

Ethics and Economics of Assisted Reproduction: The Cost of Longing (Moral Traditions)

Maura Ryan



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Ethics and Economics of Assisted Reproduction: The Cost of Longing (Moral Traditions) Maura Ryan For those who undergo it, infertility treatment is costly, time-consuming, invasive, and emotionally and physically arduous, yet technology remains the focus of most public discussion of the topic. Drawing on concepts from medical ethics, feminist theory, and Roman Catholic social teaching, Maura A. Ryan analyzes the economic, ethical, theological, and political dimensions of assisted reproduction.

Taking seriously the experience of infertility as a crisis of the self, the spirit, and the body, Ryan argues for the place of reproductive technologies within a temperate, affordable, sustainable, and just health care system. She contends that only by ceasing to treat assisted reproduction as a consumer product can meaningful questions about medical appropriateness and social responsibility be raised. She places infertility treatments within broader commitments to the common good, thereby understanding reproductive rights as an inherently social, rather than individual, issue. Arguing for some limits on access to reproductive technology, Ryan considers ways to assess the importance of assisted reproduction against other social and medical prerogatives and where to draw the line in promoting fertility. Finally, Ryan articulates the need for a compassionate spirituality within faith communities that will nurture those who are infertile.

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