

Embryos and Expectation:

Does Identity Matter in the Survival and Flourishing of an Embryo?

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Abstract

I develop a novel answer to this question: what is in an embryo's interest? Those (such as myself) who believe embryos lack moral status have not thought adequately about this question. This has led them to caricature the view that human embryos have moral status, and to dismiss it with arguments that can in fact be resisted.

One argument holds: if human embryos have the moral status of persons, then twinning is a tragedy, because the embryo ceases to exist; but this is not a tragedy. I develop and argue for a view on which twinning is just as good *for an embryo* as ordinary survival; this view is developed by applying lessons from psychological splitting cases to physical splitting cases.

(While the two arguments I discuss fail to show that human embryos lack moral status, there may be other arguments that are successful. Indeed I believe there are.)