substance and range of these essays, which are stimulating and highly readable, both for specialists and general readers. One may, of course, take issue with particular points: does abortion really constitute a right to avoid duties? Does it matter if men and women have different moral and legal rights in relation to abortion? Is the denial of the father's right to prevent an abortion not due to this being a "positive" right (requiring action by another person) rather than a "negative" or civil right (of the type discussed in Weber's essay)? If Tay Sachs disease means that "the child's basic interests are all thwarted" (page 127) (and that is perhaps debatable), that may *justify* an abortion but can one take the further step of imposing a *duty* on the mother to abort? However, the intellectual response provoked by the essays is part of the enjoyment of reading them!

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Changing Conceptions of Motherhood

Edited by Derek Morgan, London, British Medical Association, 1996, 74 pages, £6.95.

Considering Surrogacy

London, British Medical Association and Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, 1996, 11 pages, £5.20.

"Six weeks after his birth, George and Dianne knew that little Jack would soon be theirs legally. They were all grateful for the helpful advice and direction that their general practitioner had given them and for showing Tracy (the *partial* surrogate) how to do the artificial insemination herself. Dianne hoped desperately that Tracy (who of course was the legal mother until the parental order could be obtained), would not change her mind and decide to keep Jack as she

knew she was entitled to do under the terms of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (1990), by which instrument no surrogacy arrangement was enforceable. George and Dianne had been surprised, that, despite having lived together for the best part of ten years, they were advised to become married well before the birth otherwise they would not be able to request the parental order making him their son legally. It also seemed bizarre to Dianne that despite Tracy's estranged husband really having nothing much to do with the whole affair, he was still Jack's legal father until the parental order was obtained – at least he didn't object, which really would have made things difficult! At night she often wondered how Jack would feel at the age of 18 when, even if she and George decided to hide the terms of his birth, he could seek out the registrar of births and obtain his birth certificate on which was written the name of his birth mother. Would he still regard Tracy as his real mother, or would the fact that she, Dianne, had brought him up as his social and legal mother really count? They were still undecided what to do. Perhaps she'd discuss it again with the counsellor whom her GP had arranged for her.

"How mean it was that according to the Surrogacy Arrangements Act (1985), she couldn't pay Kim and the other members of the *Womb with a View* Club as she knew that would have been illegal. Nevertheless she felt a great debt to them for arranging for her to meet Tracy and for her to be the surrogate, especially since she knew that she could not have advertised for her in the newspaper – no editor would have touched it with a barge pole as that too would have been illegal under the Act. She hoped that the £10,000 that she gave Tracy would compensate her adequately for her having to give up her job, and for all the travelling to and fro for antenatal care. Strange how some people thought that no money could change hands in a surrogacy arrangement – but then she wasn't being paid, it was just 'reasonable expenses'."

How well informed George and Dianne were – thanks to the help of their knowledgeable general practitioner, who clearly had read *Changing Conceptions of Motherhood – the Practice of Surrogacy in Britain*. This is not a rip-roaring read, nor a taxing ethical discussion about surrogacy, nor is it meant to be. It is a considered and factual account of the practice of

surrogacy and the law which surrounds it, and of its medical aspects, plus a useful discussion of the psychological aspects of surrogacy and the need and place of counselling.

There is a real need for this little book, as may be seen from the preceding scenario. Many practitioners, whether general or specialist, find the whole area confusing, and to many it is so fraught with legal traps as to make it a method of treatment well worth staying clear of. This too is the complaint of many women, who, as a last resort, would like at least to discuss the possibility but have no idea where to turn, as their own health professionals are scared and ill-informed. The book clarifies terminology such as *partial* and *full* surrogacy; who is the father; parental orders and adoption; birth registration, and the terms of the Acts relevant to the practice of surrogacy. The amended Surrogacy Arrangements Act (1985) is included for good measure. Despite at times being a bit legally turgid, it should be mandatory reading for all involved with the delivery of assisted conception and should be available in libraries for those wishing to clarify the issues.

Help is at hand for the consumer too. The BMA/HFEA have published jointly an informative 11-page booklet which is derived from the above book, but has been simplified in a question-and-answer style to make it useful to women considering surrogacy. As with the book, it deals with the legal position, the status of the child, parental orders and criteria for becoming a surrogate mother. Questions to do with the involvement of medical professionals, the benefits of counselling and the health risks are all raised and answered, as is the implication for the child and others. Although the language has been highly simplified, I believe it will still be too difficult for many who are in greatest need. Nevertheless its general usefulness cannot be doubted. It will be of benefit not only to those considering surrogacy, but to anyone simply interested in what surrogacy is about and what it entails. It will also be useful to some who are more peripherally involved health care professionals, and indeed to students who wish to have a quick preview of the issues in order to decide if more in-depth reading is required.

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