

## ABORTION, A WOMAN'S RIGHT

Abortion is a basic human right because -

nobody has the right to use anybody's body against their will.

an unborn child is a potential child up to an undefined stage

the baby cannot have an equal right to life with her or his mother who is a grown up and developed person

### MICHAEL TOOLEY

Michael Tooley argued that to be a person was to have desires and that rights are based on desires. To have the right to live one had to want to live and understand what live meant. Babies can't do these things so he believed that abortion and infanticide were permissible as long as they were done as humanely as possible.

Rights are not based on desires but on needs and you can need what you do not desire. We have right and wrong desires so just wanting something does not mean we are entitled to it.

Tooley doesn't remember what it was like being a baby so for all he knows babies might desire life and understand what life is though this knowledge would be very primitive but it could be there.

Killing the baby even humanely will still hurt it and sometimes the baby is extracted bit by bit when things go disastrously wrong. Tooley would have to justify this by saying that it is right for there would be greater pain for it or its mother or both if it lives.

Many anti-abortion campaigners state that the baby in the womb gets no choice to live while the mother chooses for it and chooses abortion. They ask why nobody cares about the baby's choice. But they are driving people to Tooley's argument for it is obvious that the baby cannot choose anything.

Tooley's views give no real grounds for abortion.

### JJ THOMSON AND ABORTION

Judith Jarvis Thomson argued that because the woman owns her body she has the right to get an abortion if she doesn't want to be pregnant. She said that though the baby has a right to life, the mothers right to control her body comes first.

If you give birth to a child and the child needs your kidney or it will die there is no law that has the right to force you to donate. Your bodily integrity comes first. Therefore Thomson was right. If she is wrong then frozen embryos should be implanted by force in women to save them.

Suppose there was a machine that could grow babies to full term. Girls are forced to contribute eggs to it. Your egg was fertilised by mistake and now the baby will be aborted so that another baby can be brought to full term in the system instead. Unless your baby is implanted in you, it will die. It will die by being pulled to bits by the machine. Is it your duty to allow this to be done to you and save your baby's life? What if the baby was genetically designed to be the most compassionate doctor possible?

Thomson was right. Getting pregnant, even on purpose, doesn't give the mother the duty to keep the child alive. She can have an abortion if she wishes.

The baby in the womb takes the woman's bodily resources and changes her body forever. It occupies her body in a hugely intimate way. It is such a big thing that many reason that nobody has the right to force a woman to maintain the baby's presence against her will.

The pro-life argue, "But the baby is not a malicious intruder. It is not the baby's fault it is there." If God put it there he is clearly not all good. At best he is both good and bad. The woman may have consented to the sex that put the baby there. That does not mean she consented to the result of the sex. To deny this would be like saying a woman going out on her own and getting drunk at a club asked to be raped. The Catholic will not say to her, "I wish I could help you get rid of the baby as you have a right to control your own body. But I can't for its a sin." That would imply a grudging obedience to the

Church ban on abortion. The baby is the mother's more than anybody else's for she carries it and feeds it and half of its genetics come from her. It is partly her.

If a woman is not allowed an abortion because the baby is not a malicious invader then it follows that if the baby were then it should be allowed! Strange! And surely if the baby is a sinner and anti-god and needing forgiveness in baptism then it can be assumed to be as no better than a malicious invader?

## WHY SUPPORT ABORTION - ESSAY

Some argue, "We do not know if abortion is the killing of a human person. The foetus may seem to be a mass of tissue and still be a person. We don't understand how we are persons. Abortion for a small reason is wrong for we don't know if abortion is murder or not. Even a ball of cells could be a person in some way we do not understand so abortion for no serious reason is wrong in case it is murder. It is replied that carrots and onions might be persons and we kill them. But the difference is we have no reason to think they might be and do have reason to think that the foetus might be a human person."

The truth is that though foetus has more hope of being a person than a carrot it is absurd to imagine that it is a human person when it has no developed brain. To accuse a woman who has an early abortion of murder or killing a person is an extremely dangerous and serious allegation and the proof that the baby was a person then needs to be put forward but the proof is unsatisfactory so pro-life is anti-women.

You cannot find out if an early embryo is a person with the right to life. If you want to shoot something for fun that may be a person you can check. You cannot argue, "If it is wrong to drive my car in the dark when I see a shadow that could be a person, then it is wrong to abort an embryo for it might be a person." It is just not the same. See page 16, Questions of Life and Death.

Abortion is not always wrong. Much of humanism agrees with abortion on demand in the early stages for there is no reason to think that the baby is a human person then. Even if it has a brain it would be too primitive to make it conscious to any important degree. We don't think that animals are as personal as ourselves. A baby should be aborted when it would be destined for a life of agony. It is wisest in this case to terminate the pregnancy in case it is not a person. Abortion at the later stage is never right unless it is the only way to save the mother's life and if both will die.

We must see the value in the fact that if we prohibit abortion desperate women will die and suffer at the hands of back street abortionists so it should be allowed to keep them away from such butchers. It is countered that this is like saying that since people are going to steal or molest children that we should allow these things. But these women are desperate and believe they have no choice and there is the possibility that they are not harming a human person in having the contents of their wombs emptied. An abortion should be performed to stop a woman going to a back street abortionist. The mothers come first for we are more sure they are persons than we are that their babies are.

The pro-lifers know that they have no business expecting everybody to believe that a few cells is a human being. It's plain commonsense.

It is clear that if the world populates at the rate it is doing that the destruction of most of us will come one day through famine and plague. In this sense, abortion does save lives. It saves the people who have not come into being yet. Many nations will abort adults just to survive in an over-populated world that strains resources. Better to abort babies than adults!

The Humanist recognises that not everybody agrees with her or him on abortion. So whose opinion should be enshrined in the law? Should it be the Catholic one that always forbids abortion or should it be the opinion of women who believe abortion should be carried out even at a late stage just because the woman finds it convenient? Should it be the more moderate stance of Humanism? As the adult is more certainly a person than even a foetus at six months in the womb the women's opinion should come first.

The Catholic Church officially teaches in its vicious and notorious Dictionary of the Family that any democracy that allows abortion is not a democracy for it does not respect the lives of its unborn citizens. This teaching then urges Catholics to force the law of the land to forbid abortion no matter how many want it legalised. We will not stand for such interference.

## CONCLUSION

Abortion is a woman's right and should be freely available.

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