

# Pros and cons of abortion

Rarely has a more bewildering set of letters blotted the pages of the Gateway than those concerning abortion. The quality of some of the arguments indicates a lack of rudimentary education. For example, citing statistics showing that there are risks in having an abortion shows nothing other than that there are risks. This is equally true of bearing a child, walking across the street, eating at SUB. Such argument prove nothing.

Mr. Thompson fares no better in elementary logic when he equates both actions done to oneself and actions done to another by oneself. Simple observation provides the basis

for distinguishing the two. The right to control one's own body does not entail the "right" to control someone else's. These two notions are mutually exclusive.

Miss Strom gets hopelessly confused when she states "an embryo or foetus is not part of the mother's body." Really??? Regardless of one's position on this issue I think it is a fact easily confirmed by simple observation that until the time of birth the foetus is not a "totally new organism" but is decidedly a part of the mother's body. This is not the problem. The problem is "What is the status of the foetus before birth?"

This question is *not* answered by referring to the foetus as a "cancerous-like thing a few inches long" and "jelly-like in nature" either. What it looks like has nothing to do with its status.

No one can deny that the foetus is alive. But all cells in the body are alive in some sense too. They are capable of sustaining growth and reproducing. So the question is not "is it alive" but "what is it alive as?"

It is undeniable that the zygote if left to mature will become a human being but as such this is only a potency which is not fully actuated until the moment of birth. Until that moment it has no life or being of its

own apart from the woman's. Just as blood cells while alive in one sense, in another sense have no life and being apart from the body, i.e. are alive only with respect to the body, so too with any complex of cells be they liver or foetus. The only difference is that the organs of the body have no further potential to realize whereas the foetus does.

This, however, does not alter the fact that it is but a potential. And, further, that the foetus has no status apart from that of the woman. As a group of cells in the woman it has no status apart from her and thus it is up to her to decide what is to be done with them. As part of the woman it has

no being apart from her and cannot be accorded any status as an independent being and therefore has no rights.

Until it is born, i.e. until it becomes a being in its own right, the foetus does not have its own actual life as an entity apart from the woman's so only her wish is involved. It is at her sole discretion to dictate what disposition she is to make of the functions of her own body. Until birth, the foetus remains a function of her body and as such, it is the woman's moral right to decide whether she wants to have a child or not. It is hers and hers alone.

Jack Adrian  
Grad. Studies

To: Name With-held:

Miss Strom is also aware that "it takes two to tango." Her child is due this week. Having lived with her the past seven months, I am aware, in part, of the deep and agonizing conflict she has endured. But she has come to accept responsibility for her pregnancy as well as for her decision to carry it to term. However, this was not easy. I am sure that this knowledge will cause you to see her position from a different perspective.

To begin with, Joan wrestled long and hard with the question of whether or not to abort. Because of her straight background, her family, and her

circumstances, abortion, in one sense, would have been the easy way out. And yet, how can we know what effect this action would have had on her mentally, emotionally, or spiritually?

Because there are two sides to this issue, I say back to you, "How can you, without going through a pregnancy, realize the full consequences of such an action?" As you say, the decision, whichever it is, will affect different people in different ways.

Some women are able to endure an abortion and nonchalantly walk away. Others, like yourself, are deeply scarred. Some women are able to

manifest a deep maturity by having the baby and giving it away for adoption, though the cost be great. Others just don't care.

Still others evidence another kind of maturity in their ability to keep and raise the child. I agree that a woman should be fully supported in whatever decision she makes.

As implied earlier, to carry the pregnancy to term raises two issues. Will I keep my baby, or will I surrender? I am sure you are aware of the immense consequences involved in trying to raise a child, particularly alone.

To surrender, however, is much like abortion. It is the death of your child as far as you are concerned. And yet, because you gave away a healthy baby, you think about it. You wonder if it is alive, healthy, happy, loved. You wonder if it is receiving all you would have liked to have given that child—but you knew you couldn't. That is why you surrendered.

No, my dear, I cannot put myself in your place or situation; into whatever went into making your decision which I do realize was very difficult and painful. But I can feel for you.

My deepest hope is that you can resolve the guilt you still experience, and continue to press forward rather than to keep looking back. You only hurt yourself. I also hope that if your desire is to have children, this will be fulfilled within the context of a loving and trusting relationship.

I would also like to assure you that I have learned, from tragic experience, that time will move you in the direction toward healing.

Roanda Heye

On Feb. 15, the Gateway carried an article by a girl who had had an abortion at fifteen years of age. I, too, became pregnant at the same age, and I'd like to comment.

By the time a girl reaches fifteen, she should know enough to remain unconvinced by a guy who tells her that "no one gets knocked up the first time." To argue that she doesn't can only be for one of two reasons: either it is an excuse for not having the willpower to say "no," or it is a rationalization to others as to why she finds herself pregnant.

Going through a pregnancy and having the child does not guarantee, contrary to popular opinion, a wrecked life for the person involved. Only if the person lets it happen can her life be ruined. To go through with a pregnancy takes planning and a lot of suffering on the part of the girl involved—take it from me. But we are all responsible for our own actions and must take the consequences for them. I had my child and kept up in school as well, and I certainly do not consider my life ruined by my experience.

If her reason for having an abortion is that a woman is "someone with feelings and a life to live," as the author of the article "True Abortion Story" states, then the abortion is merely an easy way out of a difficult situation. She does it for her own selfish reasons, without regard for the human life she carries within her.

When a person doesn't want her pregnancy to be common knowledge, it need not be. The only people who know that I have had a baby are those who I have chosen to enlighten. I had the

baby adopted and she is no longer mine—she is neither a constant embarrassment to me nor a tie to my life. A person who would consider killing the baby through abortion should have no qualms about other people, who love the baby and have waited for it for up to a year, raising it.

Pro-abortionists talk about the rights of women. I, too, am for women's rights. But I disagree with the view that abortion is a "right." Everyone stand accountable for their own actions. Women cannot consider that they have a right to rid themselves of an unwanted problem in a morally wrong way; they, as much as anyone else, must deal with that problem. There is a point where rights end and irresponsibility begins.

I don't believe that this article will cause a radical change in the views of anyone. But I ask that everyone think about what I've said, and about what has been said in previous articles. Is the inconvenience of nine months worth the price of one human life? To the author of "True Abortion Story" I am talking people, not principles. However, to me, "people" includes the baby who is just as involved as the mother, as well.

(Name withheld by request)

What follows is a parody of parts of a letter on abortion that was printed in the Feb. 15 Gateway. It is not written to ridicule nor to be cruel nor to condemn, but simply to make a point that badly needs making.

"So there I was at nineteen. My father had just had a severe

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RE: Students in Fetal Defense (Gateway, Tues. Feb. 8).

As usual, the people speaking out against abortion don't ever have to face pregnancy themselves. Yes, there are risks involved in abortion, but you don't have to be a male medical student to be able to compare these abortion risks with the risks of birth — which are many times greater.

Even risks of birth control can compare very unfavorably with abortion eg. the pill and thrombophlebitis. It is time that the women who face the consequences of pregnancy have the freedom and the knowledge to make their own decisions about their bodies.

Anne Lambert  
Home Ec.

From: *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Boston Women's Health Book Collective, Simon & Schuster, N.Y. 1976.

Risk of Death for Women in the Age Group 15-45 (US-1973)

1. Pregnancy - 17/100,000 Live Births
2. Mortality (all causes excluding pregnancy) - 80/100,000 Women
3. Combined Mortality (1 plus 2) - 97/100,000 Women
4. Oral Contraceptors - 0.3-3/100,000 Women
5. IUD Users - 0.3-1.5/100,000 Women
6. Foam Users (mortality based on 20% pregnancy rate) - 3.4/100,000 Women
7. Condom Users (mortality based on 10% pregnancy rate) - 1.7/100,000 Women
8. Legal Therapeutic Abortion ("TAB") - 3.2/100,000 Women
9. TAB plus Unprotected Intercourse (mortality secondary to 80% pregnancy rate) - 2.6/100,000 Women
10. TAB plus Foam - .6/100,000 Women
11. TAB plus Condom (mortality secondary to 10% pregnancy rate) - .3/100,000 Women.

## CHARLES LUNCH

Calgary — The view from the restaurant atop the Calgary tower is one of pure wealth. Below me along 7th Avenue stretch the glass and steel towers of the oil barons. In the distance one can almost imagine the vast herds of cattle grazing in the foothills, and on the western horizon is the glint of tourist dollars piling up in the resort towns of Banff and Jasper.

This is Alberta, and make no mistake — from the moment you step off the plane you are thrust into a whirlwind of action and excitement unparalleled in the East.

Albertans are a breed unto themselves. They're rough and tumble and ready to pick a fight with any "Eastern bastard," as they are prone to call us. Yet at the same time they have a certain *joie de vivre* that sends them off

searching for new ideas and new sparring partners.

There's no lack of culture here in Big Sky Country. Professional theatre flourishes in both Calgary and Edmonton, with top-line actors like Diane Stapley, Jamie Farr and Wayne & Schuster appearing in current hits such as *Send Me No Flowers* and *The Canadian Rodeo Revue*.

Even the restaurants here are different. None of the endless repetition of French, German, or Greek places one might find in other cities — here there's an exciting variety of steak & pizza, steak & lasagna, pizza & cantonese, and even pizza & pizza places. My best meal during this trip has to be the Won-Ton and Prime Rib I feasted on at the Four Seasons.

The big difference between

West and East isn't the entertainment, however. It's the positive attitude that people out here hold for the future of their province. No worries about Quebec separation, because Lougheed has signed a secret agreement with Montana, and on July 1, 1979 everyone here packs their bags and oil wells and moves to Butte.

Perhaps the attitude of Albertans is best summed up by the young woman who accompanied me to the Saturday Fights at the Big Four building (which, incidentally, have replaced disco as the "in" thing for the upper class Calgarian). Tiger Tamaso had just laid Stu Hart flat when my friend jumped up and shouted "You stupid son of a bitch! You don't know wrestling from pig shit! FUCK YOU!!" The Alberta mystique could not have been expressed more eloquently.

