

Polis – Baby talk

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2007/04/08/baby-talk/

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Why do female journalists who have babies feel compelled to tell the world about it? What makes formerly sensible people like [Miranda Sawyer](#) use their children as editorial assets? Writing in the [Observer](#) (which has become an embodiment of the personal as editorial) she tells the world that since having a child she has reconsidered her views on the sanctity of life. Previously she took the stock feminist pro-abortion line, which was neatly complemented by the stock rationalist secularist liberal line on the “right to die”. I have previously commissioned work from Miranda and enjoy her radio reviews and music journalism but how does having a bairn make you an authority on ethical issues? Having a child is a world-altering moment for anyone and should rightly be celebrated but should it really

be used as a platform to claim moral weight or human insight? Perhaps it doesn't really matter – why shouldn't people use their own experiences to comment on big ideas and difficult topics? If it annoys me so much then I should have followed my usual rule of turning the page whenever I see a woman writer open an article with “as a new mother”.

But there is a point of principle here. I think that journalists who want to be taken seriously do have to be careful to separate out their own lives from their subject matter. At least they should try.

And as a New Man I object to feminists who claim that everyone else should be fair and objective while they are allowed to privilege their own personal experience. I think that journalists have a responsibility which comes with their ability to air their views. And for intelligent female journalists I think that includes not exploiting their own personal lives for editorial gain. Does Miranda somehow think that women (or men) without children have less of a right to a view on the issue of abortion?

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