

TITLE

The Ethics of Pregnancy, Abortion and Childbirth: Exploring Moral Choices in Childbearing

AUTHOR

Stammers, Trevor

JOURNAL

The New Bioethics

DATE DEPOSITED

24 October 2016

This version available at

<https://research.stmarys.ac.uk/id/eprint/1254/>

COPYRIGHT AND REUSE

Open Research Archive makes this work available, in accordance with publisher policies, for research purposes.

VERSIONS

The version presented here may differ from the published version. For citation purposes, please consult the published version for pagination, volume/issue and date of publication.

PROOF COVER SHEET

Author(s): Book Review
Article Title: Book Review
Article No: YNBI1238578
Enclosures: 1) Query sheet
2) Article proofs

Dear Author,

1. Please check these proofs carefully. It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to check these and approve or amend them. A second proof is not normally provided. Taylor & Francis cannot be held responsible for uncorrected errors, even if introduced during the production process. Once your corrections have been added to the article, it will be considered ready for publication.

Please limit changes at this stage to the correction of errors. You should not make trivial changes, improve prose style, add new material, or delete existing material at this stage. You may be charged if your corrections are excessive (we would not expect corrections to exceed 30 changes).

For detailed guidance on how to check your proofs, please paste this address into a new browser window: <http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/production/checkingproofs.asp>

Your PDF proof file has been enabled so that you can comment on the proof directly using Adobe Acrobat. If you wish to do this, please save the file to your hard disk first. For further information on marking corrections using Acrobat, please paste this address into a new browser window: <http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/production/acrobat.asp>

2. Please review the table of contributors below and confirm that the first and last names are structured correctly and that the authors are listed in the correct order of contribution. This check is to ensure that your name will appear correctly online and when the article is indexed.


Sequence	Prefix	Given name(s)	Surname	Suffix
----------	--------	---------------	---------	--------

Queries are marked in the margins of the proofs, and you can also click the hyperlinks below.

AUTHOR QUERIES

General points:

1. **Permissions:** You have warranted that you have secured the necessary written permission from the appropriate copyright owner for the reproduction of any text, illustration, or other material in your article. Please see <http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/permissions/usingThirdPartyMaterial.asp>.
2. **Third-party content:** If there is third-party content in your article, please check that the rightsholder details for re-use are shown correctly.
3. **Affiliation:** The corresponding author is responsible for ensuring that address and email details are correct for all the co-authors. Affiliations given in the article should be the affiliation at the time the research was conducted. Please see <http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/preparation/writing.asp>.
4. **Funding:** Was your research for this article funded by a funding agency? If so, please insert ‘This work was supported by <insert the name of the funding agency in full>’, followed by the grant number in square brackets ‘[grant number xxxx]’.
5. **Supplemental data and underlying research materials:** Do you wish to include the location of the underlying research materials (e.g. data, samples or models) for your article? If so, please insert this sentence before the reference section: ‘The underlying research materials for this article can be accessed at <full link>/ description of location [author to complete]’. If your article includes supplemental data, the link will also be provided in this paragraph. See <<http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/preparation/multimedia.asp>> for further explanation of supplemental data and underlying research materials.

QUERY NO.	QUERY DETAILS
AQ1 	Please check whether the inserted closing quotation mark following “Child” has been placed correctly. If not, please indicate where this should appear.

How to make corrections to your proofs using Adobe Acrobat/Reader

Taylor & Francis offers you a choice of options to help you make corrections to your proofs. Your PDF proof file has been enabled so that you can edit the proof directly using Adobe Acrobat/Reader. This is the simplest and best way for you to ensure that your corrections will be incorporated. If you wish to do this, please follow these instructions:

1. Save the file to your hard disk.
2. Check which version of Adobe Acrobat/Reader you have on your computer. You can do this by clicking on the “Help” tab, and then “About”.

If Adobe Reader is not installed, you can get the latest version free from <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

3. If you have Adobe Acrobat/Reader 10 or a later version, click on the “Comment” link at the right-hand side to view the Comments pane.
4. You can then select any text and mark it up for deletion or replacement, or insert new text as needed. Please note that these will clearly be displayed in the Comments pane and secondary annotation is not needed to draw attention to your corrections. If you need to include new sections of text, it is also possible to add a comment to the proofs. To do this, use the Sticky Note tool in the task bar. Please also see our FAQs here: <http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/production/index.asp>.
5. Make sure that you save the file when you close the document before uploading it to CATS using the “Upload File” button on the online correction form. If you have more than one file, please zip them together and then upload the zip file.

If you prefer, you can make your corrections using the CATS online correction form.

Troubleshooting

Acrobat help: <http://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat.html>

Reader help: <http://helpx.adobe.com/reader.html>

Please note that full user guides for earlier versions of these programs are available from the Adobe Help pages by clicking on the link “Previous versions” under the “Help and tutorials” heading from the relevant link above. Commenting functionality is available from Adobe Reader 8.0 onwards and from Adobe Acrobat 7.0 onwards.

Firefox users: Firefox’s inbuilt PDF Viewer is set to the default; please see the following for instructions on how to use this and download the PDF to your hard drive: http://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/view-pdf-files-firefox-without-downloading-them#w_using-a-pdf-reader-plugin

Book Review

The Ethics of Pregnancy, Abortion and Childbirth: Exploring Moral Choices in Childbearing. By HELEN WATT. Pp. 157. Abingdon: Routledge. 2016. £85.00 (hb). ISBN: 978-1138188082.

This book is the sixteenth volume in the popular *Routledge Annals of Bioethics* series. The author is a former director and now Senior Research Fellow at the Anscombe Bioethics Centre in Oxford and offers here a challenging and seemingly expensive read. However, both her economy of writing and the extensive use of endnotes enable her to encompass more ideas and topics than many books twice the size – the longest chapter has 115 endnotes occupying 20 pages. The irritation of having to constantly flick to the end of the chapters to read the footnotes combined with the density of the argument do not make for an easy read but it is a comprehensive, fascinating and ultimately worthwhile one.

In her introduction, Watt states her aim is to primarily explore pregnancy in all its moral aspects but immediately goes on to state that since abortion is the context in which this most frequently occurs, this topic will inevitably be discussed at length as well. Having then re-affirmed her purpose of writing about the ethics of pregnancy rather than the moral status of the fetus, the first chapter *The Uni-Personal Pregnancy* is about the fetus and explores various theories of personhood, dealing with some very familiar issues en route such as twinning and potentiality. Her conclusion that the maternal-fetal dyad is a linking of two human subjects she admits is only the beginning of the ethics of pregnancy and moreover there are many thorny issues involved for those who reject equal status but consider the fetus at least as a significant other. ‘Birth is a change of location, not a change of identity’ (p.35).

The next chapter *The Neighbourly Pregnancy* therefore is the focus to the pregnant woman and the question of what a pregnant woman might reasonably be said to owe the ‘other’ she supports. Starting from Thomson’s ubiquitous ‘kidnapped violinist’ analogy Watt agrees that duties to support others are role-related and that donating a kidney to a stranger is beyond the call of duty. However, she distinguishes duties to avoid harmful bodily invasion as *not* being role-related and therefore contra Thomson, it does not require a splendid Samaritan to refuse to carry out harm which is what abortion intrinsically entails for the fetus.

The third chapter *The Maternal Pregnancy* is by far the longest and following on from its discussion of kidnapped violinist analogy, it focuses on the pregnant woman herself by asking whether becoming pregnant in itself makes one a mother rather than a helpful assisting Good Samaritan. Watt commences her exploration by considering the rights conferred upon a woman by virtue of her becoming pregnant. This Watt explores through examination of the case of pregnancy in women rendered unconscious by trauma and in the case of women who

are raped. Though such examples are generally raised as those where abortion may be most justifiable, Watt contends that ‘an abortion in both circumstances would be “a new invasive act, fully avoidable, which would make the woman’s own invaded body the unwitting site of a violent invasion of her child’s.”’ She further argues powerfully that the maternal role cannot *simply* be chosen by those who want to parent a particular child. There are several moving personal accounts from women who have become pregnant through the violation of rape that illustrate this

I believe that to encourage a woman to have an abortion is to add more violence to her life. The fact that she is still alive should give her an added reason to cherish the innocent life growing inside her. Two wrongs will never make a right.

The chapter goes on to consider a seemingly exhaustive array of related topics — pregnancy, control and feeling, control, pregnancy and guardianship, prenatal testing, maternal and materno-fetal treatments in pregnancy and the conflicts that can arise from them, life-threatening pregnancies, ectopic pregnancy and premature delivery. The section on ectopic pregnancy made me uneasy as a former clinician as Watt does seem to have considerable unease ethically about ‘intentional removal of the embryo (with a relatively undamaged tube)’ rather than expectant management or removal when the tube is damaged. However, she recognizes the tenuousness of her own ethical position here in immediately acknowledging that surgical removal at an early stage seems ‘clearly justifiable’ and ‘arguments against it seem well-nigh incomprehensible, in view of the risks this could avoid’ (p.81). Would that all ethicists had such insight and openness about the weakness of their position when out on a precarious ethical limb!

The Spousal Pregnancy, the fourth and final chapter (arguably rather misleadingly titled), looks at the way in which pregnancy affects parenting and society as a whole and considers whether there are morally speaking ‘better and worse ways to begin a pregnancy ... and if so what these ways might be’. In making fetal reduction in multiple pregnancies from IVF her first topic here, Watt makes a convincing case that ‘the “consumerish” attitudes of ART doctors and patients to unborn ART offspring’ [stem from] the ‘consumerish’ structures of ARTs themselves. Not all parents requesting IVF however would contemplate the creation of untransferred embryos, let alone accept fetal reduction and may rightly resist (and feel diminished by) the implication that users of ARTs are merely ‘commissioners of the child-product assembled ... [taking] owner type attitudes towards it’ (p.107). Furthermore parents whose conceive naturally are certainly not immune from those attitudes either!

This final chapter also explores donor pregnancies, ‘embryo adoption’, pregnancy intimacy and sexuality and male support of pregnancy. Watt concludes by claiming that pregnancy tests our commitment to both human equality and to the bodily nature of human moral subjects. Pregnancy though it may be burdensome is not an illness. Pregnancy is maternal, involving two subjects whose relationship is familial. It is to be celebrated and it should be supported even for those for whom it is not a cause for celebration. ‘We should not lose sight of the joy of having children – children seen as a gift, not a product – as we support each other through the obstacles that may cloud or obviate that joy’ (p.122).



