

## NOTES

- [1] See S. CROOK (2002) Stephen Clark's green holism, *Heythrop Journal*, Vol. 43, Number 4, pp. 444–462.
- [2] See S. CROOK (2002) Callicott's land communitarianism, *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, Vol. 19, Number 2, pp. 175–184.
- [3] See S. CROOK (2002) Plumwood and Lomborg: crisis and anti-crisis in green thought, *Imprints: A Journal of Analytic Socialism*, Vol. 6, pp. 270–285.
- [4] P. TAYLOR (1986) *Respect for Nature* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press).

**A Defense of Abortion**

DAVID BOONIN, 2002

Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

xv + 350 pp., £47.50 (hb) £16.95 (pb)

Given the scope and density of David Boonin's *A Defense of Abortion*, it behoves me to begin by saying that a review of this length fails miserably to do justice to the work. Boonin's tome is tightly packed with seemingly every conceivable argument *against* — or objection to arguments *for* — the moral permissibility of abortion. And although he covers so much in relatively few pages, his analyses and arguments rarely, if ever, seem oversimplified or heavy-handed. Rather, Boonin appears to have merely eliminated the superfluous without sacrificing philosophical rigour. As the title indicates, Boonin defends the view that abortion, at least in typical cases, is morally permissible. However, he also contends that 'to say that an action is permissible is not to say that there are no moral reasons against doing the action, but only that it is a candidate from which one is morally permitted to choose' (p. 8). Hence his claim that 'establishing that an action would be morally permissible should represent only the beginning of one's moral deliberation, not the end it is too often taken to represent' (p. 8).

Regarding method, Boonin deftly employs that of reflective equilibrium, which he describes as the provisional acceptance of moral intuitions concerning various kinds of actions with more initial weight given to those which seem clear or forceful, along with the development of a credible moral theory that unifies and underwrites these judgments (pp. 9–10). 'In seeking principles to underwrite our considered moral judgments about particular types of actions,' he writes, 'the method directs us to give preference to those principles that are more general and more fundamental and which more fully exemplify the general theoretical virtues [e.g., parsimony, salience, coherence]' (p. 10). Even more noteworthy than Boonin's employment of reflective equilibrium, however, is that he proceeds on methodological terms that the critic of abortion accepts. A defence that proceeds otherwise, Boonin states, 'reinforces the impression that the controversy over abortion arises from a simple clash of incommensurable viewpoints' (p. 14). Thus, 'Only this kind of argument can contribute to resolving the abortion controversy' (p. 14).

Boonin divides the arguments against abortion into two categories: rights-based and non-rights-based. The former are divided further into three subcategories: arguments that attempt to show that the foetus acquires a right to life at conception (e.g., the parsimony, potentiality, and future-like-ours arguments), arguments that attempt to show that the foetus acquires a right to life sometime after conception (the implanta-

tion, initial brain activity, and viability arguments), and arguments that attempt to show that Judith Jarvis Thomson's 'Good Samaritan argument' is fallacious (the tacit consent, killing versus letting die, and intending versus foreseeing objections). As for non-rights-based arguments, Boonin examines the golden rule, culture of death, pro-life feminist, and uncertainty arguments. The majority of the book is devoted to rights-based arguments, and of those Boonin dedicates nearly half of his discussion to Thomson's Good Samaritan argument. Boonin's objections to the arguments against abortion are clear and incisive, comprising a cogent defence of abortion. Although all are worth discussing, for the sake of space I can only consider one. Nevertheless, it is an argument that I consider constitutes one of Boonin's more significant contributions to the abortion debate: viz., his objection to Don Marquis's 'future-like-ours' (hereafter FLO) argument against abortion.

Boonin summarizes Marquis's argument in the following way. Marquis assumes that in cases B, C, and D in the following list, the individuals in question have the same right to life as those in E: (A) foetus, (B) infant, (C) suicidal teenager, (D) temporarily comatose adult, (E) you or me. Marquis inquires: What is the property the possession of which most plausibly accounts for the wrongness of killing in cases B-E? According to Marquis, it is that of 'having a [FLO] that contains experiences of the sort that one now values or will later come to value (if one is not killed)' (p. 61). Marquis then asks: Does the foetus have a FLO? Marquis contends that it does and that, in Boonin's words, 'the best account of the wrongness of killing in general provides a sufficient reason to conclude that the foetus has the same right to life as you or I' (p. 57).

In his rebuttal to Marquis's FLO argument, Boonin identifies and relies upon three distinctions: (1) the 'present or future' versus the 'present' versions of the FLO principle; (2) occurrent versus dispositional desires; and (3) actual versus ideal desires. Briefly, Boonin argues that Marquis's FLO account of the wrongness of killing involves the *former* of each disjunct (present or future occurrent actual desire), while his own preferred account includes the *latter* of each disjunct (present dispositional ideal desire). With this in mind, let us examine more closely each aforementioned distinction and, subsequently, Boonin's rebuttal as a whole.

According to Boonin, Marquis uses statements of the form 'P values (or will come to value) X' and 'P desires (or will come to desire) that X continue' interchangeably (p. 63). Thus, the FLO principle underlying Marquis's account may be expressed as:

If an individual P has a [FLO] F and if either (a) P now desires that F be preserved, or (b) P will later desire to continue having the experiences contained in F (if P is not killed), then P is an individual with the same right to life as you or I (p. 63).

The preceding 'present or future desire' version of the FLO principle is to be distinguished from Boonin's 'present desire' version of the FLO principle, which may be stated as:

If P has a [FLO] that P now desires to be preserved, then P has the same right to life as you or I (p. 64).

Of the two, Boonin submits, the latter is more parsimonious than the former and it can account for the wrongness of case of E. But can it account for the wrongness of cases A-D as well? It can, according to Boonin, and he attempts to demonstrate this by making additional distinctions, one of which concerns occurrent and dispositional desires. An occurrent desire, Boonin suggests, is one that is being consciously entertained, while a dispositional desire is one that is not being consciously entertained

but nonetheless is already actually desired (pp. 65–66). Understanding ‘desire’ in the dispositional sense, Boonin’s present desire version of the FLO principle may be expressed as:

If P has a FLO that P now dispositionally desires to be preserved, then P has the same right to life as you or I.

This present dispositional desire version of the FLO principle is able to account for not only E, but D as well.

In order for the present dispositional desire version of the FLO principle to account for C, however, a final distinction must be made between actual and ideal desires. Boonin writes, ‘we distinguish between the actual content of the desire that a person has given her actual circumstances and the content the desire she actually has *would* have had if the actual desire had been formed under more ideal circumstances’ (p. 70). Boonin holds that ideal desires are supervenient on actual desires; thus, a necessary condition for having ideal desires is having actual desires (p. 80).

If P has a FLO that P now dispositionally and ideally desires to be preserved, then P has the same right to life as you or I.

With the addition of this ‘ideal desire’ qualification, Boonin’s version of the FLO principle now accounts for C-E.

What about B? Boonin states that since ideal desires are supervenient on actual desires, ‘all that is required for the newborn infant to satisfy the conditions sufficient for having the same right to life as you or I is that he have a [FLO] and that he have actual conscious desires that can be satisfied only if his personal future is preserved’ (p. 84). Since Boonin does not believe that it is controversial to hold that the newborn infant has such conscious desires, he maintains that his version of the FLO principle can account for newborn infants as well (p. 84).

In summary, Boonin contends that the wrongness of killing in cases B-E is accounted for by his present dispositional ideal desire version of the FLO principle, while Marquis holds that the wrongness of killing in cases B-E is accounted for by the present or future occurrent actual desire version of the FLO principle. If Boonin is right, then the standard foetus does not have the property the possession of which most plausibly accounts for the wrongness of killing in cases B-E. For since ideal desires are supervenient on actual desires and the preconscious foetus lacks actual desires, it lacks ideal desires also. According to Boonin, then, the best account of why you and I, temporarily comatose adults, suicidal teenagers, and infants have a right to life does not entail that the preconscious foetus does.

A successful rebuttal to Marquis’s argument, Boonin contends, must do three things (p. 63). First, the rebuttal must identify another property that the individuals in B-E also have in common, and thus an alternative account of the wrongness of killing you or me which produces the same results in cases B-E. Boonin’s account does this by proposing a *present dispositional ideal* rather than *present or future occurrent actual* desire that one’s FLO be preserved. Second, it must show that, given that the alternative account and Marquis’s account produce the same results in these cases, there is reason to prefer the alternative account to Marquis’s. Boonin’s account does this as well, as it is more parsimonious, morally salient, and able to account for a counterexample that Marquis’s version is unable to account for (see p. 76). Finally, it must show that the alternative account of the wrongness of killing in B-E produces substantively different results in A. Boonin’s account does this, for present dispositional ideal desires are

supervenient on actual desires; thus, this property is one that is only possessed by the typical human foetus after it has reached a relatively advanced stage of development. It is hoped that my (simplified) account of Boonin's rebuttal to Marquis serves to give you a glimpse of the care and precision, endemic to the work as a whole, with which Boonin addresses arguments concerning abortion. For anyone even minimally interested in the abortion debate, Boonin's book is highly recommended.

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**The Limits of Nationalism**

CHAIM GANS, 2003

Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

ix + 192 pp, £15.95 (pb)

**Moral Philosophy and the Holocaust**

EVE GARRARD and GEOFFREY SCARRE (eds), 2003

Aldershot, Ashgate.

xix + 277 pp, £18.99 (pb)

**An Introduction to Global Citizenship**

NIGEL DOWER, 2003

Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

xv + 184 pp, £12.99 (pb)

**Rethinking Human Rights**

DAVID CHANDLER (ed), 2002

Palgrave Macmillan.

xiii + 246 pp, £47.50 (hb)

While nationalists of a most illiberal stamp wreak havoc around the world, many philosophers have spent the last dozen years attempting to defend some version of liberal nationalism. Chaim Gans's book is one of the most ingenious and attractive of what is, to my mind, a misguided genre. Like its seminal predecessor, Yael Tamir's *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton NJ, Princeton UP 1993), its subtext is to justify from liberal premises the existence of the state of Israel. But, far from this being a drawback, it gives the book's application of philosophical considerations to pressing political questions a particular bite and urgency.

Gans starts by distinguishing the kind of nationalism he favours, 'cultural nationalism', from 'statist nationalism'. The first holds that the members of a nation have a morally significant interest in their culture which warrants protection by a state. The second, conversely, regards an homogeneous national culture as merely a means whereby a state's interests are promoted. Either kind of nationalism can come in liberal or non-liberal versions, Gans claims, thereby distinguishing his distinction from the familiar ethnic/civic one. Cultural nationalism is liberal if its valuation of national groups is