



Parental Responsibility: Hazmat

Dr. Reuven Brandt

Department of philosophy, UC San Diego

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Parental Right and Responsibilities

- Obligations / responsibilities are interchangeable in this context

- Parental responsibilities
 - Caring relationship with child
 - Attend to needs
 - Guide into adulthood

- Parental rights
 - Make decisions about child's welfare
 - Have opportunity to form strong loving bonds
 - Make decisions about the kind of relationship other will have with the child

Parental Right and Responsibilities

- Rights and responsibilities can come apart
 - An abusive parent can lose contact rights, but retain obligations to provide
- How do we *initially* acquire responsibilities?
- Thoughts?



Parental Right and Responsibilities

- Special Obligations
 - Natural
 - Voluntary
- Moral luck
 - What does this mean for unintended pregnancy?

Parental Right and Responsibilities

- Millum's does not think natural accounts work
 - Pure geneticism cannot be right
 - Where do we draw the line in who becomes responsible?
- How strong is this argument?

Parental Right and Responsibilities

- Millum's solution: Conventional Acts
 - We recognize the special obligations arising from conventional acts in other cases
 - Note the convention does not have to be perfect, but it does have to satisfy these criteria:

Parental Right and Responsibilities

P's action A constitutes taking on artificial responsibility R if and only if:

1. P knows (or should know) that she is performing A;
2. P is not unduly pressured to A;
3. A is intentional under some description;
4. In P's moral community, A is understood to constitute taking on R;
and
5. P knew (or should have known) that (4).

Note: conventions can be 'negotiated away'

Parental Right and Responsibilities

- Possible worries:
 - Discriminatory conventions
 - Women do most childcare
- But does it leave children without care?

How do we make sense of this claim:

“In the case of parenthood, the would-be parents cannot decide between them whether or not they have taken on parental responsibilities, since these responsibilities are not owed solely to the other parent. However, they can negotiate how the responsibilities are distributed between them.”

Parental Responsibility

Hazmat theory:

- Heightened responsibility when exercising control over hazardous materials
 - Eg uranium, a pet lion
 - Have responsibilities *even if* there is no wrongdoing
 - Why? The burden of not engaging in 'risky' activity is vastly outweighed by the burden others face if the risk materializes
 - Consider breathing
 - So we have obligations for the consequences of the choices we make with our gametes

Parental Responsibility

Hazmat theory:

- What about stolen gamete cases?
- What about medical professionals?
 - Acting as agents

So what about the Joe's?

- Accidental pregnancy
- Sperm donor
- Both have responsibilities!

Parental Responsibility

Can responsibilities be transferred?

- Some might, but relational ones cannot
- Parental responsibilities include the responsibility to form (or be open to forming) relationships
 - Cannot be transferred!
- What about adoption?
 - Can relinquish children out of love for them
 - Wrong to wilfully take on responsibilities one intends not to fulfil (gamete donation but not adoption)
 - Maybe adoption in non-ideal

Parental Responsibility

Problems with the Hazmat theory:

- Are gametes 'hazardous materials'?
 - Is the account too broad?
- Are parental responsibilities really non-transferrable?
 - Some might, but relational ones cannot
 - Parental responsibilities include the responsibility to form (or be open to forming) relationships
 - Cannot be transferred!
- “Parental responsibility includes the responsibility to provide for one’s child’s basic needs, at least to the best of one’s ability. My misgivings regarding transferring parental responsibility are based on the premise that love is one of a child’s basic needs. If a child’s basic needs include the need to be loved, it is unclear to me that a responsibility of this kind – a responsibility to relate with a particular feeling