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DISCUSSION: *HUMANAE VITAE* AND THE ECOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

I. ON PROFESSOR CONNELL'S ECOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

William R. ALBURY

Professor R. J. Connell has offered in this journal¹ a lucid defense of the position that the use of artificial contraceptive techniques is immoral under all circumstances. This argument he has presented "within the domain of philosophy,"² upon an empirical groundwork, and with such care and elaboration as to presuppose "little philosophical background" in his readers — this last in the hope of reaching "some of the non-professionals."³ In view of Professor Connell's intentions, then, I hope it will not be thought inappropriate for me to submit the following observations, even though I am not a member of the Catholic Church nor a professional philosopher. Commensurate with my limitations, I shall be concerned only with the adequacy of Professor Connell's "natural arguments,"⁴ and would not be interpreted as casting any reflections upon the tenets of Faith.

Much of the force of Professor Connell's argument is derived from his interpretation of the teachings of ecology, a science which men have for too long neglected to their own detriment. But I wish to suggest that important elements of Professor Connell's position are undermined by that very science. In his discussion of indetermination in natural goal-directed activity, Professor Connell adduces the example of the reproduction of plants. "Seeds," he says, "are for reproduction."⁵ Now this may be true from the point of view, so to speak, of the plant which produces the seeds; but if there is one thing which ecology teaches above all else, it is that such a point of view cannot legitimately be taken in isolation. The ecosystem must be regarded as an organic whole. Thus, while the oak

¹ R. J. CONNELL, "A Defense of '*Humanae Vitae*,'" *Laval théologique et philosophique*, février 1970, Vol. XXVI, N° 1, 57-87.

² *Ibid.*, 57.

³ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

tree (for example) produces hundreds of acorns, only *some* are for reproduction ; others are necessary for the nourishment of squirrels and other fauna ; still others — falling where they will not germinate — decay, feeding insects and contributing to the soil. Nothing is lost in nature, no process frustrated ; all things are continually transformed and “recycled.”

It is difficult, then, to see how one could hold that “goal-direction belongs to seeds in a general way.”⁶ It is not the successful germination of some of its seeds which causes the tree to stop producing them, but rather its internal constitution modified by climatic conditions. Nor could one assert that reproduction is the general goal of the seeds on the ground that seeds are *necessary* for reproduction ; because they are equally necessary to certain animals as a source of food. Thus one would be forced to say that the seeds have two contrary general goals at the same time : to germinate and to be destroyed (eaten). And as for the built-in pattern, or organization, of the seeds themselves, all that one can say is that seeds are admirably suited to germinate under one set of conditions, to nourish the fauna under another set, and to enrich the soil under a third. Thus we may learn much about the economy of nature, and about the wisdom of its Creator, but we may not identify germination as the general goal of seeds on the basis of their organization.

Now it is possible that one would wish to argue that the goal of the seeds is not reproduction simply, but rather the maintenance of the species in balance with the ecological community. Thus, some seeds must germinate, but others must not, in order that there may not be too many saplings in competition for the available sunlight, rainfall, soil nutrients, etc. Furthermore, some seeds must nourish other members of the ecosystem, in order to preserve them in the overall balance. Such an argument, clearly, also encompasses the determinate form of goal-directed activity in nature (such as egg-laying, nest-building, etc.) which contributes to the survival of the species ; for the survival of the species in all cases must be understood as survival within the balance of the ecological community, not as unrestrained multiplication.

To this more sophisticated argument it is necessary to reply that **while nature** strives, as it were, to maintain an ecological balance, it is indifferent as to what elements make up that balance. If sheep ranchers (to use one of Professor Connell's examples⁷) kill all the coyotes in their region and consequently find rodents devouring their pastures, they are no doubt inclined to believe that things are out of balance. But the contrary is true : a new balance has been established, one which threatens the ranchers' livelihood. Similarly, when the rodents are poisoned and the returning coyotes begin preying on sheep, there is no lack of balance. The problem lies in the fact that the ranchers find the new balance inhospitable. In general, then, if a species disappears, for whatever reason, there may be a temporary dislocation, but sooner or later a new ecological balance will be established.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

And this new balance, from the point of view of nature, is neither better nor worse than the old one ; although from the point of view of men it may be disastrous.

To put things simply, man is the measure of the value of nature. This is a proposition upon which both the conservationist and the strip-miner agree. Where they disagree is on the question of what constitutes the more valuable use of nature by man : the strip-miner feels that wilderness has no human value, while the conservationist — whose view Professor Connell and I share — recognizes an immense value to man therein. Now since the value of nature is man-imposed, there is no moral significance in the present balance of nature except as it relates to man's welfare. Interference with nature, then, has no moral significance in itself ; what is morally important is whether the consequences of that interference, on the basis of current knowledge, may be expected to be beneficial or harmful to human welfare, broadly conceived. Furthermore, man has a moral obligation to increase his knowledge of ecology, in order that he may more responsibly use nature to his advantage. Thus I would agree with Professor Connell that man's "interventions in the realm of nature must be cautious and illuminated by more than a superficial knowledge of the relationships that exist between man, animals, plants, and the environment."⁸ But I would not agree that the environmental *status quo* has value in itself and that any alteration is in principle immoral.

When we say that man cannot remake nature, that he must come to terms with it, we mean that he cannot take an action and expect to avoid the natural consequences of that act. This is not the same as saying that he cannot take any action at all. Our present deficiency of knowledge is such that the consequences of any large-scale alteration of the ecological balance are likely to be disastrous to human welfare in the long run if not immediately ; and it is conceivable that we may never understand the mechanisms of nature sufficiently to be able to undertake a large-scale alteration in reasonable safety. Nevertheless, the ethical principle remains that if any intervention in the natural order were possible such that benefits would accrue to mankind which were commensurate with the undertaking, and such that the danger to human welfare, in its broadest sense, would be negligible, both immediately and in the long run, then that intervention would be moral.

Now one should not dismiss the preceding principle as merely academic ; for while our ignorance is presently so vast that no large-scale, and scarcely any medium-scale, interference with nature seems wise ; nevertheless we do know enough to allow us to engage in small-scale interventions. Thus, although the sheep rancher may not safely exterminate all the coyotes in his district, he may, in all ecological good-conscience, shoot the one that invades his sheep-fold. And this last point brings us, finally, to the question of contraception, which is, after all, the central issue of Professor Connell's paper.

The goal of marriage, Professor Connell and I agree, is to raise mature, emotionally-stable, young adults who are capable of self-direction and who recognize the ethical primacy of the welfare of the communities to which they belong.

⁸ *Ibid.*

This is not to say that all who enter matrimony do so with this goal in view — but this is clearly the social goal, the goal for which marriage as an institution of society exists. Further, Professor Connell and I recognize that this goal imposes certain limitations on family size, due partly to the scarcity of physical goods, but more importantly to the emotional and moral requirements of child-rearing. “Without the sound mental and moral formation which mature self-direction requires, the fullness of human existence is not realized ; indeed, in such an absence it were better (for normal people) not to have lived at all.”⁹ It goes without saying, then, that the physical and emotional health of the parents must be preserved in order that the goal of marriage not be frustrated, for these two factors exercise an enormous influence upon the child.

The first and most important place in a list of environmental factors influencing character development must be assigned to the home When the home smiles upon the young child, all the world is bright ; when it frowns, all is dark. Parental harmony and discord cast their spell upon him before he understands scarcely any of the words spoken around him¹⁰.

It is important to note the reference to parental harmony and discord in the passage just quoted ; for in his discussion of marital love and the pleasures of coitus¹¹, Professor Connell does not acknowledge the crucial relationship which holds between the mutual love of husband and wife which is fostered and deepened by sexual relations, and the harmony of the home environment in which the child is raised. Professor Connell rightly dismisses marital love as an independent end in itself, but he seems to view it, like coital pleasure, as merely an incentive toward conception with no bearing upon the ultimate goal of marriage.

Just as the tree's production of seeds is essential both for reproduction and for the nourishment of fauna, so too is coitus necessary both for conception and for the nourishment of that special love between husband and wife. The pleasure of coitus serves as an incentive toward both of these results ; and both of these results play a role in the realization of the goal of marriage. This dual contribution to a single end is not a unique feature of coitus, as is shown by the following relevant example.

In mammals the primary organs of reproduction known as the gonads (testes in the male and ovaries in the female) are essentially dual purpose organs of both external and internal secretion. The testes produce spermatazoa and the androgenic hormones (mainly testosterone) which induce and maintain the attributes of maleness. The ovaries produce ova and the oestrogenic and progestational hormones, mainly oestradiol and progesterone, which are con-

⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁰ Vernon JONES, “Character Development in Children — An Objective Approach”, in Leonard Carmichael, ed., *Manual of Child Psychology* (New York : John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1946), 725.

¹¹ CONNELL, *op. cit.*, 77 ff.

cerned with the development and maintenance of the attributes of femaleness, including sexual receptivity and the inception of pregnancy¹².

The gonads, then, have two distinct functions which both contribute to conception ; the one (external secretion) by producing the cells which may unite to form a new individual, and the other (internal secretion) by promoting those conditions which will help make the opportunity for that union more likely. Similarly, coitus contributes to the goal of marriage by producing the children of that marriage, and also by promoting those conditions of emotional harmony and stability in the home which will help the children to realize their full human potential.

The question, then, is whether artificial contraception is licit if a married couple wish to have sexual intercourse at a time when the wife is fertile and when conception would work contrary to the ultimate goal of marriage — either because the couple could not financially support another child at the time ; or because their youngest child is still an infant and requires the mother's full time, energy, and attention ; or because the wife's health is poor ; or because of any similar situation in which the couple's ability to care adequately for their children would be seriously endangered by a pregnancy and new baby. This question, like the questions of ecological balance discussed earlier, must be judged against the standard of human welfare, which in this case we may identify with the goal of marriage.

It is Professor Connell's view that the use of contraceptive techniques under these conditions is shown to be immoral by natural arguments. For, he asserts,

the immediate goal toward which coitus — as a part of the generative process — is oriented is the depositing of sperm in some proximity to the ovum, a proximity sufficient to make fertilization somewhat indeterminate but possible¹³.

But as we have seen already, coitus is not merely "a part of the generative process," the process leading to fertilization ; it is also a part of the marriage relationship, and thus a part of the family relationship. Professor Connell's reasoning is based upon the observation that "the activity of coitus terminates once the sperm is deposited."¹⁴ But surely this is to equate "the activity of coitus" with nothing more than the movements of the male, for the woman's "activity of coitus" bears no relation to the depositing of sperm. The sexual act is a partnership, and when that act is one of love rather than of mere pleasure, the activity of coitus for either partner does not terminate until the other partner has been fulfilled. Far less would be sufficient for self-gratification or conception alone.

It does not seem reasonable, then, to regard conception as the unique goal of coitus. Like any other natural process, the value of coitus derives from its

¹² Sir Alan PARKES, "The Reproductive Life Cycle", *Science Journal*, June, 1970, Vol. 6, N° 6, 26.

¹³ CONNELL, *op. cit.*, 77.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

contribution to the ecological whole in relation to human welfare. Now in this case, one may take as an ecological unit the family, the society, or the whole world.¹⁵ It would clearly be the height of folly to interfere with human reproduction on the scale of the world, or of entire societies, or even of communities. Our ignorance of the long-range consequences, and the manifest immediate evil of the destruction of human liberty, together rule out such a course of action. But on the smallest scale, that of the individual family who freely choose, contraception may be carried out safely — that is, without danger to the emotional or physical health of either partner — and, I would add, morally, whenever a possible conception would work contrary to the goal of marriage.

It might be objected that the couple could abstain until the “safe” period of the wife’s cycle was reached. Quite apart from the question of the tenuousness of this sort of “safety” in most circumstances, I would answer that the sheep rancher of our earlier example could also stay awake all night by his sheep-fold and scare away the coyotes with noisemakers until they decided to go elsewhere in search of food. But he does not do so because he needs rest, not just for the sake of his own well-being but also in order to care properly for his sheep. Similarly, a satisfactory sexual relationship between husband and wife is necessary, not just for their own emotional well-being, but for that of their children as well.

Physiologists speak of a “cycle of desire” as well as a “cycle of fertility,” and they recognize both as having an organic basis. The latter cycle results from the hormonal state of the wife, and affects her only. But the former cycle results from the hormonal state of each partner, and affects each. More importantly, in many marriages the husband’s and wife’s cycles of desire become synchronized or coordinated with each other, so that husband and wife simultaneously experience peaks of mutual desire. Dr. Cyril Fox has suggested that

the hormonal state of one partner may affect the other, and this may do something to explain the understanding which develops between a married couple over the years. It may also offer, in part, a biological explanation for monogamy and the sanctity of marriage in man¹⁶.

Furthermore, it is extremely important to note that the mutual cycle of desire and the wife’s cycle of fertility are entirely independent of one another, so that it is only by the merest chance that the peak of the cycle of desire may occur during the “safe” days of the wife’s cycle of fertility.¹⁷ The coyotes are not so obliging as to prey upon sheep only during the day; nor does ovulation occur only during the periods of low mutual desire between husband and wife. A couple

¹⁵ One cannot take the individual as the basic ecological unit in this case because marriage is obviously a relationship between individuals. Thus the issue of contraception is ethically distinct from the issue of medical therapy. The latter is judged in light of the goal of the welfare of the individual, while the former must be judged in light of the goal of marriage.

¹⁶ Cyril A. Fox, “Physiology of Coitus”, *Science Journal*, June, 1970, Vol. 6, N° 6, 84.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

who could not, at the time, risk conception without frustrating the goal of marriage, and who were experiencing a peak of mutual desire, might be forced to wait as long as twenty-one days before having intercourse, if the rhythm method were their only means of contraception. Such a situation places an unnecessary emotional burden upon parents and children alike : it denies the parents access to the natural process in which their natural tension would find release — a release which would simultaneously contribute significantly to the goal of marriage by helping to maintain the emotional stability of the environment in which the children are raised.

The rancher, by shooting the coyote which threatens his sheep, is not likely to bring ecological distress to his fellow-humans, nor to interfere with the goal of sheep-raising. On the contrary, shooting the coyote is a contribution to that goal, and the rancher may do so morally. Similarly, a married couple, whose use of artificial contraception (in the circumstances outlined above) permits them to enjoy sexual relations at a time of great mutual desire, cause no harm to their society ; nor do they interfere with the goal of marriage. Indeed, they contribute to that goal in a positive way. Thus, so far as natural arguments are concerned, it appears that there are circumstances in which the use of artificial contraceptive techniques is moral.

I cannot overstress, in closing, that the deep, mutual love of husband and wife — a love which is normally founded upon sexual activity and which alone can give that activity more than physical meaning — is to be distinguished categorically from sexual hedonism. It thus bears no analogies with gluttony, drunkenness, or drug-addiction. On the contrary, marital love requires a giving of oneself ; it is a self-transcending relationship which overflows with joyful, selfless love to encompass the whole family. In truth, this love is without parallel in nature, and the only analogy which may properly be drawn (to leave aside natural arguments) is that taught by Scripture : the union of Christ with his Church.

II. A REPLY TO MR. ALBURY

Richard J. CONNELL

Mr. Albury, who declares himself to be a non-professional, has set out to offer some remarks about the "... adequacy of Professor Connell's natural arguments", which apparently, judging by the title of his comments, should be restated as "... the adequacy of Professor Connell's ecological argument". Because Mr. Albury is a non-professional, I can understand his being unaware of the way in which refutation is to be attempted. He does not appear to know that he has only two options open to him: 1) to try to show that the argument to be refuted

contains a procedural error and is therefore invalid ; 2) to show that one or more of the premisses upon which the conclusion depends are false. And in order to accomplish either or both of these Mr. Albury must first have identified the argument and its components. But he has done none of these things ; consequently he has failed to disestablish my thesis.

Before continuing, perhaps I should note that Mr. Albury has a very mild way about him, a quality the reader is unlikely to miss. My own style is likely, therefore, to appear severe in contrast. But we must note the circumstances. Mr. Albury has attempted a refutation, and although an amateur, he has chosen to walk on an unfamiliar battleground ; as result he must expect to be treated according to the rules which govern the warfare which takes place there. Furthermore the stakes are high : A very important truth is at issue. Hence I make no apology for the direct manner in which I deal with Mr. Albury. The substance of an issue is far more important than the mode in which it is presented.

In the paragraphs that follow I shall do three things : 1) formalize the main arguments of my *Defense* so that the reader can see they are valid and not attacked by Mr. Albury ; 2) point out some false allegations which Mr. Albury assigns to me with the effect of suggesting that my arguments appear to depend upon propositions which in point of fact they do not depend upon ; 3) consider some of the propositions which Mr. Albury directly attacks.

A. *The principal arguments*

The reader who is familiar with "A Defense of *Humanae Vitae*," will recall that the first proposition I defended as an *argumentative premiss* was a statement which we may cast as follows¹ : "Any action which applies a medication (or surgery) to a healthy part of the body in order to disrupt the normal operation of the part is immoral."² This statement represents the general practice of the medical profession ; for (with the exception of the reproductive organs) physicians do not give medications or perform surgery to disrupt what is normal and healthy. My first argument, then, was the following syllogism :

Major premiss : Every action which applies medications (or surgery) to healthy organs in order to disrupt the normal operation is immoral ;

¹ My original essay was written with a view to making it read as smoothly and as painlessly as possible, since I did hope to appeal to non-professionals. This means, among other things, that it was not written as an axiomatic system, so to speak. The structure of the argument was not spelled out as it is here ; the critical reader was left to do that himself. It therefore became his job to identify the premisses, assign quantity to them, etc. But now I am doing these things, and I wish to point out to the non-professional that, although the premisses as they are cast here were not, for literary reasons, phrased in exactly this way in the text, they are, nevertheless, the same propositions that I defended in the essay. In order to expose a logical structure one may rephrase statements, assign them quantity, etc., as long as he does not change the principal terms in the premisses and conclusion.

² Section C, pages 71 ff.

Minor premiss : Every use of pills for contraceptive effects is an action which applies a medication to healthy organs in order to disrupt the operation ; therefore

Conclusion : Every use of contraceptive pills for contraceptive effects is immoral.

(I argued against contraceptive devices, too, under this same major premiss on the ground that the aim of such devices is the same as that of the medication, namely to inhibit the normal operation ; therefore their use is morally (if not physically) equivalent to damaging the organ. The effect of both is to inhibit the function.)

The above argument is a straightforward Figure I-AAA syllogism, and it is valid. Since the minor is true both empirically and by reason of the very definition of "for contraceptive effects", my critic's only recourse is to attempt to destroy the major premiss, which is, after all, the issue. But read Mr. Albury as closely as you will, nowhere does he attack that premiss.

A second argument went as follows :

Major premiss : Every use of coitus which violates the natural relation of pleasure to activity is immoral ;

Minor premiss : Every use of coitus which employs a contraceptive device is a use of coitus which violates the natural relation of pleasure to activity ; therefore

Conclusion : Every use of coitus which employs a contraceptive device is immoral.

This argument, too, is a Figure I-AAA mood which is valid. Again the only avenue of attack Mr. Albury has is the major premiss, a proposition which I defended at some length³. If he grants that proposition, all is lost for him, but once more he presents no argument against.

My third principal argument was a refutation of the position which maintains that "Overpopulation may be controlled by attacking its remote, physiological causes."⁴ I argued against this proposition on the ground that overpopulation may be attacked only through the proximate cause, the voluntary act by which the sexual powers are used ; for the voluntary mode is the one which is proper to man. The argument to be extracted is the following :

Major premiss : No act which is subject to voluntary control may be attacked in its physical causes ;

³ Section E, pages 77 ff.

⁴ Section F, pages 81 ff.

Minor premiss : Every act of coitus is subject to voluntary control ; therefore

Conclusion : No act of coitus may be attacked in its physical causes.

This is a valid Figure I-EAE syllogism, and the conclusion stands. Only if human behavior were inborn and the consequence of physical determinants — as are the instinctive behavior patterns of animals — only then would the control of population through physical causes be legitimate. Men may sterilize or apply medications to cattle, dogs, or other animals in order to control populations, because animals other than man do not act with deliberative volition. In them anatomy and physiology are everything, so to speak. But men are not cattle and may not be treated in that way.

The title of my critic's comments indicates that he wishes to consider my "ecological argument", yet nowhere does he state what that argument is. In point of fact he has thoroughly misunderstood the entire discussion of ecological issues in connection with contraception. Let me outline what I did say.⁵

My *Defense* points out, on the testimony of professionals in ecology, that the biological world is a community ; that is, the collection of biological species is an ordered whole founded upon the functions of the species themselves. To that extent the ecosystem, by reason of the equilibrium among its species, bears a functional similarity to the human body which ecologists call "homeostasis". Having taken these statements from ecologists themselves, I then proceeded to argue by the following analogy : "Just as it is immoral to poison the body, so it is immoral to pollute the ecological community." And : "Just as the physician may inhibit what is excessive or stimulate what is deficient, so too, men may remove animal and plant surpluses and encourage the reproduction of species when that reproduction is inadequate (the whole business of agriculture is to produce surpluses of this sort, that is, more plants than the species needs to maintain itself)." Many biologists spend their lives improving plant and animal stocks. But although men may harvest the surpluses, ordinarily they are not entitled to destroy, in a wanton manner, a biological species. Only if an organism (by reason of being foreign to the community or having undergone a mutation, etc.) were a destructive agent (after the fashion of a diseased part of the body) and a threat to the ecosystem as a whole would men be justified in destroying some species in its entirety. In that case the operation would be analogous to prophylactic surgery. Thus, if I had any "ecological argument", it was the argument(s) by analogy presented above. Now is Mr. Albury against this position ? Or does he think it moral to pollute ? to obliterate species ? Perhaps he wishes to supply some other ground for the immorality of pollution ? But he does not say.

Mr. Albury claims that "Much of the force of Professor Connell's argument is derived from his interpretation of the teachings of ecology . . ." Now that statement simply is not true. Every reference I made to the ecological community was

⁵ Section C, pages 77 ff.

to show that *the principle first obtained from observations upon the practice of medicine extended (analogically) beyond medicine to nature more generally*. To quote myself : "... the moral directives under which the physician operates are but particular, albeit *analogical* (emphasis supplied here) applications of more general principles which bear upon man's relation to the whole of nature (page 72, bottom)." The moral principle was first *derived* from the actual practice of human medicine and is applicable there whether or not it can be seen to extend to nature generally. Thus, if everything I said about the morality of pollution were to fall, the argument against mutilating healthy organs either by medicine or surgery would stand. And my reason for introducing the ecosystem into the essay is transparent : If someone holds pollution to be immoral, he must also hold contraceptive pills to be immoral because they fall under an analogically common principle. In short, I had hoped to take advantage of the reader's instincts about the immorality of pollution to help him see the immorality of contraception.

B. *False allegations*

As I said earlier, not only does my critic fail to identify and attack my arguments, he misuses me in another way : He claims that I make statements which in point of fact I do not make. The effect of his allegations is to make my arguments appear to depend upon premisses they in point of fact do *not* depend upon. The following are some (but not all) cases in point.

1. In paragraph 6 Mr. Albury says that he "... would not agree that the environmental *status quo* has value and that any alteration is in principle immoral." This statement implies that I maintain "Any alteration is in principle immoral," otherwise there is no justification for his attacking it. But nowhere do I make such a statement. In fact, one of my aims was to spell out the moral regulations which govern human alterations of the biological community.

2. Mr. Albury says in paragraph 5 that "... Professor Connell does not acknowledge the crucial relationship which holds between the mutual love of husband and wife which is fostered and deepened by sexual relations, and the harmony of the home environment in which the child is raised." My critic makes that statement despite the fact that I explicitly declare (page 78, top) that "We are not about to deny that sexual intercourse contributes to the well-being of husband and wife. Even those who hold that it is not the chief good of married life will admit that a successful marriage does not ordinarily occur in the absence of satisfactory sexual relationships." Now what does Mr. Albury want, *his words* ? My statement is a straightforward acknowledgement of all that is important in the "... crucial relationship which holds between the mutual love of husband and wife which is fostered and deepened by sexual relations, and the harmony of the home environment in which the child is raised." No parent in his right mind will maintain that love between husband and wife is unimportant, and to attack this is to attack

a straw man. Nor does it follow that because I deny the legitimacy of contraception as a means to fostering that end that I deny the end itself. Let Mr. Albury reread page 71, the last paragraph before section B, in which I enunciate a proposition which declares that an end does not justify any means whatsoever. Only from such a premiss could one attempt to argue the legitimacy of the means by appealing to the goal alone.

3. In paragraph 13 my critic says that "It does not seem reasonable, then, to regard conception as the *unique* (emphasis mine) goal of coitus." I do not enunciate any such position, namely that conception is the unique (in the sense of only?) goal of coitus. Nor do I say, as Mr. Albury contends, that "... coitus is *merely* (emphasis mine) a part of the generative process, . . ." The word "merely" is Mr. Albury's. He attaches a limitation to my statement that I do not assign. It is false that "Coitus is merely a part of the generative process," but true that "Coitus is a part of the generative process." If Mr. Albury were something of a logician he would know that his statement is an implicitly compound proposition and therefore says two things: "Coitus is a part of the generative process," and "Coitus in nothing else." Nowhere do I state anything like that last statement. By employing an implicitly compound proposition which contains "Coitus is nothing else," and assigning the compound proposition to me, Mr. Albury has employed a sophistical argument, the *fallacy of false cause*, for he attacks a premiss upon which my argument does *not* depend.⁶

C. Mr. Albury's attack

Leaving aside Mr. Albury's false allegations, we may now turn to his own attack, which begins with a denial, not of one of the principles of my argument,

⁶ My colleague, Father James Stromberg, likes to stress the fact that the Catholic Church does indeed understand the role of coitus in human love, and he maintains that a fundamental purpose of her pronouncements on these issues is to preserve its truly human character in the measure of dignity that demands. One of his favorite texts for showing this point is a speech given by Pope Pius XII to the Second World Congress on Fertility and Sterility, 19 May 1956. (Earlier Pius XII had condemned artificial insemination saying, among other things, that the marriage union is not to be regarded as little more than a "biological laboratory".) He says there: "But the Church has likewise rejected the opposite attitude which would pretend to separate, in generation, the biological activity from the personal relation of the married couple. The child is the fruit of the conjugal union when that union finds full expression by bringing into play the organic functions, the associated sensible emotions, and the spiritual and disinterested love which animates it. It is within the unity of this human activity that the biological prerequisites of generation should take place. Never is it permitted to separate these various aspects to the point of excluding positively either the procreative scope or the conjugal embrace. The relationship which unites the father and the mother to their child finds its root in the organic fact and still more in the deliberate conduct of the spouses who surrender themselves to each other and whose voluntary self-donation blossoms forth and finds its true fulfillment in the being which they bring into the world. Furthermore, only this consecration of self, generous in its origin, arduous in its realization, can guarantee, through the conscious acceptance of the responsibilities which it involves, that the task of educating the children will be pursued

but of an *instance* intended as an illustration of the general statement, "... not all natural goal-directed activities are oriented to their ends in equal measure (page 60, top)." The instance in question is the one of seeds. Mr. Albury's contention is that I am not entitled to say that "seeds are for reproduction", even though he grants that "... this may be true from the point of view of the plant that produces the seeds ; ...". But that, of course, is precisely the point of view one takes, the point of view of the organism that acts. "Goal-directed" is a predicate which I assigned to "activities", and I should not have to add that the activities in question are those which belong to the plants or other organisms in which they are found. But leaving aside the fact that he concedes the central point, let me summarize his argument : "One cannot say that reproduction is the general goal of the seeds because seeds are equally necessary to certain animals as a source of food (and they are necessary as fertilizer). Therefore seeds have two contrary goals." (There are several errors here to which we shall pay attention. First, if there were contrariety in the goals, it would have to be *germination* and *death* ; these are the only terms that represent anything like contraries in this connection. But is Mr. Albury going to say that the reproductive power is simultaneously oriented to reproduction and death ? Organisms die, not as the consequence of reproduction but as the result of some inevitable properties of matter. The difference is significant.

Second, when I say in my *Defense* that "... goal-direction belongs to the seeds in a general way ..." my statement is understood to mean (as the text shows) that the plant's process of producing seeds does not predetermine which seeds will germinate and which will not. That is decided by causes extrinsic to the plant ; for example, winds, animals that bury them, etc. (The quoted proposition is not equivalent to saying that seeds have only one goal.) But Mr. Albury wishes to argue that because there is more than one goal the "seeds are not goal-directed in a general way," from which it follows that he is denying the statement, "... their orientation does not extend in a determinate fashion to the individuals so as to relate them to a definite place at a definite time," for this is but a definition of "in a general way". If he denies this statement, he must assert that the orientation *does* extend to the individuals as such, and that statement is contrary to fact. But returning to his premiss, the only conclusion Mr. Albury can argue to from the statement that seeds have more than one goal, is one which says that they are goal-directed in more than one way.

In this connection, my opponent appears to argue that because seeds are "equally necessary" for several different things, there are several goals having equal status, by which I presume he means there is no order or relation of subordination between them. I wish to attack this position.

with all the care and courage and patience which it demands." (Quoted from John C. Ford, S.J. and Gerald Kelly, S.J., *Contemporary Moral Theology*, The Newman Press, 1963, Vol. II, p. 285.) Father Stromberg nails down the reason very formally : Both procreation and love are *ends* ; that is, human love is genuinely an end and not just a means ; were it a *pure means* both artificial insemination and rhythm would be immoral. The only point : One end is limited by the other — both must be respected.

First, it is simply false that seeds are "equally necessary" as food for animals. If oak trees are to reproduce, then acorns *as such* are necessary. But if the animals that feed on them are to be nourished, it does not follow that acorns *as such* are necessary. An animal is fed by the carbohydrates, fats, and proteins which the acorn supplies. In other words, if a certain animal is to be nourished, one can argue that carbohydrates, fats, and proteins are necessary, but whether they be found in acorns or some other form is incidental.

Second, if there were no reproduction of the species, animals would not feed on acorns or other such seeds, nor could the soil be fertilized by them, for they simply would not be produced. But it does not follow that if the animals do not feed on the acorns or if the soil is not fertilized by them, therefore the tree does not reproduce. It could do so without the animals feeding on its acorns.

Third, the production by some organisms of quantities of seeds that are greatly in excess of the number that germinates, is described by biologists as *adaptive*, which means that the excess is explained and accounted for by the survival of the species. Clearly, then, survival is the first goal of reproduction.

Following the remarks we attacked above, Mr. Albury presents what he considers to be a more sophisticated argument (paragraph 4), and he moves from it to a statement in paragraph 6 which says that "... man is the measure of the value of nature..." Presumably he means by "nature" the "organic whole", because he has talked about "balance" in the preceding paragraph. Now this proposition is directly opposed to the entire thesis of my essay, and if my opponent is going to assert it, he is not free to lay it down without defense in the gratuitous fashion he has chosen. Nowhere does he defend that proposition; he merely states it. Such doings constitute a cardinal violation of the rules of refutation. On page 72 I say the following: "In other words, that which is normal or healthy and, therefore, beneficial or good is *determined by nature* (emphasis supplied here); this is what sets limits to therapy. What is naturally beneficial and good in the human body does not depend upon, and is not the result of, human causality." On page 70, in connection with ecological relations between man and other organisms, I make the following remark: "What is beneficial or good must be discovered, because what is natural is good *independently* of and antecedent to human activity." These statements are in contradiction to the "man is the measure" proposition; for if man is the measure, nature derives whatever beneficial characteristics it has from man and in this respect is not, therefore, independent of human causality. Because I have defended these notions at length, Mr. Albury — if he thinks to refute me — is not at liberty to present without any support whatsoever a statement which opposes mine, and then use that opposing statement in an attempt to argue against me. This, too, is a sophistical procedure; the fallacy he commits is *begging the question*.

Mr. Albury attempts to argue in another way. He says that "... a satisfactory relationship between husband and wife is necessary not just for their own emotional well-being, but for that of their children as well." And because abstinence places

an "unnecessary emotional burden" upon parents and children alike, contraception during fertile periods is permissible. Summarized, his argument is this : "One may practice contraception because one is not obliged to bear an unnecessary emotional burden." Applying ordinary expansion techniques to procure the missing premiss, we get, "Anyone who has to bear an unnecessary emotional burden may practice contraception." In short, one may damage the organs by medication or surgery or do what is morally equivalent to these in order to avoid an "unnecessary" emotional burden, stress, or discomfort. Once again Mr. Albury begs the question, because I explicitly denied the unexpressed premiss from which he argues (see sections F and G). Whether the emotional burden is necessary or unnecessary must be determined by whether contraception is moral or immoral, not conversely. Is a fearful man entitled to run from everything because he is afraid of everything ? But certainly such a person will have to bear an emotional burden or stress if at certain times it is immoral for him to run. Mr. Albury's whole argument assumes that the end which one chooses justifies by itself any means. I might also note, as a closing remark, that his argument bears out what I contended in the last section of my *Defense*, namely, that the Western World has come to endorse the idea that comfort is the goal of human existence ; without question emotional stresses are uncomfortable.