

## Love as the Reason We Need Abortion

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Why do women and girls, and anyone who can get pregnant, need a right to abortion?

### 1. Pregnancy

No one should be forced to be pregnant.

Pregnancy is an intense experience.

Pregnancy is dangerous.

*But what about the fetus?*

Thomson has argued:

Even if the fetus has the moral status of a person, abortion is morally permissible.

In Lecture 2 I will present a view that holds:

The fetuses that die in early abortions don't have any moral status.

Is the whole explanation of why we need a right to abortion this: that no one should be forced to be pregnant?

No

### 2. Love and Motherhood

No one should be forced into motherhood

*But what about safe haven laws?*

Even with safe haven laws, outlawing abortion forces women and girls into motherhood.

Many who desperately prefer abortion nevertheless desperately prefer to keep their babies rather than make an adoption plan for them.

Because of love.

Can it be true that someone is forced to do something, even if they have an alternative in which they don't do it?

Yes: A big chain store company says "We will not be open on Thanksgiving anymore. We don't want to force our employees to work on Thanksgiving."

Why do we need a right to abortion?

Because no one should be forced to be pregnant.

Because no one should be forced into motherhood.

Why does lack of access to abortion force girls and women into motherhood?

Because of a common pattern of preferences.

Why do they have those preferences?

Because of the *love* they would have for the baby that their fetus would develop into.

Thus: Why do we need a right to abortion?

Crucially, partly, because of love.

3. Should we welcome the development of artificial gestation?

Yes – it will help premature babies.

But – it poses a serious threat to abortion rights.

If the right to abortion is just grounded in the right not to be pregnant, then it is simply the right to exit the fetus from one's body.

If girls and women merely have the right to exit the fetus from their bodies, many will be forced into motherhood.

In fact, given a common pattern of preferences, girls and women will actually be forced into both pregnancy and motherhood – because of love.

In this scenario, what grounds a right to abortion (not just a right to exit the fetus from our bodies)?

Otherwise, girls and women will be forced into both pregnancy and motherhood.

What explains why outlawing abortion forces them? Love.

(It's also important that fetuses that die in early abortions don't have the moral status of persons.)

Once artificial gestation has sufficiently advanced, love will be *the reason* we need a right to abortion.

4. *Men and boys don't have a right not to be forced into fatherhood. So why should women and girls have a right not to be forced into motherhood?*

We must recognize that it's bad when men and boys are forced into fatherhood.

This is an additional powerful reason in favor of a right to abortion for women and girls, and anyone who can get pregnant.

Men and boys should not be able to impose medical treatment on women and girls.

Women and girls have a strong reason to consult the fathers of their fetuses before continuing their pregnancies.

But there is an asymmetry:

There is no corresponding reason to consult before aborting.

5. *Is love really the reason that people prefer to raise the babies they've created? What about shame and societal pressure?*

Those factors definitely play a role for some people.

So we have to understand my claim as: love plays a major explanatory role, but may not provide the whole explanation, of how outlawing abortion forces girls and women into motherhood.

6. Abortion rights and abortion access

What is it we need?

Not just a right to abortion, we also need access to abortion.

Not just access to abortion, we also need a right to abortion.

7. Conclusion

Why do we need abortion?

Because no one should be forced to be pregnant.

Because of love: If forced to continue our pregnancies, we will love the babies we are forced to turn our fetuses into, and we will thereby be forced into motherhood.

And – because of love – some will be forced into fatherhood.

If artificial gestation technology advances, *the* reason we need a right to abortion will be: love.