



## Lives outweigh womens' rights

By William Moore

Her heart started beating when she was less than a month old, and will continue doing so until the end of her life.

By the time she was a month old, she had a brain, eyes, ears, mouth, kidneys, liver and umbilical cord.

### Commentary

By the age of a month and a half, her brain was producing detectable brainwaves. The first movements of her body and limbs occurred then as well, although it will be another three months before her mother notices movement.

She moves through her warm, buoyant world with a "delightful, easy grace" in what has been described as the "in utero waltz." She responds to a wide array of stimuli including pain, touch, cold, sound, light and taste. She gets hiccups and sucks her thumb. She wakes and sleeps, and gets bored with repetitive stimuli.

Although she is a living, growing human being, the child pictured above has no rights, no choice, no control over what happens to her body. In spite of legal "safeguards," in practice she can be killed legally up to the moment of her birth.

In the words of Dr. A.W. Liley, professor of fetal physiology, National Women's Hospital, Auckland, New Zealand, "This then is the fetus that we know and indeed we each were. This is the fetus we look after in modern obstetrics, the same baby we are caring for before and after birth, who before birth can be ill and need diagnosis and treatment just like any other patient."

"This is also the fetus whose existence and identity must be so callously ignored or energetically denied by advocates of abortion."

Information and quotations above from Dr. Liley's book, *A Case Against Abortion*.

Dr. Jerome Lejeune, world-renowned geneticist and profes-

sor of genetics at the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, recently testified during the Tennessee frozen embryo case. The following excerpts, translated from French, are from the transcript of that trial.

Q: I believe that in your opinion the fetus is a human being?

A: It is not my opinion. It is the teaching of all the genetics that I was given. There's no doubt it's a human being because it cannot be a chimpanzee being, so it's a human being.

Q: So you oppose abortion?

A: I dislike to kill a member of my own kin, no doubt. And beside that I'm a French doctor; I have sworn the oath of Hippocrates, and Hippocrates four hundred years before the Christian era made an oath that thou shalt not give poison, thou shalt not procure abortion. That means that the size of the patient does not matter; a patient is a patient. That is the Hippocratic oath.

Q: Do you regard an early human being as having the same moral rights as a later human being such as myself?

A: You have to excuse me, I'm very, very direct. As far as your nature is concerned, I cannot see any differences between the early human being you were and the later human being you are because in both cases, you were and you are a member of our species. What defines a human being is it belongs to our species, so an early one or a late one has not changed from species one species to another species. It belongs to our kin. That is a definition. And I would say very precisely that I have the same respect, no matter the amount of kilograms and no matter the amount of differentiation of tissues.

Q: Dr. Lejeune, let me make sure I understand what you are telling us. The zygote should be treated with the same respect as an adult human being?

A: I'm telling you it is a human being, and then it is a justice who will tell whether this human being has the same rights as the others. If you make a difference between human beings, it is up to you to

prove the reasons that you make the difference. But as a geneticist you ask me whether this human being is human, and I would tell you that because it is a being and being human, he is a human being.

Q: Will you concede, Dr. Lejeune, there are other very distinguished scientists, men who are as learned as you, who have thought and who have access to the same scientific information that you have, who come to a different conclusion about the moral rights or moral duty to the zygote?

A: Oh, yes, but not about whether or not it's a human being.

Biologically, there is no question that each human life begins his or her existence at conception. This new individual is exceedingly vulnerable at this stage of his or her life, needing special protection and nurturing. Each of us started life in just this way, and the reason we are still living is that we ourselves, nurtured and protected by our mothers. Does a child forfeit the very right to exist simply by reason of this vulnerability?

*William Moore, is a member of the classified staff at the University.*

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