nation before any considerations of his religious views. That's what he said. And I think that's the key point. I'm reminded of what happened just a few years earlier, when Eisenhower nominated Charlie Wilson to be Secretary of Defense, and Wilson was the head of General Motors. And Wilson was misquoted as having said "What's good for General Motors is good for the country." That's not exactly what he said, but people jumped on it, and he had to put all of his General Motors stock in a blind trust or something. He had to backtrack vigorously.

SANDEL: The stock was probably higher then than it is now, so probably –  
(laughter)

DENNETT: They were right. If he'd said what he was quoted to – misquoted to say, they were right to jump on him. Imagine if somebody said, "My view has always been that what's good for the Baptists is good for America." I think we would not tolerate that for a minute. And I think every person who runs for public office, let them have whatever religious views they have, but there's a tacit, I would say, commitment on the part of anybody running for public office to put the good of the nation first. And if it's good for their religious group, fine, but if push comes to shove, they're to put the national interest ahead of the interests of their religious group.

SANDEL: Jean, you see it differently.

ELSHTAIN: Yeah, I – I mean, I understand fully why John F. Kennedy strategically had to do that at that time, and appreciate the politics of it. But it strikes me that the alternative, Dan, is not between the president whose religious views are entirely a private affair and won't enter into his public decisions and, you know, what's good for Catholics is good for America. I think there's an alternative to either of those, which is to say, of course, he's formed and shaped by his faith tradition, and there's no possible way he could simply disarticulate all of that, put that off in a separate arena when he's making all kinds of decisions about political life. For example, the Catholic tradition of the common good, Catholic social thought. When you're thinking about poverty programs and so on, would we really want a Catholic president to say that has nothing to do with how I'm thinking about these issues? I mean, it just seems to me that, to the extent that he's formed in that particular faith tradition, it's going to enter into his reflection on a whole range of public issues.

So that doesn't mean it's entirely a private affair that has to be kept out – because he went on with some decisions he would make – it can't be made apart from his faith tradition, but of course it has to be made in a way that articulates the civic issues, the civic necessity, why it's important for the nation. So I think he was trying to do an impossible thing, which was simply to sever himself off from his faith, and in a way I don't think it's possible.

SANDEL: Stephen, do you disagree with what Jean has said?

CARTER: I agree with what Jean has said, but I want to say why I'm troubled by the question. There's two reasons. There's a theoretical reason and there's a historical contextual. The theoretical reason is that I think – and here's where I think Jean's right; I'll go a little further – I think what's being stated is simply impossible. If – now, it may be you've got presidents who are secret atheists you say, and aren't shaped by their faith at all, as Dan says. But if you have people who've been raised in a faith community, raised to its norms and its ways of looking at the world, the notion that they can simply shut that out and say, but I'm not going to pay attention to that, simply suggest religion can't be a real – a genuine part of what composes the personality. I just don't think it's possible to do.

I do think it's very important for presidents, like everyone else, to be conscious of that, and ask themselves, am I simply being shaped by my religion, or am I going further than that?

Here's the historical problem I have with it. That's what Kennedy said, it's not what Kennedy meant. And in that list of issues, he left out the most burning issue of the day, and there's a reason he did that. He didn't mention

civil rights. That speech is included in these lists of great public documents because he was supposed to be defusing a Catholic issue. Where did he defuse it? At a convention of evangelical pastors in Houston, after he won the West Virginia primary. Why? Because the Catholic Church had been the only major Southern church to stand up consistently against segregation, to the extent of excommunicating segregationist legislators in Louisiana. That was a great and wonderful moment of religious interference in politics.

Kennedy had to dispel in the South the thought that, if elected president, he was going to do that. He was going to follow the Church's teaching on civil rights law. And the problem with that speech – going back to the issue of hypocrisy – the problem with that speech is, by giving it where he did and the way he did it, he meant to leave open the possibility that his position on civil rights will be the kind of traditional, wishy-washy Democratic party position at the time, which was, we're against discrimination, but we are not going to do anything about it, which was their basic position at the time. And he was trying to suggest he was going to continue in that mold.

If he had said, because of the teachings of my church, I find racial segregation intolerable, I think that would be a better speech.

SANDEL: Would have been a better speech.

CARTER: Yeah, might have been a better speech. I'm not sure Dan would agree, but I think it would have been a better speech.

DENNETT: I'm not disagreeing with you about that at all. I am not suggesting that anybody can set aside their upbringing, whether it is secular or religious, or that they should. I'm just saying that they should not permit that upbringing to – and the furthering of the specific goals of the religion that they were raised in – to trump other considerations that would arise. They're going to be open-minded about it. If they want to push – let's take the very case you mention. I agree with you. It would be wonderful if Kennedy could have said, my church has got it right on this, and I'm going to push for it. Then he takes on the burden of explaining to the rest of the world why his church has got it right.

CARTER: Agreed.

DENNETT: That's the point. Nothing is right just because my church says it, but you can take anything from your religious upbringing at all and put that on the table and say, here's what we believe in, here's why. But you have to defend it. And that is a secular process. That has nothing to do, at that point –

SANDEL: Wait, wait. Everyone was agreeing, Dan, up until that last sentence.  
(laughter) But the last sentence suggests that reasoned moral argument is a secular process.

DENNETT: That's right.

SANDEL: Why do you say that? Why do you say that?

DENNETT: Because religion is the one area in our current culture where irrationality is not only encouraged, it is honored. (laughter)

SANDEL: Well, this is just – that's not a reason, that's just kind of a filthy slur, right?

ELSHTAIN: There goes –

DENNETT: No, I think it –

ELSHTAIN: You don't believe that.

DENNETT: I think it is –

CARTER: Ever listen to a presidential debate?

ELSHTAIN: Yeah, there goes Aquinas. I mean, you've got these monuments to reason that build on appeals to, again, to the natural reason that is simply the heritage of humanity in general, and you build your arguments based on that. This –

DENNETT: Credo quia intelligen.

ELSHTAIN: (laughter)

SANDEL: What, do you think – would you say that talmudic legal reasoning is a species of irrationality?

DENNETT: In one regard, yes, because the premises are not examined.

ELSHTAIN: Huh?

SANDEL: They're not?

DENNETT: In a proper rational debate –

SANDEL: They're not?

DENNETT: They are not – no. There's some – the premises themselves are taken as given, in any –

SANDEL: I'm not so sure about that. Susannah?

HESCHEL: Yeah, I'm not so sure about that either. In talmudic reasoning, I think the premises are, in fact, examined as much as they are in any legal (break in tape) (inaudible)

Part of the problem that you're describing of trying to eliminate one's religiosity when coming into the public sphere is an old conundrum that goes back to the problem that Ranke articulated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the historian, who said once, a historian should be completely objective, and describe an event exactly as it transpired. And it turns out that historians can't do that, and in fact, a much better approach is not to strive for rational objectivity, but to try to be aware of one's preconceptions and how they affect the choice of sources and the kind of interpretation one makes. So in a similar fashion, I would say, I would like to know, in fact, what a person's religious beliefs and practices, etc., are, and then make my decision based on that.

But I think there's another assumption here in your argument, which is that you set up, it seems to me, a contradiction. You say that someone who is religious won't speak on behalf of the nation? Why is that? Well, in some sense I can be sympathetic to that point of view, because it seems to me that religions very often fail to affirm other religions. That is, a Catholic, a Protestant, a Jew, speaks only for that one tradition, for my own tradition. Theologians don't speak on behalf of a different religion. They challenge, and they polemicize. So I think perhaps that's what you're looking for, a greater openness and affirmation, so that a theologian or theological tradition would affirm the common good, and not simply be interested in one's own religious community.

DENNETT: Absolutely right.

ELSHTAIN: Could I ask Dan a question? Do you think that Martin Luther King's arguments against *de jure* segregation, and for what he called the beloved community, do you think those were appeals to irrationalism?

DENNETT: No.

ELSHTAIN: Why not?

DENNETT: Because –

ELSHTAIN: They were certainly arguments based on faith, where he's quoting the prophet Amos, he's quoting Scripture throughout the entire argument.

DENNETT: I am quite content with the quotation of Scripture in the course of making a case for a moral position. But I don't think that Martin Luther King was using Scripture as an authority without having grounds behind that. I think he was appealing –

SANDEL: To independent moral reasons.

DENNETT – to independent moral reasons –

ELSHTAIN: He appealed to Aquinas.

DENNETT: – and in fact –

ELSHTAIN: That's who he appealed to, when he was discussing the law, and the rootedness of the law, if it's properly law, natural law and divine law, and that law can be brought to bear to challenge statutory law when it violates the natural law that is derived from divine law, so that – that's the basis of the argument. If you go to the letter from the Birmingham jail, he talks about Aquinas in there.

CARTER: I want to ask a question also about – without going into this too deeply, how we're using the term rationality. I think there is an interesting set of premises there, and there are a lot of different ways we can imagine what rationality is. And so we think for a minute about categorization, and most of us simplify the psychological world by putting things into these neat boxes. I'm sure you know more about it than I do. If you didn't know that green meant go and red meant stop, and you went out to cross the street, each day you'd notice that, and after a while you'd figure, well, that's the way it works. Green means go, and red means stop, and that would seem to me, while you haven't tried to falsify it in a formal scientific way, it's certainly quite a rational way to do it.

So now let's pick, not Martin Luther King, let's pick a religion that looks less familiar, so something like the Ile Ife tradition in Yoruba, where people believe that their personal gods, the Orishas, are nourished by the blood of a freshly killed animal, and if you don't kill the animal in a certain way, your personal god will begin to wither and die, and you'll have all this bad luck. And you ask people why, and they'll say, oh, because this happened to my aunt, or when I was little we did this and I had this result, and so on. There are flaws in that reasoning, but the fact that there are flaws is not the same as saying it's irrational. It's a different claim than that the reasoning is flawed.

I think there are a lot of religious people for whom the experiential side of religion has been tremendously important to their coming to their worldview, and the fact that we can also explain their experiences a different way is not

the same as saying they've come to them in an irrational manner. It just means, maybe, that their rationality is incomplete. But, you know what? Lots of political arguments are exactly like that. You sit down at a dinner table and discuss the Iraq war, and you'll have a very, very similar experience.

DENNETT: Every argument is incomplete. Every rational argument is incomplete. You never can support all the premises. Always some things go unexamined and unsupported. We've known that since Aristotle. But religions tend to single out some premises and forbid discussion and analysis of those. That is irrational.

ELSHTAIN: For example, all people are created morally equal, because we're all children of God, would that be such a premise?

DENNETT: I think that is exactly the sort of proposition that we should study very carefully, and consider the very good reasons for believing it. I don't think that that's an axiom. That's not like Euclid. First of all, of course, it is a normative claim –

ELSHTAIN: Of course.

DENNETT: – and I think that, as a normative claim, there is a great deal to be said in its favor.

ELSHTAIN: But –

DENNETT: And I think you've got to say the things in its favor –

SANDEL: Let's actually – let's do that for a moment, to examine the reasons in its favor. Jean in her question offered one reason for believing in universal human equality, that we're all created in the image of God. That's one reason. That's a religion that has a religious character. You would prefer a different kind of moral reason?

DENNETT: Yeah.

SANDEL: What would be an example of the kind of moral reason, and how would it contrast – we'll see whether it's more or less grounded, more or less controversial, more or less contentious or arbitrary than the one Jean offered. What would you have in mind as the moral reason for that i –

DENNETT: I would take, if you like, a sort of Kantian line and say, human beings are reasoners. They are ones that can respond to reasons, that can be moved by reasons, and we're the only species on the planet that can be moved by reasons that are presented. The very communal activity that I am



saying is the heart of morality, is something that we are capable of at our best. And this we are approximately equal in, and we should be considered equal until we – as some people do – manage to disqualify themselves by proving their own inability to participate in the discussion.

SANDEL: All right, so the issue is whether that reason stands on a different kind of footing from Jean's reason. What do you say to that?

ELSHTAIN: Well, I don't see that it does. I mean, for Kant God is the source of the moral law, and the moral law is certainly something that we can and should argue about, just as the proposition that we are all God's children, let's say, or we are all moral equals. What does that exactly – what does that mean? What is the meaning of claiming that status? What is the force behind such a claim? All of those things follow once you've made such a claim. So I don't see that the deontological claims in Kant about the nature of the moral law are different in some fundamental way from the claim that I made. I mean, they both have to be argued out further, clearly. So I don't see that one would be on the face of it, because it's based explicitly, let's say, on a religious premise, would somehow fall into a category of the irrational by contrast to a claim from Kant, who, after all, says the moral law originates with God.

DENNETT: Well, yes, that's what Kant said. But I think we can divorce Kant's religious views from his philosophical views. And I think the big difference between the Kantian, or the Kantianesque view that I put forward, and the claim that, well, it's because we're all God's children, is that that latter claim will be viewed by many people as simply factually false. They don't believe in God, and so this has no implication to them at all.

Now, if you mean that figuratively, if you don't mean that literally, then, of course, it's a metaphor, and it's not a reason yet at all. It's nice, but you haven't given a reason. It just isn't a reason.

SANDEL: It's given –

CARTER: I guess I may be missing something. I think that actually, evangelizing for his positions aside, I actually think your disagreement is not that big. (laughter) And, you know, this is what I want to understand, and also what might clear up my view. I said I'm a conversational anarchist, and I am, so I want a public square in which you're going to argue your way and I'm going to argue my way, and we'll duke it out. And if your side wins, then God bless you, your side won. (laughter) And if my side wins, then Kant bless me, my side wins.

What bothers me is if we try to invent a larger vision of the public square in which we're going to have those rules, because then I'm going to be sitting

over and thinking, well, if you're going to make up rules that exclude me in my deepest forms of concern, maybe I should make rules that exclude you.

DENNETT: Well, who said anything about excluding you?

CARTER: Oh, well, few minutes ago you were going to say, if it was based on a –

SANDEL: He's not excluding you, Stephen, he's excluding the kinds of reasons that you want to introduce.

CARTER: I understand. One of the reasons I believe in democracy is I believe deeply in people, and the diversity of their views. And I like the idea – David Tracy's idea of religion as subversive of the community it inhabits. I think you're absolutely right – sorry, Susannah. A lot of religions don't even try to be subversive. They want to have power. They want to win. They want to join the ruling class. That's a problem in and of itself, mostly a problem for the religions, I think.

But what I like is the idea of a public square in which people raised a lot of different ways, to believe a lot of different things, a lot of different traditions, are getting in there and duking it out. And, you know, if you do that, there'll be a lot of cacophonous voices, a lot of noise, and everyone will have some part of that debate – they just can't stand to listen to those people. But over time, I think that that gives us a richer public life and a richer democracy than any notion of what the rules of engagement in the public square ought to be.

SANDEL: We've had a stretch of discussion here about the role of religion in moral and political discourse. I wonder if I could go back to law, and the question of whether the law should make special accommodation for people who have certain religious duties or obligations or claims of conscience; accommodations that do not necessarily apply to others. And the concrete case that raises this is well-known Supreme Court case some years ago in Oregon, the Smith case involving – which made a ban, a general ban, on the use of drugs, including peyote, and there was a religious group, a Native American religious group, part of whose religious ritual involved the use of peyote. And it went to the Supreme Court. Should they be given an exemption under this law, or if the law was applied to them, would that be a violation of their religious liberty? And it was a very controversial result in the Supreme Court, which we can come to in a moment. But what – let's get the view of the group here. Should that law be permitted if it makes no exemption for the religious ritual use of peyote? You want to take that one on? (laughter) You may be torn on that one.

HESCHEL: Well, I would say – I can't comment on the use of drugs in particular, but I think the broader question is, to what extent are there exemptions for religious practices that go against what's expected.

SANDEL: That's it.

HESCHEL: And that has so much to do with how we understand ourselves in society, but it also has, again, something to do with how we understand religion, and how religion accommodates itself, that is – you know, I wouldn't – as you're speaking, I'm reminded of Leo Strauss' argument that if we understand religion as faith that has to be reconciled with rationality, it's a problem. It's not easy. It's difficult. If we understand religion as law, as he understood Judaism and Islam, then it's a different matter, and certain behaviors can much more easily fit into (inaudible) accommodate issues of rationality, as Dan has said.

So – but then it would lead, of course, to problems of obligation. What do you do if you're a Sabbath observer and you need to take an exam or go to work on the Sabbath, etc.? How do we handle something like that? Actually, I think we've done very well in this country in accommodating and respecting those kinds of differences, and in that sense we've developed a certain kind of Christian culture that I find much superior, for example, than the experience of Europe and the way they've had to deal –

SANDEL: Now, in that case, the Supreme Court ruled that there was no accommodation required, and this created an uproar in Congress and an attempt to legislate again – what do you say about that case, Stephen?

CARTER: Well, I thought the case was wrong.

SANDEL: Wrongly decided.

CARTER: Well, the Supreme Court ruled that the state of Oregon was not constitutionally required to make an exemption for the Native Americans. And they had a perfectly sensible argument. The argument was – it was a two-prong argument. One is, where do we stop? What's the rule going to be? That's a really good legal argument. And number two, they said, really, your quarrel is not with us, but with the legislature. You should go try to get this through a democratic process. They tried and failed through the democratic process.

But what's interesting – I want to believe what Susannah believes, that we've done a good job accommodating these things. But the truth is that people who are not mainstream Christian practitioners have mostly lost accommodation cases when it's come down to a court decision. A few have won, but it's very rare. What's striking is – and in particular, religions that

seem unfamiliar. You talk about the Christian culture, and so there are cases about Islamic prisoners, for example, who can't get access to certain kind of religious services, and the courts kind of give those the back of their hand. I was on a panel with an evangelist Christian who has a Christian prison ministry, and he said, well, Muslim prisoners have the same right to go to service as Christian prisoners do. And that wasn't the point. The point was, they didn't want the same rights as Christian prisoners. Their service they're required to go to, and they couldn't attend.

And there are a number of areas like that. Santeria is another good example where they've lost these cases. Now, I'm not saying they should have won. I'm saying that –

SANDEL: The Santeria was the ritual animal sacrifice.

CARTER: The ones that need it the most, in a sense, and that are least likely to be understood or be able to appeal to the legislature are the ones that lose. That's in the courts.

ELSHTAIN: Well, I think I agree with Susannah for the most part that we've done a pretty good job, given the complexity of many of these issues. And I think that one of the ways in which we've done that is in fact to say to certain kinds of communities – I'm thinking of the Amish, for example – that the way we accommodate is to say, in effect, you have a right to be left alone, in a sense; that there's – that we're a pluralistic enough society that we're not going to require of everyone that they follow a particular model, and that some communities that really want to be primarily withdrawn in some sense –

SANDEL: Leaving them alone meant, in that case, letting them not send their children to school.

ELSHTAIN: Yoder v. Wisconsin.

SANDEL: What about – this is the recent wave of cases, including some in Europe and in Britain – what about allowing communities, orthodox communities, orthodox Jewish or Islamic communities, allowing the religious courts to govern civil law, and in particular marriage law and divorce law?

ELSHTAIN: That I find deeply problematic.

SANDEL: You wouldn't go that far.

ELSHTAIN: I wouldn't go that far.

SANDEL: You wouldn't leave them alone. When you say let's leave them alone, you wouldn't leave them alone to that extent.

ELSHTAIN: Again, I think that that's what Stephen was talking about, the complexity of the kinds of issues that get raised, because, in light of certain kinds of commitments of Western societies to human rights, including, obviously, very important issues of human rights where women are concerned, that to the extent that you have some egregious violations the balance may tilt the other direction. And you also – I mean it's one thing to say left alone, reasonable accommodation, and so forth. It's another to say that, in fact, we're going to say to wide, broad communities that they can simply in a sense segregate themselves off from the broader law of the society, the civic law, and to have their own legal system entirely. The Amish were not calling for that.

SANDEL: Right. We want to invite comments and questions from the audience. David, you want to start us off?

Q: Well, there's an interesting case right now in, I think, the DC courts where an orthodox Jewish family has a son who's on life support, and they – apparently he is brain dead – but according to the family, orthodox Jewish law doesn't recognize death until the heart stops, so the family wants the boy to be kept alive. What's really interesting about this case, it has to do with the question, not when does *life* begin – which opens up another whole debate – but in this case, when, if you don't mind – when does *death* begin. And I just –

SANDEL: That's a much-contested issue across a number of different religious traditions. Susannah, you had wanted –

HESCHEL: Well, under orthodox Jewish law, in fact, very prominent orthodox rabbis would say that, yes, brain death constitutes death. The issue really is within the community, how does one reconcile these differing opinions. May I just say in the European courts, allowing Shariah law or Sharia courts to govern family law, to some extent we have that already in the United States, notably in terms of, for example, Jewish courts of law determining whether a divorce is taking place. And if the rabbis do not grant the woman a divorce, she's stuck, even if she has a secular divorce. So even as we look down on some of the European developments that are beginning, let's look at what we're doing – we've been doing here for a long time.

SANDEL: Yes?

Q: I wanted to ask, specifically with – your name is Jean?

ELSHTAIN: Yes.

Q: Yes, thank you. Has the epistemological difficulty of knowing truth caused us as a nation to give up searching for it? Have we abandoned truth as unknowable, and chosen instead lesser gods as good for the nation? Intelligence, proper rational debate.

SANDEL: OK, thank you. Jean?

ELSHTAIN: That's the – profound question, and would require a long time to answer fully and fairly. But I do think that all of us are tempted, given what you call the epistemological difficulty of knowing the truth, to fall somewhat short of that very high standard and high goal. And here I would just simply underscore that, with graduate students this term in a course we're reading the entirety of Augustine's *City of God*, that so much of that is focused on how we come to know the truth through reason, as well as through faith, faith seeking understanding, not dividing the two off. And much of it has to do, of course, with the orientation of the self toward what Augustine says is the source, finally, of reason and truth and love. Now, that's an argument that he feels he's got to make, but it's also an item of faith.

It strikes me that people of faith often have to really struggle with these issues in a deep way, in part because of the fact that their understanding of truth is so often sort of looked down upon, or challenged, which is entirely appropriate, but often looked down upon as simply again another appeal to unreason, when in fact it involves a search for the truth. So I – as far as I understood the premise underlying your question, I would simply agree with you. And then we have to ask ourselves where are the arenas within which something that we could, without embarrassment, call a search for the truth, where does that go forward in our society today? Is it sustained in our churches, in our colleges, where is it sustained?

SANDEL: Thanks. Yes?

Q: Professor Dennett was asked to provide examples of the statement that he made that religion is excused hypocrisy. And I think Bishop Jackson gave us a very good example of one about an hour ago, where he described the politicking that he did for Proposition 8 in California, saying – he started off the conversation saying, we must defend marriage. In fact, you'd be hard put to show how the marriage between two same-sex individuals weakens marriage – my marriage, my heterosexual marriage. But on the other hand, it would be very easy to say that if you defend – if you are looking to defend marriage, and you are an African-American minister, and a prominent African-American figure, that you might want to discuss divorce rates and the skyrocketing rate of children born out of wedlock, not only in African-American community, but particularly in the African-American community.

That, to me, reeks of hypocrisy. And I think if he weren't a religious figure, he might not have been permitted to make that statement.

CARTER: I'm sorry, I just want to ask a question. I wasn't here for the comments. Do you know for a fact that Bishop Jackson does not discuss things like divorce and the high rate of illegitimacy in the –

Q: No, but I don't know why he's wasting his time and projecting this discussion –

CARTER: No, no, I was just asking about the factual –

Q: No. No, I don't know that he doesn't. But I know he expended a lot of time and a lot of effort, and strove to make this a key issue in this particular proposition, when in fact there's much more fertile ground to be tilled in this matter if he's genuine about feeling that marriage is in danger.

CARTER: I've got a better example for you of hypocrisy. The Episcopal Church, the church I attend, a few years ago adopted a resolution in its convention that stated that the church was taking an official position against vouchers because of our deep belief in public schools. A resolution was then adopted to encourage Episcopalians to send their kids to public schools, and the leadership refused to bring it to a vote. That's hypocrisy too.

SANDEL: Yes?

Q: Yeah, I want to force the legal argument a little bit. I think it's easy to deal with the question of, should we allow head scarves, French kids to use head scarves in their schools, or is the process of kosher slaughter humane or inhumane. Odd word to use for cows and so on. What about the question of the Christian Scientist principle that you cannot bring medicine to bear upon an illness, at least as I understand it? Boston is a center of Christian Science, and Mary Baker Eddy's homestead is just up the hill from where we sit. Every once in a while we have a court case where a child with an eminently treatable disease – now, this is very different from wearing a head scarf -- a child's life is on the line. Morality says, you save that child's life. The, to my mind, irrational religious principle of not using medicine to cure – and I'm talking about children, because I would allow any adult to say, I don't want to be cured of my disease. If you're over 21, you don't have to be cured. Where does the panel fall on that, and how –

SANDEL: Stephen?

CARTER: Just very briefly on that – and what Michael was talking about before, the accommodation of religion, there's a broad spectrum of views in most schools, and from what I've said already, you may have gathered I'm at the

extreme end of believing in a lot of accommodation. But even in my work, I draw a hard line where the physical health of a child is at stake. But I want to emphasize that, the physical health of the child is at stake. I say this because there's also this literature suggesting that parents shouldn't be able to choose religious schools, religious upbringings of various kinds for their children as well because it'll harm the child in some way. I think every civilized society has to draw lines, or should debate where the lines should be drawn. Most of us would draw it at the physical well-being of a child, I think.

SANDEL: Now, when you say, Stephen, that – just if I could follow up with you on that, you say you have a very broad idea of what should be accommodated. Take a case short of the physical health of the child, but more demanding than the peyote case. What about the Santeria case, which is ritual animal sacrifice in one's front yard. Should that be accommodated? It's the constitution –

CARTER: Well, it's not usually in the front yard. But, yeah, I wrote a – I actually wrote a law review article about that in a law review at a school where you teach, I think. (laughter) But I wrote an article – see, this was years ago. I'm very uneasy about it. I don't like it. But unless we have a general “you can't kill animals at all,” I'm pretty comfortable with a religious exemption from it. When it came to the Supreme Court, that question about animal sacrifice, the Supreme Court's point in upholding the right of the Santeros to do it was that the statute in question, which was in Florida, exempted all sorts of things, from the killing of rabbits as they train greyhounds, to kosher slaughter, to even taking your dog out in the back yard and shooting him when he's old and sick. If we had a more general – a firmer ban on other kinds of killing – if, say – suppose we as a nation, we don't eat meat any more, there's a lot of things we don't do, that might be different. For me as an accommodationist, it's not a problem.

SANDEL: To remind us, the rule was not a general rule with exceptions against killing animals. It was against killing animals outside of a normal, regulated butchery or something like that, wasn't it? What was it?

CARTER: Well, no, it was an ordinance that forbade all killing of animals inside the city limits of Hialeah, Florida, except for a set of exceptions, of which that was one.

When I say I'm a strong accommodationist, I'm not saying these questions aren't worthy of a lot of discussion and argument. I just want us to argue about them. I want us to engage on them, instead of just thinking, obviously the state should always win, or obviously the religionists should always win. There are people who would argue, for example, that you need to protect religious freedom and cherish it, but you've got to live with the same laws as



everybody else. That's part of being American. That's a perfectly plausible view. I don't share it, in the case of the First Amendment, but I know a lot of people do, and I think it's a perfectly sensible view.

ELSHTAIN: Can I do a historic footnote to this, Michael, that in John Locke's famous letter on toleration, you may recall that he talks about when it would be legitimate for the world of statescraft, the state, to curb a certain kind of practice that some group, religious group, says is necessary to their religious observances. So I said, the killing of a calf we wouldn't worry about all that much, but if you had a group that said we need human sacrifice, then you're going to draw the line. So this has been an issue that's debated, been discussed for a long time.

SANDEL: Yes, indeed. Susannah, you wanted to get in –

HESCHEL: Well, I'd like to come back to the question that was posed a moment ago, and the issue of hypocrisy, which I think sometimes is given a bad name. I think questioning oneself and one's sense of hypocrisy is a good thing. In fact, what constitutes a religious person is someone who never says, I'm a good person, because a religious person is always undergoing self-scrutiny in a relentless way. So the issue of hypocrisy isn't a problem for me in that sense.

But I'm also wondering about the question under law. The assumption seems to be, of course, that the law – well, let's say that minority groups have to appeal for special legal privileges in many cases, not always. And I just wonder about religious people who feel, for example, very strongly that there shouldn't be gay marriage, or adoption of children by gay couples, and so forth. You know, I live, as a Jew, in a minority, and so the law doesn't always reflect what I believe at all. And yet I don't strive to change the law. There are certain definitions about – for example, about life and when it begins and when it ends and so on that are very different according to orthodox rabbinic Judaism, different from Christian principles, different interpretations of that verse in Exodus that's so significant for the abortion question, for example.

So once again, my question would be, then, as a Christian, a pious Christian, why not, then, live as a minority, accepting that the law of the land is going to be gay marriage, and I don't necessarily agree, but live the way a Jew lives, the law of the land is the law of the land.

CARTER: I largely agree with you, but the cases I'm thinking about where I speak of accommodation are cases where the law isn't about how others live, it's about how you have to live, and it's interfering with your practice of your religious faith. I large – I think there's a lot to what you're saying. It's kind

of like theologian Stanley Hauerwas' idea that Christians should live as aliens rather than – and I know you're laughing because you don't agree, but –

ELSHTAIN: No, I just –

CARTER: I've seen the two of you often do this one.

HESCHEL: But of course, the accommodation is constantly there, whether it's an accommodation to the days of the week, and everything closed Sunday, as opposed to Saturday, or if it's an intellectual accommodation, certain ideas and certain definitions, in fact, even of religion.

ELSHTAIN: But you're not saying that these issues shouldn't be debated publicly, but that finally, if there's a general societal consensus that emerges, one needs to live with it. But of course, that raises all kinds of questions too, doesn't it, because there was at one point in time a general societal consensus in the de jure segregated South about certain things that could not be accepted. So you've got to really continue to struggle over – if you really think some profound moral wrong is involved, for example, that – the abortion debate, you're not going to want to accommodate yourself to that. You're going to want to keep arguing and trying to change the law on that, which is of course what we do in democracy.

CARTER: But I think the difference is – I mean, I think you're both right. I think the question for – not to the pious Christian, for any person of faith living in a country that I hope we want to be generally pluralistic, it shouldn't be a matter of, how can I change the country to suit me better? I agree with that. But I think that for all of us – and this is true of people whose beliefs come from mindsets that aren't particularly religious – there are moments when you say, most of the world I'm willing to live with, but this, this think I cannot tolerate. I think what makes us able to live in a democracy is, each of us has a short list of those things. When people's lists get very long – and that's whether it's the religious right or the secular left – people's lists get really long of things they can't tolerate, then you've got a problem. But if each of us has a small list, most (inaudible) I don't know why they do that, I don't know why they allow that, I hate that – I'm going to live my life. But this I won't tolerate. And that seems to me also the Martin Luther King answer. Whether you believe, as you and I do, that he was arguing principally from religious precepts, or whether it was a broader message, however it was, it appealed to people across a variety of different views who decided, this I can't tolerate, whatever else I might be able to.

HESCHEL: I'm spending the fall semester in Edinburgh – from September to January. I'm just here for a couple of days. But one thing that strikes me from abroad is that these debates about religion and politics have changed in tone since the last few – well, 10 years or so. That is, it seemed to me that

religious arguments were so often couched in a language of resentment, in the kind of way that Dan Carter writes in his book on George Wallace.

SANDEL: They were in the past, or they are now?

ELSHTAIN: In the past.

HESCHEL: They were in the past, full of resentment. Christian arguments, Christian rights, Christian – really resentful of the culture. And I think that there's been a shift in tone, and I find that very striking when I come here, or when I read what's going on here. It may – and maybe because I'm at a distance, but I don't think so. I think there's been a longing in this country, a longing for hope, and a longing for redemption. I think we have had, for many years now, a will to be deceived, not to believe, but a will to be deceived. And we have in fact been deceived by our government, and that has, I think, shifted in a very wonderful way. And the tone of the conversation about religion and politics has in turn shifted in a very positive direction.

SANDEL: Well, thank you. We began with the separation of church and state, we ranged across the terms of relation between religious and moral argument in politics, we touched on religious liberty and accommodation, and we ended with the culture. We didn't quite have a war of religion, but we had a lively discussion, and for that I want to thank our panelists. (applause)



END OF SESSION 3

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