THE IMMORALITY OF ABORTION

I. The Basic Argument against Abortion
1. Abortion is the direct killing of an innocent human being/person
2. The direct killing of an innocent human being/person is murder.
3. Murder is morally wrong.
4. Therefore abortion is morally wrong.

II. Arguments that the zygote etc. is a person.
A. Scientific Argument
1. The zygote etc. is a distinct human life.
2. A distinct human life is a person.
3. Therefore the zygote etc. is a person.

Re 1:
   a) The zygote is alive.
   b) It is not alive as an organ of the mother’s body, or as living residue or tissue of the mother’s or father’s body; it is alive as a distinct organism with its own genetic code and its own principle of life and development.
   c) It is alive with human life and not, say, feline or equine or avian life.

Re 2:
   a) ‘Person’ is a generally accepted term for an individual human being.
   b) ‘Person’ is a substance term and not a property term: a person is an individual substance of a rational nature (Boethius).
      a. The zygote, being a living organism, is a living substance (unlike an organ which is not a substance but an integral part of a substance).
      b. The zygote, being human (and not feline or avian), has a rational nature, though not (yet) rational functions; the nature of a thing is not its functions but that which grounds its functions.
      c. To object that the zygote does not have developed functions or organs (consciousness, arms, legs, etc.) is to confuse being a person with being a post-natal person (adult etc.), or the genotype with the phenotype; the phenotype may be the way we recognize the natures of things but it is not what we thus recognize.

Re 3:
   a) The conclusion does not say the zygote behaves or looks like a post-natal person, adult etc.; it says that since the life of the zygote is the life of an individual substance which, like any substance, has a nature, or some determinate structure that makes it to be this thing (a human being) and not that thing (a cat or a horse), the zygote satisfies all that is required for it to be a person.

B. Metaphysical Argument
1. The zygote etc. is a person in statu fiendi.
2. A person in statu fiendi has the being of a person.
3. What has the being of a person is a person.
4. Therefore the zygote etc. is a person.
Re 2 [1 and 3 are self-evident], or The Metaphysics of Becoming:

a) Becoming both is and is not: it is what has already come to be and is not what is still on the way to coming to be; it is what goes on between being and not-being.

b) Take a becoming from A to B. There is no becoming at A or B, nor at any point C between A and B; a becoming thing qua becoming is not at any point of its becoming; no point is a place for it to stop at but a place for it to pass through without stopping; a becoming thing is a becoming thing only when it is becoming, which means when it is not at a place but between places; as soon as it can properly be said to be at a place it is no longer becoming but stopped (a metaphysical – not mathematical – solution to Zeno’s paradoxes).

c) Take a becoming from A to B and interrupt it at C. There is no sense saying that the becoming was interrupted at C unless we can identify the end, B, toward which the becoming was tending, and can identify the actual end at C as intervening contrary to the tending that the thing had toward B. Interruption is a failure to get to the end aimed at. Interruption is a real failure, a failure in being. The thing that was becoming B really ceases, because of the interruption, to be becoming B and really loses its being as tending toward B.

d) So, if we want to say what being a thing has which is becoming B from A, we will have to say that its being is its tending toward B. The tending of it to this end is an essential part of what it is; the end enters into it as determinative of what it is. To understand it in terms of what it is now without reference to anything further is to miss out the very fact of its becoming.

e) A Common Error: to identify becoming with the observable and measurable features that are manifest at some particular time-slice of the becoming and to exclude the features that will only be observable at some later date.

   a. E.g. the zygote etc. is said to be just a single cell of forty six chromosomes, or a collection of such cells, and what these cells are becoming, since it is not yet present or observable, is not regarded as relevant to determining what the cells now are; hence both the future condition of the cells and the present becoming-ness of these cells toward that future condition are denied to be part of what they now are; but this denial is false (the Zenonian error of reducing the dynamic to the static).

f) A becoming has an end and also some motive power driving the becoming to the end; in the zygote this power is internal; a zygote is a self-moving becoming; it contains within, as actively aimed at, the end it is driving the becoming toward.

g) So, from d) and f), the end enters into the zygote as determinative of what it is both actively and passively (both in its directing and its being directed).

h) So, the fullness of human nature enters into the analysis of the being of the zygote.

i) So, the zygote has the being of a person (the genetic structuring appealed to in the scientific argument may be viewed as the observable expression of this fact).

j) [NB. The zygote is actually a person but potentially a new-born person, a teenage person, an adult person, etc. etc.]