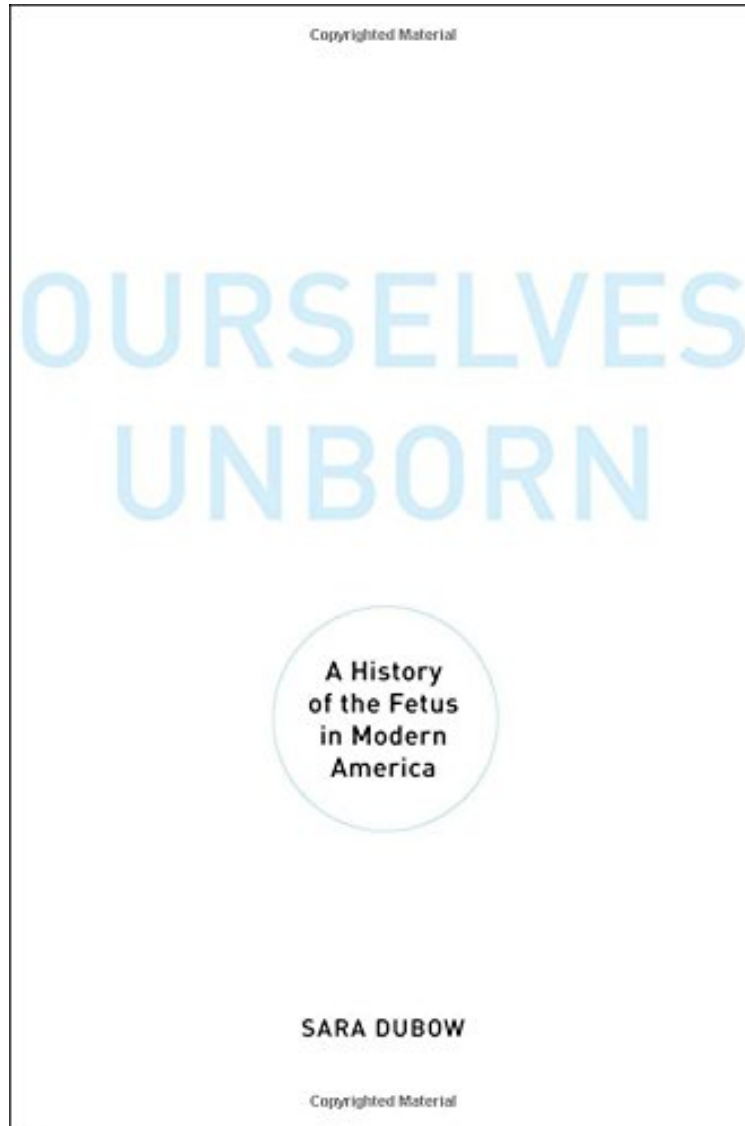


[Download free pdf] Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America

Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America

Sara Dubow

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#1339104 in Books 2010-12-28Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 6.50 x 1.10 x 9.40l, 1.23 #File Name: 0195323432320 pages | File size: 60.Mb

Sara Dubow : Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America:

11 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Navigates the roiling waters wellBy James V. Holton"Ourselves Unborn" is destined to be an important contribution in the debate about much more than abortion. Though not directly about that subject, it casts a lot of light on it.Some readers may suspect that Dubow's lack of clear-cut statements about

abortion's morality reflect a bias. But that would be a disservice to the fine work this author has done in pulling back the curtain on the role of the fetus in modern America. Dubow asserts that the fetus has been much more than a "pre-human" (my phrase) waiting to be born, but a reflection of the country's evolving attitudes about "ourselves unborn." Dubow takes us from the late 1800s/early 1900s up to the present day and shows that perceptions about the fetus reflect larger societal concerns about the role of women, individual rights, and the future of the nation. The research in this book shows that the fetus has evolved (so to speak) to become a proxy for larger social concerns--from the Progressive Era through the Cold War to the present day conservative milieu. Her most incisive commentary is on showing on the expansion of "rights" for the unborn has been the single largest factor for the increasingly restrictive climate of abortion. She shows that the arguments for those rights were in large measure appropriated by abortion opponents in the 1970s and beyond. The idea that the fetus has its own stand-alone rights has developed a lot of currency and is like to retain it for years to come, Dubow asserts. Abortion opponents are not likely to be swayed by this book. Abortion supporters are not going to find much ammunition for their cause either. However, "Ourselves Unborn" will shed light on how Americans' attitudes towards what it means to be unborn have evolved.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Intelligent, scholarly
By doug korty I agree with James Horton's intelligent review. This is a useful scholarly book though not the most interesting. For anyone with a strong interest in this particular important aspect of the abortion issue, it is very much worth reading. It is well documented with good notes, a good index, and an extensive bibliography. (from Williams College) Sara Dubow graduated from Williams College in 1991, and received her Ph.D. from Rutgers University in 2003. Before joining the Williams History department faculty in 2007, she taught at the Brearley School, Hunter College High School, and Hunter College. Her research and teaching interests examine the intersections of gender, law, and politics in 20th century U.S. history. Other books on the abortion debate: mwir-abortiondebate.blogspot.com/ Midwest Independent Research

During the past several decades, the fetus has been diversely represented in political debates, medical textbooks and journals, personal memoirs and autobiographies, museum exhibits and mass media, and civil and criminal law. *Ourselves Unborn* argues that the meanings people attribute to the fetus are not based simply on biological fact or theological truth, but are in fact strongly influenced by competing definitions of personhood and identity, beliefs about knowledge and authority, and assumptions about gender roles and sexuality. In addition, these meanings can be shaped by dramatic historical change: over the course of the twentieth century, medical and technological changes made fetal development more comprehensible, while political and social changes made the fetus a subject of public controversy. Moreover, since the late nineteenth century, questions about how fetal life develops and should be valued have frequently intersected with debates about the authority of science and religion, and the relationship between the individual and society. In examining the contested history of fetal meanings, Sara Dubow brings a fresh perspective to these vital debates.

"Dubow offers up an important contribution to the field, forcing the reader to contend both with why the fetus is such a fascinating topic for investigation and the deeper social tensions expressed in each conversation about the objects." -- *Journal of the History of Medicine* "The great strength of this book is the author's wide-angle lens on the human fetus across more than a century of American culture and politics. Sara Dubow offers a thoroughly researched, elegantly written, and comprehensive biography of the unborn. Readers interested in the history of medicine, science, and technology, as well as the history of women's health and reproduction, will find much to savor here." -- *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* "Dubow's history of the fetus as symbol is a major addition to our history of politics, gender, the body, and reproduction in America. To understand American politics and culture since the nineteenth century requires grasping American's long standing interest in the unborn and the many uses of the concept of fetus. Dubow gives the unknowable "unborn" a history, thus revealing that today's fetus is a construction that grew out of specific political circumstances." -- *Journal of American History* "[I]lluminating, even gripping...Dubow has provided an indispensable contribution to US political thought." -- *Women's of Books* "A nuanced analysis...Dubow's work makes a significant contribution to our understanding of fetal history...This work will quickly become a standard in the field. Dubow places fetal history within a broad historical context that makes the book valuable to scholars interested in twentieth-century gender, race, politics, and medicine." -- *American Historical* "Dubow's book is a reminder of the moral dilemmas, the politicisation and the sometimes shameful decisions that have been taken over the years. This careful book allows the reader to navigate a course through highly-politicised waters." -- *The Economist* "Provocative" -- *Slate* "Splendidly informative." -- *Commonweal*

About the Author Sara Dubow is Assistant Professor of History at Williams College.