

A baby isn't a commodity

In 1983, I purchased my first computer, a Commodore 64. I switched to Macintosh in 1986. Today, with lingering nostalgia for the Mac, I have a PC on my desktop.

I have bought computers new and used.

As I upgraded, I got rid of several desktop friends. Some I sold. Others went to friends and relatives. Once I discarded an outmoded computer to the trash.

Computers have been an important part of my life. My digital relationships can be summarized by the phrase, "Every computer a wanted computer."

When a computer served my purposes, it was valued and wanted. When a computer did not serve me well, it was destined for removal from my desk.

My relationship to computers is similar to what Planned Parenthood advocates between parents and children. Its motto is, "Every child a wanted child."

With this motto, Planned Parenthood advocates the commodification of children.

A child has no intrinsic value according to this view. A child attains value just like a computer—by serving its owner and being wanted by its owner.



**JOHN
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Guest
column

In this materialistic view, children, like computers, should exist only if they are planned and wanted.

As an economist, this seems reasonable and consistent with my experience with computers. However, as a son and a father, I was not a commodity. I hope I did not regard my children as commodities.

Once their lives began, Sunny, John, Fred, and my dear unplanned Nicole had immense value quite apart from providing utility to parents. They are unique human beings. They have made me happy and made me mad. I am sure I have returned these favors to each of them.

In Thomas Jefferson's words from the Declaration of Independence, my children have "an inalienable right to life." Our relationships would be hard to describe. But one thing is sure—no one is a commodity.

Accepting the commodity view of children is dangerous. With this view, there is no reason not to discard as trash the human possessions we do not want.

One of my computers ended up in the trash bin, not unlike an aborted baby.

The actions and advocacy positions of Planned Parenthood follow directly from its open regard of human life as a commodity.

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