

Moral and Legal Status of Abortion

V. Potential Persons and the Right to Life

prima facie right may exist but it does not override the full rights-bearing mother.

Alien abduction and cloning thought experiment.

IV. Fetal Dev. and the Right to Life

Early fetus lacks characteristics of personhood

8 month old fetus still lacks some but not all of the characteristics of personhood.

Mother's rights (full person) cannot be trumped.

Characteristics of Personhood

Consciousness

Reasoning

Self-motivated activity

Capacity to communicate

Presence of self-concepts and self-awareness

III. Defining the Moral Community

Necessary vs. Sufficient Conditions

Some characteristics may be necessary

Some may be sufficient

If a fetus lacks ALL the characteristics, then it is surely NOT a person.

I. Defining the Moral Community

Beings with and equal moral rights

What sort of creature has inalienable rights

II. Definition of "Human"

1. Moral Sense: Full fledged member of the moral community (personhood)

2. Genetic Sense: Member of our species

VI. Infanticide

Deprivation to others count against (analogous to destroying artwork or environment)

Others will most likely want to provide for it and thus, ceteris paribus, it would be wrong to destroy it.

May still be justified in cases of unwanted or defective infants.