

Some pro-lifers think abortion is wrong because it deprives an individual of a valuable future—a future like ours (or “FLO” for short)

We can reconstruct the argument like this:

(F1) It’s always wrong to deprive an individual of a FLO.

(F2) Abortion deprives an individual of a FLO.

(F3) So, abortion is always wrong.

The problem is, I think F1 is open to counterexamples.

Suppose there were a special device that could guarantee a pregnancy from a single sex act, and suppose persons A and B, with compatible reproductive organs, had access to this device.

By refusing to have sex with each other using the device, they’d be depriving an individual of a FLO, and yet I think it’s clear it’s not wrong to do so. Thus, F1 is false.

One might object by saying, depriving is an action, but what A and B did in this case is not action but inaction.

However, we can tweak the case to get around this objection. Suppose A and B begin having sex with the device, and then person A changes their mind and wants to stop. If A lies there and does nothing, it will result in an individual with a FLO. But if A takes an action—namely actively stopping the sex act in the middle—it will deprive that individual of a FLO.

I think it’s clear that there’s nothing wrong with actively stopping the sex. So, F1 is false.

References

Don Marquis – “Why Abortion is Immoral”