

# Ever one of the most contentious issues

Government



Ever since the case of Roe v. Wade in 1973, abortion has been one of the most contentious issues in our society. On the one hand, the pro-choice perspective believes that a woman should have the right to choose what is right for her and her situation, on the other the pro-life perspective feels that all children should have the right to live. The legality of abortion is hotly debated in society today.

My stance on this debate is that abortion is morally permissible under certain circumstances, and therefore it is not wrong to abort a foetus if there is a genuine cause for concern for the life of the unborn child and/or mother. A lot of debate arises with this issue due to the differing opinions on when the foetus becomes a human being. Some argue that it is at the moment of conception; others believe it is when the heart begins to beat; and others claim that it is when the baby is born into the world. There are many other arguments alongside these, which makes the argument of your own opinion rather difficult to portray due to the inconsistency of when a life actually begins. For me, it is when the baby's heart begins to beat at just 6 weeks. The rights argument is the claim that the foetus has a right to life, or that a woman has the right to do with her body as she wishes. The woman's rights is an aspect I feel strongly about. If the woman falls pregnant after putting measures in place to prevent it, and she does not want these changes to occur to her body, as she feels that it is not in her best interests to mother a child, she should be allowed to make the decision to abort the foetus.

Judith Jarvis Thompson also uses the people seed example to argue the case of failed contraception. Imagine that people seeds float about, and one may drift in through an open window and embed themselves and take root in your

carpets. You fix up your windows with screens in order to prevent this from happening, but on one very rare occasion, the screen is faulty; and a seed drifts in and takes root. Does the person plant have a right to the use of your house? This faulty screen is analogous to failed contraception. In the case of this incident, clearly, the woman is not obliged to go through with the pregnancy as she had thought ahead and put measures in place for the prevention of pregnancy.

So, in this case an abortion would not be wrong as it was not the woman's fault. Here, we need to establish whether or not a foetus is actually a human life and whether it does necessarily have the right to life. Michael Tooley (in P. Singer ed.: Applied Ethics, Oxford UP, 1986) argues that only 'persons' have a right to life. Foetuses may be human beings, but that does not entail that they are persons. A person is something possessing a concept of a self as a continuing subject of experience and believes that it is such a self.

Another aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is that of The Doctrine of Double Effect. The Doctrine of Double Effect argues that it may be acceptable to bring about a foreseen but unintended bad consequence, where that consequence is side effect of pursuing some good end. So, in order to save a pregnant woman's life, it may be necessary to perform a hysterectomy that has the foreseen but unintended consequence of killing the foetus. So, in this instance the health and wellbeing of the mother is a priority. I agree that the mother's life comes first, as without her, the child would suffer a lifetime without its mother's care. Also, if the mother was to die during pregnancy, it could also cause the unborn child to also die, and surely it is better to save one life than to lose two? In cases of rape, it is <https://assignbuster.com/ever-one-of-the-most-contentious-issues/>

completely understandable why a woman would want to end that pregnancy. Rape is an extremely distressing crime, which some women may never recover from.

If you give birth to the baby of the criminal that raped you, it would be a constant reminder of the event, and could result in unintentionally neglecting that child. It is unfair for the child to face the consequences of actions they had no control over. Judith Jarvis Thompson gave the example of the violinist in order to explain the argument for the woman's rights.

The argument goes as follows. Imagine that you have been kidnapped and 'plugged into' a violinist, in order to save their life. Do they have the right to use your body? If not, does the foetus have the right to use the woman's body? Thompson argues that yes, it would be a great act of charity if the woman allows the use of her body, and it may seem selfish and cruel to not do so, but it is certainly not unjust. The woman was kidnapped against her will and given the responsibility of keeping this other life alive, she is not obliged to do so if it would cause her great distress. Consequentialism looks at the consequences of either carrying out, or failing to carry out, an abortion.

The 'Roe vs. Wade' abortion case in the USA (1973) argued in favour of legal abortions, in part, in order to reduce the suffering caused by illegal abortion. This was a big turning point in history which many scholars refer back to in order to support their argument. If abortions were to become illegal again, it would not mean that women would keep their babies.

Many women would result to illegal abortions just like they did many years ago. This could increase the mortality rate of both women and children. At <https://assignbuster.com/ever-one-of-the-most-contentious-issues/>

least with legal abortions, they are as safe as they could possibly be. Another consequence would be the amount of unwanted children that are being brought into the world. The birth of an unwanted child could result in child abuse, and a very bad upbringing for the child. Also, if a parent cannot provide financially for a child, then surely it would be kinder for the child to not be brought into the world? The moral issue of abortion may increasingly be linked to the development of pre-natal screening technologies, whereby 'defects' in a foetus can be identified prior to birth. Can abortion be justified if it leads to a more worthwhile life? For example, a severely deformed foetus, which would not live very long once born.

It would be cruel for the parents as they would have to deal with the bereavement of their own child, and it is also cruel for the child itself as it is being put through a very traumatic life when the parents could have prevented it at an early stage. It is morally right for this child to be aborted when the quality of life is at a serious low. In cases such as these we need to consider whether death is actually a bad thing.

However, on the contrary to this argument, not everyone who supports women's rights are in favour of abortion. A number of people are trying to override the choice of abortion with practical solutions. According to some, if women were to stop having abortions so frequently, the government would have to put measures in place in order to support mothers.

For example, financial help and inexpensive, readily available childcare. However, this is portraying an image that bringing up a child is based solely around money. This is not the case. A child needs support and a loving home, so this

argument is very inconsistent in the sense that a child needs more than just money to have a good life. This is a weak argument for the immorality of abortion as an unwanted child will be neglected. Also, many people would be having children for the financial benefits, who is to say that this money will actually go towards bettering the child's wellbeing? To conclude, the statement given is proven to be unsound by the evidence that I have shown.

The right to life is a huge topic with many different views. However, abortion provides benefits to both the mother and the unborn child. With abortion being legal, it gives options. Yes, it is a sad and distressing thing to go through, but this one act determines the rest of someone's life. It is better to go through one bad experience rather than have a lifetime of bad experiences that you have no control over.