

**2nd
EDITION
- EXPANDED -**

ABORTION RIGHTS

and
Fetal 'Personhood'

**The Pro-Choice
Resource Book
That Answers Questions**

Edited by Edd Doerr and James W. Prescott

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Personality Profiles of 'Pro-Choice' and 'Anti-Choice' Individuals and Cultures

James W. Prescott

I WOULD LIKE to briefly summarize some fifteen years of cross-cultural studies that I have conducted on the social behavioral characteristics of "pro-choice" and "anti-choice cultures" and individuals.

We have been told by the anti-choice movement that their position, namely, that the fetus is a person from conception and, thus, its termination of life is equivalent to murder - is one that "respects life;" and that this "right to life" position is derived from what Cardinal Bernardin has called a "seamless garment" of respect for life. These assumptions of the benevolent personality character structure of the "anti-choice" person and culture have been questioned and invalidated by my research over the past fifteen years. Contrary to their claim, the "anti-choice" personality or culture has a consistent profile of tolerance of and even support for human violence and pain with authoritarian control over personal liberties.

Specifically, I found from my studies of both primitive cultures and contemporary legislative actions in North America (Canadian Parliament; U.S. Congress; Pennsylvania House and Senate) that the "anti-choice" person or culture has the following statistically significant characteristics: support for slavery (primitive cultures); support for killing, torturing, and mutilation of enemies captured in warfare (primitive cultures); exploitation of women and children (primitive cultures); punish and/or reject pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activity (primitive and contemporary cultures); kin group is patrilineal (primitive cultures); support capital punishment (legislators); support for Vietnam War and aid to the Nicaraguan "Contras" (legislators); support "no-knock" laws (legislators); oppose hand-gun controls (legislators); oppose use of medical heroin for dying cancer patients (legislators); support outlawing of fornication and adultery (legislators); have approximately 50% lower family and child nurturance scores than "pro-choice" (legislators); support societal

punishment of prostitution; and believe that sexual pleasure weakens moral character (psychometric studies).

In summary, "anti-choice" persons and cultures are characterized by: (a) an intolerance for the dignity, integrity, and life of the human body; (b) a high tolerance for and/or indifference toward human pain and suffering; (c) a lower value on nurturance of children and families; and (d) an anti-sexual pleasure ethic.

On the basis of my research, I concluded that the "anti-choice" personality and/or culture is motivated primarily by a moral concept of "sexual sin" where "illicit" sexual pleasures of the body must be denied, controlled or punished. Tolerance of choice on abortion represents a *de facto* recognition of a "sexuality for pleasure ethic" that is disassociated from procreation. This moral view of human sexuality is unacceptable to the patristic, authoritarian moral fundamentalists who believe in "sexual sin," favor the subordination of women to men, and fear full sexual equality for women. (The above scientific findings and conclusions are more fully presented in the article reprinted as Appendix C.)

It is of more than passing interest to note the parallels between the co-existence of "torture, mutilation and killing of enemy captured in warfare" with punishment of abortion and pre-marital and extra-marital sexuality in the primitive cultures with that of the Roman Catholic church and its history of "torture, mutilation and killing of heretics," (burning at the stake and the torture chambers of the Papal and Spanish Inquisitions) with the Vatican's opposition to abortion and pre-marital and extra-marital sexuality. (It is a matter of historical fact that Pope Innocent IV first authorized torture in the Papal Inquisition in the Papal Bull: *Ad Extirpanda* in 1252.)

The above findings and historical events further invalidate the claim that the psychology or motivation underlying "opposition to abortion" reflects a "Seemless Garment" of "Respect for Life."

DEVELOPMENTAL AGE (WEEKS)

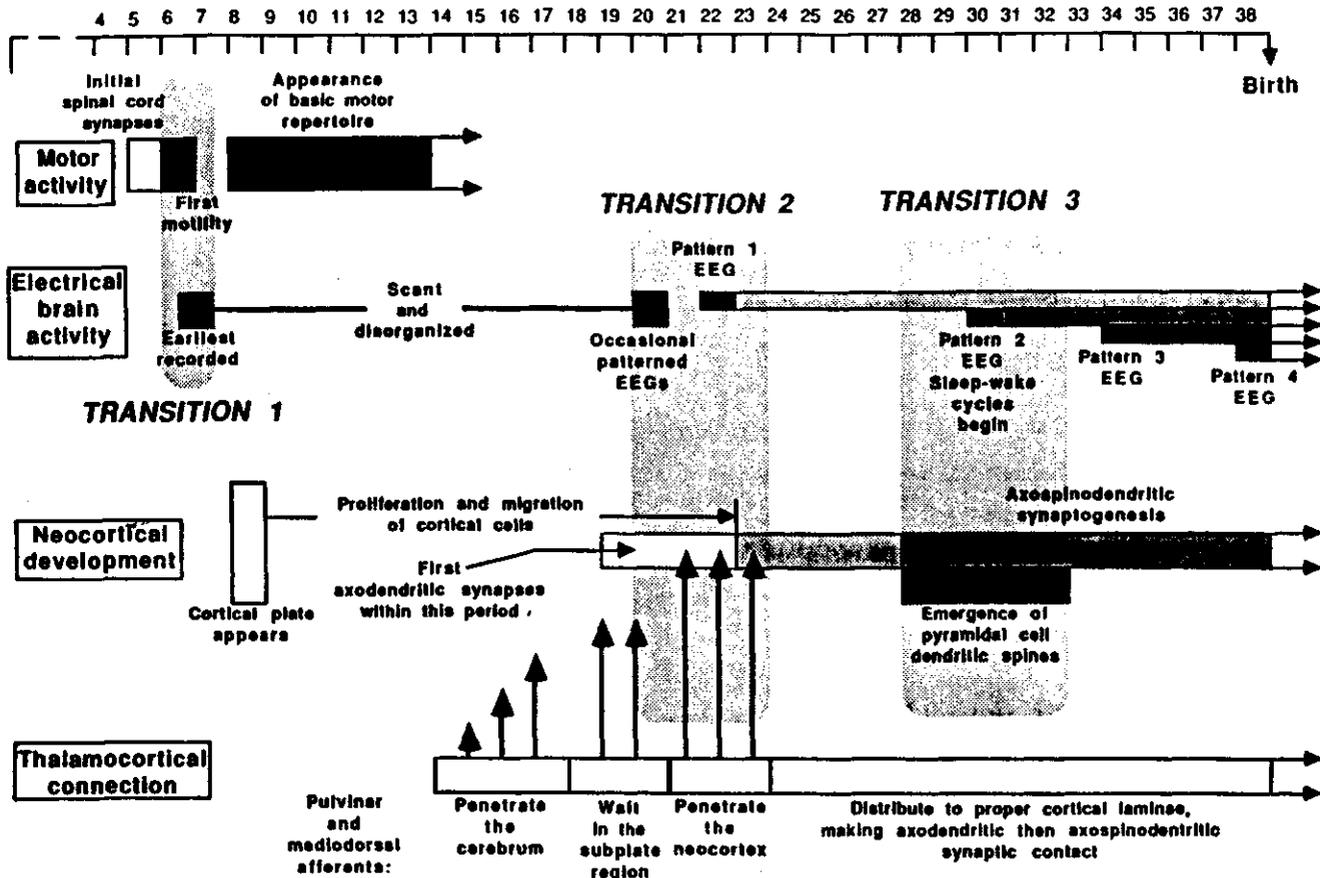


FIGURE 1. Neuromaturation Processes During Fetal Human Life