



New Reproductive Technologies and the Emergence of New Ethical Challenges in the Realm of Children's Rights from Brenda Almond's Perspective¹

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Introduction

Remarkable advancements in biomedicine and reproductive technologies have delineated a new structure of human life. These developments have transformed traditional concepts of family, parenting, and identity. Technologies such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), gamete donation, surrogacy, and cloning, while helping to resolve infertility issues and fulfilling families' desires to have children, have also paved the way for complex ethical and legal challenges, particularly concerning the rights of children born through these methods. The significance of this issue lies in the fact that in many ethical and legal policy-making processes, the interests of adults have been prioritized, while the fundamental rights of children, such as knowing their genetic background and family affiliation, have been overlooked—a right that was naturally realized prior to the advent of these technologies but may now be lost due to technological intervention and adult choices. In this regard, the present study addresses the following questions: What impact do the ethical challenges arising from new reproductive technologies have on families and children? How might children born through new reproductive methods, such as the use of donated human eggs, feel about their situation? And is the application of these technologies truly in the best interests of the children born through these means?

Research Background

In previous studies related to bioethics and the consequences of new reproductive technologies on children's rights, human reproduction was predominantly defined within the natural biological framework of men and women and within the context of the traditional family. However, with scientific and medical advancements, these equations gradually changed. The birth of Louise Brown as the first IVF baby in 1978 marked a turning point in the history of biomedicine and the beginning of extensive ethical controversies. Meanwhile, studies by psychologists such as Bowlby and Harlow have demonstrated the importance of the emotional bond between mother and child from the perspective of psychology and personality development. Bowlby considers

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the attachment between mother and infant as the foundation of human personality and identity formation, and Harlow proved in his experiments that the deprivation of maternal bonding leaves profound psychological and social impacts on the child. On the other hand, philosophers such as Leon Kass and Trevor Jordan have emphasized the necessity of knowing one's genetic background. Leon Kass warns that disregarding the biological origins of humans leads to the loss of the concept of corporeality and generational ties, while Trevor Jordan considers the deprivation of genetic awareness a violation of justice. Relying on these theoretical foundations, Brenda Almond argues that new reproductive technologies are only defensible when employed to strengthen the institution of the family and protect the child's interests, rather than when they serve the personal interests of adults.

Research Methodology

Employing a descriptive-analytical method and relying on the perspectives of British moral philosopher Brenda Almond, the present study examines the ethical challenges arising from new reproductive technologies, with a specific focus on children's rights.

Research Findings

Among the findings of this study is that new reproductive technologies have led to a transformation in the concept of the family and the redefinition of parental roles. In the past, mother and father were evident biological concepts, but today, due to gamete donation and surrogacy, a distinction has emerged among the biological, legal, and social parent. Almond believes that the emotional and biological bonds between a child and their parents play a fundamental role in the child's personality development and identity formation, and no alternative structure can fully compensate for this bond. In her view, depriving a child of direct contact with the biological mother or keeping them ignorant of their genetic roots can leave profound identity, psychological, and social impacts on the child. Another challenge in this field is concealing information regarding genetic parents from children born through donated gametes. According to Almond, this concealment constitutes a violation of the child's fundamental right to know their identity. She argues that just as adopted children have the right to know their biological parents, children conceived through assisted reproductive methods must also have the right to access their biological information. Alongside these issues, the commercialization of reproductive processes is another fundamental challenge. According to Almond, treating eggs, sperm, or embryos as tradable commodities poses a threat to human dignity. Although the voluntary donation of germ cells can be ethically defensible in specific cases, when financial motives replace human considerations, the boundary between ethical care and human exploitation disappears. This perspective is also consistent with the principles outlined in international conventions, such as the documents of UNESCO and the European Union, which have prohibited the buying and selling of genetic materials. Furthermore, regarding the use of deceased sperm and the birth of a child after the death of the genetic parent, Almond emphasizes the necessity of informed consent and warns that an exclusive focus on expanding adults' rights should not lead to the neglect of children's rights. Ultimately, the issue of designer babies and human cloning is introduced as one of the most



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challenging areas of bioethics. Almond believes that selecting genetic traits for a future child is an infringement upon the boundaries of their freedom and human dignity, and human cloning may lead to the birth of "second-class humans"—individuals whose existence relies solely on an external purpose and who lack an independent identity.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that, in Almond's view, the advancement of reproductive technologies, while a major step forward in medical science, can pose a threat to human dignity and children's rights in the absence of clear ethical and legal guidelines. She emphasizes that the focal point must always be the precedence of children's rights over the desires and autonomy of adults, with particular importance placed on the child's right to a clear identity and belonging to a biological family. Even if new technologies can cure infertility or physical defects, neglecting their ethical dimensions may lead to an identity crisis in future generations. Establishing laws and ethical frameworks is essential to protect children's interests and prevent the misuse of reproductive technologies. The law must differentiate between those who use these technologies to treat infertility and those with other objectives to reduce unethical exploitation. Establishing special regulatory bodies and educational programs to raise awareness among parents and professionals regarding children's rights is also of distinct importance. Adhering to ethics and strict oversight is the way to guarantee the protection of children's identity and rights in the world of new reproductive technologies.

Keywords: Reproductive ethics, Brenda Almond, ethical challenges, children's rights, human cloning, new reproductive technologies, genetic identity