

Sex:

The Foundation of Moral Value

John C. Cahalan
23 Pilgrim Circle, #E
Methuen, MA 01844
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PRELIMINARY NOTES ONLY!

aa, start, TT, June 19, 1998

Perhaps start TT article this way: There are unjust ways of making babies. Then describe marriage as a moral way because it makes babies by an act of love that values persons and ends-in-themselves and so as worthy of CL. Then ask whether anything short of that could also be moral.

aa, June 17, 1998

In marriage, another person results from an act placing a value on another person's person-making ability, placing a value on another person insofar as she has a person-making ability. So the child not only comes from persons, she comes from an act of love between persons, an act evaluating another person as worthy of committed love precisely insofar as she has a person-making ability, i.e., insofar as she has the ability to make the child that results.

X is worthy of committed love, and X comes into existence through a form of love. Should the love through which those worthy of committed love come into existence be committed love? If not, desiring another person insofar as she has a person-making ability is like desiring her insofar as she has food-making ability. That is, in desiring her for her food making ability, I am not desiring her for anything that puts an obligation on me to give her committed love. I am only obligated to be fair. But also, I am only desiring her for her ability to perform tasks, to produce relative goods.

Valuing her as having a person-making ability must always subordinate other aspects of her sexuality to its being a person-making ability.

If I do not evaluate myself as a maker of that for the sake of which everything else exists, I cannot evaluate myself, my partner, my children, etc. as that for the sake of which everything else exists.

I am a person-maker only in union with another person-maker, but that union is oriented toward making something worthy of lifelong committed love.

June 18, 1998

I strongly and sincerely love my wife, but my love is not based on respect for the person as an end-in-itself, because I do not subordinate, in my system of values, every other aspect of sex to procreation. Now I find out that we are infertile. Nothing in that revelation changes the status of the person in my values. So the person remains something that is, de facto, not an end-in-itself, not that for the sake of which everything else exists.

So now I can continue the same way without consciously and deliberately interfering with procreation, but I have still done nothing to give the person the status it deserves in my system of values. So just ignoring the value of the person may be moral in some contexts, that is, contexts in which I do not have to consider taking action against procreation. But even in that context, I am faced with the choice of so using other aspects of my sexuality that they way I am using those other aspects could not be subordinated to the purpose of making a person. So ignoring is not enough to do justice to the person as an absolute value. To do that the way I, as a

sexual being, must do it, as a free sexual being must do it, the only way I can do it is to freely subordinate every other aspect of sexuality to the purpose of making a person, even if I know that we are infertile.

Before test tube babies, the meaning of our coming into existence was that we resulted from an act of love, of desire, of evaluating, toward another person.

Using sex while thwarting the making of a person reduces the use of our person-making ability to a power for performing tasks, functions. For tasks bring into existence things that are not worthy of committed love for their own sake. And to the extent that we are valued only for (and if we were valued only for) our ability to perform tasks, we are not valued as worthy of committed love for our own sake (think of the robot cook). To equate making a person with the performing of tasks is to equate value of a person and the value of things that are less than absolute values.

We are valuing someone precisely as a sexual being, insofar as she has sexuality. But sexuality exists for the sake of being a person-making ability; sexuality exists for the sake of an AV worthy of committed love. So we can desire someone as a sexual being the way we desire someone as having food-making ability. (The food-making ability does not produce an AV and so does not involve the issues of treating them as AVs, but our acquiring the use of their AV does involve that issues, for it involves their freedom.) Or we can value the other as a sexual being to be, for that reason, worthy of committed love. If we do not value the other as a sexual being to be worthy of committed love, are we valuing the other person to be an end-in-itself?

We perceive illegitimi this way: You were brought into existence, not because your value as a person is such an absolute moral value that love between 2 other persons for each other's person-making ability should not interfere with making you but should be allowed to be the cause of you.

Not every way of making a person does justice to the value of a person. And an act can appear to do justice to the value of a person when it really doesn't (e.g., saving my wife's life by artificial contraception).

How would an atheistic juror feel if Fallon had deceived her into believing that he was also militantly atheist?

If you say that the only thing that counts, or that should count, is what sex can contribute to me and my partner, you have already implied that children have value only because we want them. (A comment on the problem that everything appears to exist for the sake of persons.)

June 18, 1998

Thoughts while listening to David Novak's talk at Toronto:

Lust produces children with no place in the social structure.

Original starting point of file:

Because sexuality is our person-making ability, the context in which we use it or refrain from using it can either affirm the ethically absolute value of the person as such or deny it.

Thesis: Since a person is an end-in-itself, our choices are ethically incorrect if they do not give the person the status of being an end-in-itself in our system of values. An end-in-itself is that for the sake of which everything else exists. So the person is that for the sake of which the means of producing persons exists. When our choices make the means for producing persons something that does not have the place, in our system of values, of existing for the sake of producing persons, the person does not have the place, in our system of values, of being that for the sake of which everything else exists; for it does not even have the place of being that for the sake of which the means of getting persons exists.

So, when instead of refraining from sex, we prevent conception by using sex in a way that excludes conception, the value we place on sex (the place that sex has in our system of values) is not that of being a means to the existence of a person. And if the way of bringing persons into existence does not have the value, in our estimations (the place in our system of values), of being a means to the existence of a person, the value that the existence of a person has in our estimations (the place a person has in our system of values) is not that of existence of an end-in-itself.

REFRAINING FROM SEX VERSUS CONTRACEIVING

The existence of our person-making ability is not just as valuable, just as important, as the existence of a person. A person is an end-in-itself; the use of our person-making ability is not an end-in-itself. If their value were equal, we would be obligated never to refrain from using our person-making ability; we could not refrain from using our person-making power without diminishing the absolute value of the person. But we can, do, and must refrain from using our person-making ability most of the time.

The question is whether instead of refraining from using the power to make persons, we can use it while deliberately preventing it from achieving that end without diminishing the value of that end in our estimation and, therefore, diminishing the value of a previous products of that power in our estimation.

We can refrain from using our person-making power without denying the value of a person as an end-in-itself. In fact, refraining from the use of our person-making power can be a way of honoring the value of a person; for our decision to refrain can result from the fact that persons have the status of ends-in-themselves, not only in reality, but also in our estimations of value. For example, we might believe that it would be unjust for us to assume the responsibility for the life and well being of another end-in-itself, because our health or finances would make it impossible for us to satisfy the demands of justice for another end-in-itself. There are two ways we can avoid that responsibility. We can refrain from using our person-making power, or we can use that power while also doing something to prevent it from achieving the goal of making a person.

If we refrain from using that power, we are sacrificing other goals, other values, other ends, rather than interfere with our person-making power's ability to make ends-in-themselves. So this is a way of honoring the value of the person as an end-in-itself relative to lesser values. We deem the other values worthy of sacrifice rather than make the means for the existence of that for the sake of which everything else exists into something that cannot produce the value without which there are no other values. We forsake relative values rather than reduce the means for the absolute value to being less than the means for the absolute value.

I cannot morally choose to achieve an end by using the act of interfering with conception as the means to attain it. I can choose to achieve an end by refraining from an act that would cause conception. It is one thing to refrain from a sex act. It is another thing to choose a sex act, for whatever purpose, and prevent the purpose of conception. In both choosing the sex act as a means and preventing conception as a means, I evaluate whatever other end I achieve by the sex act as a higher end than conception, because in order to use sex for whatever other end I am seeking, I have to take direct action to prevent the end of conception from occurring. I decline to sacrifice that other end but instead sacrifice the coming into existence of an absolute value rather than fail to achieve that other end.

In refraining from the sex act, I do not evaluate the end I achieve by refraining as if it were higher; that fact that the person is a higher end may be the very reason I refrain. I have other ends for the sake of which I refrain from becoming a parent; those ends may be lesser ends. But I should not use my person-making ability in a way that lets me have my cake and eat it too. I should not use it for a lesser end at the expense of not allowing it to achieve the end of procreation, at the expense of interfering with its being the ability to produce an absolute value.

Moreover the other values we are sacrificing rather than make a person are themselves primarily means to the existence of a moral absolute. It is even a distortion to say, for example, that pleasure and procreation are two alternative ends for sex. The pleasure itself is a means, not an absolute end. Nature has so designed it that the existence of persons results from the satisfaction of desires for of things, like pleasure and companionship, other than the existence of a person. But among the things that can result from the use of sex, among the things sex gives us, one is not only more important than all others, it is incomparably more important than the others: sex gives us our existence.

Our existence is incomparably more important than anything else sex gives us for two reasons. One reason is that without existence we could have no other goods nor seek any other values. Existence is the necessary condition for everything else that can happen to us. But that is not the only reason our existence is incomparably more important than anything else sex gives us.

Everything I have just said about our existence being a necessary condition for everything else that happens to us could be said of the products of animal sexuality, namely, animals themselves, as well as of human sexuality. But the product of human sexuality, namely, persons, is something of incomparably more value than the product of animal sexuality. Persons are ends-in-themselves, which means that they exist for their own sakes, not for the sake of anything other than themselves. Rather, everything else exists

for the sake of persons, for the benefit of persons.

Persons, in other words, are moral absolutes, and without the existence of persons as things valuable for their own sake, no other moral values could exist. If only animals existed and not persons, all values would be relative to the arbitrary subjective desires of animals. Because persons are what they are, there are values that we must honor regardless of our subjective desires.

Since the existence of a moral absolute results from the satisfaction of desires for nonabsolute goods, the most important reason for the existence of those desires for nonabsolute goods, and for the existence of the satisfaction of those desires, is the existence of something else, the existence of a person, the existence of a person other than ourselves. So the value of that which is an end relative to our subjective desires, the value of pleasure and/or companionship, is primarily the value of a means relative to something other than the satisfaction of our subjective desires; for its most important value is that of a means relative to the existence of a moral absolute, a means relative to the existence of that without which no moral values would exist.

A means is valued for something other than itself that it can bring into existence. Sex is primarily a means to the existence of that for which everything else exists, but it is also the means to other things, such as psychological satisfaction. But the existence of a person is that for the sake of which everything else that sex can produce exists. For persons are that for the sake of which everything else exists. So, if we make sex a mere means to psychological gratification and fulfillment, where it becomes a "mere" means because we frustrate its production of a person for the sake of other ends, what place does the existence of a person have in our evaluations? In our evaluations, the existence of a person is not that for the sake of which all other values associated with sex exist; for we can pursue those values to the exclusion of pursuing the value of conceiving a person. In that case, how can the existence of a person have the status of an absolute value in our estimations of value, since the existence of a person is not even that for the sake of which the means of producing a person exists, in our estimations of value.

For the refrainer, on the other hand, the reason he refrains can be the fact that, in his evaluations, pleasure and everything else produced by sex exist for the sake of producing persons. In other words, he refrains because the existence of a person has the status of the existence of an absolute in his system of values. If he used sex while interfering with procreation, on the other hand, the existence of a person would not be, in his evaluations, that for the sake of which everything else associated with sex exists. And so, the existence of a person could not be the existence of an absolute value, in his estimations of value. For how can a person be that for the sake of which everything else exists if it is not even that for the sake of which the means for bringing it into existence exist. If a person is not that for the sake of which the means for producing a person exists, then a fortiori, a person is not that for the sake of which everything else exists.

So we must value everything else that sex can produce in subordination to its value of bringing a person into existence; otherwise, the existence of a person is not the existence of a moral absolute in our system of values.

On the one hand, all the other values produced by sex are for the sake of already existing persons, ourselves, and on the other hand, all those

other values exist for the sake of the existence of a new person. There need be no conflict between these two "exists for the sake of," unless our motivation to pursue, or our conscious way of pursuing, those relative values for the sake of what they can contribute to ourselves excludes their existing for the sake of bringing into existence another end-in-itself.

Something that is an end-in-itself in reality must be an end-in-itself in our system of values. If we pursue those lesser goods for our own sake to the exclusion of the existence of another end-in-itself, we are evaluating the existence of those desires for lesser goods, we are placing a value on the existence of those desires, in a way that contradicts the fact that the primary reason for our having them is the existence of something that everything else is for, not just the existence of a relative and nonnecessary part of the happiness of another person, ourself.

When I refrain from sex, I am not evaluating my nature to be less than a producer of an absolute. I am doing the opposite, I am giving my nature a place in my system of values as the producer of the *only* thing that has absolute value, a person. For I am evaluating it to be something that should not be used in a way that excludes its being the only producer of the only thing that has absolute value. Otherwise, I would be saying that the other things produced by sex exist for the nonnecessary relative good of one person, myself, to the exclusion of existing as the means to the very existence of persons, the good without which there would be no relative goods, the good necessary for any other goods.

I cannot consciously use sex without placing a value on it. I cannot consciously refrain from sex without placing a value on it. Using it while contravening its ability to produce a person requires valuing it as if it were not the means and for producing a moral absolute. Refraining from using it can be a way of valuing it as a means to a moral absolute.

I am not obligated to seek the existence of another end-in-itself. I am obligated not to make the means to the existence of a moral absolute into less than a means to a moral absolute. For doing so would involve evaluating things without which no moral absolute would exist to be merely a nonnecessary means to nonabsolute values. But there can be no nonabsolute values unless absolute values exist.

If we do not value an end-in-itself as such, moral values cannot have the place they should have in our system of values. For in failing to honor an end-in-itself as such, we are failing to value that without which there would be no moral values. As a result, if we fail to value sex primarily as the sufficient condition for the existence of an end-in-itself, we are failing to value it as the sufficient condition for the existence of any moral values whatsoever.

The opponent will say that producing another ethical absolute is the most important end, but not the only end, of sex. We can prevent the most important end, without denying that it is the most important end. But being an ethical absolute is not just being "most important" in this context. Something can be the most important end of X, without being an ethical absolute, and so without X's being connected to an ethical absolute. Sex is

connected to an ethical absolute, and it's most important end is not just most important but is an absolute end.

To describe the position that the existence of a person deserves to occupy in our system of values, it is not sufficient to use phrases such as "primary end," or "most important end." By themselves, such phrases attribute only a *relative* value to that which they describe. A is primary relative to B; of wheat, corn, and oxygen, oxygen is the most important relative to the well being of animals. The reason why the production of a person should be the primary value of sexuality in our estimations is not just that persons are higher goods relative to others but that persons are absolute goods relative to others.

I can often chose between unequal values with no moral implication because nothing is involved that is necessary for the good of an end-in-itself. That is, the choice between nonabsolute goods, or between means to nonabsolute goods, often has no moral implications. For example, I may find classical music to be more deeply satisfying than popular; nevertheless there can be times when I desire the kind of satisfaction popular music gives more than the kind classical gives. But here we are comparing relative values; the different ends of sex are not merely of unequal value, as two nonabsolute goods might be. The difference between the various ends of sex is that between an absolute value and nonabsolute values, an end that is an absolute good in reality and ends that in reality are not absolute goods. So the choice of contraception has implications for whether something that is an absolute good in reality also has that status in my evaluations. And the difference between the value of a means to something absolute and necessary for other goods and the value of a nonnecessary means to something relative is incommensurable. So contraception does not just make sex a means to something of lesser value but it turns the means of getting that for the sake of which everything else exists into something that, in our estimations, does not exist as a means to that for the sake of which everything else exists.

There are times when it is better not to create children than to create them. But there can be no time that it is better to use a means to the very existence of an end-in-itself as if it were only a nonnecessary means to the existence of something less than an absolute good. We should not make our nature into a nonnecessary producer of a relative good at the expense of our nature's being the producer of a necessary absolute good.

Could we decide a sex act will not have the end of procreation for the purposes, for example, of saving my wife's life and still make the decision consistent with evaluating her as an end-in-itself, as an ethical absolute? Doesn't the value of a person have a higher place in the estimation of someone who saves his wife's life by abstaining from the use of his person-making power than one who saves it by preventing his sexuality from achieving the end of making a person?

But even if the value of the person is higher in the estimations of A than of B, is A obligated morally to give it that higher estimation? Yes, "higher" is a relative term, but the value we are talking about is an absolute value. If B values it relatively lower than A, is B valuing it as an absolute?

To sum up: In a television interview, a pedophile was asked why he wanted pedophilia made legal. He answered, "Because I have this gift that makes life glorious and wonderful, and I want to use it." He spoke as if he

were in awe of his sexuality because of the pleasure it could give him. But shouldn't we be more in awe of our sexuality because it can give existence to PERSONS, to beings of unequivocally absolute value, to beings that everything else exists for and that do not themselves exist for the sake of any other kind of being? Shouldn't we be dumbfounded at the thought that we have the ability to produce such staggeringly valuable beings?

If these philosophical descriptions of a person's value are too abstract to be exciting, replace them with theological descriptions. We have the power to produce children of God, images and likenesses of God, beings in whom God Himself will dwell, beings who will share the infinite life of God. Shouldn't we be in awe of a power that can produce such an effect?

How can we fail to be in awe of sex for its ability to produce such an effect, unless we devalue the existence of a person? If we say, "I grant that the existence of a person is important. But is it so important that I fail to honor an absolute value for what it is, if I value the means to get persons in such a way that its value is not that of producing persons?" The word "so" in "Is it so important" tells the whole story. What is important but is not "so-important-that . . . ," is not an absolute value. If something is not "sufficiently important that . . . ," the thing is not that for the sake of which everything else exists.

And what is the alternative to being in awe of sex because it is the person-making ability? That pedophile was in awe of it because it can give us the same kind of pleasure that animals can have, because having the same kind of pleasure that animals can have makes *human* life glorious and wonderful. In other words, the alternative to being in awe at sex because it can produce ends-in-themselves is to reduce the person, including ourselves, from being an absolute value, in our estimations, to having a value no higher than that of an animal. For what makes our life glorious and wonderful, that is, what gives our life *value*, is an ability that produces nothing higher than an animal can produce.

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aa, outtakes from contra and artconcp, July 14, 1998

In marriage, human life comes from one person's complete giving of him/herself to another person. The meaning of that coming into existence is one rational beings belief that another person is worthy of his/her complete giving of him/herself.

Instead, the result of that production is something whose existence depends on whether we want her or not, and so her value depends on whether we want her or not.

Sexuality is not, like our food-making ability, something whose use contributes only a relative and contingent value to end-in-themselves; sexuality contributes that without which there would be no other values, persons, that without which there would be no persons, their existence. denying that the other is worthy of committed love just because the act in question is not an act of complete giving of myself?

The use of my person-making ability is less than worthy of a person if it is not an act of committed love toward another person. But if I use a mechanical means of procreation instead of my person-making ability, I am saying that it is alright for persons to come into existence as a result of mechanical acts; I am saying that mechanical acts of production are worthy of products that are worthy of committed love. But if coming into existence through a mechanical process is not an injustice to a person, why should coming into existence through a sex act not based on committed love? So the existence of a person should come from an act of love between persons.

No, but Nor am I preventing the other's person-making ability from being that.

So in valuing the other's sexuality the value of a person as such is involved in a way it is not involved when we value the other for their ability to feed us. As long as our use of their food-making ability is consensual, there may be no moral issue involved.

Anything less than that, and we are not evaluating another to be worthy of complete giving of ourselves.

We are not evaluating the other to be that, but are we denying it? When I enter into an ordinary business or social exchange, am I denying that the other is worthy of committed love just because the act in question is not an act of complete giving of myself? No, but in such acts, I am not using, and placing a value on, the other's person-making ability.

Prior to test-tube babies, human existence came from one person placing a value on another person. Specifically, one person places a value on another person's person-making-ability, or places a value on another person insofar as she has an ability that is in fact a person-making-ability. That act of valuing is an act of love, an act of appreciating, of desiring union with, of desiring oneness with her insofar as she has an ability that is de facto a person-making ability. What if the value we place on the other

person as a sexual being is less than that of being an object of committed love? Then, the existence of human persons results from placing a value on another person that is less than the value of being worthy of committed love. The existence of X results from placing a value on something, Y. If we value Y as less than worthy of committed love, can the existence of that which results from that evaluation be worthy of committed love?

No, because, although X in fact is worthy of committed love, the existence of a person cannot logically have that status in our evaluations. For in our evaluations, the existence of X is a result of valuing a person as something less than worthy of committed love. But if X should not result from an evaluation of a sexual being as something less than worthy of committed love, should X result from anything less than an act of committed sexual love between two persons?

And if we consent to jointly using our person-making ability while frustrating the production of a person, we cannot consistently be each valuing the other person as that for the sake of which everything else exists.

Why is extra-marital sex "dirty" or degrading? What does it degrade? It degrades the value of human life.

Pornography, casual sex, etc., trivialize our person-making ability. They do it even though, e.g., the woman in the pornography is not fertile at the time. The features of her we are trivializing are the features by which we make persons, when we can make them, the features necessary for making children, when we can make them.

My argument also shows why it is not just prudishness to consider pornography "dirty." The value of the human person is degraded, if sex is valued as a mere means to something less than human existence; for then the person is no longer that for which everything else exists.

But the value of persons transcends their ability to perform functions as the absolute transcends the relative. So the ability to perform functions cannot be placed on a par with the ability to make persons without implicitly reducing the place of the person in our system of values. But if the woman's person-making ability is disconnected from its relation to an ethical absolute, since that which was formerly absolute is no longer absolute, a different value will inevitably be placed on women's sexuality. It will be valued for the relative goods it can provide, and women will inevitably tend to become sex objects.

, a machine that was not also a feature of a moral absolute, a machine that did not also belong to the being of a moral absolute.

I can use it for other purposes as long as, in doing so, I do not contravene, I do not act against, I do not fail to honor, its religious purpose.

For I decline to sacrifice that other end for which I believe a sex act is a means but instead sacrifice the coming into existence of an absolute value rather than fail to achieve that other end. whatever other end I am trying to bring into existence as a higher end than

In refraining from the sex act, I do not evaluate the end I achieve by refraining as if it were higher; that fact that the person is a higher end may be the very reason I refrain. I have other ends for the sake of which I refrain from becoming a parent; those ends may be lesser ends.

There are times when it is better not to create children than to create them. But there can be no time that it is better to use a means to the very existence of an end-in-itself as if it were only a nonnecessary means to the existence of something less than an absolute good. We should not make our nature into a nonnecessary producer of a relative good at the expense of our nature's being the producer of a necessary absolute good.

But if the way of bringing persons into existence does not have the place in our system of values of being a means to the existence of a person, the place that the existence of a person has in our system of values is not that of existence of that for the sake of which everything else exists.

To describe the position that the existence of a person deserves to occupy in our system of values, it is not sufficient to use phrases such as "primary end," or "most important end." By themselves, such phrases attribute only a *relative* value to that which they describe. A is primary relative to B; of wheat, corn, and oxygen, oxygen is the most important relative to the well being of animals.

So contraception does not just make sex a means to something of lesser value but it turns a means of getting that for the sake of which everything else exists into something that, in our estimations, does not exist as a means to that for the sake of which everything else exists.

The existence of our person-making ability is not just as valuable, just as important, as the existence of a person. A person is an end-in-itself; the use of our person-making ability is not an end-in-itself. If their value were equal, we would be obligated never to refrain from using our person-making ability; we could not refrain from using our person-making power without diminishing the absolute value of the person. But we can, do, and must refrain from using our person-making ability most of the time.

We can get a clearer idea of the difference between refraining from sex and using sex while contravening the goal of procreation by considering an essential feature of the human act that has been ignored for the most part since Aristotle.

To the extent that we behave rationally, we direct our actions or refraining

from action by our rational beliefs about connections between ends and means. Assume that eating ice cream is seriously bad for your health. When you are tempted to have some ice cream your decision consists (at least in part, but it is an essential part) in selecting between different, but not contradictory, pieces of rational awareness about ends-means connections: (1) your belief that eating ice cream is a means contrary to the end of health; (2) your belief that eating ice cream is a means to the end of gustatory pleasure. Choosing not to have the ice cream amounts to using your belief about the ends/means connection in (1) to direct yourself toward the goals you will accomplish in life. Choosing to eat the ice cream amounts to using your belief about the ends/means connection in (2) to direct yourself toward goals.

Using belief (2) to control our action does not in itself violate the rational appetite's goal of conforming to our knowledge of what things are. The cash value of the qualifier "in itself" is this. In the absence of a circumstance like (A), which is state of affairs distinct from the state of affairs expressed in (2), choosing to seek the end of pleasure by the means of eating ice cream need not have any moral implications.

But

A means is valued for something other than itself that it can bring into existence. Sex is primarily a means to the existence of that for which everything else exists, but it is also the means to other things, such as psychological satisfaction. But

For how can a person be that for the sake of which everything else exists if it is not even that for the sake of which a means for bringing it into existence exist. If a person is not that for the sake of which a means for producing a person exists, then a fortiori, a person is not that for the sake of which everything else exists.

Something that is an end-in-itself in reality must be an end-in-itself in our system of values. If we pursue those lesser goods for our own sake to the exclusion of the existence of another end-in-itself, we are evaluating the existence of those desires for lesser goods, we are placing a value on the existence of those desires, in a way that contradicts the fact that the primary reason for our having them is the existence of something that everything else is for, not just the existence of a relative and nonnecessary part of the happiness of another person, oneself.

When I refrain from sex, I am not evaluating my nature to be less than a producer of an absolute. I am doing the opposite, I am giving my nature a place in my system of values as the producer of the *only* thing that has absolute value, a person. For I am evaluating it to be something that should not be used in a way that excludes its being a producer of the only thing that has absolute value.

Using a sacred symbol for deception would be an evil even if no further harm were being done to the people being deceived.

If the existence of a person were simply relatively better than the other values of sex, we would not be displacing an absolute value if we used sex in a way contrary to the existence of a person. I cannot change my evaluation of sex relative to an absolute value without changing my evaluation of myself relative to that value, since the ability to produce

that value is part of what I am and since my existence is nothing but a product of the ability to produce that value. And I must change my evaluation of my partner and others likewise.

I evaluate refraining from conceiving as a means to my happiness; I evaluate interfering with conceiving as a mean to my happiness. The second case involves more than the first. The second case involves evaluating other aspects of sexuality as means to my happiness, and only as means to my happiness, even though in themselves they are the means to the existence of ends-in-themselves. So I am failing to evaluate them as what they are in a respect that is essentially, not accidentally, involved in every choice I make. Every choice I make is aimed at the well being of an existing end-in-itself, is for the sake of the well being of an existing end-in-itself. So every choice I make either honors or does not honor things as being what they are in a certain respect: as what they are with respect to being ends-in-themselves or means to the good of ends-in-themselves. But contraception involves an exclusive disjunction between valuing sex as a means to the existence things worthy of honor for the own sake and valuing sex as if a means to that which exists for its own sake was a means to my happiness in a way that excludes its being a means for there being any ends-in-themselves at all, a means for an end-in-itself existing at all.

For the child is not the direct result of an act valuing another person as an end-in-itself.

If we created an artificial means of procreation, our own nature, our own psychology, would not change. As of now, when sex is the only means, the relationship of one partner to the other fully values the other partner as an end-in-itself if and only if we subordinate that relationship to the purpose of procreation. Given that the nature of our psychological makeup would remain the same,

Necessarily, we would be making the relation between ourselves and our partner (not to mention our children) something other than what nature designed it to be, and it would be something other than nature designed it in a way that was inconsistent with valuing persons as ends-in-themselves.

Now, we perform actions which can describe as being engaged in person-making." If we gave up using sex for procreation because we had an artificial means of doing so, we would perform the same action but that description would no longer true of it. The change in description reflects a change in reality, i.e., that action no longer has the kind of relation to an absolute value that it used to have. So, the place of sex in the scale of values in reality would radically change without any corresponding change in the psychological acts by which we now place values on our sex partners. And so the value of the relation to another person that I establish in sex would radically change; and the value of an integral part of my own being would radically change. My own being would not have the value it had before; that value would be diminished, and not merely in a relative sense. The value of my being would be diminished in a way intrinsically related to the status of a person as an absolute value.

refraining from using my sexuality is not the same as evaluating a person-making ability as if it did not exist for the sake of making persons and so is not the same as evaluating the existence of a person as if it were not the

existence of that for the sake of which everything else exists. Again,

If we frustrate the production of a person for the sake of other ends, in our evaluations, the existence of a person is not that for the sake of which all other values associated with sex exist; for we are pursuing those values by thwarting the of conceiving a person. In that case, the existence of a person cannot have the status of an absolute value in our estimations of value, since the existence of a person is not even that for the sake of which a means of producing a person exists.

For the refrainer, on the other hand, the reason he refrains can be the fact that, in his evaluations, pleasure and everything else produced by sex exist for the sake of producing persons. In other words, he refrains because the existence of a person has the status of the existence of an absolute in his system of values. But if he used sex while interfering with procreation, the existence of a person would not be, in his evaluations, that for the sake of which everything else associated with sex exists. And so, the existence of a person could not be the existence of an absolute value, in his estimations of value.

we could not still fully value ourselves, our partner, our children or any other persons as ends-in-themselves, if we use our sexuality in a way contrary to the purpose of procreation, that is, if we use the power that brought us into existence, to which we owe all the value our existence has, in a way contrary to the purpose of bringing that kind of value into existence. If we choose not to use our person-making ability for making persons, we are necessarily demeaning ourselves, our partner and other persons.

For we are saying that the use of a machine is morally equivalent to what we do now.

Likewise, if we use our person-making ability while frustrating its ability to make persons, we are evaluating that which brought us into existence, sexuality, as if it were not a means to the existence of that for the sake of which everything else exists. And so we are implicitly evaluating past products of our sexuality as if they were not moral absolutes. So if we do not value our sexuality as existing for the sake of making persons, we cannot consistently value ourselves and other human beings as being that for the sake of which everything else exists.

A choice made in full rational awareness that does not evaluate an end-in-itself to be what it is in reality is a defective choice, defective by the standard of being an act based on rational awareness that consciously fails to conform to what rational awareness tells us about what things are.

So I cannot morally try to achieve any end in any circumstance by choosing my person-making ability as a means while at the same time also choosing as a mean an act that thwarts the goal of procreation. But the decision to achieve some end by refraining from using my person-making ability can be a deliberate way of refusing to place a value on a person-making ability that treats it as if it did not exist for the sake of making persons,

Persons are ends-in-themselves, which means that they exist for their own sakes, not for the sake of anything other than themselves. Rather, everything else exists for the sake of persons, for the benefit of persons. The other things sex gives us are relative and, strictly speaking, nonnecessary values. Persons are ends-in-themselves, which means that they exist for their own sakes, not for the sake of anything other than themselves. Rather, everything else exists for the sake of persons, for the benefit of persons. The other things sex gives us are relative and, strictly speaking, nonnecessary values.

Children come from one person's desiring another, and so placing a value on another, as a sexual being. In a well functioning marriage, the child comes from two persons valuing each other, as sexual beings, to be worthy of committed love. So in marriage, the meaning of the child's existence is that the value of persons, as having person-making ability, is to be worthy of committed love. In a healthy family, a child learns just from observing her parents relationship, that the meaning of her existence, and hence that of other persons, is that human sexuality causes effects that are worthy of committed love for their own sake.

Given that it is possible for persons to come into existence through a sex act that results from two persons valuing each other, as sexual beings, to be worthy of committed love, would any other way of making a person be morally worthy of a person, since the value of the new person is that of an entity worthy of committed love? Is it possible to consistently value children as ends-in-themselves if we consensually use our person-making ability without valuing our partner, as a sexual being, to be worthy of committed love?

I cannot consciously use sex without placing a value on it. I cannot consciously refrain from sex without placing a value on it. Using it while contravening its ability to make a person requires valuing it as if it were not a means for making a moral absolute. Refraining from using it can be a way of valuing it as a means to a moral absolute.

aa, January 21, 1998

The value of the person first comes into play, first arises as an issue, first becomes an issue, is first at stake, in our decision to use our person-making power.

Maybe all we need say is that in deciding how to use our sexuality, we are always deciding how to use a person-making power, no matter how many other such powers there may be.

Check out the traditional theory of transmission of original justice/original sin. Maybe there's something about our sexuality there that can be used to argue against in vitro fertilization, etc.

aa, sex not the only means to get persons, January 20, 1998

If we stopped using sex for procreation and used only artificial means, it would still be true that every person that will ever exist will be the result of sex. For the artificial means will be first produced by products of sex and only by products of sex.

Maybe the question is whether we who are persons and who are products of sex can morally decide that our person-making ability not be used for that purpose, even if there are other ways of making persons. If we choose not to use our person-making ability for making persons, are we necessarily demeaning ourselves and our partner? Or are we necessarily making the relation between ourselves and our partner (not to mention our children) something other than what nature designed it to be, and something other than nature designed it to be that is inconsistent with valuing persons as ends-in-themselves?

If the value in question is an absolute value, the answer must be no. Since sex is capable of producing an absolute value, we essentially change the nature of our evaluation of sex if we use it in a way that contradicts that value. If the existence of a person were simply relatively better than the other values of sex, we would not be displacing an absolute if we used sex in a way contrary to that value.

Can I change my evaluation of sex relative to an absolute value without changing my evaluation of myself relative to that value, since the ability to produce that value is part of what I am? And since my existence is nothing but a product of the ability to produce that value? Must I not change my evaluation of my partner and others likewise?

And when I do decide to use it for procreation, does the value of the product of that use become simply something that has value because I chose it and not because its value is intrinsic? For it is a value that, as far as my evaluations are concerned, may or may not come from this chosen action.

At one time we performed actions about which an alien could say "They are engaged in person-making." Now we perform the same action and that description is no longer true of it. The change in description reflects a change in reality, i.e., that action no longer has the kind of absolute value that it used to have. The place of sex in the scale of values in reality radically changes. And so the value of the relation to another person that I establish in sex radically changes; and the value of an integral part of my own being radically changes. My own being does not have the value it had before; that value is diminished, and not merely in a relative sense.

The value of my being has diminished in a way intrinsically related to the status of a person as an absolute value. Sexuality is not just accidentally related to the existence of persons; it has a specific causal connection to the existence of persons.

Assume that a natural event occurs of which a chance result is a new mechanism with a specific relation to the existence of persons. Still the coming into existence of that new mechanism did not itself have a specific relation to the existence of persons. The coming into existence of our mechanism with a specific relation to the existence of persons did have a specific relation to the existence of persons. For our mechanism for creating persons was brought into existence by means of another person's specific mechanism for creating persons.

Call the new method B. Once B is in existence, it is specifically related to

human persons. But the persons B makes do not have B as a power; they have sex as a power. So the power B makes is itself made by something with a specific relation to it. Our sexuality has a specific relation to persons and its coming into existence was not accidentally related to something with a specific connection to persons. B has a specific relation to persons but B's coming into existence is only accidentally related to the existence of persons. That is, the causes of B's coming into existence are only accidentally related to the existence of persons.

aa, committed love January 5, 1998

What is the difference between sacrificing pleasure rather than contravene procreation and sacrificing the existence of a person rather than pleasure? The difference is the place of a person in our system of values.

We value the other person's sexuality. If we value it as a means to the existence of an end-in-itself, must we not value the other person as an end-in-itself, and so value her as worthy of committed love?

How can something be, in our estimations, that for the sake of which everything else exists, if that something is not even that for the sake of which, in our evaluations, a means for its existence exists?

aa, thoughts from Serrin Foster's talk at Harvard, April 20, 1998

Who owns that life in the petry dish? The conceptus owns it. And the conceptus has the right to develop, if possible, in his mothers womb, the right not to be a bastard, etc. The right not to be treated as property, as chattel.

For the mother or father to conceive with another partner is just as immoral as having sex with another partner would be.

We will go from saying "Every child a wanted child" to "Every dependent older person a wanted older person."

Why not have the abortion? You can always have *other* children. As if children were replaceable parts, the ethic of function rather than of relationship to a unique person.

April 29, 1998

Human existence comes from an act in which one person places a value on another person, specifically, one person places a value on another person's person-making-ability, or places a value on another person insofar as she has an ability that is in fact a person-making-ability. That act of valuing is an act of love, an act of appreciating, of desiring union with, of desiring oneness with her insofar as she has and I have a de facto person-making ability. So the existence of a person should come from an act of love between persons. The use of my person-making ability is less than worthy of a person if it is not an act of love toward another person. If I use my person-making ability mechanically, I am saying that it is alright for persons to come into existence as a result of mechanical acts. (See Grisez.)

A common argument: Our self-giving is less than complete if we withhold our fertility from one another. Sure, but why must it be complete? As long as

we mutually agree not to give ourselves something, isn't our not giving ourselves that thing fair? Can't we mutually agree, for instance, not to give each other our sexuality at all? If we can do that in fairness, why can't we mutually agree not to give each other our fertility? What is unjust if I do not ask for your fertility if you do not ask for mine? As long as I don't have to give myself completely to you, why must you give yourself completely to me. Don't we most of the time engage in relations where we don't ask the other to give herself completely and aren't asked to give ourselves completely in return?

WHAT IF SEX IS NOT THE SOLE MEANS OF PRODUCING PERSONS

Sex might not be the necessary means of getting persons. As things stand now, our sexuality is the sole means of getting persons. Even in vitro fertilization uses the products of our sexuality, sperm and ova. So the use of the current artificial means for producing persons does not bypass the use of our sexuality, and so does not bypass the question of whether our sexuality has as its primary end something that is primary, not just because it is a higher value than something else, but because it is absolute value.

But let us assume that we discover on another planet an unconscious machine that can produce human persons, a machine that was itself only an accidental product of unconscious causal forces. Regarding such a machine, it might be possible to use the person's character as an end-in-itself to argue that it would be immoral to use the machine for any other purpose while frustrating its ability to produce persons. For the sake of argument, however, let us assume that using that machine while contravening its ability to make persons, would not require us to value the existence of a person as if it were other than the existence of an end-in-itself. Would it follow that we can use our own sexuality, while contravening its ability to make persons, and still value the existence of a person as the existence of an end-in-itself?

The machine in question is unconscious; so the only kind of relation it has to the existence of a moral absolute is an unconscious relation. Frustrating that relation, therefore, does not put the machine into any conscious state in which the existence of an end-in-itself does not have the status that an end-in-itself's nature calls for it to have. The machine cannot value ends-in-themselves as ends-in-themselves; nor can it value means to the existence of ends-in-themselves as means to the existence of ends-in-themselves.

Our sexuality, however, is a feature of a conscious being, a rationally conscious being. In addition to having ends to which we are oriented by our subrational faculties, we have ends to which we are oriented by our rationally conscious faculties. One of the ends to which we are oriented by our rationally conscious faculties is that of giving the person the status of a moral absolute, the status of that for the sake of which everything else exists, in our conscious evaluations of things, actions, and states of affairs.

Unlike the machine, we can value ends-in-themselves as ends-in-themselves and means to the existence of ends-in-themselves as means to the existence of ends-in-themselves. But we can also fail to value ends-in-themselves as ends-in-themselves or means to the existence of ends-in-themselves as means to the existence of ends-in-themselves.

When we consciously place a value on our sexuality, we are placing a value on ourselves as sexual beings. We cannot place a value on any of our faculties, or any other human being's faculties, without simultaneously placing a value on ourselves or the other party insofar as we possess the faculty we are evaluating. Our faculties do not exist in separation from us, and so they cannot be evaluated as if they existed separately from us. (A person-making machine can be evaluated as if it existed separately from us.) When we hire a chef because of her ability to make food, we are placing a value on her, not just on her food-making ability. We are valuing her insofar as she has the ability to make food. Thus, we cannot treat her as if she were a machine for making food. We must treat her as a person, an end-

in-itself, when we relate to her because of her food-making ability. We do not have to treat a machine as an end-in-itself, when we relate to it because of its food-making ability.

Likewise, we cannot value ourselves as if we were machines for making moral absolutes, a machine that was not also a feature of a moral absolute, a machine that did not also belong to the being of a moral absolute. We might find a technological means of getting visual information that allowed us to use our eyes for some purpose other than seeing while frustrating their ability to see. We would be evaluating our sight-making ability, and ourselves as having a sight-making ability, as machines for performing acts of sight, machines that we do not have to use for that purpose. But in assigning an end to the act of using our sight-making power, so that we can frustrate our ability to make sight, we are not valuing that which brought us into existence, sexuality, as if it were not a means to the existence of that for the sake of which everything else exists. Everything else does not exist for the sake of beings making acts of vision; everything else does exist for the sake of that which we can bring into existence by using our sexuality.

But if we so value our sexuality that we can contravene its ability to make persons, we are valuing our sexuality as if it did not exist for the sake of bringing about that for the sake of which everything else exists. Therefore, human sexuality does not exist for the sake of all the past human beings that it has brought into existence. For if those past human beings are each an instance of that for which everything else exists, they must be instances of that for which our sexuality exists. Therefore, if they are not that for the sake of which our sexuality exists, they are not that for the sake of which everything else exists.

So if we do not value our sexuality as existing for the sake of making persons, we cannot consistently value ourselves and other human beings as being that for the sake of which everything else exists.

So the question is whether rationally conscious beings can place a value on their person-making ability, and on themselves as possessing a person-making ability, without . . . (But if I only want pleasure, I am not placing a value on myself as something with a person-making ability, I am ignoring that aspect of my sexuality and evaluating other aspects of it.) How do we evaluate our person-making ability so as to achieve our ends as rational evaluators, as beings not just with the ability to make ends-in-themselves, but with the ability to evaluate ourselves and our powers as belonging to ourselves; how do we evaluate ourselves and our abilities as belonging to ourselves in ways that do not fail to achieve the end of our ability to evaluate ourselves and our powers in conformity with our rational knowledge of what they are?

Can we consistently evaluate ourselves and our partner as beings for the sake of which everything else exists and not evaluate our sexuality as existing for the sake of producing beings for the sake of which everything else exists?

We can consistently value the machine as not existing for the sake of producing that for the sake of which everything else exists. For in so valuing the machine, we are not simultaneously placing a value on a person; we are not simultaneously evaluating a person with respect to their person-making ability.

A pencil is a means to something less than a moral absolute. If I evaluate the pencil as a means to something less than a moral absolute, I

have done no injustice to the pencil. Now the person-making machine is not itself a moral absolute. Like the pencil, it is something less than a moral absolute. Therefore, if I use the machine as a means to something less than a moral absolute, I have done no injustice to the machine. I can still consistently evaluate it, the machine, for what it is, something less than a moral absolute.

Likewise, sexuality is not a moral absolute. But it is an inseparable feature of a moral absolute and it is, in fact, a means to the existence of a moral absolute. The question is can I evaluate sexuality as something less than a means to a moral absolute without evaluating the being from which it is inseparable as something less than a moral absolute. Can I evaluate a person insofar as they have a person-making ability as thereby related to making something less than a moral absolute without valuing the thing that has the ability to make persons as something less than a moral absolute?

Thing X has a person-making ability. Can I evaluate that thing as if it were less than a means to making a moral absolute without evaluating the thing as if it itself were less than a moral absolute? The preceding sentence applies to both machines and persons. Both have the ability to make persons.

But that sentence would not make it wrong to evaluate a machine as a means to something less than a moral absolute, because it is not wrong to evaluate the machine itself as something less than a moral absolute. But that sentence would make it wrong to evaluate a person's sexuality as something less than a means to a moral absolute, because it is wrong to make the person something less than a moral absolute.

When I evaluate someone for having a food-making ability, I am evaluating them for the ability to produce something less than a moral absolute. Food is not an end-in-itself. But I do not thereby evaluate the person as something less than a moral absolute. Nor am I reducing them to being a mere means to something that is less than a moral absolute. I am evaluating them as if they were less than a means for making a moral absolute. But I am not denying that they are means to making a moral absolute; I am not reducing them to that level.

But if I evaluate her person-making ability as if it were a means to something less than a moral absolute, I am evaluating the person as if she were less than a moral absolute. For I am evaluating a means for bringing into existence a person (the means being a person with sexual ability) as if the existence of a person were not that for the sake of which the means exists.

In the case of humans, the means for bringing a moral absolute into existence is itself a moral absolute. For the means is not solely our sexuality, as if our sexuality existed separately from the rest of us. The means for bringing a moral absolute into existence is another moral absolute acting sexually. In the case of the machine, the means for bringing a moral absolute into existence is something less than a moral absolute acting asexually.

When I evaluate the machine acting asexually as less than a means to a moral absolute, I am not evaluating a moral absolute as a means to something less than a moral absolute. When I place a value on myself acting sexually and I so evaluate myself as less than a means to a moral absolute, I am evaluating a moral absolute as, at that time, less than a means to a moral absolute. So I am not evaluating myself acting sexually as existing for the sake of that for the sake of which everything else exists. So I am not

evaluating myself as that for the sake of which everything else exists.

But in the case of placing a value on the machine acting asexually as less than a means to a moral absolute, I am not evaluating the machine acting asexually as a means to that for the sake of that for the sake of which everything else exists. So whatever else I can say about the machine, I cannot say that the machine itself is that for the sake of which everything else exists.

If we evaluate a being of type F with respect to their ability to produce beings of type F, and that evaluation does not make their ability to produce beings of type F the reason for that ability's existence, then their evaluation does not make beings of type F that for the sake of which everything else exists.

But if we evaluate beings of type G with respect to their ability to produce beings of type F, and that evaluation does not make their ability to produce beings of type F the reason for that ability's existence, Now what is type F? If type F is a machine, then we have failed to evaluate machines as that for the sake of which everything else exists.

THE PERSON IS NOT AN END-IN-ITSELF IN MY EVALUATIONS

But procreation is the primary end to which I am related by what my sexuality is prior to choice. If I choose pleasure over procreation, procreation is not my personal primary end, but it remains the primary end of what I am as a sexual being. But why does that fact constitute a miscalculation of anything? I am evaluating procreation as if it were not the primary end of my sexuality; in my evaluations, it is not what it is in reality. In my evaluations, in my relating things to ends, procreation is not the primary end of my sexuality, of my sexual acts. (It may not be the end of a particular sexual act when I am infertile, but it is certainly the primary end of my sexuality.) What the relation of procreation to my sexuality is in reality is not what that relation is in my evaluations, my system of values.

In interfering with conception, I am evaluating something other than a person as the reason of my sexuality's existence, the reason of its existence for me at that time, the value of its existence for me at that time. I am evaluating my sexuality as primarily existing for something other end than producing something for the sake of which everything else is produced.

If we claim that the human person is the highest worth, must we not value sexuality primarily for its ability to bring into existence that which is of the highest worth? We value means for the ends, the effects, they can bring into existence. Sex can bring into existence pleasure and human persons, which result is of more worth? So if we do not value sex primarily for bringing human beings into existence, how can we say the human person possess the highest worth in our estimations?

And if we place a value on sex that excludes the bringing into existence of a human being, how can we say that the value of a person is an absolute value, the value of an end-in-itself, something worthy of committed love, not for its function, its ability to bring something else into existence, but for its own sake. We value things other than absolute values for what they can bring into existence. If sex is the only way to get X, but we explicitly decline to value sex for bringing X into existence for the sake of bringing something else into existence, can the existence of X be the value that measures all other values, a value that all other values must at least be consistent with?

THE VALUE WE PLACE ON SEX DETERMINES THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE

So the value we place on sexuality will inevitably determine the value we place on human life and vice versa. The way we evaluate human life has logical implications for that which causes human life, that which is the sole way of getting human life. If human life is that which is not only most valuable (a relative description) but of absolute value, then the cause of human life, the sole source of that which is of absolute value, deserves a certain kind of evaluation, a certain kind of place in our system of values. What kind? A kind determined by the following logical link: If we evaluate the necessary means for the existence of human life as a mere means to pleasure or a mere means to the production of things less than the absolute

value, we are not valuing human life as the absolute value. And if we choose to interfere with procreation, we are valuing sex, not just as having ends in addition to the end of procreation, but as merely a means to something less than the existence of an absolute value.

The value of the human species is the value of sex, the source of the species. The value we place on sex will be the value we place on that mode of existence of which sex is the source and the essential source, that mode of existence which is nothing but a product of sex; that's all human life is. It is not an accidental product of sex like, e.g., venereal disease. It is essential in the forward looking direction (from cause to effect) and in the backward looking direction. Concerning the latter, all human life is an result of sex. Maybe somewhere in the universe human life is produced in some other way, but here all is a result of sex. And artificial means would imitate sex, would have to imitate sex (a la Aristotelian art). Even test-tube babies show that our attitude toward sex is our attitude toward human life. If human life should not result from an act of giving between two persons, if sex is not the act of giving from which human life should result, human life is something that can be mechanically manipulated.

There is only one way to get a human being, through sex. If X is an absolute value, i.e., an end relative to which all other ends must be measured, then if we use the means necessary to get X while deliberately frustrating X, are we not devaluing X? If other ends are in fact not measured to their relation to X, then X is not an absolute value. And those other ends are not measured relative to X, if we can frustrate X, while using the means to X to get them.

But if there were another way to get X, we could not say we were necessarily frustrating X. But what if an artificial means to X is developed, then there is another means to get X, and we are not choosing against X, when we practice birth control. But that assumes there are not other arguments that make those artificial means immoral to use. If they are immoral on other grounds, we are back at step 1.

Contraception article: In contraception we willfully oppose (a la Grisez?) the value of our own existence; we devalue our own existence (and hence contradict ourselves a la Gewirth?). We do this because our existence is nothing but a product of sexuality. To prevent sexuality from producing human existence for the sake of some other value is to oppose the value of human existence, and hence to oppose our own value. It is to devalue human existence, and hence to devalue ourselves.

When I employ sex in a way that intends to avoid procreation, I am placing a value on my partner, even my imagined partner if the sex is autoerotic. I am using her person-making features. But I am not just putting a value other than person-making on those features and hence on her, I am trying to *suppress* those features. E.g., what she is in my values is a source of pleasure for me in a way that requires her not being a person-maker. If so, what is a person in my evaluations? A person is no longer an absolute value, by which all other values must be measured.

The existence of our partner resulted from, and solely from, a previous act(s) of valuing another person. Can we devalue our partner's ability to

make ends-in-themselves without devaluing the results of previous uses of the ability to make ends-in-themselves?

However, can we place a value on it while frustrating its value as the maker of persons, can we place a value on the other person while frustrating her value as a maker of persons, and still honor the value of a person as that for the sake of which all other values are values? And if we cannot both frustrate the value of our sexuality as the maker of persons and value persons as that for the sake of which everything else exists, we cannot value our sex partner as an end-in-itself.

Can we ethically decide that a sex act will or will not have the end of procreation? On the basis of what standard, what end, could we decide this?

What higher end could there be that could justify such a choice? Or what higher end is there that we could not achieve through another means, through abstinence, and therefore achieved without deciding that this sex act will not have the end of procreation?

Contraceptive sex: (1) cheapens the meaning of sex. It no longer has the meaning of first of all bringing into existence an end-in-itself. (2) cheapens the meaning of our existence, for it cheapens the meaning of that which the act we are engaging in otherwise would create; that which it would have existed is no longer that for the sake of which everything else exists in our estimations. For it is not even that for the sake of which the necessary means to its existence exists. (3) cheapens the meaning of the sex partner and of the lasting union between them that sex helps support, that is "based on" sex.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR SEX TO BE CONSENSUAL AMONG THE PARTNERS

The reason why even consensual extramarital sex is exploitation is that you are reducing the value of human life and so reducing the value of even the consenting partner -- and of yourself. The reason why you are reducing the value is that the value we place on sex will be the value we place on human life, and vice versa.

Mar. 24, 95

Why is extra-marital sex "dirty" or degrading? What does it degrade? It degrades the value of human life.

The pinup model who did not want to pose nude because she did not want her future children to see the pictures. Why worry if a child sees her mother nude? To be nude is to expose and give away her ability to be a mother. For her ability to be a mother is her ability to stimulate the male. And the male's ability to be a father requires his being stimulated by the female.

Pornography, casual sex, etc., trivialize our person-making ability. They do it even though, e.g., the woman in the pornography is not fertile at the time. The features of her we are trivializing are the features by which we make persons, when we can make them, the features necessary for making

children, when we can make them.

The brain is an instrument for thinking, even when we are sleeping. It still is what it is, because evolution selected it for thinking. The stomach is still an instrument for digesting, even when we are fasting. What the stomach is, its design, its nature, is an organ selected for digesting; etc.

SSR, Woman's lib, Pew, 3-19-96

"I don't want my body to be respected for its ability to carry children." Then your inevitably making your body into a sex object. "No, I want my body to be respected as belonging to a person, an end-in-herself." But you canceled the value of a person when you refused to let your body be respected as the place where *persons* come into existence and are nurtured. Once that value is rejected, reduction to being a sex object is inevitable.

Do we have the right to tell someone else: I consensual give you permission to use my person-making ability in a way that prevents the absolute value of the person from being affirmed?

USING SOMEONE'S SEXUALITY VERSUS USING THEIR OTHER FACULTIES

Nature has designed it so that human persons come into existence as a product of, so that human persons owe their existence to, the desire of one person for another person, as a product of the mutual desire of persons for each other. Nature has so designed it that a human person comes into existence as a result of another person placing a value on a third person. When one potential parent places a value on the other, he/she does not evaluate the other with respect to every feature of the other's makeup. He/she probably does not desire the other, for example, because the other has type O blood. He/she is placing a value on the other person insofar as the other is a sexual being, placing a value on the other person insofar as the other person has sexuality. (For simplicity, I will say that one person places a value on the sexuality of the other. But it must be remembered that you cannot place a value on features like having type O blood or having sexuality in abstraction from placing a value on the entity that possesses the feature, since features do not exist in abstraction from the entities that have them.)

But to place a value on sexuality is to place a value on the other person's person-making ability. So in valuing the other's sexuality the value of a person as such is involved in a way it is not involved when we value, for instance, their ability to make us laugh or to feed us. We pay people for the use of their laugh-causing ability or their food-making ability. As long as the use of their abilities is consensual, there may be no moral issue involved. But valuing another person's person-making-ability involves the value of the product of that ability, the value of that which that ability can make. And one of the things that ability can make is a moral absolute, something for the sake of which all other values exist.

And not only is an end-in-itself one of the things sexuality can make, but sexuality is necessary for the existence of ends-in-themselves. Without sexuality, no ends-in-themselves could exist. Without sexuality, nothing for the sake of which everything else exists would exist. For other values to exist, persons must exist; for persons to exist, sexuality must exist and be used in a way that allows persons to exist.

I do not deal with a person's capacities apart from the person. If I hire a comedian to give me pleasure, I am hiring him or her, not just his or her capacities. But I am hiring him or her AS a being with certain capacities. I can deal with those capacities, which are merely capacities for performing functions, according to justice. I can give money in return for making me laugh. When I do, I treat the capacity under which I am relating to the person as a capacity for making effects that are less than the existence of persons. And I am treating the person, insofar as he or she possesses that capacity, as less than a maker of something of absolute ethical value.

Children come from one person's desiring another, and so placing a value on another, as a sexual being. In marriage,

When I enter into an ordinary business or social exchange, am I denying that the other is worthy of committed love just because the act in question is not an act of complete giving of myself?

No, but in such acts, I am not using, and placing a value on, the other's person-making ability. Nor am I preventing the other's person-making ability from being that.

Using the other person's laugh-making ability does not require me to cease valuing the other person as an end-in-itself. I could be doing that, but I do not have to. However, if I use their ability to make that for the sake of which everything else exists with the intention of preventing that ability to make that for the sake of which everything else exists, what is the place of that for the sake of which everything else exists in my system of values? And if it does not have the place it deserves in my system of values, can I be valuing the other person as an end-in-itself?

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

I evaluate refraining from conceiving as a means to my happiness; I evaluate interfering with conceiving as a mean to my happiness. The second case involves more than the first. The second case involves evaluating other aspects of sexuality as means to my happiness, and only as means to my happiness, even though in themselves they are the necessary means to the existence of ends-in-themselves. So I am failing to evaluate them as what they are in a respect that is essentially, not accidentally, involved in every choice I make. Every choice I make is aimed at the well being of an existing end-in-itself, is for the sake of the well being of an existing end-in-itself. So every choice I make either honors or does not honor things as being what they are in a certain respect: as what they are with respect to being ends-in-themselves or means to the good of ends-in-themselves. But contraception involves an exclusive disjunction between valuing sex as necessary means to the existence things worthy of honor for the own sake, means without which ends-in-themselves would not exist, and valuing sex as if the necessary means to that which exists for its own sake as means to my happiness in a way that excludes its being a means for there being any ends-in-themselves at all, a means for an end-in-itself existing at all.

Sex is not just a necessary means to ends-in-themselves. Water, air, blood, etc., etc. are all necessary means to the existence of persons. But each of that latter are only accidentally connected to the existence of persons. Sex is not accidentally connected to the existence of persons. Sex is a sufficient condition and the only sufficient condition, a necessary and sufficient condition, for the existence of persons. So sex's relation to the

existence of persons is the necessary means for the existence of any moral value. Sex is the only sufficient means to the existence of moral value.

The structure of the human act is that we choose means in view of an end, and we do so on the basis of knowledge of the connection between a means and an end. So we cannot avoid placing a value on our sexuality that either does or does not value the product of sexuality, human persons, as ends-in-themselves.

Choices evaluate things by making them ends or means. (Should I make the rosary a means of deception, a means of scoring points?) Thus they either evaluate something as an end or relate it to another thing that is an end. So a choice relates things to the (other?) Ends of man. Isn't pleasure an end to which I am oriented by being what I am prior to choice? Yes, but procreation is also an end to which I am oriented prior to choice by being what I am. So I can choose the end of pleasure as long as it doesn't interfere with the end of procreation. But why can't it interfere? Aren't I *always*, in every choice, selecting between ends to which I have an inclination prior to choice? Yes, but pleasure is just an end for me; a child exists for its own sake.

Preventing the occurrence of conception because we do not want the child, makes the product of sexuality something whose value depends on whether we want her or not, i.e., whether she satisfies some other goal for us than the goal of allowing a means to an end-in-itself produce an end-in-itself. Whether she satisfies some other goal for us than the goal of the existence of an end-in-itself. If a product of sexuality has value because she is wanted, the product of sexuality is not an absolute value in our estimations. She is wanted in view of some other end, e.g., personal satisfaction for the parents. Hence she is not an end-in-herself.

Sometime in our youth, we learn two things: sexual activity can produce pleasure; sexual activity can produce human beings. Which should be more important to us? Think of parents who lose a child. They would trade all the pleasure that sex ever gave them for having their child back.

To put sexual pleasure in perspective in relation to our happiness, consider parents who have had to experience the death of a child. That child is a product of their sexuality; another product of their sexuality is pleasure. Which product is more important? Any parent who has lost a child would trade a lifetime of sexual pleasure to have that child back. That child IS the meaning of their sexuality. What children contribute to our happiness is INCOMPARABLY more than what sexual pleasure contributes to our happiness.

Sex has that link to human life not just in the sense that at certain periods of the month it can cause human life, but in the sense that its role in our lives is to make us person-producers and person-rearers. That is its role in the human species.

The fact that sexuality is what it is in order to be a means for procreation is indicated by the following. There are times when there is a better than 50/50 chance for conception to take place. We would use contraception then because sexuality is more likely to be a means to procreation than not. But

there are also times when the chances are less than 50/50 but more than 0. We would still use contraception at those times. If sexuality has the chance of producing a human being, its main purpose and meaning is as an instrument for producing human beings, since (1) our existence is more fundamental to us than any other purpose sexuality might serve and (2) the existence in question is the existence of an ethical absolute.

As teenagers, we learn two things: sexual activity can produce pleasure; sexual activity can produce human beings. What happens to the value of a person when we make sex an instrument for pleasure first, or at least separate the value of sex from the end of creating persons? We know what happens. We kill people at the beginning and end of life. Also we can see the results in the excesses of gay culture, i.e., those excesses say "For me, sex is for pleasure. I want to stay gay because it gives me pleasure."

But why should the creation of persons have so much pleasure associated with it? Because of what is needed for the upbringing, the nurturing, of a person.

Of the two things we learn as teenagers, which is more important? The production of human beings. But why is that more important? One answer would be that the preservation of the species is at stake. The same answer could be given in respect to every species: the importance of the pleasure of sex is less than that of the preservation of the species. But in the human case, is the preservation of the species the only thing that is more important than is the pleasure associated with sex? We like to think that at least two other things are more important. One is the lasting relationship between two people that is based on sexual attraction. The other is the existence, not of the species, but of individual human beings.

At one time, the latter was considered the most important of all. The human species differs from other species in that the individual, not just the species, has an importance in herself that transcends the pleasure of sex, and any other temporal value.

But why should an individual human being have such a high value? That is, why should we consider an individual human being to have such a high value? At one time, we would have given people the following reason for placing individual human beings on such a moral pedestal: A human being as a child of God or as the image and likeness of God, or as the personal dwelling place of God, has a unique relation to something whose value is unequivocally absolute and objectively so: God. That answer may not have satisfied philosophers. But for the rational man on the street who does not have philosophical scruples, it is a sufficiently clear answer to the question why she should consider each individual human being to be of absolute moral value. Our behavior may not have lived up to our concept, but at least we had a concept that made clear why our behavior should live up to it.

And so we had a reason for considering sex to be the means of the coming into existence of something of absolute moral value greater than which there could be no value short of God. That was the most important value of sex. The second most important value of sex was the lasting relation it formed. For two reasons.

First, the lasting relation was necessary for the just upbringing of the entity of absolute moral value that sex produces. Second, the lasting relation gave each of the partners the committed love that, as entities of absolute moral value, they each deserved.

Rather, the value we put on life is the value we put on our sexuality. Just when our knowledge of the genetic code taught us about human life, the sexual revolution occurred. The latter determined the value we put on life. That value is what we evaluate human life to be, that is, we evaluate it to be the existence of some mature characteristics. But in so doing, we are evaluating those characteristics relative to our ends, not the ends the being with those characteristics has the future potential for.

Jun. 11, 96

Can love affirm the value of the loved as an ethical absolute value, if the love is not open to allowing our mutual love, our unifying love, to make our unity the cause of another ethical absolute? (What is the cause of an ethical absolute? The union of two other ethical absolutes; not just two other persons, but the the loving union of two other persons.) -- if we are not open to letting our unity produce another ethical absolute? Mar. 2, 96

And see Notes2, SSR, of this date. The structure of the human act is that we choose means in view of an end, and we do so on the basis of knowledge of the connection between a means and an end. So we cannot avoid placing a value on our sexuality that either does or does not value the product of sexuality, human persons, as ends-in-themselves. So this is one of those areas where we cannot avoid evaluating a thing to either be or not be what it is, i.e., cannot avoid "treating" things as if they are or are not what they are. (We can say we "evaluate" human persons a certain way in deciding for sex; can we say we "treat" them as if they are not what they are? We can't treat a nonexistent one way or the other, but we can treat ourselves and our sex partner as if we are not what we are, ends-in-ourselves.)

But why is it "higher"? I must be evaluating something as if it were not what it is. Refraining from sex for other purposes cannot be intrinsically evil, since most adults are doing just that for most of their waking hours.

Accidental birth control would deprive me of an end, but not in a moral sense.

Intentional birth control deprives me of an end as a rational person. But it does so because I have failed to choose correctly.

ethics, 12-10-92

example of the great mouthpiece using the rosary to deceive. There are two misevaluations here; deception is only one of them. Using a sacred symbol for deception is an evil even though no further harm is being done to the people being deceived.

What if I use the rosary, not just for another purpose, but in a way that contravenes its purpose? What place does that purpose have in the values of the user? I can use it for other purposes as long as, in doing so, I do not contravene, I do not act against, I do not fail to honor, its religious purpose.

What if the great mouthpiece had tried to get Yankee fans on the jury instead of Catholics, and then let a season's ticket to the Yankees fall out of his pocket instead of a rosary?

Ethics, Sexuality, Contraception, 8/ 1/94

Or consider this paragraph on birth control from elsewhere in the notes files:

We cannot use our person-making power outside of a context in which we leave the use of that power open to making persons. Nature may close the context so that persons cannot be made, but we cannot. This illustrates the sense in which we are responsible for our actions, not for their results. Or better, the sense in which ethics governs good or evil actions, regardless of results. The action in question is the act of the will. Just as it is against the goal of the rational appetite to evaluate ourselves to be agents oriented to our own destruction, and to the cessation of our orientation to ends, it is against the nature of the rational appetite to evaluate ourselves to be agents oriented to the preventing our person-making power from making persons.

The knowledge that directs my action cannot be the knowledge that act X will cause a posited sex act to be infertile, i.e., to achieve the end of being free from children. But I can use the knowledge that nature will cause a posited sex act to be infertile as the knowledge that directs my choice of whether or not to have sex.

If people are not nothing-but products of sexuality, because God infuses the soul directly, then the argument holds a fortiori.

Sex is responsible for producing many values, many ends. But one of the things sex produces, and only one, is an absolute value, an end-in-itself. Whatever the other results of sex are, they are relative values, not absolute values. And they are values *for* already existing persons, not for another person sex could bring into existence. But these relative values for already existing persons, values that are not ends-in-themselves for already existing persons, exist primarily for the end of the existence of something that will be an end-in-itself for other persons.

In other words, nature designed it so that the existence of new ends-in-themselves would result from the satisfaction of desires on the part of already existing persons, desires aimed at things that are goods relative to already existing persons. Nature designed the following situation: there exist in us desires for things good because they bring us satisfaction of those desires; nature designed the existence of those desires in us for the sake of bringing into existence something other than the satisfaction of those desires, and something not just in addition to the satisfaction of those desires but something that, contrary to those other goods, is something for the sake of which all other values exist.

The existence of the potential parent is of equal value to the existence of the potential child. But the existence of a relative part of the potential parent's well being, a nonnecessary means to the parents well being, is not as important as the existence of another person itself. And the existence of a nonnecessary means to a part of my well being is not as important as the existence of a necessary means to the existence of an absolute good.

Since sex is the only example we have of something that is the only means to something that is the only absolute value, it is difficult to find analogies. But since all arguments from analogy are imperfect, it is not

impossible to find an analogy, that like all analogies, is good up to a point.

Sex has that link to human life not just in the sense that at certain periods of the month it can cause human life, but in the sense that its role in our lives is to make us person-producers and person-rearers. That is its role in the human species.

The greater cannot come from the lesser. If I treat a person under the aspect of a-sexual-being the way I treat a person under the aspect of a-being-who- can-perform-function-X, I am treating a procreator as a thing maker, as an agent with a capacity for making things. A person (the higher) does not come from a mere capacity for making things.

Human life is the product of an act of animal passion. What then is the value of human life?

Human life is the product of committed love between persons. What then is the value of human life?

The prohibition of birth control is like the moral prohibition against taking someone's life. That is, we are not always obligated to do something positive to save a life; similarly, we are not always obligated to perform an act that will produce a baby. And we are always obligated never to do something positive with the intention of taking a life; similarly, we are obligated never to do something positive with the intention of preventing the production of a baby.

It seems that in both of the above cases it is the value of a human person as a moral absolute, as an end-in-itself that is at stake. That is, the same status of a person as an end-in-itself prohibits positive action for the end of taking a life or of preventing a life, but does not prohibit refraining from an act that will save a life or that will produce a life.

(But is it the case that we can never refrain from an act with the intention of someone's dying as a result, but can refrain from an act with the intention of someone's not coming into existence as a result? If so, the difference between these cases must be explained.)

And not only is an end-in-itself one of the things sexuality can make, but sexuality is necessary for the existence of ends-in-themselves. Without sexuality, no ends-in-themselves could exist. Without sexuality, nothing for the sake of which everything else exists would exist. For other values to exist, persons must exist; for persons to exist, sexuality must exist and be used in a way that allows persons to exist.

If only animals existed and not persons, all values would be relative to the arbitrary subjective desires of animals (if we prevent conception, sex is an arbitrary subjective desire, and we are products of arbitrary subjective desires).

For we have no aspiration or ability to produce anything more glorious and wonderful than what an animal can produce.

Feb. 8, 95

Human life comes from an act of love between persons. The meaning, the value, of human life is that of the committed love of one person for another, from which life comes.

In marriage, human life comes from one person's complete giving of him/herself to another person. The meaning of that coming into existence is one person's believe that another is worthy of his/her complete giving of him/herself. Anything less than that, and we are not evaluating another to be worthy of complete giving of ourselves. We are not evaluating the other to be that, but are we denying it? When I enter into an ordinary business or social exchange, am I denying that the other is worthy of committed love just because the act in question is not an act of complete giving of myself?

No, but in such acts, I am not using, and placing a value on, the other's person-making ability.

Children come from, are the direct result of, valuing another person, placing a value on another person. If the valuing of another person from which children come is not that of valuing her as object of committed love, if persons come from placing a value on other persons, but not placing a value on them as worthy of committed love, then ...

What brings persons into existence is a love of some kind, a desire of some kind. So what brings persons into existence is a valuing of some kind of another person, a placing a value of some kind on another person, an evaluation of some kind of another person. Persons are the direct result of a valuing of some kind, of a placing of value of some kind. If the valuing from which persons result is not an affirmation of the person as worthy of committed love, a recognition of a person's deserving of committed love, can we consistently judge the result of that valuing as something worthy of committed love?

The meaning of a child's existence is that of being worthy of committed love for their own sake. Persons are worthy of evaluation as objects of committed love for their own sake. If the evaluation of another person that brings children into existence is not evaluation of her as an object of committed love for her own sake, ... If the love for a person that brings children into existence is not love for a person as a being worthy of committed love for her own sake, ... then is the existence of that which results from this valuation, the existence of that which results from this love, the existence of something worthy of evaluation as an object of committed love, then is the existence that this love produces the existence of a being worthy of committed love for its own sake?

Nature has designed it so that things for the sake of which everything else exist result from a desire for a union between two persons. The first effect of that desire, that valuing, that love, is a union between two persons, the second effect is the existence of a new person. That second effect is something worthy of committed love for its own sake, something worthy of evaluation as an object of committed desire.

Jun. 12, 95

Society requires that sex be confined to relationships of committed love. That means that the meaning of sex is giving love to another being, sharing

life with another being, who is worthy of committed love for their own sake, i.e., a person. And since sex is also the way we share existence itself with beings worthy of committed love for their own sake, we cannot frustrate the latter function of sex without contradicting its meaning of being a relation to a being worthy of love for her or his own sake.

Artificial insemination, in vitro insemination, surrogate motherhood, Jul. 4, 95

If we are responsible for the existence of a being worthy of committed love, we are responsible for giving it committed love. Who else would be responsible if we are not? To assign that responsibility to someone else is to confuse personal value with functional value. For replacability is the ethic of functional value.

Another point: the value we place on human life is the value we place on sex. Note that in this formula, the value of human life comes first. So if we put an absolute value on human life, it follows that we have the attitude that sex is a vehicle for committed love. And therefore, if we do not view sex as a vehicle for committed love, we cannot put an absolute value on human life.

Test-tube babies: the giving of existence is not an act of love in which two people give each other their life-sharing power.

Evolution selected sex as a means of getting you, the parent, into a lifetime personal relation with your child. Your action causes you to get into such a relation. But more, your action, your pleasure, causes another person, the other parent, to get into the same kind of relation. By mutually agreeing to practice birth control, you cannot change the fact that the pleasure you are experiencing was designed to do the above, has an essential relation to the above. I can choose to let the other party use my person-making power, but cannot choose that it cease to be a person-making power, or parent-making power

We want to try out someone's cooking before selecting them as a mate. But trying out their sex changes the meaning of sex in marriage and weakens its contribution to the success of the marriage. In fact, it changes the meaning of marriage itself.

SSR, Ethics, P&CG, Abortion, Aug. 31, 94

If our use of the life faculty is not based on committed love, then human life is not (cannot be) the object of committed love, be something worthy of committed love for its own sake.

Just as our faculties of desire include an ability to make moral absolutes, our faculties of desire include an ability to commit ourselves to love another person for their own sake. And just as we cannot consistently value persons as ends-in-themselves while using our person-making ability in a way that contravenes the making of persons, so also we cannot consistently value persons as worthy of committed love if we use our person-making ability

in a context in which our ability to have committed love for our partner is contravened.

A child is worthy of committed love. Therefore, she should be brought into existence through committed love, and it is an injustice to her if she is not.

SSR, Ethics, Oct. 23, 94

In something I read recently, Gore Vidal was quoted as saying that making another person into a (sexual) object was joy, and as long as it was consensual on the part of the other person, it was all right. But one can hardly call marriage make another person into an object. In marriage, one gives one's body to the other permanently, completely. That is hardly making an object out of the other. Nor is it giving the other permission to make an object out of you.

Sex is too essentially and uniquely connected with human life for sex not to be part of a permanent sharing of life with another. If we use sex outside of such a permanent sharing, we are diminishing the value of human life, because human life is so essentially connected with sex.

As of now, when sex is the only means, the relationship of one partner to the other fully values the other partner as an end-in-itself if and only if we subordinate that relationship to the purpose of procreation. But if we create an artificial means of procreation, our nature, our psychology, does not change. Given that we are the same, can we still fully value ourselves, our partner, etc. as ends-in-themselves, if we use our sexuality in a way contrary to the purpose of procreation? If we use the power that brought us into existence, to which we owe all the value our existence has, in a way contrary to the purpose of bringing that kind of value into existence?

Nature has chosen that human life would come into existence as a result of the physical desire of one person for the pleasure that another person's body can give. If so, how can the value of human life not be merely that of an accidental product of a purely physical desire? Human life can have the dignity it deserves and needs only if the use of sexual desire is made part of a relation of committed love and committed self-giving of each other's bodies between those who will create human life through their desire.

They also have sufficient rational knowledge to recognize that for them to deliberately produce persons by a machine would be an injustice to the person produced; for it would be depriving the person produced of having an existence whose meaning was that of the committed love of two ends-in-themselves for each other.

It is an injustice to the child in another way. It is saying to the child that the meaning of her sexuality is not the existence of that for the sake of which everything else exists, and therefore implicitly saying to the child that she is not something for the sake of which everything else exists.

But what about infertile couples? We have a choice between looking for artificial means or looking for ways to make their person-making ability work.

(We would be depriving them of something that has value for them because they want it, especially if adoption was available.)

And what if we don't replace sexuality with a machine but produce children in both ways? That is, we say that we should never interfere with

our person-making ability but we can at the same time produce children in other ways.

Human life can have the dignity it deserves only if the desire to have children, only if our wanting of children, is integrated with an evaluation of children as being that for the sake of which everything else exists, and not just as being things that we desire. The test-tube baby's life belongs to it, not to us. Immediately it has the right to other things than just care. It has the right to more than just having tasks performed for it that it cannot perform itself. It has the right to be loved as a unique, irreplaceable instance something for the sake of which everything else exists. It has the right to learn from the love of others that it is an end-in-itself and, therefore, something worthy of committed love for its own sake.

And it has the right to learn that the meaning of its sexuality is that of a person-making ability and a permanent commitment ability.

Also, in certain contexts, the act that brings a human person into existence is an act of committed love and complete self-giving. For

outside of the context of committed love, where outside has a privative, not just negative, meaning: it is to exercise the power to make persons

Is the product worthy of committed love?

Of course, it is the parent's fault, not the child's. But we are saying that

We view a bastard as a product of a defective cause, something ill-conceived, something misbetgotten, a lemon, a botch, a dud, a flop.

Children deserve to be brought up in an environment of a loving relationship between their natural parents, so that they learn without being told it, that the meaning of their existence as persons is love between persons, the self-giving of one person to another. That is where their existence comes from. So they learn the dignity of themselves and other human beings as persons, because persons are beings worth another person's giving their whole life to.

Ethics, P&CG, SSR, G and L, Personal versus functional, January 10, 1994

The de-personalizing of the parental relation, ie., the parent is not obligated to give personal love, as long as someone does, turns personal relations into functional ones, gives personal relations the attributes of functional ones. The characteristic of functional relations in contrast to personal is their interchangeability. Someone else can do the job you are valued for. So your value is not unique. Likewise, who ever is responsible for giving you love can be replaced; the job is interchangeable; the parent does not have unique, irreplaceable relation with you. But it is such relations that give the person its unique value.

Also, my relationship to one of my children is describable as "for better or worse, until death do us part." E.g., if a child develops a debilitating illness, the parent is responsible for caring for her. But my marriage partner is responsible for my having children, so she is responsible, along with me, for my having this life-long, for-better-or-worse relationship. The only just thing for marriage partners to do, therefore, is commit themselves to each other, to their mutual support in bringing up their

children, in a life-long, for-better-or-worse relationship.

Pew, SSR, Sex, 1-10-97

A child is worthy of committed love. Therefore, she should be brought into existence through committed love, and it is an injustice to her if she is not. And it is an injustice if we use our person-making power for less than committed love, thereby weakening the institution that can create and nurture the child with committed love.

Nov. 7, 95

Morality governs behavior toward persons. But the source of the behavior is also a person, and so the source of the behavior must respect her own personhood. I cannot acknowledge the value in another's personhood without implicitly acknowledging the value in my personhood, a value that binds me as much as the other person's value binds me. For if I do not respect that value in myself, I implicitly disrespect it in the other. If I do not respect the value of personhood in myself, I imply that personhood anywhere does not have a value that I am defective if I do not recognize.

In the phrase "another person," as used in the claim that morality concerns behavior toward another person, it is the word "person" not "another" that has the moral significance.

When we use our sexuality, we are not just using our life producing power, but our life caring-for power, our life nurturing power, and really our life affirming power; for the family is where our value as worthy of committed love is recognized, i.e., is made concrete and actual.

Dear Jim,

Here are some possible ways to strengthen that birth control argument I sent you.

First, I think my reference to sex as the necessary means for generating ends-in-themselves is irrelevant. As long as something is, prior to our intervention, a means for making persons, we cannot use that means for another end in a way that requires us to frustrate the end of making a person, unless a person is something less than that for the sake of which everything else exists, in our system of values.

Assume that we discover on another planet an unconscious machine that can produce human persons, a machine that was itself only an accidental product of unconscious causal forces. Regarding such a machine, it would be possible to invoke the person's character as an end-in-itself to argue that it would be immoral to use the machine for any other purpose while frustrating its ability to produce persons.

Now take the case of a machine for making persons that is the product of human art. Once that machine exists, there would only be three moral possibilities. We could use it without interfering with its ability to make persons. Like our sexuality, we could refrain from using it. Unlike our sexuality, we could alter the machine so that it was no longer a person-making instrument.

But would the last possibility really be moral? That is, if it is immoral to sterilize ourselves, why would sterilizing the machine be moral? My argument does *not* depend on having a good answer to this question. If there is no moral distinction, then only the first two possibilities mentioned in the preceding paragraph are genuine moral possibilities.

Here is a suggestion, however, for saving the morality of sterilizing the machine, but not of sterilizing ourselves. As a work of art, the parts of the machine are all accidentally connected to one another. For example, it is accidental to the metal making up gear A that it happens to be spatially juxtaposed to gear B.

The same is not true for all the parts of living things. It is not accidental to a thing with heart that it is also a thing with a liver. If it did not have a liver, it would not need a heart, and vice versa. The reason such juxtapositions are not accidental in living things is that our DNA constitutes a design calling for a certain kind of development. That design constitutes a standard for judging development. It is not a misfortune if a chimp does not develop enough intelligence to multiply and divide; it is a misfortune if a human child does not so develop. In each case there is an objective standard for saying what is a misfortune and what is not.

Since an existing person is an end-in-itself, altering the makeup of a person is not morally insignificant as altering the makeup of a work of art, which is not an end-in-itself, would be. Possibly, this line of thought could lead to a justification for sterilizing the machine that would not justify human sterilization. But, again, my argument does not depend on this

possibility.

You also raised the issue that we have no obligation to merely potential persons. I assume that in the background is something like the common belief that morality only concerns our relations to other persons; where other persons are not affected by a decision, the decision could not be immoral. I disagree with that belief and in a moment will briefly state why.

But even if true, that belief would not undercut my argument. For if sound my argument implies that we cannot consistently value our person-making ability in a way that excludes the making of persons and also value persons, actual existing persons, as things for the sake of which everything else exists. For if persons are that for the sake of which everything else exists, then a means for making persons must exist for that sake.

The first thing that we owe another person (and ourselves) is a certain place in our system of values, a certain kind of evaluation through our evaluating faculty, the will. And we owe them that place because they are persons. But we cannot consistently give them that evaluation and at the same time evaluate a person-making ability as existing for the sake of something that prevents it from making persons, since persons are that for the sake of which everything else exists.

But even if birth control did not imply a misevaluation of existing persons, my argument would make birth control immoral. The physical good or evil associated with an action are external to the will; what makes an action morally good or evil is the relation of the will to that physical good or evil. In other words, moral good and evil reside in the act of the will, the decision.

If so moral good or evil must consist in the achievement or failure to achieve some end to which we are oriented through our decision-making power, the will. Moral evil consists of a certain kind of defective decision. The defect must be measured by some goal to which our ability to make decisions is oriented prior to our making decisions. Whatever that end is, deciding to treat another person unjustly violates that end, but it may also violate the same end to misevaluate ourselves or our powers with respect to their relation to the kind of thing for the sake of which everything else exists. If so misevaluating ourselves or our powers would be *morally* defective for the same reason that deciding to treat another person unjustly would be, even though no physical evil was done to an existing person.

To understand what that end is, I think we have to go into what I call "The Things Aquinas Forgot to Tell Us about His Ethics," conclusions that follow from his metaphysics and that are necessary to make his (or anybody's) ethic work, but which Aquinas did not explicitly draw.

Our decision-making power is a rational appetite. As an appetite it places values on things (or states of affairs, or actions) by valuing them as ends or as means to ends. As rational, it makes use of our rational knowledge of what things are to evaluate them as ends or means to ends. In evaluating things that are known by reason, we can either evaluate them as if they are what we rationally know them to be or evaluate them as if they were

not what we rationally know them to be. For our decisions can treat things as if they are what we know them to be or as if they were not what we know them to be.

For example, assume that we have freedom of choice. Then, the ends by which I value everything else are my ends because I have chosen them to be my ends. But the ends by which another person evaluates everything else are just as much due to her choice as my ends are to my choice. In this sense, free persons are ends-in-themselves; they cannot avoid being responsible for having whatever ends give other things whatever value they have in a person's system of values.

But I can treat you as if your ends (and means) did not have just as much value to you as my ends and means have to me. And I can knowingly treat you this way. If so, I am treating you as if you were not an end-in-itself in the same way that I am an end-in-itself. And if I so treat you as a result of a decision made with the use of rational knowledge, my rational appetite is not achieving the goal of evaluating you to be that which reason knows you to be.

I claim that my decision making power has that goal just as much as my faculty of belief has the end of judging you to be what you in fact are. And so, just as an act of my faculty of belief is necessarily and unavoidably defective if it judges you to be other than what you are, an act of my faculty of making decisions is non-hypothetically defective if it evaluates you to be other than what reason knows you to be. For my decision-making faculty is a rational appetite.

That defect is what specifically *moral* evil consists of, whether another person is affected by my decision or not. And if I evaluate a person, even in the abstract, to be other than that for the sake of which my concrete person-making power exists, I am failing to evaluate a person to be that for the sake of which everything else exists. So my decision fails to achieve the goal of evaluating the person to be that which reason knows it to be.

I know I'm taking a lot of your time, but I'd like shift gears to show you some other connections my argument about birth control has.

I think the argument shows that the value we place on sexuality will inevitably determine the value we place on life, and vice versa. That logical link shows that it was not a mere sociological fact that the sexual revolution resulted in a devaluation of human life. The value society places on sex results in abortion, in encouraging youth to behave in ways that will spread lethal disease, no matter how "safe" our practices are, and in making euthanasia an obligation, since birth control deprives us of enough young to take care of our old, while still maintaining our materialistic lifestyle. These phenomena are not accidentally connected to the value we place on sex; they are logical consequences of the place human life has in our system of values, given the place our means of producing human life has in our system of values.

My argument also shows why it is not just prudishness to consider

pornography "dirty." The value of the human person is degraded, if sex is valued as a mere means to something less than human existence; for then the person is no longer that for which everything else exists.

I would suggest that the argument can even explain why pornography and other forms of abuse of women have increased simultaneously with the growth of the woman's liberation movement. In its radical forms, feminism says, in effect, "We don't want to be valued just for our ability to make persons; we want to be valued *equally* for our ability to perform functions, tasks. But the value of persons transcends their ability to perform functions as the absolute transcends the relative. So the ability to perform functions cannot be placed on a par with the ability to make persons without implicitly reducing the place of the person in our system of values.

But if the woman's person-making ability is disconnected from its relation to an ethical absolute, since that which was formerly absolute is no longer absolute, a different value will inevitably be placed on women's sexuality. It will be valued for the relative goods it can provide, and women will inevitably tend to become sex objects. So the results of radical feminism will be in direct contradiction to its intentions.

Another way to put it. Radical feminism says, in effect, "We don't want our bodies valued for their ability to make babies. We want our bodies valued as belonging to already existing things, ourselves, who, because we are persons, are that for the sake of which everything else exists." But they implicitly cancel the value of the person, and hence their own value, when they declined to have their bodies respected as the place where persons come into existence and are nurtured. Once the value of the person is implicitly canceled, there is nothing to prevent the reduction of their person-making ability to the state of a pleasure-making ability in our system of values.

In this regard, it is worth noting the difference in the roles of men and women in the making of persons with respect to the person of the opposite sex being an object of evaluation. The desires of the man have to be aroused by the sexuality of the woman for human conception to take place; the corresponding desires of the woman do not have to be aroused. So nature has, for good reason, made it easier for a woman to become a sex object for a man than vice versa. And so nature has, for good reason, designed us so that there is more danger of a man *reducing* a woman to being a sex object than vice versa.

Feminists think they are taking account of this difference in correctly opposing pornography. But their only protection against being reduced to sex objects is respect for their value as persons. And they implicitly deny the morally absolute value of the person, when they ask for their performance of functions to be valued on a par with the personal relationship of motherhood.

My argument also explains why consent between adults is not sufficient to justify my making use of a person's sexuality, while it is sufficient to justify my making use of other faculties the person possesses. When I place a value on a person as, for example, a food maker, the way I ensure that I simultaneously treat her as an end-in-itself is by asking her consent and/or

by paying a price that is fair relative to the value of the food I get from her. Why doesn't using another person's sexuality work the same way?

If a person freely chooses to sell me the use of her sexuality, why isn't that just like her freely choosing to sell me the use of her food-making ability?

Outtakes from contra, started May 21, 1998

contra outtakes

Even when we are infertile, temporarily or permanently, to conform to what reason knows about human sexuality, a rational appetite must value everything else associated with sex as existing for the sake of making persons. Our cognitive faculties are what they are primarily for the sake of giving us knowledge of truth even when we are unconscious and so cannot exercise the ability to know truth. Our cognitive faculties do not entirely cease being what they are when we are unconscious, and the primary reason why they are what they are at that time is knowledge of truth. The existence of the first rational beings may have been an accidental product of blind forces of nature, but even if reason was selected for reproduction because, at some time in our evolution, it contributed something other than knowledge of truth to our survival, reason itself is not blind. And by reason itself we can recognize that it is rational knowledge of truth that makes us ends-in-themselves and that, therefore, what reason is deserves to be valued, even when it is not functional, primarily for being that which makes persons absolute values.

For persons do not cease being absolute values when reason is not functional.

When we judge brain damage, of any kind, to be a misfortune, by what standard do we judge it to be a misfortune? By the standard of whatever goal the damaged part of the brain could formerly achieve that it can no longer achieve. By implication, then, we are saying that, other things being equal, we should value what that part of the brain is in terms of what it formerly could contribute. Other things might not always be equal; something that is a disadvantage from one point of view might turn out to be an advantage from another point of view. But if the value in question is an absolute value, or a necessary condition for an absolute value, other things can never be equal.

Likewise reason knows that, even though someone is infertile, to the extent she can perform sexual functions at all, what the features that constitute human sexuality are deserve to be valued as existing primarily for the sake of the coming to be of new persons. Even when we become naturally infertile, as at menopause, the primary reason that the faculties we continue to have exist at all is so that, at another period of our life, we could make beings of absolute moral value. If we refuse to value human sexuality in this way, persons are not, in our evaluations, that for the sake of which everything else exists.

Compare the following cases. One infertile couple only completes the sex act vaginally, because, in their estimations, the other values associated with human sexuality must always be what they are, in our evaluations, primarily for the sake of being a person-making ability. For the reason sexuality exists at all in human beings is for the sake of a value that must always be the value to which other values are subordinated in our evaluations. Another infertile couple, knowing that their sexuality cannot produce persons, practices sex in a way in which it would be impossible to make persons even if they were fertile. The act by which they express their love is not the same act by which children come about, when couples are fertile. Should we say that they have not evaluated persons to be less than

absolute values, since the means they are using to achieve other goals is not in fact a person-making ability? The primary reason why their sexuality exists at all is so that human beings can make other human beings at certain times in their lives. Since the existence of human beings is the existence of that for the sake of which everything else exists, the primary reason why our sexuality exists at all is for the existence of human persons. If we fail to evaluate our sexuality as if the primary reason it exists is for the sake of the existence of persons, we are failing to evaluate persons as that for the sake of which everything else exists. And if we so evaluate our sexuality that the way we use it would make the coming to be of a person impossible, we are failing to evaluate our sexuality as if the primary reason it is what it is is for the existence of persons.