Preface

In 1974, bioethics was not yet a recognized subdiscipline of ethics, although an increasing amount of work was appearing in the area, most of it focusing on a few hot topics such as abortion. Reproductive ethics did not really gel into a field until some ten years later. The essays in this volume span this twenty-year period of intense growth and specialization.

Reproduction has been the major point of intersection between the burgeoning fields of bioethics and feminist philosophy. I believe that there are at least two reasons for this. One is that reproduction is the most obvious place where sex makes a difference. Another is that the second wave of feminism was born (perhaps not coincidentally) at a time of accelerating social change and rapid development in reproductive biology.

I came at the issues with a feminism born in graduate school, an environment where women were scarcer than hen's teeth and the door marked "Faculty Women" had no takers, where the curriculum was heavy with courses such as Automata Theory and more traditional courses that did not notice gender. That my first published work was in reproductive ethics was mostly a matter of chance. *Roe v. Wade* had just come down from the Supreme Court, and I found myself attempting to articulate why I thought the opinion was right, even if not convincingly argued. Michael Tooley's groundbreaking article "Abortion and Infanticide" had just appeared, and when he was asked to write again on the subject, he, knowing that I was working on abortion, kindly asked whether I would like to collaborate with him. The result was "Is Abortion Murder?" in 1974. In the next ten years or so, I wrote several more pieces about reproduction, not particularly intending to establish it as an area of specialization (it did not yet exist), but

drawn irresistibly to the issues. Most of my writing time in the next few years was taken up with a book on children's rights, but once that was finished the rest of the essays in this volume were written, several pulled out of me by calls for papers or invitations. The most recent, "What Can Progress in Reproductive Technology Mean for Women?" was finished in January 1995.

Only recently did I notice how many essays I had written and that they fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, with very little overlap, and with a couple of overarching themes. One is the aforementioned feminism, a feminism that seems sadly lacking in much mainstream work on reproduction. Another is parental responsibility toward children and future children, a theme that unites this bioethics work with my work on children's rights. This latter theme introduces what some might regard as an antifeminist note, given the inevitable tensions between women's welfare and that of fetuses, babies, and children. I believe that such tensions are an unavoidable feature of the moral landscape, however, and that no moral perspective can reasonably insulate itself from their existence via denial.

The Introduction sets the moral stage for the three groups of essays that follow, each containing both old and new work. The first group raises questions about the right to reproduce. It has seemed to me for a very long time that although there are good grounds for recognizing a legal right to reproduce, the automatic assumption that it entails a moral right to reproduce under any circumstances is questionable. Indeed, I believe that reproduction is morally wrong in some circumstances. This assertion tends to provoke strong emotions, and a demand for line-drawing principles, in a tone that suggests that none is conceivable. Yet humans have developed moral guidelines in many areas of life no less fraught with difficulty than this one, and much more careful thinking is clearly required here.

The second group of essays focuses on abortion. Disagreement about the morality of abortion has been a divisive theme in the United States since the 1970s, and so this emphasis needs no further justification. Each of the essays examines a different facet of the debate, ranging from the moral status of the fetus and potentiality arguments to a series of questions about women's rights.

The third group of essays takes up issues raised by new reproductive technologies and arrangements. Two of them examine arguments about surrogacy (or contract pregnancy), a topic that is proving to be nearly as controversial as abortion. Two others look at the general moral implications of the new developments, one defending them against objections that fail to take account of women's welfare, the other evaluating John Robertson's principle of procreative liberty within the context of that welfare.

It would be impossible to acknowledge all the people who have helped to shape the work in this volume over these many years by arguing with me, critiquing my work, or—once in a while—agreeing with me. Among them are the Wells and Hamilton students who have enrolled in my Reproductive Ethics seminars. I must also thank other feminist bioethicists, who, I fear, mostly sigh sadly at what they see as my wrong turns, but who have also, despite their distaste for some of my stands, provided me with some of the best criticism and strongest solidarity. Thanks also to John Ackerman, whose enthusiasm for this project made it exist, and the staff at Cornell University Press who helped make it esthetically pleasing. Last but not least, thanks to my husband, John Coleman, who both encouraged me to get things off my chest and onto paper and helped create the conditions that made the book possible.

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REPRODUCING PERSONS