

This is an earlier version of the book review published in the *Journal of Moral Philosophy*.

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Kate Greasley. *Arguments about Abortion: Personhood Morality and Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 269 pages. ISBN: 9780198766780. Paperback: £22.99

The scholars of the contemporary academic abortion debate can be divided into three groups: those who believe abortion is immoral because the fetus has moral status; those who believe abortion is permissible even if the fetus has moral status; and those who believe abortion is permissible only because the fetus lacks moral status. Kate Greasley belongs to the third group. She argues in her book *Arguments about Abortion* that the morality of abortion depends crucially on the moral status of the fetus and that abortion is permissible because the fetus lacks (full) moral status.

Arguments about Abortion is clearly written and covers a wide-range of important arguments and views on the abortion debate. The book is divided into three sections. In the first section, Greasley defends the view that a successful abortion argument must take into account the moral status of the fetus. In the second section, she argues that personhood should be treated as a range property, meaning that it is fully and equally borne out by all human beings past a minimum threshold, and claims that there is a good reason to place the minimum threshold for moral personhood at birth. She argues that punctualism, a view which claims that personhood is gained instantaneously, is implausible. In the third section, Greasley addresses practical questions surrounding the abortion debate such as sex-selective abortion and conscientious objection.

Greasley engages rigorously with much of the important literature including Ronald Dworkin's 'red herring' argument, Judith Thomson's famous analogies and the Good Samaritanism argument, Jeff McMahan's Embodied Mind Account, and Christopher Tollefsen and Robert P. George's Substance View. Greasley also addresses arguments put forward by Christopher Kaczor (*The Ethics of Abortion*, Routledge, 2015) and David Boonin (*A Defense of Abortion*. Cambridge University Press, 2003).

One claim that Greasley does not discuss is the Actual Future Principle (see Elizabeth Harman, "Creation Ethics." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 1999). The Actual Future Principle states that an early fetus that survives has some moral value but an early fetus that dies has none. Harman's principle, or a wider version of it – the Ever-Conscious View: a view that claims that a being has moral status only if it is alive and is, was, or will be conscious – should at least be mentioned, even though one might believe such a view to be problematic.

Greasley presents arguments for and against the claim that the fetus has moral status. She presents common *reductio*-type counter-arguments and shows how they are dealt with when debating the moral status of a fetus. Unsurprisingly, Greasley admits that none of the arguments presented can eventually avoid such *reductios*, and one eventually has some bullets to bite.

It is impressive how deeply Greasley interacts with the arguments put forth by others before her. Careful examination of most of the important abortion arguments makes her book valuable for anyone working on the ethics of abortion, even though one might not always agree with Greasley's claims.

Certain parts of the book are particularly good to read for anyone working in applied ethics. For example, the chapter devoted to analysing the role of analogical arguments, such as the violinist with kidney failure or the conjoined twins could be very useful for philosophers working outside of the abortion debate as well. According to Greasley, the problem with analogical arguments is that they do not compare like with like. Drawing on the work of Maggie Little, Greasley claims that pregnancy is a *sui generis* phenomenon: there simply are no good analogies with it. But that is not a

reason to jettison such arguments altogether, Greasley claims, because the analogies are not meant to resemble pregnancy in all respects, but to isolate certain features whose ethical significance we are testing. For example, if one is not satisfied with Thomson's violinist analogy because it does not capture all ethically salient features, then Greasley claims that one must explain what such missing features are and why they are morally meaningful.

Although I agree with Greasley that personhood should be understood as a range property, I am not fully convinced that the threshold should be placed at birth. Greasley argues that fetuses lack a separate, physical presence in the world essential for sharing in an embodied human life, while newborns have such a presence. This is supposed to provide a reason to treat newborns as persons while at the same time denying personhood to fetuses. There are at least two concerns I would have liked Greasley to have interacted with. First, there are some counterarguments against the person-denying-view of abortion that Greasley has not dealt with. For example, if the fetus has no personhood, why do prospective parents often mourn miscarriages? There might be a simple answer to this question, but the argumentative power of Greasley's book would be strengthened if it had been explored.

Second, the view that birth marks a significant threshold regarding the right to life raises the question of what we should do in the future when it might become possible to gestate fetuses outside the womb in artificial devices. Then there would be no 'birth.' Greasley's person-denying view of abortion seems to imply that using artificial wombs does not 'solve' the abortion debate as it might do for scholars sympathetic to Thomson's position. That is because if the fetus is not a person, as Greasley claims, then killing it cannot be seriously morally wrong and in abortion, the pregnant woman might have a right to demand the death of the fetus. But those who argue that abortion is permissible due to bodily independence should accept that if the fetus can be detached alive and gestated in an artificial womb, the pregnant woman can demand only detachment, not the death of the fetus. The bodily independence view for the permissibility of abortion would thus be suitable to the pro-life position. Since Greasley is arguing that we should place the threshold for personhood at birth, it would be interesting to consider what her position implies about the case of ectogenesis when there is no obvious birth involved.

The section about selective abortion is well-done, but the section about conscientious objection at the end of the book is rather thin regarding the rapidly growing literature on the topic. For example, the journal *Bioethics* has published a special issue on the conscientious objection in healthcare in 2014. The chapter could have been improved by engaging with the wider and constantly growing literature on the conscientious objection, for example by drawing on the articles from *Bioethics* and other bioethical journals.

Minor quibbles aside, *Arguments about Abortion* covers an extensive literature in sufficient depth that Greasley's book could serve as a starting point for anyone interested in the abortion debate. It certainly deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone working on the morality of abortion.

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