IS THE UNBORN HUMAN BEING A PARASITE?

In trying to defend abortion, pro-choice advocates sometimes say that the unborn is just a parasite on its mother's body. Is this true?

Biological Definition: A parasite is an organism that grows, feeds, and is sheltered on or in a different organism while contributing nothing to the survival of the host.

1. Parasites and hosts are of different species. The mother and her child are of the same species.
2. A parasite enters or lives on its host as a foreign object. An unborn human being is, in part, **of** the mother's body. It is "flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone." It is a normal part of her species' reproductive scheme.
3. A parasite grows, feeds, and is sheltered on or in its host's body. While an unborn human grows and is sheltered temporarily in his/her mother's body, it **shares** food and nutrients with her. The mother's body is made in anticipation of carrying one or more children. It accommodates the child, for example, by
    a. increasing blood plasma volume by 40-50% and red cell mass by 20-30%;
    b. increasing the heart rate to accommodate the higher volume of blood;
    c. increasing oxygen consumption and carbon dioxide removal;
    d. increasing the waste filtration of the kidneys.
4. A parasite may damage the tissues of its host, and remains with the host until it or the host dies. Although human pregnancies may involve complications for the mother, the child does not damage the mother's tissues in a healthy pregnancy, and the child leaves its mother at birth.
5. A parasite contributes nothing to the survival of the host. A child brings joy to the mother, develops her maternal emotions, fulfils her reproductive potential, and, in promoting the development and maturation of the mother's mammary glands, provides her with protection against breast cancer.
6. Moreover, since 1979, researchers have found that fetal cells migrate into the mother's body and remain there after birth. In her book, *Do Chocolate Lovers Have Sweeter Babies: The Surprising Science of Pregnancy* (2011), science writer Jena **Pincott** notes that far from being a parasite, the unborn child can help heal its mother over her lifetime. For example, scientists have discovered that:
    a. baby's fetal cells show up more often in a mother's healthy breast tissue as opposed to cancerous breast tissue (43% vs. 14%);
    b. as the quantity of fetal cells in a mother's body increases, the incidence and level of diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis decreases;
    c. the baby's stem cells can migrate to injured sites in the mother's body to help heal it. Such fetal cells have been found in diseased thyroid and liver tissue, becoming healthy thyroid and liver cells.

Genetic specialist Dr. Kirby Johnson of Tufts Medical Center in Boston, and Prof. Carol Artlett at Philadelphia's Thomas Jefferson University, back up **Pincott's** ideas. Their research shows that when a woman becomes pregnant, she acquires an army of protective cells that remain with her for decades. "There's a lot of evidence now starting to come out that these cells may actually be repairing tissue," said Artlett in a 2006 NPR interview.

Hence, science indicates that abortion is not only child-destructive, but can be self-destructive as well.