

The Possible Legacies of the Pro-choice/ Abortion Debate

The map below shows that abortion of a fetus is permissible in most countries, under varying circumstances, of course. This development has been fueled by the argument and thinking that a woman should have the final say on whether to carry a pregnancy to full term, or not. Arguments made in favor include avoiding unwanted children who would be neglected, or to protect the health or dignity of the woman, especially where the pregnancy is as a result of rape or incest. Indeed, the pro-choice movement (i.e. the choice to have an abortion) is increasingly couching the issue of access to abortion as a fundamental human right for women.

The opposition, the pro-life movement, are equally vehement, and determined to overturn existing abortion laws, or to strictly limit their implementation. They call out, to awaken society's consciousness and awareness, to the harm and losses caused by acts of abortion.

Their arguments are that:

- Abortion is murder of a defenseless human being, because they see the developing the fetus as a child whose heart has started to beat at 21 days.
- Only about 1.5% of abortions are due to rape and incest, the very sympathetic reason in justifying abortion laws.

To stress their point, they point to the high incidence of lost fetal lives, quoting reports which indicate that as many as one million children are aborted each year, and statistics from the US Center for Disease Control which suggest that as high as 35% of pregnancies end in abortions. Also, according to World Health Organization, there are an estimated 40-50 million abortions every year in the world. This corresponds to approximately 125,000 abortions per day.

Abortion is now so common in the US that it is estimated 1 in 4 women have had one. Some studies indicate that among the economically disadvantaged in big cities, there are more abortions than babies born – suggesting that having easy access to abortion by this group is a form of state promoted genocide, though appearing voluntary.

There is also growing alarm that the laws regulating abortion in some states have become so lax that they can be carried out all the way to full term.

Yet, there is an ironic statistic, based on research, which shows that the rate of abortion tends to decline after abortion laws have been passed in a society. According to a study by the Guttmacher Institute, abortion rates have fallen over the past 25 years, even as more countries have made the procedure legal and easier to get. Countries with the most restrictive abortion laws also have the highest rates of abortion.

Though easier access to birth control may explain the lower abortion rates, the pro-life movement likes to use this statistic as evidence of regret by women who have had an abortion, and who try to dissuade others from doing the same.

Needless to say, the pro-choice movement and other research reports refute the claim that having an abortion can lead to regrets that then manifest in depression and other emotional problems.

Without taking sides in the matter, it is quite evident that many who are caught in the debate must experience a high degree of anguish in trying to decide which route to take.

Nevertheless, any objective observer would have to admit that no one can get pregnant by themselves. Therefore, pregnancy is the result of a deliberate or a careless act. Since every act must have a reaction or consequence, a person striving after knowledge should never overlook the effect of this law in evaluating the arguments in this debate.

Before proceeding further, it is important to distinguish between types of abortions, or acts that maybe justifiably defined as due to negligence or carelessness. Spontaneous abortion (miscarriages) cannot be included as arising from carelessness or negligence. Neither can an abortion to save the life of a prospective mother be classified as arising from negligence or carelessness. These types generally occur with women who want to carry their pregnancy to full term, regardless of how the child was conceived.

Therefore, frankly speaking, any other type of abortion is a desire to terminate an unwanted pregnancy.

With the exception of rape or incest, most of such unwanted pregnancies are the result of “the heat of the moment” by both parties. A state in which caution is then thrown to the wind. In other words when the “I don’t care feelings” are quite high in the individuals. And, this feeling generally induces carelessness or negligence in considering the possible consequences of the intended action.

Since pregnancy requires the role of the male and female, it follows that men are equally responsible. Therefore, they must acknowledge their own contributory actions, which can be deliberate or careless. Thus, society should, as is now mostly the case, stop seeing abortion as an issue that concerns women primarily.

In fact, this raises the important question of the role of men in the decision to terminate a pregnancy. It could be argued that the two parties involved should take responsibility for the consequences of their conscious decision to terminate a pregnancy. After all, abortions carried out for medical reasons are usually made by both partners.

Therefore, the current practice of excluding most men from the decision to terminate unwanted pregnancies never forces men to face the consequences of their own negligent actions. This allows many men to think that they can absolve themselves of responsibility when a woman takes the decision to abort an unwanted pregnancy. As discussed in the feature article, our actions and their reactions form part of the legacy that we leave behind, and that we carry with us to bless our future, or to cause regret and remorse.

Therefore, reports that some women, even if only a few, experience regret after an abortion, is perhaps evidence of the experiencing of that legacy.

Also, the argument that the majority of women have no regrets or remorse does not refute the fact that we must all ultimately experience the effects of our legacy. The speed at which one experiences is invariably determined by that person's level of inner sensitivity or perception. And the studies refuting the phenomenon of regret have not followed the women studied through the rest of their lives. So, there is no way of knowing if they suffered regret much later in life.

Another irrefutable legacy of this movement is the laxity with which we today view sexuality and sexual relations. No doubt the abortion movement has exposed the hypocrisy and stringent mores and rules governing these relations in the past. Nonetheless, an honest observer would have to admit that the seriousness and sanctity surrounding sexual relations has practically disappeared in modern society, to be replaced by a degree of carelessness that some now find disturbing. In fact, the deep thinker may be justified in wondering whether such laxity and carelessness in one aspect of a person's life could not spill over into other aspects of their life, and ultimately come to affect psyche and personality. There are many who think that modern society has become too lax in many respects compared to the past. A few examples may help to make the point: respect for authority or elders, laxity in our manner of dressing, even for formal occasions, the general lack of self-control in use of language, a generally higher level of superficiality than even the recent past, etc.

There is also a Spiritual perspective that is seldom factored into this debate.

Just as there is Spiritual afterlife, there is also Spiritual life before life, meaning that a human being already exists as a spiritual entity before birth on Earth.

That being the case, the future occupant of the new forming body already has a designated occupant, waiting near the prospective mother for such time as the body would be ready for its incarnation.

An abortion interrupts this process and denies the waiting Spirit the opportunity to incarnate on Earth. Since most incarnations are opportunities being offered to the Spirit to make good on lapses from past lives on Earth, or to learn new lessons, a willful abortion will deny that spirit its regenerative opportunity on Earth, an act that cannot be seen as anything but uncharitable to a fellow human being.

An abortion may terminate the life of the developing fetus, but the ethereal threads that were being formed to connect the discarnate spirit to the developing fetus are not immediately severed. As a result, the ethereal ties of the discarnate spirit and the woman who terminated the pregnancy may remain for a while.

As one can imagine, the connection between both parties is not likely to a cordial one, and the tension felt through this connection can cause the psychic discomfort sensed by some women. This explains in part the "post abortion regret" reported in studies, showing that it dur to more than just a twinge of conscience.

Hopefully this brief expose on this topic will serve as food for thought for those who are still struggling, with evaluating this debate, or looking for the right path to take in this situation.