

Paper Assignment #1

Assume, if only for the sake of argument, that a newborn human infant is a person. When during the course of a typical pregnancy does the fetus develop into a human person with rights comparable to those possessed by infants? (Feel free to research human prenatal developmental biology and cite sources on this question. Thomson's rejection of "slippery slope" arguments is relevant too.) Describe and evaluate Thomson's argument for the claim that abortions are morally permissible under certain conditions even when we assume that the aborted fetus is a person. Make sure to discuss the two hypothetical examples we discussed in our lectures (i.e. the violinist scenario and the scenario involving people-plants) and explain how these examples are used by Thomson to support her conclusions. After you've given a clear exposition of Thomson's arguments, you must present **criticisms** of those arguments. If you think Thomson is right, you must show how she can answer these criticisms; if you think Thomson is wrong you must show why these criticisms are not persuasively answered by the things that Thomson says.

Note: At no point should you write, "I think Thomson is right," or "I think Thomson is wrong" without also explaining your **reasons** or **evidence** for holding the view in question. This essay should not be entirely devoted to a description of Thomson's views and a report on your feelings about those views. You must, of course, describe Thomson's views accurately, but you must **also** address them in a critical fashion, using **cogent reasons** to either argue for or against holding them. Try your best to come up with something original to say.

Due 4/22/20 by 5PM

(Submit the essay to your TA in the manner he or she wishes to have it submitted)

The paper must be 4-5 pages long, double-spaced text in a normal font (e.g. Times New Roman 12 pt.), with normal tabs and margins (e.g. Microsoft Word's default settings).