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### Recitation 06: The Obligations of Pregnancy and Thomson on Abortion

1. Administrivia

I will return paper 2 in lecture on Tuesday.

Please sign up for a time to meet with me to discuss the rewrite. [see sign-up sheet]

Midterm survey (I will distribute at the end of recitation).

2. Presentation: Kamena Kostova on the pregnancy obligations of women and men

3. The rights and responsibilities of pregnancy: Oaks, Harris, and Roots

Some questions:

- What is healthism? What are its implications (moral, legal, social)?
- What is the upshot (moral, legal, social) of the considerations Oaks raises in her article?
- With the exception of SC, “neither US state laws nor the courts support criminal prosecution of pregnant women for prenatal action” (Harris, p. 1698). Why?
- What would the implications of a male contraceptive pill be (moral, legal, social)?

4. Thomson’s defense of abortion

Assumption: a fetus has a strong right to life, just like adult persons do.

Conclusion: it is sometimes permissible to abort a fetus. When?

- When the mother’s life is at stake.
  - the mother has a right to self-defense.
  - the mother has a property right to the use of her body.
- When the pregnancy is the result of rape (and the mother’s life is not at stake)
  - the fetus has (at most) a *liberty right* to life; it does not have a *claim right* to life.
  - no obligation to aid the fetus, but she cannot destroy it once it is viable.
- When the pregnancy resulted from contraception failure.
  - voluntary sex and contraception failure does not give the fetus a claim right to life.

In the case of deliberate pregnancy, the mother gives the fetus a claim right to life and it is impermissible to abort it.

But: sometimes people abort fetuses that were the result of deliberate pregnancy. What does Thomson’s view say about the morality of these cases?

What about infanticide? Does Thomson’s view make it sometimes permissible?

What about obligations to help the proximate? Do we have these?