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04/21/2022

PHIL-1002-002

Ethics Final Paper

Fetuses, if you are to compare them to plants, would be the seed of a plant. A seed is not a plant yet. Each seed has the potential to become a plant, but in fact is not a plant yet. A fetus has the potential to become a human but has not yet become one yet. Like any living thing, fetuses take time to develop and grow. The fetus is sharing the body of the mother, so mothers are also in charge of her own body. The choice of abortion is the choice of the mother. It is morally permissible because it reflects the morals of the mother.

In Judith Jarvis Thomson’s “A Defense of Abortion,” there were a few examples used that convinced me of her point to be made. The example of Jones and Smith’s coat argument displays the ownership that the mother has of her body makes abortion permissible to save the mother’s life. The example of the incredibly growing baby relates to the laws of self-defense and the limited amount of option the mother must choose from. The example of the People-seeds expounds on the cases where pregnancy is forced onto a woman without her choosing. All these examples, along with the others that Thomson used, coincide with my own image of abortion as the choice belongs to the mother.

The example is that Jones and Smith are both outside freezing, but there is only one coat to keep one person from freezing. Jones puts on the coat to keep warm, but Smith also needs the coat to stay warm. There is not room for Jones to argue Smith over it when the coat is own by Smith. This is referencing a woman and her baby, if the woman’s life is in danger, it is not irrational to say that a woman is going to save herself since it is her body just like it is Smith’s coat. This example brings forth the mother owning her body and having to make the choice of what she wants to do with it. Thomson in the text directly shows how she looks at the relationship between the mother and the unborn child. She describes the relationship as “not like two tenants in a small house which has, by an unfortunate mistake, been rented to both…” as the mother owns the house and has authority of how lives in it. I agree with how Thomson is thinking in this example as it also circles back to the choice being the mothers to make.

The example of the incredibly growing baby puts you into a small house with a child. The child is rapidly growing, and you are already up against the wall and in a few minutes, you will be crushed to death. The child on the other hand, will not be crushed to death. The child will not be hurt, if nothing is done to stop him from growing, he will just bust out of the house and be free. However innocent the child is, you do not have to wait passively for it to kill you. The point she is trying to make is towards when mothers get abortions when having the child puts their own life at risk. She is claiming that by letting the mother die so the child can live, is taking away the exact same rights we fight for the infants to have in the case of abortion. The mothers’ rights of self-defense aid her when it comes to saving her own life from her child. Thomson states, “But if the woman houses the child, it should be remembered that she is the person who houses it.” Her words here resonate with house my thought process upon reading it for the first time. The mother owns/is the house, and she houses whatever is inside, thus making her actions morally permissible.

The final example of the People-seeds is where Thomson uses the term as reference to the process of child conception. She describes opening a window due to it being stuffy in a room, but in turn that lets a burglar into her home. Even though she did not intentionally let the burglar in, her actions enabled the burglar to, well, burgle. In Thomson’s argument, the point she seems to want to get across is that someone who does not want children voluntarily opens her windows with the only thing standing between someone entering is a screen. Her argument has merit because she makes some decent points about voluntary actions that lead to “People-seeds” entering and taking root. In addition, she goes on to say that “After all you could have lived your life with bare floors and sealed doors and windows,” and then uses the counterexample of rape to cancel out this statement. I am convinced from this example as it depicts the consequences of living in the world as danger looms everywhere. This puts women in a situation of fleeting safety upon leaving her home. No matter the cause or process, abortion is morally permissible for a woman who unwillingly becomes pregnant.

Thomson’s examples show how in most cases, the situation comes down to the mother having to share her body with the fetus and her decision of what she wants to do with her body. The Jones-Smith coat argument allows people to see the view of two people needing something to survive, only for the rock papers scissors to be circumvented by the fact that Smith owns the jackets. The mother owns the body as the fetus is sharing it, this leaves the decision of abortion of to the mother. The growing baby argument only extremifies the self-defense scenarios where the mother can choose to save her of life or the life of her child, but not both. The People-seed example brings involuntary pregnancy to the forefront because of voluntarily opening of the woman’s windows to danger. I believe Thomson’s defense of abortion is successful in convincing me that even if you consider a fetus a person, it is the mother’s choice with what she wishes with her body.

Bibliography

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