# Case Study on Moral Status

In the case study, Dr. Wilson, Jessica, Marco and Aunt Maria employ different theories in the determination of the moral status of the fetus. Based on the diagnosis, the baby has abnormalities that may prevent him or her from leading a normal life. Additionally, the fetus shows signs of developing Down ’s syndrome upon birth. Based on the circumstances, each of the parties is trying to justify their preference of what should happen to the unborn baby. Each of the persons involved in the case has a divergent perspective as to what should happen to the fetus owing to her disabled and the possibility of developing Down’s syndrome.

Jessica is in a dilemma. On the one hand, carrying the baby to full term would mean that she would not be in a position to realize her economic dreams and independence due to the projected condition of the baby. With the disability identified, it means that Jessica would be obliged to be around the baby full time, which would deny her the opportunity to pursue her economic endeavors. On the other hand, she thinks about protecting the life of the fetus due to her conviction that life is sacred. Jessica employs the theory of moral agency in the making of the decision about the fate of the fetus. Moral agency dictates that people make moral judgments about what is right and wrong (Robertson & Walter, 2013). Further, the theory points to people being judged based on their decisions. Jessica, by taking into account the nature of life as sacred and protected, she utilizes moral agency in the making of her decision.

Maria has a different view of the situation. Obviously, she does not subscribe to abortion as an alternative as proposed by Dr. Wilson based on her advice to Jessica. In particular, Aunt Maria urges Jessica to give thought to the idea of carrying the pregnancy to full term. She persuades her to allow the intention of God to take the course. However, the highlight of Maria’s advice is when she urges Jessica to reflect on her responsibility as a mother to her child. Maria relies on relationship theory in her argument for the carrying the fetus to full term.

According to Moses (2013), the moral status is conferred by an existing relationship and obligations as well. Jessica, as a prospective mother to the child, has a duty to provide and care for the unborn child. Such is not limited to the motherly roles such as breastfeeding and ensuring the wellbeing of the child. Such duties are inherent in the relationship between a mother and a child. Aunt Maria has given thought to this relationship making her advice fit the dictates of the theory of relationship in the determination of the moral status of the fetus. To her, the duties of Jessica as the baby’s mother overrides the line of thoughts exhibited by other people involved in the case. Therefore, from the perspective of Aunt Maria, terminating the pregnancy through abortion is not an alternative.

Dr. Wilson’s assertion that abortion is the most viable alternative to determine the fate of the fetus borders cognitive properties theory of moral status. According to Kolb (2008), cognitive properties encompass sensations and emotions. Additionally, the properties include feelings of sufferings. He considers carrying the pregnancy to full term irrational, as the child will face multiple difficulties in life. The fetus does not exhibit any cognitive abilities at the moment. It is therefore wise to procure an abortion. Additionally, the doctor believes in the theory emanates from the fetus inability to display an awareness and reasoning regarding the happenings in its environment. Additionally, abortion would alleviate the fears of the mother, especially about raising a child with a disability. The cognitive properties theory influence Dr. Wilson’s preference for abortion in particular through enabling the making of the decision. The fetus lacks a moral capability, which justifies abortion as an alternative.

Dr. Wilson has informed Marco about the diagnosis. However, Marco is proposing that he is the one to inform Jessica, his wife about the status of the fetus at a convenient time. Dr. Wilson does not agree with the proposal and proceeds to inform Jessica about the diagnosis. Marco affirms that he will support the decision made by Jessica regarding the fate of the fetus. If she agrees for an abortion, he will support her. The approach adopted by Marco echoes relationship theory. Such is because his decision depends on that of Jessica. Therefore, the choice of Marco is unpredictable so long as Jessica is yet to decide. Such means that the choice might be for or against abortion depending on Jessica. The moral status of the fetus is also likely to change following the decision to be made by Jessica. The relationship theory of moral status helps Marco excuse himself from making the hard decisions whether the pregnancy should be terminated.

Of the theories employed by the actors in the case study, Jessica’s moral agency is rational in deciding the fate of the fetus. Each of the alternatives at the disposal of Jessica has positives and limitations. Through moral agency theory, Jessica will be in a position to decide whether a decision is right based on the merit. In this case, the merit includes the extent to which the course of action leads to a happy conclusion for both the mother and the fetus. Moral agency theory also takes into account the religious convictions of Jessica as far as abortion is concerned. Moral agents believe that no organism deserves to die without a good reason (Frey & Wellman, 2007). Jessica is concerned about abortion because the fetus is a living thing and thus do not have to die for without a justifiable reason. By employing moral agency theory, Jessica creates an opportunity to analyze the alternatives and their outcomes so that the final decision is favorable to not only herself but also the fetus as well. As indicated in the case, Jessica asserts that life is sacred. Based on this, I am convinced that the moral agency theory is the most appropriate to the case.

## References

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