An Evaluation of How John Paul II's Critics Engage the Arguments that He Uses to Support Natural Family Planning and to Oppose the Use of Artificial Birth Control.

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ABSTRACT

AN EVALUATION OF HOW JOHN PAUL II’S CRITICS ENGAGE THE ARGUMENTS THAT HE USES TO SUPPORT NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING AND TO OPPOSE THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL BIRTH CONTROL.

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This thesis seeks to study the arguments that John Paul II uses to support Natural Family Planning and to oppose the use of Artificial Birth Control. It seeks also to evaluate which of the critics' arguments further this debate by accurately portraying and engaging John Paul II's positions and which ones misrepresent what he is saying. After a thorough reading of the arguments that have been presented by John Paul II and his critics, this thesis intends to demonstrate that most of the critics' arguments fall within three categories. The first category includes those arguments that misrepresent John Paul II's positions and thus hinder the debate by misleading people. The second category includes those arguments that accurately present John Paul II's positions, but that fail to really advance this debate because they do not develop a sustained argument against those positions. The third category of arguments are those arguments which accurately engage John Paul II's positions and further this debate because the reasons for their arguments are developed against John Paul II's actual positions. The conclusion of this thesis is that more study and debate needs to continue over the arguments presented in the second and third categories so that people will be able to make an informed decision and not be mislead by unsubstantiated arguments.
I would like to thank those who have been instrumental in the creation of this thesis. A great deal of thanks goes to Dr. Dennis Doyle for all of the times he read my rough drafts and offered his encouragement, constructive criticisms, and guidance.

There are many others who have had a role in this research. Behind the scenes were my wife Chrissy and daughter Anna who sacrificed many hours of family time so this thesis could be completed; thanks go to Christopher West whose shocking interpretations of John Paul II’s works whet my appetite to discover if the pope really was saying such things about love, sex, marriage, and eternity; to Dr. Therese Lysaught whose willingness to supervise an independent study on John Paul II’s writings and unwillingness to accept mediocre work provided the foundational research for this thesis; to Dr. Kelly Johnson and Dr. Brad Kallenberg who agreed to be readers on this thesis though they did not know me, to the library staff at Newman University in Wichita, Kansas, particularly Sr. Edwina and Rita who supplied me with copious amounts of books and articles to do my research, even when books were overdue; to my parents whose sacrificial love and work ethic have played the greatest role in my understanding of married life; to John Paul II whose writings formed one of the foundations for this thesis; and to his critics, whose views challenge those who support Natural Family Planning to think more deeply on the issue and to seek answers to their concerns. Finally, I would like to offer my greatest thanks to God, through whom we are wonderfully made, redeemed, and reborn so that all things are possible.
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INTRODUCTION

THE BIRTH CONTROL DEBATE

For many years one of the most passionately debated topics in the Catholic Church has been the use of artificial birth control (ABC) within marriage. On numerous occasions the Church has issued statements condemning the use of ABC and sterilization for the purpose of fertility regulation. The only option presented as a moral means of fertility regulation is natural family planning (NFP). Many people mistakenly believe the Church accepts NFP and opposes other forms of fertility regulation because NFP relies upon nature and the others do not. This is not the position of John Paul II; he uses a phenomenological analysis of scripture and a philosophy of personalism as a basis to examine the fundamental rights and responsibilities of all persons, including the realm of human sexuality.\(^1\) John Paul II’s approach represents an attempt to explain the official Catholic teachings in a new way, by connecting people’s experiences with the moral norms accepted by the Catholic Church.

The morality of different birth control methods has been debated so extensively that in 1995 James Gaffney said “it is no longer imaginable that any new arguments will be advanced either for or against the reasonableness” of the Church’s position on birth control.\(^2\) Richard McCormick claims reasoned discourse has been replaced by

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accusatory rhetoric,³ and John Garvey believes the debate is ignored because people have already made up their minds.⁴ Commenting on the lack of scholarly study performed by the few critics who have written articles on John Paul II's positions, Janet Smith claimed, "It is simply unfair to authors and audiences that scholars should not have done their homework. Why indeed should they deserve a hearing?"⁵

These statements demonstrate a problem with the birth control debate. The intellectual energy in this debate has waned and many of the current criticisms of John Paul II's teachings have not accurately engaged his positions. In my judgment many of the criticisms against John Paul II's positions misrepresent his ideas and thus misinform others of his actual arguments. There are criticisms of John Paul II's teachings that further this debate, but these are being obscured by the misrepresentations.

In this thesis I will present the views of John Paul II and the views of theologians who oppose his teachings on ABC. After major arguments from both sides are presented, I will demonstrate which arguments against John Paul II's positions engage his arguments, deserve a response, and need to be further debated, and which arguments are merely misunderstandings or misrepresentations of his theology. The goal is to begin to eliminate some of the chaff from the wheat so meaningful debate on this issue can continue, and progress can be made on an issue that affects many people and remains a source of division in the Catholic Church.

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⁴ John Garvey, "The Popes Two Voices", Commonweal 108 no. 6 (March 27, 1981): 166.
CHAPTER 1
BUILDING A CASE FOR ARTIFICIAL BIRTH CONTROL

In this chapter I will provide a selective historical background concerning how sexual intercourse in marriage has been understood in the Catholic Church and why some theologians believe the understanding of marriage and sexual intercourse has evolved to the point where the use of ABC is not in contradiction with the purposes of marriage. After a brief summary of several points favoring a revision of the ban on ABC, a range of current arguments against the pope's teachings will be presented.

The Purposes of Marriage and Sex Throughout Church History

The Christian understanding of marriage and the purposes of sexual intercourse have received different explanations throughout the history of the Church. Vern Bullough claims, "The Church Fathers regarded sex as, at best, something to be tolerated, a necessary evil out of which procreation resulted." According to John Noonan, St. Justin said that Christians got married "only to produce children" and Clement said that spouses should avoid having sexual desire for each other and to practice continence except when they were seeking to beget children. Procreation was seen as the primary reason for marriage and intercourse. Intercourse for desire or pleasure was considered to be either mortally or venially sinful. Noonan quotes St. Jerome as saying, "An adulterer is he who

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8 Ibid., 76
is too ardent a lover of his wife.”⁹ In the third century Lactantius provided another reason for intercourse, the “Pauline purpose of intercourse as a remedy for incontinence.”

Intercourse during pregnancy was a remedy for incontinence, but the couple was not considered to truly have “the virtue of modesty.” Noonan did not find one other “Christian theologian before 1500 explicitly upholding the lawfulness of intercourse in pregnancy.”¹⁰ Thus for nearly 1500 years the Church indicated that outside of procreation intercourse was at least venially sinful.

Noonan and Bullough both identify Augustine as the person who had the single greatest impact on the understanding of sex and marriage in the Church. The hostile Christian attitude towards sex was heavily influenced by the culture and philosophies of the day. Augustine, a convert to Christianity, “carried with him many of his Manichean ideas about sex.”¹¹ In his arguments to oppose the Manicheans, Augustine identified three ends of marriage: offspring, fidelity, and symbolic stability. For Augustine having offspring is more than procreating; it is also “the educating of them religiously.” Augustine taught that couples could engage in sexual intercourse to sustain each other’s weakness so they do not fall into illicit intercourse, and to pay the marital debt.¹² Augustine’s mistrust of intercourse and his attempts to justify marriage against the Manichean heresy set a course for understanding marital sexuality for centuries.¹³ Augustine’s teachings on sex and marriage, particularly the three goods of marriage: offspring, fidelity and sacramentum “have, with much development, served to define for Catholic theologians the good of marriage.” “The heart of the Augustinian position is the old rule of Philo and the Stoics, buttressed by their appeal to a nature whose purposes are evident.”¹⁴

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⁹ Noonan, Contraception, 80.
¹⁰ Ibid., 78
¹¹ Bullough, Sexual Attitudes, 23.
¹² Noonan, Contraception, 127.
¹³ Bullough, Sexual Attitudes, 23.
¹⁴ Noonan, Contraception, 131
Gregory the Great, who was pope from 590-604, said that if pleasure is mixed with the act of sex, the couple has sinned.\textsuperscript{15} According to Noonan, the idea that sexual pleasure was evil was once a common belief that has gradually dissipated:

The Gregorian view that all sexual pleasure was an evil had reached its maximum strength at the end of the twelfth century, when it was held by Huguccio and Pope Innocent III. The thirteenth century saw the gradual disappearance of this position which was so embarrassing to the orthodox defense of the holiness of marriage.\textsuperscript{16} Even St. Thomas Aquinas taught that seeking pleasure in sex was a venial sin.\textsuperscript{17} Sexual intercourse without the intent to procreate was allowed for the Pauline doctrine of preventing the couple from mortally sinning by seeking intercourse through illicit unions. This was the common teaching through the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries on sex and marriage.\textsuperscript{18} “Slowly, indirectly, artfully, the pure procreative doctrine was undermined, but only to accommodate the doctrine of St. Paul.” This subtle movement to justify nonprocreative marital intercourse was an important development in the understanding of marital intercourse.\textsuperscript{19}

By 1566 the Roman Catechism identified three purposes of marriage. “The first of these, then, is this very partnership of diverse sexes...Another is the appetite of procreation... the third is...the remedy of marriage to avoid sins of lust.”\textsuperscript{20} The Roman Catechism also said that the couple was “not to have intercourse for the sake of pleasure or lust,” and “to abstain from intercourse occasionally to pray.”\textsuperscript{21} The Church allowed intercourse in order to avoid the mortal sin of fornication, but still saw pleasure as a vice to be avoided, and did not see intercourse as good for its own sake.\textsuperscript{22} Before the council of Trent some theologians argued “the purposes of intercourse need not be confined to the

\textsuperscript{15} Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 150.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 292-293.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 294.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 248.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 249.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 313.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 314.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 313-315.
Augustinian purpose of procreation or the Pauline purpose of avoiding fornication.  

However, even though the council mentioned love as having a role in marriage, “the only two acceptable purposes for initiating intercourse were procreation and avoidance of fornication. As long as there were only these two lawful categories, and the lawful category of intercourse for pleasure, no exploration of personal values, no valuation of love in intercourse, was possible.”

In the centuries following the Council of Trent several theologians provided reasons why couples may want to avoid procreation. Noonan attributes much of this progress in marriage theology and the decrease in the emphasis on procreation to St. Alphonsus Ligouri. He considers Ligouri to be “the most influential single authority on moral theology in the Catholic Church” in the nineteenth century:

Ligouri reflects a doctrine in transition and in some confusion. Augustinianism is banished. Procreation need not be a purpose of marriage; it may be mentally excluded from acts of intercourse. But pleasure is distrusted, and love unrecognized.

Noonan credits the Jesuit John Gury with improving upon Ligouri’s views:

Between 1850 and 1964 the teaching of the Church on the purposes of marital intercourse experienced substantial evolution....

...Gury declared that marital intercourse was lawful for any one of four purposes: ‘the generation of offspring; ‘the satisfaction of the obligation’; ‘the avoidance of incontinence in oneself or one’s partner’; ‘the desire of fostering or bringing about decent friendship, of manifesting or promoting conjugal affection and so forth.

Since 1880 pleasure has increasingly been seen as an independent value. However, it has only been since World War I “that there was a substantial development of the relation of intercourse to love.” Noonan attributes this appreciation for love and the relationship to

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23 Noonan, Contraception, 321.
24 Ibid., 322-323.
25 Ibid., 320-329.
26 Ibid., 320.
27 Ibid., 329.
28 Ibid., 491.
“the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and Max Scheler.” In speaking about another phenomenologist named Dietrich von Hildebrand, Noonan claims: “For the first time, a Catholic writer taught that love was a requirement of lawful, marital coition.”

**Casti Connubii**

Revisionists supporting a change in Church teaching on ABC saw hope in the statement and decision by the Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference on August 14, 1930.  

Where there is a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, the method must be decided on Christian principles. The primary and obvious method is complete abstinence from intercourse (as far as may be necessary) in a life of discipleship and self-control lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless in those cases where there is such a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles. The Conference records its strong condemnation of the use of any methods of conception-control from motives of selfishness, luxury, or mere convenience.

On December 31, 1930 Pope Pius XI responded to this change in Christian tradition with the encyclical *Casti Connubii*, which includes this statement:

Since, therefore, openly departing from the uninterrupted Christian tradition, some recently have judged it possible solemnly to declare another doctrine regarding this question, the Catholic Church, to whom God has entrusted the defense of the integrity and purity of morals, standing erect in the midst of the moral ruin which surrounds her, in order that she may preserve the chastity of the nuptial union from being defiled by the foul stain, raises her voice in token of her divine ambassadorship and through our mouth proclaims anew: any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin.

The reactions to these statements were mixed. In the United States on March 21, 1931, “the majority of a committee of the Federal Council of Churches, a forerunner of

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29 Noonan, *Contraception*, 494.
30 Noonan, *Contraception*, 495.
33 Ibid., 4-5.
today's National Council of Churches, endorsed 'the careful and restrained use of contraceptives by married people,' at the same time admitting that 'serious evils, such as extra-marital sex relations, may be increased by general knowledge of contraceptives.' As years passed the official pronouncements by other Christian Churches continued to show a movement toward the acceptance of the use of ABC in marriage. This is not to imply all leaders of other Christian traditions opposed Pius XI's position or supported the decision made at the Lambeth Conference; in fact many opposed the use of ABC under all circumstances. Noonan claims that even though Casti Connubii did not revise the teaching on ABC, it did reflect an evolution in the understanding of the purposes of marriage, and portrayed love as related to personal spiritual development. He quotes Pius XI as saying:

This mutual interior formation of the partners, this earnest desire of perfecting one another, can be said in a very true sense... to be the primary reason and cause for marriage, if marriage is not considered strictly as instituted for the proper procreation and education of children, but is more broadly taken as a sharing, way and partnership of all of life.

This evolution in understanding was furthered by Herbert Doms, who had a significant role in the development of marriage theology in the 20th century. Doms's theory accounts for many of the anomalies that were common in the Catholic Church for which the Augustinian-Thomistic theories did not adequately account. In Doms's theory “marital coitus was an ontological act” that affected the very being of the persons in the act. Doms “discarded the classic terminology of ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ ends in marriage.”

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34 Kippley, Birth Control and Christian Discipleship, 5.
35 Ibid., 5-6.
36 Noonan, Contraception, 496.
37 Ibid., 496-499.
38 Ibid., 497.
39 Ibid., 498.
Though not completely agreeing that, "conjugal love was the first end of marriage," Bernard Härting, Joseph Fuchs, Gerald Kelly and John Ford, all leading moral theologians in the 1950's and 60's, supported this shift to an emphasis on love. The shift to emphasize the importance and role of love in marriage was expressed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and as in Doms, the terms primary and secondary were dropped in describing the purposes of marriage. The third end of marriage, traditionally called *remedium concupiscence*, was entirely left out of the documents. It seemed as if the evil that had been associated with intercourse and pleasure had finally been rejected and that marital intercourse was now seen as an independent good.

**The Second Vatican Council**

Supporters of ABC like Charles Curran saw hope for a revision of official Catholic teaching in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Curran says the documents of the Second Vatican Council reflect a newer, inductive, dynamic, and historically conscious approach as opposed to the methods previously used by the Church: "In the documents of Vatican II the bishops do not officially adopt any worldview or methodology. But Vatican II definitely portrays reality in terms of a more historical worldview, and also employs a historically conscious methodology." Curran points out that the document *Lumen Gentium* emphasizes the role of the people of God in coming to know the truth: "The hierarchical church can learn, and has learned, from the prophetic voice in the Church. History reminds us that in the Church change usually occurs from underneath." Curran

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considers people who advocate a change in the teaching on ABC to be faithful prophets of God, and claims that prophets are almost always rejected initially. 44

Curran claims Gaudium et Spes is another document that displays historical consciousness and is “an excellent illustration of the change in emphasis in Church documents from a classicist methodology to a more historically conscious approach.” 45 The bishops acknowledge the Church has benefited from the development of humanity and the document indicates the Church must dialogue with the contemporary world. “The need for ongoing dialogue and ongoing search for truth contrasts sharply with the classicist view of reality and truth.” 46 “The more historically conscious worldview emphasizes the changing, developing, evolving, and historical.” 47 Time and culture are important factors in determining morality; even the gospels were conditioned by eschatological and cultural conditions. Moral theology needs to be based on concrete reality and respond to the current cultural conditions. “Thomas has established the basic principle of realism- the law must reflect the needs of the community here and now.” 48

Other theologians support these sentiments and observations. Richard Gula claims:

Gaudium et Spes (1965) is a landmark document shift from ‘nature’ to ‘person’ in an official Church document. This historically conscious, empirically oriented, personally focused document of the Second Vatican Council introduced new considerations into natural law by the attention it calls not to human nature as such, but to the human person. 49

According to the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: “the human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary

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44 Noonan, Contraception, 51,52.
45 Curran, Themes in Fundamental Moral Theology, 50.
46 Ibid., 51.
47 Ibid., 47.
48 Ibid., 84-85.
Gula believes: “The Pastoral Constitution...is favoring historical consciousness when it says 'in light of the Gospel and of human experience' (n. 46).”

Lisa Sowle Cahill says when Gaudium et Spes—calls us to read “the Signs of the Times”:

“This means attention to the concrete actualities of contemporary society, culture, and human experience. Traditional natural law ethics had aimed at a transcendent rationality, universality, and certainty; at universal and absolute moral norms which could be applied to specific situations invariably, with only a few closely-defined exceptions."

“Procreation and the love or union of the spouses were given as the two natural purposes of sexual acts, with no ranking of these ends. It meant the goal of procreation was no longer the dominant moral standard in Catholic Sexual ethics.” Nor did the document mention the tertiary end traditionally known as remedium concupiscence, which was often invoked as the Pauline explanation that marriage was a remedy to keep people from committing mortal sin through illicit relationships. In the documents of the Second Vatican Council, marital intercourse is portrayed as a true good and can be engaged in for the sake of the couple without any taint of sin, even if they are not seeking a procreative end.

In describing the role of sexual intercourse in married love, Gaudium et Spes n.49 says:

The Lord, wishing to bestow special gifts of grace and divine love on it, has restored, perfected, and elevated it. A love like that, bringing together the human and the divine, leads the partners to a free and mutual giving of self, experienced in tenderness and action, and permeates their whole lives; besides, this love is actually developed and increased by the exercise of it. This is a far cry from mere erotic attraction, which is pursued in selfishness and soon fades away in wretchedness. Married love is uniquely expressed and perfected by the exercise of the acts proper to marriage. Hence the acts in marriage by which the intimate and chaste union of the spouses takes place are noble

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51 Ibid., 22.
and honorable; the truly human performance of these acts fosters the self-giving they signify and enriches the spouses in joy and gratitude.\footnote{54}{Gaudium et Spes, (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) (December 7, 1965), Documents of Vatican II ed. by Austin P. Flannery (Grand Rapids Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing, 1975), 952.}

This portrayal of marital intercourse is vastly different from previous official teachings about sex in marriage. The importance of love, unity, fidelity, and the procreation and education of children is mentioned numerous times, and intercourse for pleasure or unity is not talked about as being tainted by sin or as being unchaste or dishonorable. Revisionists believe the use of historically conscious methodologies would show that the traditional condemnation against ABC was heavily influenced by the historical and cultural surroundings, and not because it is intrinsically evil. The use of ABC in marriage should now be evaluated according to the Church’s modern view of marriage and marital intercourse. Since the teachings on marital intercourse have been revised, some believe the prohibition against ABC can also be revised. It was commonly known that at the Second Vatican Council many of the Bishops believed a change in the Church teaching about ABC was in order but the council was not given the opportunity to vote on the issue of birth control.\footnote{55}{Daniel Callahan, ed., The Catholic Case for Contraception (London: The Macmillan Company, 1969), VII-X.}

A special birth control commission was created by John XXIII and continued by Pope Paul VI to study the issues of marriage, family, population, and birth control.\footnote{56}{Robert G. Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate (Kansas City, Mo: National Catholic Reporter, 1968), 9.} Even though the commission was advisory, Robert Hoyt claims, “its mission was to provide the pope with authoritative guidance.”\footnote{57}{Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate, 17.} The committee was comprised of a number of bishops and cardinals as well as lay couples, demographers, social scientists, medical researchers, and doctors.\footnote{58}{Ibid., 19.} Before the commission’s work was completed, the committee

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{56}{Robert G. Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate (Kansas City, Mo: National Catholic Reporter, 1968), 9.}
\footnotetext{57}{Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate, 17.}
\footnotetext{58}{Ibid., 19.}
\end{footnotes}
had become divided on the ABC issue. The majority of the people on the committee favored a revision in official teaching with regard to the use of ABC in marriage and commonly called themselves revisionist theologians. A minority group favored continuing the traditional condemnation of ABC use, and they are often called traditionalists or conservatives. Both of these groups presented documents to the pope to aid him in his discernment process. The documents were not supposed to be released to the public, but some of the documents from both sides were eventually leaked to the press.59

A Summary of the Revisionists' Arguments from the So-called Majority Report

At the Second Vatican Council the Church sought dialogue with the world and acknowledged that dialogue was necessary because both were in a state of continual change.60 Change is not to be seen as a threat, but as part of the Church's dynamic progress and growth.61 For many years the Church taught "...that marital intercourse was illicit unless accompanied by the intention to procreate - or, at least (because of the words of 1 Cor. 7.) to offer an outlet for the other partner; and yet no theologians hold to this teaching today, nor is it the official position."62 This development in marriage theology can also be found in other authoritative documents. "Pius XI, in Casti Connubii already, referring to the tradition expressed in the Roman Catechism, said: 'This mutual inward molding of a husband and wife, this determined effort to perfect each other, can in a very real sense be said to be the chief reason and purpose of matrimony.'"63 There are many reasons for this evolution of understanding, "advances in physiological, biological, psychological and sexological knowledge; a changed estimation of the meaning of sexuality and of conjugal relations; but especially a better perception of the responsibility

60 Ibid., 80-81.
61 Ibid., 79.
62 Ibid., 67.
63 Ibid., 82.
of man for humanizing the gifts of nature and using them to bring the life of man to greater perfection.⁶⁴

Today many theologians propose that:

The morality of sexual acts between married people takes its meaning first of all and specifically from the ordering of their actions in a fruitful married life, that is one which is practiced with responsible, generous and prudent parenthood. It does not then depend upon the direct fecundity of each and every particular act. Moreover the morality of every marital act depends upon the requirements of mutual love in all its aspects.⁶⁵

In Casti Connubii Pius XI supported the use of sexual intercourse during the infertile period and allowed “a separation between the sexual act which is explicitly intended and its reproductive effect which is intentionally excluded.”⁶⁶ A couple using ABC has the same intent, but is intervening in the generative processes to more effectively avoid the reproductive effect of intercourse. Revisionist theologians claim:

It is proper to man, created to the image of God, to use what is given in physical nature in a way that he may develop it to its full significance with a view to the good of the whole person ... men should discover means more and more apt and adequate so that the ‘ministry which must be fulfilled in a manner which is worthy of man’ (Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, II, c. 1, par. 51) can be fulfilled by married people.⁶⁷

Many revisionist theologians believe “the views we hold now are not a turning-back on traditional values, but a deepening of them.”⁶⁸ Repeated official condemnation of ABC “is by no means an apostolic tradition or an attestation of faith but merely the tradition of a teaching formulated in diverse way at diverse times.” For example, Augustine objected to the use of the infertile period to avoid conception because the Manicheans used that

⁶⁴ Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate, 66.
⁶⁶ Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate, 90.
⁶⁷ Ibid., 87; and Fuchs, “The Majority Papal Commission Report,” 158.
⁶⁸ Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate, 108.
method. Ironically this is the only method considered to be acceptable and moral by the magisterium today. 69 Hoyt offers another quote from the “Majority Report”:

What has been condemned in the past and remains so today is the unjustified refusal of life, arbitrary human intervention for the sake of moments of egoistic pleasure.

...what is always to be condemned is not the regulation of conception, but an egoistic married life, refusing a creative opening-out of the family circle, and so refusing a truly human – and therefore truly Christian – married love. 70

It is the egotistical and total opposition to children the church has and always will condemn as gravely sinful. 71 The tradition was interpreted and explained according to the conditions of the times; these same values are being upheld by couples who for serious reasons need to regulate conception with modern means for “the totality of married life.” 72

One problem with Casti Connubii is the natural law argument the pope used, did “not consider sufficiently man, God’s creature, as the prudent administrator and steward of the gifts of nature.” 73 “Little by little, however, the church has freed herself from this inadequate concept of nature and the natural law.” 74 Revisionists add, “It is natural to man to use his skill in order to put under human control what is given by physical nature.” 75 In the past, some medical interventions were prohibited because theologians thought we should not interfere with nature, but now these interventions are allowed for the good of the person and the community. 76 Humans are primarily rational creatures and they conform to their rational nature when they intervene in the biological processes to achieve human ends. 77 Revisionists claim: “It is the duty of man to perfect nature (or to

69 Noonan, Conception, 120.
72 Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate, 89.
73 Ibid., 64.
74 Ibid., 65.
75 Ibid., 91; and Fuchs, ”The Majority Papal Commission Report,” 162.
76 Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate, 68.
77 Ibid., 69.
order it to the human good expressed in matrimony) but not to destroy it.” Many revisionist theologians believe “the substance of tradition stands in continuity and is respected.” Fertility regulation issue today faces different problems and situations, which could mean a different conclusion about the use of birth control.

Theologians who support a change in official church teaching do so out of concern for the totality of the marriage relationship:

Infertile conjugal acts constitute a totality with fertile acts and have a single moral specification.... and this is the case for matrimonial acts which are composed of several fertile and infertile acts; they constitute one totality because they are referred to one deliberate choice.

Revisionists also appeal to the idea of humanity’s dominion over nature.

“Biological fecundity is not continuous and is subject to many irregularities and therefore ought to be assumed into the human sphere and be regulated within it.” The rhythm method may not work for all couples because “only sixty percent of women have a regular cycle.” Therefore, “the means to be chosen, where several are possible, is that which carries with it the least possible negative element, according to the concrete situation of the couple.” Thus the use of the rhythm method might not be able to provide some couples with the reliability they need to responsibly regulate their fertility.

Finally, revisionist theologians argue that most Catholics disagree with the teaching on ABC. If the Church is to be in dialogue with the world, the Church needs to consider the practices of its faithful as well as the teachings of our separated brethren. Official teachings are not being based on the current understanding of sex and marriage.

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78 Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate, 71-72.
80 Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate, 72.
81 Ibid., 71.
82 Ibid., 75.
84 Hoyt, The Birth Control Debate, 84-85, 87.
85 Ibid., 87.
but on loyalty to past teachings and methods, and a fear that change would hurt credibility and claims of infallibility.

**Criticisms of Humane Vitae**

In the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* Pope Paul VI opposed a revision of the teaching on ABC. ABC was declared to be intrinsically wrong and could not be used by couples to prevent conception even for serious reasons. Couples would have to rely on other methods such as periodic continence to avoid pregnancy. (It is significant to this study that Pope Paul VI was reading Karol Wojtyła’s book *Love and Responsibility* at the time he wrote the encyclical.)

The criticisms against *Humanae Vitae* were immediate. Within twenty-four hours theologians in the United States signed a statement of protest against the teaching of the document. Many critics claimed that much in the encyclical was in contradiction to the Second Vatican Council. The pope had removed this decision from the bishops, many of whom supported a revision in the teaching, and then he ignored the findings of the majority of the experts on the committee. Only four theologians on the committee signed the minority report, which supported maintaining the condemnation of ABC. The open dialogue with the modern world and the modern sciences, along with respect for collegiality, was ignored. The encyclical was indifferent “to Vatican II’s assertion that

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86 Hoyt, *The Birth Control Debate*, 10,11.
87 Ibid., 59-61.
91 Hoyt, *The Birth Control Debate*, 179.
prolonged sexual abstinence may cause 'faithfulness to be imperiled and its quality of fruitfulness to be ruined.'\textsuperscript{92}

Another argument against \textit{Humane Vitae} was that the pope's arguments "are based on an inadequate concept of natural law."\textsuperscript{93} The methodology he used did not seem to be historically conscious or inductive like the ones used at the Second Vatican Council but rather reflected a narrow understanding of natural law that describes morality in terms of acts and physical processes. Revisionists say the use of natural law can be interpreted many ways and has changed according to historical influences: "Past authoritative statements on religious liberty, interest-taking, the right to silence and the ends of marriage have all been corrected at a later date."\textsuperscript{94}

Critics claim that Pope Paul VI did not seriously consider the witness of the vast majority of practicing Catholics who believed the use of ABC was morally acceptable: "The special witness of many Catholic couples is neglected; it fails to acknowledge the witness of the separated Christian churches and ecclesial communities; it is insensitive to the witness of many men of good will; it pays insufficient attention to the ethical import of modern science."\textsuperscript{95} Michael Novak, a former revisionist who has since changed his position on ABC, said:

In human terms, the Pope simply cannot be aware of the human suffering and the unreality involved in his conception of sexuality in marriage... In theological terms, his decision is of the utmost importance because it provides a very clear test of the source of doctrinal authority within the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{96}

Ultimately, many theologians who opposed Paul VI's conclusions either claimed the encyclical is not infallible, or that Catholics could still use ABC if their conscience

\textsuperscript{92} Maguire, "Theologians' Statement," 69.
\textsuperscript{93} Hoyt, \textit{The Birth Control Debate}, 180.
\textsuperscript{94} Hoyt, \textit{The Birth Control Debate}, 179.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 180.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 201.
discerned they needed to use it to responsibly regulate fertility for the sake of their marriage and family.\textsuperscript{97}

**Revisionists' Teachings Are Not a Break from Traditional Values**

Advocates for the use of ABC do not see the principles which lead to their conclusions in opposition to previous teachings on morality: “the views we hold now are not a turning-back on traditional values, but a deepening of them.”\textsuperscript{98} Gula is an example of a revisionist theologian who believes the values sought in modern methods of determining morality retain what is most important from previous teachings in Catholic ethics.

Gula claims the reason why the classicist world-view and natural law are not the best methods on which to base moral theology is that Cicero d. 43 B.C and Ulpian d. 228 A.D. influenced the great teacher of natural law, Thomas Aquinas. Ulpian said natural law is “what man shares in common with the animals” and Cicero said that natural law was “an innate power to which we ought to conform.” (reason, prudent thought) “The ambiguity of Thomas and his vacillation between observing the ‘order of nature’ and observing the ‘order of reason’ to arrive at moral norms have caused great confusion in Catholic moral thought.” This is why natural law supports physicalism over personalism in determining morality,\textsuperscript{99} and why traditional moralists are using a physicalist argument against birth control.\textsuperscript{100} Gula believes that the so-called traditional methods (particularly natural law) of doing theology are inadequate because they place too much emphasis on physical action and not on the total person and surrounding circumstances.\textsuperscript{101}

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{97} Hoyt, *The Birth Control Debate*, 179; and Charles E. Curran, *Faithful Dissent*, Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1986, 17.
\item \textsuperscript{98} Hoyt, *The Birth Control Debate*, 108.
\item \textsuperscript{100} Gula, *What Are They Saying About Moral Norms?*, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 36.
\end{footnotes}
The new methods of explaining morality see nature as a force over which we have dominion and which we can control to meet human needs. Gula refers to Louis Janssens who “shows that ...contemporary moralists do not understand nature as prescribing God’s moral will. Nature provides the material with which we have to deal in a human way to promote the well-being of human life.” With this perspective “nature provides the possibilities and potentialities which the human person can use to make human life truly human.”

Contemporary theologians evaluate morality according to the total person. An example of this is “personalism.” Personalism goes beyond the physical or biological and includes the social, spiritual, and psychological dimensions of a person. “Contemporary theology recognizes that it cannot ignore the unfinished, evolutionary character of human nature and the human world.” The contemporary view sees human nature and the world as being more dynamic than it was seen in the past, which means moral norms can change. The concrete expressions of norms is influenced by particular historical circumstances, and to determine the morality of an act one needs to include the intent and circumstance to determine its morality.

Gula identifies several theologians whose methods are more concerned with the good of the person than the physical act. Joseph Fletcher holds the position that we should do what is the most loving, what is the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Peter Knauer says that physical evil and moral evil are two different things and that one needs commensurate reasons to perform a physical evil, but that it would not be

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102 Gula, What Are They Saying About Moral Norms?, 37.
103 Ibid., 41.
104 Gula, What Are They Saying About Moral Norms?, 35.
105 Ibid., 47.
106 Ibid., 55-57.
107 Ibid., 60-61.
a moral evil as long as doing this does not undermine the value chosen in the long run.\textsuperscript{108}

Bruno Schuller claims that a norm should be followed unless there is a more important value that deserves preference.\textsuperscript{109} Richard McCormick believes that "actions which cause non-moral evils are moral only if there is a truly proportionate reason which justifies the action."\textsuperscript{110} Gula believes these methods are improvements over the so-called traditional methods, because traditional moralists claimed certain actions were intrinsically evil, thus the intent and circumstances did not matter.\textsuperscript{111}

Charles Curran is also concerned that morality is not being determined by what is truly good for people and their marriages in the total human context, but by biological processes: \textsuperscript{112} "The encyclical on the regulation of birth employs a natural law methodology which tends to identify the moral action with the physical and biological structure of the act."\textsuperscript{113} It is understandable that primitive people found happiness by conforming to nature because the forces of nature dominated their lives. However, we no longer need to conform to nature to find happiness because we have power over it.\textsuperscript{114}

Curran believes an inaccurate understanding of human biology and lack of medical advancements heavily influenced the previous teaching on fertility regulation:

Imperfect medical and biological knowledge merely heightened the importance attached by the older theologians to the physical and procreative aspects of sexuality. Contemporary Catholic theologians too often forget the recent and rapid advances in scientific knowledge about human reproduction and sexuality....\textsuperscript{115}

...Thus, only within the last hundred years or so has science realized that the woman is not fertile for the greater part of her menstrual cycle. Procreation is not possible after every act of sexual intercourse but only during a comparatively short time each month. Thinkers like the classical moral theologians who lacked the knowledge of modern medicine necessarily would give too great a value to human

\textsuperscript{108} Gula, \textit{What Are They Saying About Moral Norms?}, 61-65.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 66.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 74.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 68.


\textsuperscript{113} Curran, \textit{Themes in Fundamental Moral Theology}, 64.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 40-42.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 168.
semen and see too strong a connection between the individual sexual actuation and procreation.\textsuperscript{116}

Curran also claims that the so-called traditional methods of determining morality do not take into sufficient account the relational aspects:

Morality depends primarily not on the substance viewed in itself but on the individual seen in relationship to other beings. Unfortunately, the so-called traditional natural law approach frequently derives its conclusions from the nature of a faculty or the physical causality of an action seen only in itself and not in relationship with the total person and the entire community.\textsuperscript{117}

Curran chooses “a relationality-responsibility model as the basic ethical model.... For the relationality-responsibility model, sin is the breaking of our multiple relationships with God, neighbor, self, and the world.”\textsuperscript{118} He adds: “In general an emphasis on the person as subject or agent accepts the fact that the acts of the individual must be seen not in relation to an extrinsic norm but in relation to the person acting.”\textsuperscript{119}

Louis Janssens claims ABC can be justified by Thomas Aquinas’s doctrine of double effect. Janssens sees Thomas’s “debita proportio” as being explained today as a proportionate reason.\textsuperscript{120} Thomas Aquinas would classify ABC as an “ontic evil” and not a moral evil because ABC could be used for the higher ends of the couple. “According to Thomas, it is permissible to will in itself an act which causes ontic evil, provided that certain conditions are present and if this act itself serves a higher end.”\textsuperscript{121} Curran agrees with Janssens’s assessment of Thomas:

Thomas Aquinas properly belongs under the category of teleology – morality is based on the ultimate end and acts are good or bad depending on whether or not they bring us to the ultimate end or impede this progress. Thomas’s first consideration is

\textsuperscript{116} Curran, \textit{Themes in Fundamental Moral Theology}, 168-169.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 204-205.
\textsuperscript{119} Curran, \textit{Themes in Fundamental Moral Theology}, 207-208.
\textsuperscript{121} Janssens, “Ontic Evil and Moral Evil,” 59.
the ultimate end of human beings, followed by his discussion of the human acts by which we achieve the ultimate end.... The manuals unfortunately do not follow either the whole of the Thomistic teaching or the tone of that moral teaching.\textsuperscript{122}

Peter Knauer says that, in the encyclical \textit{Casti Connubii}, Pope Pius XI is against moral evil but not necessarily physical evil. Traditional Catholic teachings have already justified using physical evils if they did not cause a moral evil and served the greater good; they just used different terminology.\textsuperscript{123} Knauer claims that theologians have traditionally used the doctrine of double effect to justify a physical evil, and this doctrine was employing what he would call commensurate reason.\textsuperscript{124} Pope Pius XI used commensurate reason to justify the use of periodic continence to avoid pregnancy, and without a commensurate reason it would be immoral. Pius XII also used commensurate reason to allow the use of periodic continence in marriage and again, without a commensurate reason, periodic continence is not justified.\textsuperscript{125} Knauer maintains that ABC can be perceived as a physical evil, not a moral evil, when a commensurate reason is present.\textsuperscript{126} He also sees commensurate reason as supporting the principle of totality.\textsuperscript{127} The teaching condemning the use of ABC may be revised because there are cases where ABC may be a physical evil, since it opposes the good of procreation, but not a moral evil, if, through commensurate reason, it could be shown that ABC supported the total good of the marriage.\textsuperscript{128} Knauer claims, \textit{"If the reason of an act is commensurate, it alone determines the finis operis, so that the act is morally good."}\textsuperscript{129} He also believes that one must look at the long term consequences: "To prove that a particular act is contraceptive

\begin{footnotes}
\item[122] Curran, \textit{Themes in Fundamental Moral Theology}, 204.
\item[125] Knauer, "The Hermeneutic Function of the Principle of Double Effect," 33.
\item[126] Ibid., 30-31.
\item[127] Ibid., 21-23.
\item[128] Ibid., 30-35.
\item[129] Ibid., 11.
\end{footnotes}
in the moral sense it must be shown that the act in the last analysis does not serve the end of preservation and deepening marital love, but in the long run subverts it.”\textsuperscript{130}

\textbf{Various Criticisms About NFP and the Condemnation of ABC}

Now that the relationship is portrayed as being important, whatever will enhance and strengthen the relationship should be encouraged. Rosemary Radford Ruether is concerned that the rhythm method imposes an abnormal regime on the couple that harms their relationship. The NFP method does not allow for sufficient freedom for the good of the relationship. Couples need the benefits of the marital act when the relationship calls for it and not ten days later. The marital act is an expression of the relationship and not an egoist appetite. The abstaining disrupts the “psychological dynamics of the sexual life.”\textsuperscript{131} Ruether considers the method to be dehumanizing, like not being allowed the spontaneous expression of a smile and living in fear due to the irregularity of the cycle.\textsuperscript{132} ABC allows the couple “the maximum freedom to develop the auxiliary perfections of their married life as much as possible.”\textsuperscript{133}

Bernard Häring is concerned about the apparent double standard with regard to the use of medicine in regulating fertility. Häring questions why Catholics are allowed to use pills to enhance fertility but not allowed to use pills to inhibit fertility. This seems like a double standard in favor of procreation without adequate appreciation of the relationship. Many couple’s fertility cycles are not regular and it is unreasonably difficult for them to use NFP because they are unable to determine when they are fertile and infertile. Häring says morality is being based on cycles, which couples have no control over and he

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\textsuperscript{130} Knauer, “The Hermeneutic Function of the Principle of Double Effect,” 34.  
\textsuperscript{132} Ruether, “Birth Control and the Ideals of Marital Sexuality,” 151.  
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 152.
\end{flushright}
questions if salvation should be determined by the reliability of someone’s cycle? Härning is also concerned, “about the less educated people who are incapable of acquiring and using the modern knowledge of these rhythmic tendencies.”

The arguments put forth by Humanae Vitae and supported by John Paul II call for each and every act to be open to life. During certain parts of a woman’s cycle it is impossible for her to become pregnant. Härning doubts if couples who practice NFP are truly “open to the transmission of life” and says: “The expression ‘open to new life’ has much less meaning now.” How are these couples any more open to life with each and every act than couples who use other methods? How are pregnancy, infertile periods, and menopause still considered as acts open to new life even though scientifically one cannot get pregnant? How are naturally sterile couples any more open to life with each and every act than couples who use artificial means? Couples wanting to avoid a pregnancy have intercourse during the infertile part of the woman’s cycle precisely because she is infertile. If the success rate using NFP is as high as supporters of NFP say it is, then how is the couple open to new life with each and every act?

I have provided a selective presentation of some of the major critics and arguments against the official Catholic condemnation of ABC. Now that I have established why revisionist theologians believe a change is in order, and I have shown how the debate has evolved historically, we are in a position to see what critics of John Paul II are saying about his arguments. What I am trying to do in this thesis is present John Paul II’s positions and the current arguments against his positions and evaluate how

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135 Ibid., 157.
136 Ibid., 161.
137 Härning, “The Inseparability of the Unitive-Procreative Functions,” 155.
138 Ibid., 163-164
accurately the critics are engaging his actual positions. Now that we understand a little about some of the previous criticisms, we are prepared to hear from John Paul II's critics.
THEOLOGIANS WITH CRITICISMS OF JOHN PAUL II'S ARGUMENTS

Luke Timothy Johnson

Luke Timothy Johnson offers numerous criticisms of John Paul II's teachings on ABC and marital sexuality. Johnson's first criticism against the pope's book, *The Theology of the Body*, is that it does not respond to the concerns of real people:

John Paul II's work, far from being a breakthrough for modern thought, represents a mode of theology that has little to say to ordinary people because it shows so little awareness of ordinary life....

...Because of its theological insufficiency, the pope's teaching does not adequately respond to the anxieties of those who seek a Christian understanding of the body and of human sexuality and practical guidance for life as sexually active adults....

...no real sense of human love as actually experienced emerges in these reflections.139

Johnson does not believe that the pope's reflections help people deal with love, intimacy, and sexuality as they experience it. Even though John Paul II uses phenomenology, his explanations do not express the awkwardness and giddiness of actual sexual experiences, but instead are based on textual exegesis. The pope spends a lot of time analyzing and explaining scripture, "but seems never to look at actual human experience."

Johnson is not against using scripture to explain human experience, but he believes that the lived experience of people today also needs to be heard. Johnson says, "an occasional glance toward human experience as actually lived may be appropriate, even for the magisterium."140 Many couples would testify to a different experience of sex in marriage, one that is at odds with the conclusions of the pope. "I would welcome the honest acknowledgment that for many who are married the pleasure and comfort of

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sexual love are most needed precisely when least available, not because of fertility
rhythms, but because of sickness and anxiety and separation and loss.\footnote{141}

Johnson also criticizes John Paul II’s teachings for not seeming very concerned or
offering much hope to people who are not in heterosexual marriages or have not chosen a
celibate vocation. These people, their experiences, and their perspectives are completely
left out of the reflections:

Human love and sexuality can appear in only one approved form, with every other
way of being sexual or loving left out altogether. Is it not important at least to
acknowledge that a significant portion of humans—even if we take a ludicrously low
percentage, at least tens of millions—are homosexual?\footnote{142}

John Paul II also fails to truly listen to married people and especially women:

Sad to say, John Paul’s theology of the body, for all its attention to Scripture,
reveals the same deep disinterest in the ways the experience of married people, and
especially women (guided by the Holy Spirit, as we devoutly pray) might inform
theology and the decision-making process of the church.\footnote{143}

An adequate theology of the body ought to account for people in all different walks of life
and all types of sexual orientations. Johnson claims John Paul II has not truly listened to
what others are saying about their experience of marriage and sexuality:

A theology of the body ought to speak not only of an ‘original solitude’ that is
supposedly cured by marriage, but also of the ‘continuing solitude’ of those both
married and single, whose vocation is not celibacy yet whose erotic desires find, for
these and many other reasons, no legitimate or sanctified expression, and, in these
papal conferences, neither recognition nor concern.\footnote{144}

Johnson does not believe John Paul II’s theology addresses the complicated and
real problems of people who are victims of circumstances:

What about couples who can no longer have sexual relations because one of them
has innocently been infected by HIV, and not to use a condom means also to infect
the other with a potentially lethal virus? ... Given the fact that in Africa AIDS affects
tens of millions of men, women, and children (very many of them Christian), is the

\footnote{142} Ibid., 14.
\footnote{143} Ibid., 17.
\footnote{144} Ibid., 16.
refusal to allow the use of condoms (leaving aside other medical interventions and the changing of sexual mores) coming dangerously close to assisting in genocide?\textsuperscript{145}

The pope's teachings are illogical, suggests Johnson; compassion and concern for these people should lead to a reexamination of the ban on ABC.\textsuperscript{146}

Another problem that Johnson finds with John Paul II's 'theology of the body' is how he presents and defends his arguments. He says, "the pope only asserts and never demonstrates." He puts forth statements as if they were facts about humanity, but he does not explain and substantiate the reasons for his conclusions. Nor does the pope cite the studies of other professionals to support his teachings, but instead relies on his own intellect and experiences to justify his positions. John Paul II "minimizes the flat internal contradictions among the conferences. For example on October 1, 1980, the pope declares that a husband cannot be guilty of 'lust in the heart' for his wife, but a week later, in the conference of October 8, he states confidently that even husbands can sin in this fashion."\textsuperscript{147}

John Paul II's 'theology of the body' is too narrow because it does not take into account the other fallen areas of the human person like gluttony and drunkenness. Reducing a theology of the body to sexuality falsifies it from the beginning. A thorough theology of the body would "embrace all the other ways in which human embodiedness both enables and limits human freedom through disposition of material possessions, through relationships to the environment, through artistic creativity, and through suffering—both sinful and sanctifying."\textsuperscript{148}

As a biblical scholar, Johnson disagrees with John Paul II's use of scripture:

As for the pope's way of reading Scripture, the grade is mixed. Certainly he is careful with the texts. Nor does he misrepresent those aspects of the text he discusses in any major way—although he leaves the impression that Matthew's

\textsuperscript{145} Johnson, "A Disembodied 'Theology of the Body,'" 17.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 12.
“blessed are the pure of heart” (5:8) refers to chastity, when in fact he knows very well that the beatitude does not have that restricted sense. Even more questionable are the ways John Paul II selects and extrapolates from specific texts without sufficient grounding or explanation.\textsuperscript{149} Johnson wonders why the pope chose the passages he did and left out others or spent very little time on some verses which seem to articulate the love between a husband and a wife.\textsuperscript{150} How are the passages related to each other and how can an idea from one passage be applied to another passage to arrive at a conclusion for all modern people? Johnson complains: “John Paul II seems unaware of the dangers of deriving ontological conclusions from selected ancient narrative texts. He inveighs against the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion,’ but the remedy is not an uncritical reading that moves directly from the ancient story to an essential human condition.”\textsuperscript{151}

Johnson also faults the pope for failing to explain how verses contrary to his positions fit into his theology:

John Paul II does not deal with some of the difficulties presented by the texts he does select. For instance, he manages to use Matthew 19:3-9, on the question of marriage’s indissolubility, without ever adverting to the clause allowing divorce on the grounds of porneia (sexual morality) [sic] in both Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. What does that exceptive clause suggest about the distance between the ideal “in the beginning” evoked by Jesus, and the hard realities of actual marriages faced by the Matthean (and every subsequent) church?\textsuperscript{152}

If the Matthean Church compromised and allowed a clause for divorce, what does that say about the modern church’s right to allow clauses for other difficult situations that seem at odds with other teachings in scripture?\textsuperscript{153} The pope’s selection of scripture passages for analysis has given him a narrow and ascetical perspective of the total scriptural message.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 13.
Johnson adds: “A sadly neglected text is 1 Timothy 6:17, where God supplies us all things richly for our enjoyment.”\textsuperscript{154}

Johnson’s most spirited criticism is against John Paul II’s portrayal of the moral agency of women:

The position of the popes and their apologists continues to reveal the pervasive sexism that becomes ever more obvious within official Catholicism.\textsuperscript{155}…John Paul II’s reading of Scripture tends to reduce the moral agency of women within the marriage covenant and sexual relationships. This becomes glaringly obvious in the argument that artificial birth control is wrong because it tends to “instrumentalize” women for men’s pleasure by making the woman a passive object of passion rather than a partner in mutuality.\textsuperscript{156}

John Paul II’s exegesis of scripture leads, claims Johnson, to a sexist understanding of women. Even though Johnson acknowledges that the pope uses Genesis 1, he does not use it vigorously enough to portray that men and women are equals:

The Genesis 2 account pushes him virtually to equate “man” with “male,” with the unhappy result that males experience both the original solitude the pope wants to make distinctively human as well as the dominion over creation expressed by the naming of animals. Females inevitably appear as “helpers” and as complimentary to the already rather complete humanity found in the male. Small wonder that in virtually none of his further reflection on sexuality do women appear as moral agents: Men can have lust in the hearts but not women; men can struggle with concupiscence but apparently women do not; men can exploit their wives sexually but women can’t exploit their husbands sexually.\textsuperscript{157}

The moral agency of women is undermined in the pope’s exegesis of scripture. Nor are women trusted to make the decision of whether it is morally acceptable for them to use ABC. Johnson says advocates of NFP have treated women like objects because their focus remains:

…tightly fixed on biological processes rather than on emotional and spiritual communication through the body….Don’t all of us living in the real world of bodies know that women have plenty of reasons of their own to be relieved of worries about pregnancy for a time and to be freed for sexual enjoyment purely for the sake of intimacy and even celebration?\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 16-17.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 17.
John Paul II does not know everything there is to know about the human body and his speculations and interpretations do not make something necessarily true:

Most important, I would like to see a greater intellectual modesty, not only concerning the ‘facts’ of revelation but also with the ‘facts’ of human embodiedness. In everything having to do with the body, we are in the realm of what Gabriel Marcel called mystery....we don’t understand everything about the body.  

Johnson implies that John Paul II distrusts what the body can teach us about ourselves:

We cannot detach ourselves from our bodies as though they were simply what we ‘have’ rather than also what we ‘are.’ We are deeply implicated and cannot distance ourselves from the body without self-distortion. Our bodies are not only to be schooled by our minds and wills; they also instruct and discipline us in often humbling ways. Should not a genuine ‘theology of the body’ begin with a posture of receptive attention to and learning from our bodies? 

The pope distrusts and distances himself from the body and sexual passions, says Johnson, because he is afraid to really learn from them: “Human bodies are part of God’s image and the means through which absolutely everything we can learn about God must come to us.” People should not lack temperance or continence, yet we should listen to what our bodies are leading us to accept. Johnson says God uses sexual passion and our bodies to motivate us and to choose things our minds would never choose.

It is because of his distrust of the body and sexual passion that the pope’s perspective on marital love is distorted:

Self-control is not the entire point of sexual love; celibacy is not the goal of marriage! ...

...I would welcome from the pope some appreciation for the goodness of sexual pleasure—any bodily pleasure, come to think of it! ... Sexual passion, in papal teaching, appears mainly as an obstacle to authentic love,...

...John Paul II and his apologists seem to think that concupiscence is our biggest challenge. How many of us would welcome a dose of concupiscence, when the grinding realities of sickness and the need have drained the body of all its sap and sweetness, just as a reminder of being sentient!

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160 Ibid., 14-15.
161 Ibid., 15.
162 Ibid., 15.
163 Ibid., 16.
Johnson believes God has placed pleasure within the sexual act for the good of humanity to lead us to love others. The pope’s emphasis on continence and self-control is at odds with a modern understanding that pleasure and marital intercourse are gifts from God.

Johnson criticizes the pope’s understanding of human love and says marital love is not determined by “fertility rhythms.”¹⁶⁴ Faithfulness, when it is genuine, is the result of a delicate and attentive creativity between partners, and not simply the automatic product of ‘self-control.’¹⁶⁵ A ‘theology of the body’ should talk about how human sexual existence is difficult and how little support there is for covenanted love and how the stresses of life “bear upon our sexual expression.”¹⁶⁶ John Paul II’s overemphasis on the importance of procreation has obliterated the unitive aspect of marital intercourse:

The theology of the body is reduced to sexuality, and sexuality to ‘the transmission of life.’ The descent to biologism is unavoidable. ...John Paul II recognizes two ends of sexual love, unitive intimacy and procreation. But from the other side of his mouth he declares that if procreation is blocked, not only that end has been canceled but also the unitive end as well. He has thereby, despite his protestations to the contrary, simply reduced the two ends to one. This can be shown clearly by applying the logic in reverse, by insisting that sexual intercourse that is not a manifestation of intimacy or unity also cancels the procreative end of the act.¹⁶⁷

The Theology of the Body was geared to a defense of Humanae Vitae, but, claims Johnson, John Paul II failed to provide anything convincing.¹⁶⁸ Johnson does not believe that using ABC discounts the overall disposition of openness to life:

The focus on each act of intercourse rather than on the overall dispositions of married couples is morally distorting. ... the arguments of Paul VI and John Paul II sacrifice logic to moral brinkmanship. When Paul VI equated artificial birth control and abortion, he not only defied science, but also provoked the opposite result of the one he intended.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 15.
¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 15-16.
¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 16.
¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 14.
¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 16.
Ultimately, Johnson believes that the praise by John Paul II’s supporters for his ‘theology of the body’ is excessive and that the pope’s teachings will not bear the fruit they expect it to.

**Ronald Modras**

Ronald Modras is another theologian with numerous criticisms of John Paul II’s teachings. The first is that John Paul II does not truly value the importance of sex and passion and that he sees these pleasures and the body as barriers to a spiritual life:

Wojtyla still maintains the old Platonic dualism with its suspicion of the body and its passions.... Wojtyla espouses a stratified concept of the human person. Like the pagan stoics and medieval schoolmen, he views the emotions as dangerous if not evil.170

This understanding of sex and passion causes the pope to have a puritanical understanding of love. Modras says that, according to John Paul II:

Genuine love is the antithesis of emotional desire, and a couple ‘must free themselves from those erotic sensations which have no legitimation in true love.’ Wojtyla describes love as a ‘duty’ whereas sexual desire or concupiscence ‘means a constant tendency merely to ‘enjoy’...Wojtyla does not explicitly describe sexual feelings as dirty, but he does imply it when he writes that ‘sensations and actions springing from sexual reactions and the emotions connected with them tend to deprive love of its crystal clarity’ (p. 146). Sexual emotions or enjoyment are not evil in themselves, but only if dissociated from procreation.171

Modras does not believe the pope really values passion and the body:

In 1971 he wrote about concupiscence, which we may here define as spontaneous sexual desire, as destroying human dignity and impoverishing the world.172....

...More problematic, however is his discussion of the spontaneous sexual desire that Catholic theological tradition has come to call concupiscence.173

John Paul II sees pleasure and desire as vices a person must learn to control. Again

Modras cites words and phrases from John Paul II’s writings:

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171 Modras, “Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body,” 152.

172 Ibid., 152.

173 Ibid., 153.
They were created ‘above the world of living beings or ‘animalia’ (p.52), capable of ‘disinterested’ self-giving without any taint of the selfish ‘enjoyment’ that is the negation of the ‘nuptial meaning’ of the body (p.83)....

...As a consequence of that first sin, our bodies are marked by the ‘humiliation’ that is spontaneous sexual desire or concupiscence (p. 50)....

...Unwilled spontaneous sexual attraction or desire for someone of the same sex is a ‘disorder’ in the same way that unwilled, spontaneous sexual attraction or desire for anyone is an ‘imbalance’ and ‘distortion’...It is a ‘disorder’ and ‘distortion’ since, for the pope as for Augustine, sexuality was created for procreation, not enjoyment. 174

Modras says that the pope is overreacting to the evil of concupiscence and its effect on humanity:

Karl Rahner, the foremost Catholic theologian of our century, has pointed out that concupiscence is natural, since, according to Catholic tradition, freedom from it is preternatural and so not required by human nature. If Adam in the Genesis story was free from concupiscence, it did not stop him from sinning. It follows, moreover, that if concupiscence limits our totally free self-giving to virtue, it also limits our totally free self-giving to vice. If it keeps us from being angels, it keeps us from being demonic as well. 175

Modras also criticizes the pope for altering the Kantian imperative: “If there is a weakness in Wojtyla’s argument, it hinges upon the word merely. Although he states the Kantian imperative correctly the first time he quotes it, he thereafter regularly omits the crucial word merely.” We cannot help but make use of other persons as means as we deal with each other. The pope uses cardinals the way the rest of us use mechanics. The pope’s assertions just do not correspond with reality as people experience it. 176

Like Johnson, Modras also criticizes John Paul II’s exegesis of scripture: “The work is not one of biblical scholarship; the pope does not pretend to be a biblical scholar and only infrequently relies upon modern biblical exegesis.” 177 It is unclear at times what the pope is implying in his exegesis:

The reader may be confused at first, since one is not altogether sure whether Adam (‘humankind’) is regarded as a historical individual engaged in historical events or a symbolic representation of ourselves in our present human condition. In either case,

175 Ibid., 155.
176 Ibid., 151.
177 Ibid., 152-153.
the pope uses the creation stories not so much for substantiation as for inspiration or a jumping-off point for his own personal reflections....

...The pope interprets these texts not within their own distinct historical contexts but in the light of one another, assuming that they share a common theological vision and attitude toward the body and its sexuality.

As John Paul II interprets the Genesis stories and comes to conclusions based on them, Modras says, “Absent are any references to ‘mythical character’ as the pope draws an historical ‘state of original innocence’ from the first chapters of Genesis.” Modras concludes, “Adam is obviously not a symbol but a historical individual and his sin an event whose ‘cosmic shame’ is indicated by our sexual shame.” Modras wonders what contemporary biblical scholars have to say about “a historical Adam in complete control of his sexual organs.”

Modras also criticizes the pope’s use of terminology and how he applies terms without explaining the meanings sufficiently: “Pope John Paul II’s language is abstract, at times turgid, and often ambiguous.” It is difficult to understand the pope’s style of writing. In one instance a phrase or word seems to indicate one thing and in another it means something else. Also, John Paul II’s insistence of rational self-control and self-mastery in conjunction with the necessity of spouses accomplishing a conscious self-giving may be more than is humanly possible: “Psychologists will question whether a completely self-giving love is possible, and if complete rational self-control to the detriment of spontaneity is altogether desirable.” More importantly, if one fails to live out this vision, is it sinful?

Modras believes that: “the greatest challenge to the pope’s theology of the body and its sexuality is people’s experience. What the pope approaches from the outside and calls lust, they live on the inside and call love.” For someone who claims to be using phenomenology, the pope’s reflections are in contradiction to the actual experiences and

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179 Ibid., 155.
180 Ibid., 155.
181 Ibid., 155-156.
understanding of the majority of Christian couples. Even though the pope employs phenomenology, he does not back up his assertions with demonstrations, statistics, or even examples of peoples’ experiences: “Karol Wojtyla has never been one for offering empirical evidence for such claims.” Like Johnson, Modras does not see evidence for the pope’s positions, and he detects an overemphasis on bodily control without an appreciation for the good of sexual pleasure.

Richard Grecco

Another theologian who has critiqued John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body* is Richard Grecco. After giving a relatively positive review of the pope’s work, Grecco voices concerns about John Paul II’s conclusions:

Finally, there are a few questions that need exploration.
(a) About subjectivity. John Paul II pays relative inattention to the social sciences and this has consequences. For example, of man and woman he says, ‘their conjugal union presupposes a mature consciousness of the body’ (21 Nov. ’79). The way to such ‘maturity’ entails a search in all three dimensions of experience. But developmental theories of consciousness indicate that many, if not most people never achieve the high degree of authentic subjectivity that he describes. Can Church teaching realistically presuppose such keenly developed levels of subjectivity? If empirical data show that it cannot, then is not the implication a revision to the Church’s teaching on indissolubility?  

Like Modras, Grecco finds the terms John Paul II uses to be ambiguous. Grecco also says the portrayal of the meaning of the body seems to limit the originality and ingenuity of couples and their relationships:

John Paul II’s approach to the meaning of the body seems to be overly structured, almost mechanistic or pre-programmed. His emphasis, for example, on re-creating, re-constructing, rediscovering the meaning and then re-reading the language of the body appears somewhat exaggerated. What does such an emphasis say about the spontaneity of human expression and about human creativity and individuality?

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182 Modras, “Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body,” 151.
184 Grecco, “Recent Ecclesiastical Teaching,” 147.
Greco doubts if many couples are capable of living out this vision and argues that the pope’s perspective limits human freedom and individuality by being overly structured.

Lisa Sowle Cahill

A feminist theologian who has also critiqued the writings of John Paul II is Lisa Sowle Cahill. Cahill claims that the pope’s teachings are idealistic and that he overemphasizes the physical act:

The writings of John Paul II, to the extent that they romanticize and idealize the interpersonal love relationship, while grounding substantive norms in the physical act, continue to discourage the true integration of spirit and body as sources of sexual ethics. What is needed is a sexual ethics that recognizes both the physical and interpersonal aspects of sexuality, marriage and parenthood.  

John Paul II puts too much emphasis on the physical act and not enough on the relationship for his moral criteria. For Cahill what makes something moral or immoral is not so much the act, but the “concrete and practical degradation of the human persons involved.”

The pope’s description of human love requiring total self-gift seems too idealistic or romantic. Like others, Cahill doubts whether any couple can reach complete and total self-gift, especially each and every time within the marital act:

The idea that each act is a total self-gift depends upon a very romanticized depiction of sex, and even of marital love. Certainly there will be times when an act of sexual sharing is hampered or disturbed by factors, intrinsically or extrinsically generated, which impinge, either temporarily or permanently, on the couple’s relationship. They are stressed by economic difficulties, an ongoing disagreement about a family matter, blind spots in seeing one another’s emotional needs, a crying child, lack of sleep, or an important project due at work. But even more than that, in

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the most ideal of circumstances, human beings rarely if ever accomplish 'total self-gift.'\textsuperscript{188}

Cahill would rather see the pope talk about equality and unity rather "than of the intersubjective 'gift' which John Paul II wants to associate with the body's 'nuptial' meaning."\textsuperscript{189} She doubts people will be able to live out this vision of marital unity and questions if the mutual self-giving is required equally of both spouses in all aspects of married life.\textsuperscript{190} She concludes that the pope's ideas are not realistic: "Human realities do not always conform to the general ideal, however admirable, and that morally right choices will often depend on prudent, practical adaptation of the ideal to reality."\textsuperscript{191} Instead of striving for complete and mutual self-gift, the pope should do more to encourage equal responsibility in sexual intimacy and family life.\textsuperscript{192}

Cahill expresses this further concern: "Traditionalists, including the magisterium, tend to so tie procreation to acts that their affirmation of procreation is premised on what amounts to a denigration of the relationships in which it takes place."\textsuperscript{193} John Paul II's emphasis on procreation and traditional gender roles seems to undermine the importance of the relationship, personal development, and the well being of the persons involved, especially women:

While a loving union has been recognized as an equal purpose of sexual relations since about the time of the council, the welfare of the person, couple, or family is still never permitted to take precedence over the 'natural' goal of procreation. Among other effects, this inhibits our ability to see sexuality in relation to total personal development, and tends toward a view of women as primarily wives and mothers, usually in the home, prepared to give birth and raise children.\textsuperscript{194}


\textsuperscript{190} Cahill, "Catholic Sexual Ethics and the Dignity of the Person: Double Message," 145.

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 150.


\textsuperscript{193} Cahill, "Catholic Sexual Ethics and the Dignity of the Person: Double Message," 150.

\textsuperscript{194} Cahill, "Morality: the deepening crisis," 496-499.
Cahill believes part of John Paul II’s overemphasis on procreation is due to a lack of real dialogue with married couples and their experiences: “The testimony of married persons should have a prerogative in normative evaluations which has not been granted thus far.”\textsuperscript{195} She adds: “On what basis is it affirmed that marital experience requires procreation as the completion of conjugal love (especially if tied to each sex act)?”\textsuperscript{196}

The pope has misunderstood how couples view marital intercourse and he is applying his experiences and not the couples’ experiences: “More serious dialogue with married persons about the relation of having children to their conjugal commitment and to their sex lives (especially ‘each and every act!’) is in order.”\textsuperscript{197} Cahill refers to Rosemary Ruether’s argument:

As Rosemary Ruether observed early on in this debate, it is important to understand that, while the celibate cultivates sexual self-control and asceticism, that ethic should not dominate the sexuality of wives and husbands. Ruether insists rightly that a married person ‘has sublimated the sexual drive into a relationship with another person,’ the demands of which are ‘real and meaningful demands.’\textsuperscript{198}

Cahill implies that the pope has put too much emphasis on restraining sexual passion.

She cites the work of Mary Durkin and her book \textit{Feast of Love} as an example of someone who has worked with sociologists and the experiences of real couples:

‘The claim that contraception contradicts the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife’ ‘does not seem to relate to the actual experiences of many people.’ Indeed, more needed in the marital experience of many is encouragement to nurture their sexual attraction, rather than to control and restrain it.\textsuperscript{199}

Another difficulty Cahill has with “the nuptial meaning of the body” – is its isolation from the social conditions necessary for its realization, especially the structure and social location of the family, and the roles of women within the family.” The current social structures in the family and society would not allow for the vision of the pope to be

\textsuperscript{195} Cahill, “Divorced from Experience: Rethinking the Theology of Marriage,” 171.
\textsuperscript{197} Cahill, “Divorced from Experience: Rethinking the Theology of Marriage,” 176.
\textsuperscript{198} Cahill, \textit{Sex, Gender & Christian Ethics}, 204.
\textsuperscript{199} Cahill, “Divorced from Experience,” 176.
employed in a way that truly treated women as equals. Cahill reports how Jan Grootaers, questions John Paul II's "role identification and human classification," which has fostered "substantiate genuine discrimination and prejudice against them." John Paul II's use of sexist language and his stereotyping of men and women according to traditional roles foster discrimination.\textsuperscript{201} Cahill adds: "Moreover, if woman and men are to be equal partners in the conjugal relationship, their reproductive, familial, and social contributions must be seen in genuinely equal terms, and their control over family size must be shared."\textsuperscript{202} Cahill doubts that in the current culture couples can live the vision of John Paul II, especially with regard to the equal contribution of each spouse to this vision. She also questions if the primary role of motherhood for women is consistent with the idea of equality and shared responsibility:

   Yet the practical consequences of biblical and personalist themes are far from receiving full recognition. One is struck by the coalescence of a sexual ethics of procreation and union represented in each and every sexual act, and a social context in which motherhood must constitute the primary identity of women.\textsuperscript{203}

   Cahill is pleased that John Paul II is using scripture to ground his teachings, but she questions the conclusions of his reflections as well as the method he employs to arrive at those conclusions. Cahill calls for a "more explicit and nuanced development of the method or means by which one moves from biblical 'evidence' to a contemporary interpretation, and for the justification of such means."\textsuperscript{204} She is also concerned about how the original meanings of the texts affect the method and conclusions of John Paul II:

   The personalist language of 'mutual self-gift' and 'total surrender' of spouses through sexual union does not fit comfortably into Israelite views of marriage, nor even into the Genesis creation stories, though the latter are quite exceptional in the originally equal status given to the woman, and in the importance given to the couple as distinct from the family...neither the first nor the second creation story speaks of the institution of 'marriage' as such, and certainly not of any 'sacramental' marriage...

\textsuperscript{200} Cahill, "Divorced from Experience," 174.
\textsuperscript{201} Cahill, "Accent on the Masculine," 90-91.
\textsuperscript{202} Cahill, Sex, Gender & Christian Ethics, 201.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., 205.
\textsuperscript{204} Cahill, "Divorced from Experience: Rethinking the Theology of Marriage," 174.
Finally, the ‘one flesh’ unity of Genesis 2 is proposed in the context more of a social partnership than of a procreative one.\textsuperscript{205}

Even though she supports the pope's efforts to ground the discussion on scripture, she questions his method of exegesis, his conclusions, and how binding this interpretation is on all people.

**Summary**

This chapter has provided a brief history of how the understanding of the role of sexual intercourse in marriage has evolved in the Catholic Church and why some theologians believe a revision of the teaching banning the use of ABC is in order. Critics claim that the pope does not value sufficiently the role of sex in marriage and that he continues to see sex and pleasure as evil or at least as things that should be avoided as much as possible. They also say that his exegesis of scripture is flawed and that his conclusions about human love are unlivable because he does not adequately appreciate the experience of married couples or the importance of the relationship. Other criticisms include: how the pope uses terminology, how he stereotypes women according to traditional roles, the lack of moral agency he grants women, his lack of attention to those who are not heterosexual or celibate, internal contradictions of his teachings, and what psychologists have to say about the capability of people living according to his vision. This thesis seeks to address which of these arguments truly engage John Paul II’s positions and further the debate, and which ones misrepresent his teachings and thus hinder the debate.

\textsuperscript{205} Cahill, “Divorced from Experience,” 173.
CHAPTER 2

JOHN PAUL II’S VISION OF GOD’S PLAN FOR HUMAN LOVE

Now that we are aware of the critics' arguments, we can begin to evaluate their criticisms as we study John Paul II’s reasons for his positions. In this chapter I will present the basic principles behind the modern day method of NFP so the reader will be familiar with NFP as it is currently being taught. Then I will explain why John Paul II uses a phenomenological analysis of scripture to support his existential personalism. Finally, I will summarize and explain some of the principles behind John Paul II’s teachings about how the use of ABC is contrary to God’s plan for humanity because it violates human dignity by reducing spouses to become of pleasure and how the use of ABC falsifies the meaning of the marital act.

Natural Family Planning

NFP is considered by the pope to be a moral method of fertility regulation for married couples. NFP is a relatively modern method using the knowledge of the woman’s fertility cycle to either avoid or achieve a pregnancy. In the 1920’s independent researchers in Germany and Japan first discovered at what point in a woman’s cycle ovulation occurs. By the 1930’s people were using an imprecise method known as “calendar rhythm” to practice NFP.\textsuperscript{206} With the calendar rhythm couples used the knowledge of the woman’s menstrual cycle to approximate when it was likely she would and would not be fertile. A problem with the rhythm method is that it requires long periods of abstinence from intercourse and it is not tailored to the individual (many women have

irregular cycles) and therefore is not highly effective for many couples.\footnote{Chris West, Sex & Christian Discipleship: A Reflection on the 6th and 9th Commandments (tape 2), given at St. Vincent de Paul's R.C.I.A., Denver, Colorado Jan 27, 2001, (Colorado Springs, CO: Our Father's Will Communications, 2001), cassette. (Chris West is considered by many to be an expert on John Paul II's writings and claims what he has to say is not his own, but based upon John Paul II's writings.)} As early as the 1950's Drs. Evelyn and John Billings of Melbourne, Australia discovered there are special mucus symptoms during the fertile period of a woman's cycle,\footnote{Kippley, Birth Control & Christian Discipleship, 16.} but many years passed before these clinical studies were completed and this information was widely known. With the marketing of the birth control pill in the 1960's, couples were able to space more effectively the birth of their children without the burdens of periodic abstinence.\footnote{Zimmerman, Natural Family Planning, 103-104.}

Because the Church condemned the use of ABC, many people continued to look for more effective ways to avoid pregnancy and yet remain within the teachings of the Church. As research over women's reproductive cycles continued, new information allowed researchers to confirm and improve upon previous methods. Those findings allowed couples to abandon the imprecise calendar rhythm method and enabled them to identify their own fertile and infertile symptoms. The new methods of NFP are ecologically safe, effective in avoiding or achieving pregnancy, cost virtually nothing, and can be used by all people whether they live in a rain forest or a city.\footnote{Thomas W. Hilgers, The Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning: With an Introduction to NaProTechnology, 3d ed. (Omaha, NE: Pope Paul VI Institute Press, 1992), 1.}

There are several modern models of NFP. Two accurate and popular methods are the Ovulation and the Sympto-Thermal Methods. According to Thomas Hilgers M.D., the Ovulation Method relies on the observations of cervical mucus discharge throughout the woman's cycle to determine days of fertility.\footnote{Zimmerman, Natural Family Planning, 103-104.} During the fertile time when ovulation occurs, clear, stretchy and lubricative mucus is present at the vaginal opening. This is called peak-type mucus. Peak-type mucus creates an environment allowing the sperm to
live and move easily through the vagina and cervical canal. If the method is being used to avoid pregnancy, the couple abstains from sexual intercourse on the fertile days. If the couple seeks to conceive a child, they have sexual intercourse during the fertile days. Mucus is often observed throughout the woman's cycle, but if it is non-lubricative, it is considered non-peak type mucus and is not a sign of fertility. The couple is educated on how to record and interpret these observations by charting. Detailed instruction is given on making good observations and keeping with the observational routine.212

The Sympto-Thermal Method considers the observations of not only the cervical mucus as with the Ovulation Method but also the changes in the cervix and the basal body temperature. Body temperature rises after ovulation and remains at a higher temperature until the end of the cycle dropping right before menstruation begins. Temperature remains at a higher level if conception has occurred. These signs are crosschecked against each other to reinforce the days of fertility or infertility.213

In the last few years there has been much progress in the area of NFP. Dr. Hilgers claims the newer and increasingly more accurate NFP methods are allowing couples to avoid the burdens of an unplanned child from 94.8 to 97.4% of the time, which is equal to or more effective than the use of ABC. At the same time, the knowledge involved in using this method has also helped seemingly infertile couples understand the reasons for their difficulty in conceiving and bearing children, which assists doctors in treating their condition. The success rate for couples having difficulty conceiving but finding success through NFP is very high, approximately 20-40% of the time.214 Dr. Hilgers also believes the practice of NFP will help women to identify endometrial and cervical abnormalities at the earliest stages which will reduce the detrimental effects of the

213 Natural Family Planning Catholic Diocese of Wichita, Natural Family Planning (Wichita, KS: Natural Family Planning Catholic Diocese of Wichita, undated).
214 Hilgers, The Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning, 49.
diseases and reduce the use of “inappropriate surgical procedures.”\textsuperscript{215} NFP is not only an effective means to achieve or avoid pregnancy; it can also be a useful screening procedure in women’s health, much like a self-breast examination.

For NFP to be effective the spouses must communicate, be knowledgeable of their fertility, and act together in accordance with this knowledge. One of the biggest problems in relationships is the lack of communication. NFP requires couples to regularly talk about important, intimate, and sensitive issues. This simple practice not only requires the couple to talk about their bodies and sex, but it also fosters the reexamination of their priorities for their relationship and family. After the man and woman both know at what point she is in her cycle, they decide whether or not they should have intercourse, or if they should express their love in another way. If they decide it is not in the best interests of their relationship or family to have intercourse at that time, they still have the benefits of self-awareness, verbal intimacy, and reflection on their lives and goals. If they choose not to have intercourse, they are encouraged to express their love and intimacy in other ways. Thus the practice of NFP has a way of fostering multiple modes of physical contact, intimacy, and communication between spouses.\textsuperscript{216}

\textbf{The Phenomenology and Personalism of John Paul II}

Before we study the teachings of John Paul II, it is helpful to understand some of the motivations behind his teachings. Fr. Wojtyla’s education was highly structured around the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine, but as a pastor these teachings with their reliance on principles and norms deduced from abstract ideas and doctrines did not fit the understanding of many of his parishioners, who trusted their

\textsuperscript{215} Hilgers, \textit{The Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning}, 60.

\textsuperscript{216} Hilgers, \textit{The Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning}, 39-40.
experiences for moral guidance.\textsuperscript{217} Wojtyla sought to express the teachings of the Church in a way that would make use of his parishioners' experiences.\textsuperscript{218}

George Weigel says that after living through the atrocities of World War II and while living under communist occupation, Wojtyla hoped "philosophy could still probe deeply enough into things-as-they-are to help us grasp the way we ought to act."\textsuperscript{219} Reflection over the realities of the war and the way people acted lead him to study the philosophical method called phenomenology. "Phenomenology is an effort to 'bring back into philosophy everyday things, concrete wholes, the basic experiences of life as they come to us.'\textsuperscript{220} Phenomenology was founded by "Edmund Husserl, who was born in 1859 in Prostejov, in Moravia."\textsuperscript{221} Husserl initially used it in the philosophy of mathematics but eventually expanded its use into the philosophy of knowledge and logic.\textsuperscript{222} Weigel claims Wojtyla became interested in Husserl's belief that philosophy had become disconnected from everyday life in one of two ways. "Empiricists reduced our experience to 'sense data, impression, chemical compositions, neural reactions, etc.' Idealists, determined to fit everything into ideal types, forms, or categories, drifted off into a world of extreme abstraction and subjectivism."\textsuperscript{223} In contrast, phenomenologists analyze the experience as a whole, the psychological, physical, moral, and conceptual elements that make up the experience, and what this tells us about the human condition.\textsuperscript{224} Richard Hogan claims:

In this way, he (Husserl) linked the interior powers of the mind, will, self-awareness (consciousness) to the real world and was able to overcome the division between the interior life of the mind and the real world which had entered philosophical thought first

\textsuperscript{218} Hogan, <http://www.nfpoutreach.org/Hogan_Theology_%20Body2.htm>, 4-5.
\textsuperscript{220} Weigel, Witness to Hope, 127.
\textsuperscript{221} Robert Sokolowski, "What is Phenomenology? An Introduction For The Uninitiated," Crisis, April 1994, 26.
\textsuperscript{222} Sokolowski, "What is Phenomenology?", 26.
\textsuperscript{223} Weigel, Witness to Hope, 127.
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., 127.
through Descartes. (Descartes’s "I think, therefore I am," divorced reality--the exterior world--from the interior life of every person because it grounded existence only in interior thought.)

Robert Sokolowski agrees with Hogan’s and Weigel’s assessments:

The belief that each man is a world unto himself is at the root of the relativism of our society and its intellectual elites, and in striking at this presumption of modernity phenomenology is in a position to make an important contribution to contemporary culture.... Phenomenology accepts appearances as truly manifesting things. Part of its philosophical work is to provide careful analyses of how various kinds of things – pictures, words, memories, cultural objects, animals, other persons, moral goods, even the sacred and the divine – present themselves to us, how they can be intended both in their direct presence and in their absence... phenomenology tries to show how the scientific has roots in the prescientific, how it does not disqualify the ordinary but adds a different sort of exactness to it. It keeps us from reducing, say, the living and the personal to the merely material.

Michael Novak describes phenomenology as “a sustained effort to bring back into philosophy everyday things, concrete wholes, the basic experiences of life as they come to us.” It is significant to this debate that Husserl used phenomenology to argue against historicism. Sokoloski says: “By showing how we perceive and articulate a common world, and by showing how truths transcend any particular time and place, phenomenology counters the skepticism expressed in reductive materialism, psychologism, and historicism.

Hogan claims, “Karol Wojtyla first encountered phenomenology through Roman Ingarden” (one of Husserl’s students) “who was a professor in the philosophy department at the University of Cracow where the future pope was earning his doctorate in philosophy.” Wojtyla saw that phenomenology could link ethics to lived experiences and help people understand how and why the Church’s moral teachings are relevant in their lives. Phenomenology is well suited to explaining things to modern people because it “is a subjective, inductive, and experiential philosophical method” that seeks to display the

228 Sokolowski, “What is Phenomenology?,” 28.
connection between the interior person and what should be done in the real world.\textsuperscript{229} This is in contrast to the teachings of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who said we have a moral obligation to follow ethical norms for the good of society, yet concrete “ethical norms are unknowable because they lie beyond immediate human experience.”\textsuperscript{230} Kant separated ethics from human experience, but many modern people are unlikely to follow ethical norms unless they can see a clear connection with the ethical norms and their lived experiences.\textsuperscript{231}

Wojtyla hoped phenomenology would expand and improve the connection between experience and ethics when he wrote his doctoral dissertation on Husserl’s student, Max Scheler. Scheler opposed Kant’s view that concrete ethical norms are unknowable and said that we should follow ethical norms not because of exterior rules/duties that benefit humanity, but because of our own interior experience. Hogan claims Wojtyla studied Scheler because Scheler attempted to link values with experience:

Scheler argued that every human experience is connected with a value. We are either attracted to or repulsed by it. By studying human experience from the subjective, interior point of view, Scheler believed he could identify values. These values actually existed in the real world. They were concrete and objective, but they were known through subjective, individual experience.\textsuperscript{232}

Wojtyla’s study of Scheler did not give him the conclusions he had hoped to find:

Wojtyla was critical of Scheler because Scheler failed to provide an objective order of values. Since values were known through the subjective experience of each person, they could differ radically from one person to another. Furthermore, the relative importance of these values was determined by the intensity of the response to each value. The value which elicited the most intense emotional response from an individual was, for that individual, the most important value. Therefore, even if two people had a similar set of values, the hierarchy of these values would differ from person to person. In Scheler’s thought, there was no way to establish an objective order of morality, because each person felt a different level of emotion or response to a particular value.\textsuperscript{233}

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{231} Hogan, <http://www.nfpoutreach.org/Hogan_Theology_%20Body1.htm>, 10.
\textsuperscript{232} Ibid., 6.
Whatever struck one the most deeply became the most important value, regardless of what that value was, leaving Scheler’s use of phenomenology in a state of relativism.234 Scheler also did not explore how our ethical choices have internal as well as external effects. If one does generous acts, this not only aids the one receiving the generosity but it also contributes to transforming the one doing the act into a generous person.235 Weigel concurs with these assessments. Wojtyla criticized Scheler because he failed to show how “moral choices shape a person,” and because Scheler had a “tendency to emotionalize experience and consciousness, leading to a truncated portrait of the human person.”236 Andrew Woznicki also confirms these conclusions when he quotes Wojtyla as saying, “Whatever a man does in his act, whatever he effects or produces, he always simultaneously ‘produces’ himself, if it can be so expressed, - he expresses himself, he forms himself, and in some way, he creates himself.”237

Wojtyla uses phenomenology to analyze ethical facts on a phenomenal and experiential plane.238 However, he believes a Christian cannot only rely on phenomenology, because the ethical value of human actions needs to be scrutinized in light of objective principles.239 Woznicki quotes Wojtyla on the benefits and limitations of phenomenology:

Phenomenological experience can capture the experience of the human person in all its content... Ethical fact is an experience of values. It is an experience intentionally directed towards values as to its own objective content.240 .... By means of this method, we uncover ethical good and evil. We see how it fashions the experience of a person; yet, we cannot discern the objective principle, by which one act of a person is ethically good, and another one, ethically evil. In order to

236 Weigel, Witness to Hope 129.
239 Ibid., 19.
formulate this principle, we must discard the phenomenological method... We must
avail ourselves here of the metaphysical method, which will enable us to define the
revealed Christian order of moral good and evil, in the light of objective principles. It
will enable us to define and justify it in a philosophical and theological manner.\textsuperscript{241}

Phenomenology helps one to understand and evaluate people’s experiences and values,
but these subjective values must be evaluated in light of other sources of truth, especially
revelation.

John Paul II uses phenomenology to explore the experiences of characters in
scripture. He believes the Holy Spirit inspired people to write in sacred scripture, lessons,
events, and experiences that God wanted us to reflect on. These people, whether they
were writers or characters in the writings, had personal experiences with God. Their
personal subjective experiences are the types of subject matter the philosophical method
of phenomenology analyzes.\textsuperscript{242} Phenomenology provides a tool for examining
personhood through interior experiences, from the inside, so the conclusions are not
perceived as exterior rules I must obey for the good of society, but as an interior calling to
do what is in conformity with my personal dignity.\textsuperscript{243} Scripture reveals God to humanity,
and phenomenology reveals humanity to us. By using phenomenology to study the
experiences of characters in scripture, we can gain insights into what scripture reveals
about humanity as well as answers to humanity’s questions.\textsuperscript{244}

As Augustine used platonic philosophy to explain theology and Thomas built upon
Augustine and Aristotle, so has John Paul II built upon their teachings with the modern
day method of phenomenology.\textsuperscript{245} Woznicki agrees: “Wojtyla uses a phenomenological
method in his philosophical anthropology, nevertheless his philosophy of man is entirely

\textsuperscript{241} Woznicki, A Christian Humanism, 21-22.
\textsuperscript{242} Hogan, <http://www.nfpoutreach.org/Hogan_Theology_%20Body2.htm>, 3-5.
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid., 5-6.
\textsuperscript{244} Ibid., 3-5.
\textsuperscript{245} Hogan, <http://www.nfpoutreach.org/Hogan_Theology_%20Body1.htm>, 3-6.
based on St. Thomas’ metaphysics of the human person.” Sokolowski believes this is an improvement:

Phenomenology can add a subjective dimension to scholasticism without becoming subjectivist, and, because phenomenology explicitly considers the first-person viewpoint...I would suggest that phenomenology gives a better account of the subject than does Transcendental Thomism, a twentieth-century adaptation of St. Thomas’s thought developed by such writers as Joseph Marechal, Karl Rahner, and Bernard Lonergan.

John Paul II incorporates and builds on the foundations laid by previous theologians but adds the modern subjective turn to human experience. This is why there is so much disagreement as to whether John Paul II is an Augustinian, Thomist, Personalist, or Phenomenologist. He attempts to incorporate elements from all these traditions, yet he studies scripture and the human person through the method of phenomenology. John Paul II is difficult to understand because he does not explain his viewpoints directly. When he presents his perspective it is more like having a conversation or walking down a spiral staircase. He studies an issue from several vantage points and, when he returns to his original angle, the reader has a deeper insight into the issue. Novak claims that, in order to understand Wojtyla, we must keep in mind he is a poet and that he thinks like an artist by reflecting on concrete wholes, on the whole experience. Like Max Scheler he uses phenomenology “to get at the feelings.”

Scholars who support John Paul II’s positions claim his teachings can best be described as personalism. “Wojtyla’s phenomenological philosophy – as it is often called – is, in fact, an existential personalism.” Janet Smith calls it personalistic philosophy because “his foremost concern is how each and every act we perform conforms with what

246 Woznicki, A Christian Humanism, IX-X.
249 Weigel, Witness to Hope, 138.
251 Woznicki, A Christian Humanism, 9.
is in accord with what human dignity demands.\textsuperscript{252} In John Paul II's first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, we find the fundamental starting point for his writings, the person in relationship with Christ:\textsuperscript{253}

Christ, the Redeemer of the world, is the one who penetrated in a unique unrepeatable way into the mystery of man and entered his 'heart'. Rightly therefore does the Second Vatican Council teach: 'The truth is that only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light...Christ the new Adam, ...fully reveals man to himself...He who is the 'image of the invisible God' (Col 1:15), is himself the perfect man who has restored in the children of Adam that likeness to God which had been disfigured ever since the first sin. Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare.'\textsuperscript{254}

John Paul II's writings revolve around two main points: The human person is made in the image and likeness of God and therefore has an objective dignity and value that surpasses all the other values in creation, and because God became human and redeemed humanity our dignity and responsibilities were elevated even higher. Human beings cannot be understood apart from Christ; therefore, church teachings must protect and foster the dignity of every person. Novak arrives at similar conclusions: "Wojtyla also shares with DeLubac the conviction that the concept of pure nature- apart from the fall and grace – is a merely hypothetical category, which does not and never did exist.... In the Pope’s thought, the realm of ‘nature’ is thin and hypothetical indeed, compared to the actual workings of the fall and of grace in real history."\textsuperscript{255} According to John Paul II, human nature must be understood in light of original humanity, the distortion caused by sin, and most importantly the redemption and elevation of human nature by Christ.

John Paul II believes the crisis plaguing modern humanity is the dehumanizing of the human person, especially those structures and conditions

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\item \textsuperscript{252} Smith, "Pope John Paul II And *Humanae Vitae*," 236.
\item \textsuperscript{253} Hogan, <http://www.nfpoutreach.org/Hogan_Theology_%20Body1.htm>, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{255} Novak, "John Paul II: Christian Philosopher," 14-15.
\end{enumerate}
that reduce a person to an object of manipulation.\textsuperscript{255} The root of the problem lies in a distorted philosophical anthropology, and to solve this problem each of us must be “treated as a person in his integrity, which includes both the human and the divine dimensions of man.”\textsuperscript{257} John Paul II’s understanding of humanity is rooted in scripture such that God became human to reveal to us not only who God is, but also who we are called to be. Because of our elevated dignity over all of creation and our connection with the Divine, people have a responsibility to God, to themselves, and to each other to seek perfection and to always act as images of God should.\textsuperscript{258}

Woznicki claims that in the pope’s writings love is what brings a person to self-realization and human nature to fulfillment:

For Wojtyla, love is the universal principle of all the spheres of human existence. Love, so understood, becomes the fundamental principle of ‘self-actualization’ of man... Responsibility and creativity of love become, according to the author, the fundamental characteristics of human dignity through which each man can fulfill his/her own individual existing being.... Christian humanism as viewed by Wojtyla is something which is not yet realized. Rather, it is a task to be achieved through a constant process of ‘self-fulfillment.’\textsuperscript{259}

Woznicki says that in Wojtyla’s writings there is a connection between truth, freedom, free will, love, and the process of human self-fulfillment. Woznicki offers these quotes from Wojtyla:

Only truth about oneself can bring about a real engagement of one’s freedom in relation with another person. It is a giving of oneself, and giving of oneself means exactly to limit one’s own freedom for the sake of another person. The limitation of one’s freedom could be something negative and painful, were it not for love, which transforms it into something positive, happy and creative. Freedom is for love. Unused by love, it becomes something negative, leaving man with emptiness and unfulfillment.... Man needs love more than he needs freedom, since freedom is only a medium whereas love is a purpose. Man desires, however, true love, because only when it is based on truth, can an authentic engagement of freedom be made possible.

\textsuperscript{255} Weigel, \textit{Witness to Hope}, 334.
\textsuperscript{257} Woznicki, \textit{A Christian Humanism}, IX,2.
\textsuperscript{259} Woznicki, \textit{A Christian Humanism}, 61.
Will is free while, at the same time, it is 'compelled' to search for goodness, which responds to its nature.260

Because the pope sees truth and love as being connected, if one does not act in accord with the truth of the human person, one's acts cannot be truly loving actions. Wojtyla says:

A person finds in love the fullness of his being, of his objective existing. Love means that particular action, that particular act, which expands to the fullest the existence of a person. It must be, of course, a true love. What is true love? True love is a love in which the real essence of love is being realized—love which turns towards the real (not just a seeming) good in a real manner, i.e., in a manner which conforms to its nature. This can also be applied to love between man and woman.... true love perfects and develops personal existence. A false love, on the other hand, has contrary results. False love turns toward false good, and – what happens more often – to some actual real good, but in a manner which does not conform to its nature, or even opposes it... A false love is an evil love.261

Weigel comes to similar conclusions about the pope's writings. Human freedom and fulfillment does not mean to do whatever we want, but to know the true, good, and beautiful and then choose it. True human freedom comes from self-mastery, not self-assertion. Self-mastery is achieved, "not by repressing or suppressing what is natural to me, but by thoughtfully and freely channeling those natural instincts of mind and body into actions that deepen my humanity because they conform to things-as-they-are."262 The proper way to live and love is inscribed in our hearts; what we must do is rediscover the truth of the human person and respond to that truth by integrating it into every aspect of our lives. For John Paul II "it is in moral action that the mind, the spirit, and the body come into the unity of a person."263

Weigel says in, Person and Act, Wojtyla explains how human acts transform a person. Weigel summarizes Wojtyla's position on the relationship between human acts and the person:

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262 Weigel, Witness to Hope, 176.
263 Weigel, Witness to Hope, 176.
In moral action, that *somebody* begins to experience his or her own transcendence...by freely choosing what is good... In this free choice of the good and the true, Wojtyła suggests, we can discern the transcendence of the human person. I go beyond myself, I grow as a *person*, by realizing my freedom and conforming it to the good and the true. Through my freedom, I narrow the gap between the person-I-am and the person-I-ought-to-be.\textsuperscript{264}

Richard Hogan claims that the pope uses phenomenology because of his emphasis on the person:

Since personhood has always been one of the most important concepts in Christianity, and very important to John Paul II, the phenomenological method provides a new way of studying and perceiving Christian Revelation. Saint Thomas using Aristotle studied personhood more or less "from the outside".... What is lacking in Thomism is the subjective side of the life of the person. Using the phenomenological method, John Paul is able to develop the subjective side of the person while in no way compromising or altering the fundamental objective truths of Revelation. It is precisely because the person is vital to revealed truth that there can be a synthesis of phenomenology and the faith. Phenomenology begins its investigation with the individual human person, with our conscious experience of ourselves as acting agents.... Phenomenology, subjective as it is, 'opens the door' to the full truth about man revealed in the objective order by God.\textsuperscript{265}

John Paul II uses phenomenology to study stories and parables in scripture because they present the experiences and choices of human persons. For example, in *Dives in Misericordia*, (Riches in Mercy), John Paul II analyzes the parable of the prodigal son from the interior experiences of the prodigal son. John Paul II concludes, "That son . . . in a certain sense is the man of every period." All of us experience moments or even years like the prodigal son when we forsake our relationship to God for other values. Hogan says that after losing what the son considered of value and longing to eat the food the pigs ate:

The Pope writes that 'the analogy turns clearly towards man's interior.' The prodigal son has not only squandered money, but the prodigal son has an 'awareness of squandered sonship,' of the loss of his own dignity. The prodigal's return to his father is a personal experience of forgiveness but it also contains important objective revealed truths... Phenomenology allows us to probe experiences of people and in the study of the Scriptures, actually to probe people's experiences of Revelation.\textsuperscript{266}

\textsuperscript{264} Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 175-176.
\textsuperscript{266} Hogan, <http://www.nfpoutreach.org/Hogan_Theology_%20Body1.htm>, 9,10.
In *Laborem Exercens*, the Pope refers to the primary purpose of work: the shaping of an individual into someone who acts like God, who participates in God's creative work by subduing "the earth." In working, human persons imitate God. They act as He acted when He "worked" to create the world. In acting as images of God through work, human persons shape themselves more and more into who they are: images of God. In this way, they fulfill themselves.267

Robert Sokolowski provides another example of the pope using phenomenology to study the experience of a person in his encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*.268 In that encyclical the pope analyzes the experience of the young unnamed man who meets Jesus. John Paul II argues, "The question which the rich young man puts to Jesus...rises from the depths of his heart. It is an essential and unavoidable question for the life of every man."269 Sokolowski claims, "The encyclical does not simply present moral truth, but describes it in relation to the inquiring moral agent; it speaks about the correlation between object and subject, not about the object alone."270

One can see the focus on human experience and personalism in two writings that will be foundational texts for the pope's arguments on fertility regulation. *Love and Responsibility* was written as a result of his experiences with young adults in the confessional, as well as with couples in marriage preparation. While writing drafts of *Love and Responsibility*, Professor Wojtyla went on a vacation with students from the philosophy, psychology, and medical departments and had each of them read chapters of his rough drafts and then present the chapters to the group for discussion. Wojtyla wanted to know if it fit their experiences and made sense to them.271 John Paul II's book, *The Theology of the Body*, which is a collection of 133 weekly addresses John Paul II

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268 Sokolowski, "What is Phenomenology?," 29.
270 Sokolowski, "What is Phenomenology?," 29.
271 Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 139.
gave from 1979-1984, 272 incorporates conclusions and principles developed in Love and Responsibility.

In Love and Responsibility, Wojtyla explains that people are at the same time an object and subject of human acts. Because people possess cognition and free will, their actions affect not only the person who is a recipient of the act, (object) but also the inner or spiritual life of the person who is acting (subject). 273 The importance and dignity of the person become more pronounced as Wojtyla claims that the only just action toward a person is to love them:

A person’s rightful due is to be treated as an object of love, not as an object for use. In a sense it can be said that love is a requirement of justice, just as using a person as a means to an end would conflict with justice...Justice concerns itself with things (material goods or moral goods, as for instance one’s good name) in relation to persons, and hence with persons rather indirectly, whereas love is concerned with persons directly and immediately: affirmation of the value of the person as such is of its essence. 274

In addition to his concern for justice for the human person, in The Theology of the Body John Paul II explains why he believes a phenomenological examination of the subjective experiences of the characters in Genesis is appropriate:

In the interpretation of the revelation about man, and especially about the body, we must, for understandable reasons, refer to experience, since corporeal man is perceived by us mainly by experience. In the light of the above mentioned fundamental considerations, we have every right to the conviction that this “historical” experience of ours must, in a certain way, stop at the threshold of man’s original innocence, since it is inadequate in relation to it. However, in the light of the same introductory considerations, we must arrive at the conviction that our human experience is, in this case, to some extent a legitimate means for the theological interpretation. In a certain sense, it is an indispensable point of reference, which we must keep in mind for interpreting the beginning. A more detailed analysis of the text will enable us to have a clearer view of it. 275

These are just a few examples of John Paul II’s personalism and his use of phenomenology to study the experiences of people in his writings. Through

274 Ibid., 42.
phenomenological studies of scripture, the pope uncovers what he believes to be prototypes of common interior experiences. John Paul II believes these personal experiences are meetings with God, and that God’s answers to their problems and questions are relevant for all people and all times.

**John Paul II’s Theology of the Body**

John Paul II begins his ‘theology of the body’ lecture series with a question presented to Jesus in Mt 19:3ff and Mk 10:2ff:

> And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, ‘Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?’ Jesus answered, ‘Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.’ They said to him, ‘Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?’ Jesus answered, ‘For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so’ (Mt 19:3ff., cf. also Mk 10:2ff.).

John Paul II emphasizes that Jesus twice referred to the beginning, so he begins his analysis by returning to the beginning, before people had hardened their hearts through sin. According to John Paul II, people are visible expressions of the image and likeness of God. Thus, humanity is a sacrament, a visible sign of the invisible mystery, glory, and dignity of God. Likewise, because people are the only creatures composed of both body and soul, the interior person is visibly expressed through the body. This is fundamental to John Paul II’s theology because understanding what and who the human person is helps us to understand God, and likewise understanding who God is helps us to understand what humanity is called to be.

Drawing from the stories of Genesis, which John Paul II calls mythical stories, he performs a phenomenological study through which he draws conclusions about the nature

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277 Ibid., 46-48.
of humanity and God’s intentions. The pope concludes that Adam’s ability to recognize his superiority over the animals and the ability to choose what to name them reveals humanity’s elevated nature and dominion over the rest of creation. Adam’s self-conscious awareness allowed him to realize that he was not only unique and special among all of God’s creatures, but also that he was alone. Although everything was created out of love for Adam (the representative of all humanity), Adam felt incompleteness or loneliness, which the pope calls original solitude. As the image and likeness of God, Adam was meant to reflect God, who is love, and a communion of persons. Adam desired to love as God did, but due to the integrity of his physical and spiritual nature Adam needed to express his love bodily, and he could not find another creature to whom he could give himself totally, and unite with to express his love.

With the creation of Eve, the loneliness and incompleteness that Adam experienced disappeared. Adam saw in Eve another person who was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, a feminine reflection of the image and likeness of God, his equal, and yet different. Like the rest of creation, Eve was a gift from God. Adam, being equal to Eve, was also a gift for her and each could choose to make a gift of him/herself (both physically and spiritually) to each other and likewise because of equality each was capable of receiving the other completely. John Paul II, echoing the teaching of Guadium et Spes, says that Adam, as a representative of all humanity, could only find

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281 Ibid., 35, 36.
282 Ibid., 448-451.
283 Ibid., 35-42.
285 John Paul II, The Theology of the Body, 49-50; and West, God’s Plan for Marriage “In the Beginning”, cassette.
happiness and discover himself through the sincere giving of himself (GS24).\textsuperscript{287} Inspired by love, they expressed their love through the marital embrace.\textsuperscript{288} By uniting bodily, Adam and Eve’s exterior actions express interior realities, and they make visible that God is a communion of persons united in life-giving love.\textsuperscript{289}

As images of God, Adam and Eve had the ability to freely and consciously give themselves to each other without shame in a union of love and peace:\textsuperscript{290}

The original community-communion of persons should have made man and woman mutually happy by means of the pursuit of a simple and pure union in humanity, by means of a reciprocal offering of themselves, that is, the experience of the gift of the person expressed with the soul and with the body, with masculinity and femininity (‘flesh of my flesh’; Gn. 2:33), and finally by means of the subordination of this union to the blessing of fertility with ‘procreation’.\textsuperscript{291}

However, later in the mythical story of Genesis, Adam and Eve were tricked into eating from the tree of knowledge because they trusted the “Deceiver” and doubted God’s designs were truly in their best interests.\textsuperscript{292} Through sin the original innocence and unity of Adam and Eve was destroyed, but God’s plan for humanity remained written into their design.\textsuperscript{293} Now that Adam and Eve were in a fallen state, they lacked the sanctifying grace of God and therefore did not perfectly reflect the image and likeness of God. John Paul II concludes that this change was primarily interior, but because of the unity of body and soul it affected the total person, causing:\textsuperscript{294}

\ldots a certain constitutive break within the human person, almost a rupture of man’s original spiritual and somatic unity. He realized for the first time that his body has ceased drawing upon the power of the spirit...The body, which is not subordinated to the spirit as in the state of original innocence, bears within it a constant center of

\textsuperscript{289} Ibid., 450, 525,526.
\textsuperscript{290} John Paul II, \textit{The Theology of the Body}, 50, 62-66; and West, The Sacramentality of Marriage (tape 1).
\textsuperscript{293} John Paul II, \textit{The Theology of the Body}, 175.
\textsuperscript{294} Ibid., 115.
resistance to the spirit, and threatens, in a way, the unity of the man-person...The structure of self-mastery, essential for the person, is, in a way, shaken to the very foundations in him....

Their bodies and souls were no longer perfectly integrated to easily accomplish the plans God had for them. Because of sin the desire to reflect the Creator and to make themselves a gift to each other was now distorted and they became dominated by desires of self-interest. The attraction to and desire to become a gift to their spouse was now experienced as lusting after their spouses' sexual value. Their experience of shame caused them to cover up the body parts the other lusted after. This covering up was an attempt to reestablish unity and to get their spouse to relate to them with the dignity they knew they deserved. Thus, shame and lust have more to do with attacks against the dignity of the person, and not a fear of the body or sexuality.

In the mythical story when God questioned Adam, Adam blamed Eve and even God for putting her there; when God questioned Eve, she blamed the serpent. No longer did Adam and Eve perfectly reflect God with actions of truth and disinterested love; instead they reacted selfishly. The unity between God, Adam, and Eve was broken, along with the integral unity of the person and one's dominion over one's own body. God warned them that because of their sin there would be suffering and death. Men dominating women and wives longing for greater unity with their husbands (Gen 3: 14-24) is not a punishment God sent on humanity; it is a consequence of sin and what will happen in their relationships as long as they continue to live outside of God's plan.

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297 Ibid., 118-119.
298 Ibid., 117, 122.
300 Ibid., 120-122.
After analyzing the creation stories to establish what the relationship between man and woman was originally meant to be, and showing the consequences of the fall, John Paul II turns to Jesus’ teachings in Mt 5:27-28: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” This teaching is related to the question with which John Paul II began this investigation. When the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus whether or not it was permissible for a man to divorce his wife, Jesus replied in the beginning it was not so, but Moses granted divorce because of the hardness of their hearts. Jesus refused to discuss their question at a legalistic level but instead elevated the level of their discussion by returning to the Creator’s original intentions, indicating that God’s design was still to be followed. That Jesus twice referred to the beginning and then paraphrased and combined the scriptural texts that were centuries apart indicates that we are all called to live according to God’s original design. Because of our fallen nature it will not be easy; however, Jesus would not ask people to do what is impossible, so with God’s grace we must be capable of living according to the original plan.

John Paul II continues his analysis by reflecting on the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Mt 5:8) Jesus was trying to reach the hearts and consciences of the people he was talking to, so they would fulfill God’s laws according to the Creator’s intentions. When Jesus talks about purity of heart, he is talking about all of the things that are in conformity with the will of God. Jesus is not condemning the human heart but appealing to it. Jesus wanted a

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302 Ibid., 25-27.
303 Ibid., 167-168.
304 Ibid., 345-346.
305 Ibid., 130-135.
306 Ibid., 130-135.
transformation of their hearts so they could embrace God's will and not distort it with forms of selfishness like lust.  

John Paul II says that Jesus (who knows the hearts of people) contrasts adultery and lust with purity of heart, because lust is contrary to God's will.  

Jesus was trying to get to the intentions of God’s laws. The chosen people went great lengths to live out the Mosaic laws, but they failed. Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill them." (Matt 5:17).  

Jesus raised and fulfilled the law against adultery by saying “whoever looked lustfully at a woman committed adultery in his heart.” When Jesus talks about committing adultery in one’s heart, he did not specify whether this woman was another person’s wife, unmarried, or even one’s wife. The ethic of Jesus went beyond legalistic rules and sought integration of God’s intentions into all aspects of their lives.  

According to the pope, in the sexual sphere, disorder and disintegration are manifested as lust. When St. Paul talks about the lusts of the flesh and the works of the world, he is talking about all the desires contrary to the teachings of Jesus, such as the three-fold lusts described in 1 John 2: 16-17: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever.” Something that is not of the Father, but of the world, indicates God did not create it, but that it came into the world after original sin. Lust is a manifestation of a lack of the original fullness, depth, and unity of the human person in the image of God.  

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308 Ibid., 130-135.  
309 Ibid., 158.  
310 Ibid., 156-157.  
311 Ibid., 130-132, 156-159.  
313 Ibid., 110.  
314 Ibid., 112.
The more we are able to live according to God’s will, the happier we will be because we will be more able to fulfill our purpose according to God’s plan.315

How is a person to know whether they are living according to the world (the works of the flesh (interior and exterior)) or the plan of God? John Paul II says that scripture indicates the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh (Gal 5:17).316

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissension, envies, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like... In contrast the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control... (Gal 5:19-23).317

Each of these vices and virtues involve a choice and therefore an effort of the will.318 The more we give into concupiscence, the weaker or less sensitive we become to the prompting of the Spirit in our intellect and will. The more we sin, the greater distortion there is between our body and soul and the harder it is to understand and live according to God’s designs and intentions. Once sin becomes habitual a person becomes less sensitive to the voice of their conscience.319 The fact we suffer from concupiscence means the redemption of our bodies is not complete, and that we must choose to participate in our own redemption.320 The mastery of the flesh “is an indispensable condition of life according to the Spirit.”321 John Paul II claims: “The flesh indicates not only the ‘exterior man’, but also the man who is ‘interiorly’ subjected to the ‘world’.322 Christians should not use freedom for the flesh but to live according to the Spirit (Gal. 5).323 To determine if something is according to God or according to the world one should look at whether it is

316 Ibid., 191.
317 Ibid., 193.
318 Ibid., 193.
319 Ibid., 146.
321 Ibid., 196.
322 Ibid., 191.
323 Ibid., 196.
producing fruits of the Spirit, or fostering “works of the flesh.” With the assistance of God’s grace, a person living in the Spirit will demonstrate fruits of the Spirit in their lives.324 One of the fruits of the Spirit the pope emphasizes is the fruit of self-control. One who lacks self-control is not guided by the Spirit, but guided by concupiscence.325 Based on a phenomenological analysis of scripture, the pope concludes that self-awareness and self-control were two characteristics demonstrated by humanity before the fall, because they named the animals and chose to give themselves to each other “without shame” in the marital embrace.326

**The Sacredness and Unity of the Body and Soul**

John Paul II is not opposed to the human body, sensual passion, or emotion in any way. On the contrary, he actually says, “An exuberant and readily aroused sensuality is the stuff from which a rich – if difficult – personal life may be made. It may help the individual to respond more readily and completely to the decisive elements in personal love.”327 The marital act and the body are sacred because both are physical expressions of God on earth.328 The pope quotes 1 Cor 6:19, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own.”329 John Paul II rejects all dualistic mentalities and insists that the body and soul are designed for unity, which is why the expressions and movements of a person must express both an interior and exterior truth.330

One of the problems with lust is that a person’s body is mistakenly seen as being more important than the person themselves. A person who looks at another with lust is

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325 Ibid., 194-196.
326 Ibid., 37-41, 63-65.
330 Ibid., 159-162.
primarily motivated by the other's sexual value, thus they perform an injustice to the person and to God by failing to recognize that the person's highest value is as a person in the image of God.\textsuperscript{331} Passions and the desire for sexual intimacy are gifts from God; therefore they are true goods which John Paul II calls the raw materials of love. However, when sensuality is not properly integrated into love for a person, it becomes lust and lust is the antithesis of love because it directs us to seek the physical good of the body without truly valuing the whole person and offering ourselves as a gift to that person.\textsuperscript{332} The value of the person must not only be understood intellectually, for "affirmation of the person influences the emotions in such a way that the value of the person is not just abstractly understood, but deeply felt."\textsuperscript{333} To remedy concupiscence and sexual disorder caused by sin, and to help people find true love, the biblical virtue of chastity must be embraced so that we are not motivated by lust but by a desire for total unity and the giving of our self to another.\textsuperscript{334} Echoing Gaudium et Spes 24, John Paul II says that the human person is fulfilled through love, by the giving of oneself totally.

John Paul II claims there is a connection between St. Paul's use of chastity and Jesus' idea of being pure of heart. In explaining the virtue of chastity, he quotes First Thessalonians:

\begin{quote}
This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from unchastity, that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the heathens who do not know God (1 Th 4:3-5). ...God has not called us for uncleanness, but in holiness, therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (1Th 4:7-8)\textsuperscript{335}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[331] Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 123-124.
\item[333] Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 184.
\item[334] Ibid., 143-147.
\end{footnotes}
Lust is the antithesis of love because lust reduces the person to an object that satisfies one’s desires.\(^{336}\) When pleasure becomes the highest value, any attempts to limit pleasure to its rightful role results in resentment, because one has a distorted sense of values.\(^{337}\) Therefore, chastity is resented because it is seen as something that impedes freedom and hinders love.\(^{338}\) Concupiscence places the sexual value of the body above the value of the person, which prevents true love and compels people toward sexual intimacy.\(^{339}\) Love needs chastity because chastity helps love to develop and grow beyond the raw materials of sensuality and emotion.\(^{340}\) Neither carnal sensuality nor concupiscence are sins in and of themselves because sin requires an act of the will.\(^{341}\) Sensuality becomes a sin when the will accepts the desire to see the other’s highest value as an object or means of enjoyment. If emotion or passion is placed above revealed virtue and objective truth, then the person has allowed their intellect and will to put sensuality and emotion above the dignity of the other person. John Paul II calls this sinful love because it is only masquerading itself as love. People who lack chastity and purity of heart may feel like they love the person, when in reality their true motivation is to achieve the good of emotional or physical pleasure.\(^{342}\) True love requires recognizing the value of the person and then giving oneself to that person out of love. Only someone who has self-mastery, someone who is chaste with purity of heart, can see the true values of a person and can properly respond to the emotional and sexual aspects of the person as they are integrated into valuing the whole person.\(^{343}\) The sexual and emotional aspects can enhance or deepen a love, provided that love is based on the objective valuing of the

\(^{338}\) Ibid., 144.
\(^{339}\) Ibid., 150.
\(^{340}\) Ibid., 146.
\(^{341}\) Ibid., 161.
\(^{343}\) Ibid., 171.
person.\textsuperscript{344} This is why true love requires chastity. A chaste person is always in control of their concupiscent desires and is able to constantly see the person as the most important value.\textsuperscript{345} Chastity is not a negation of the body, but an affirmation of the person's dignity and value.\textsuperscript{346} Once again we see that the pope's position is based on the integrity of the person, and making these subjectively experienced values subservient to the actual person.

**The Difference Between Loving and Using Each Other**

In the quest for happiness or fulfillment the question arises whether or not it is acceptable to 'use' another person to attain a good.\textsuperscript{347} John Paul II defines the word 'use' according to two definitions. One definition of use "means to employ some object of action as a means to an end,"\textsuperscript{348} the other definition is "to enjoy" or "to experience pleasure."\textsuperscript{349} He also uses St. Augustine's two definitions of pleasure. St. Augustine called one type "\textit{ut}\(\textsuperscript{a}\)" which is "intent on pleasure for its own sake, with no concern for the object of pleasure." The other type of pleasure is called "\textit{frui}" which is finding "joy in a totally committed relationship with the object because this is what the nature of the object demands."\textsuperscript{350}

John Paul II tries to explain why love is the opposite of using and why one cannot base morality upon utilitarian principles. With the philosophy of utilitarianism a person tries to maximize pleasure and minimize pain because that is what is considered useful or good.\textsuperscript{351} According to this criterion a person may use (\textit{uti-} to use, to take advantage of) the person because they are a means to an end, which in this case is pleasure. Under

\textsuperscript{345} Ibid., 171.
\textsuperscript{346} Ibid., 145-146.
\textsuperscript{347} Ibid., 26.
\textsuperscript{348} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{349} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{350} Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 44.
\textsuperscript{351} Ibid., 35-36.
the principle of utility, if using a person brings one pleasure, then it should be done, especially if using each other brings mutual pleasure. This arrangement will last until one of the people no longer believes the other person is an adequate means to that end.\textsuperscript{352} If one tries to correct the theory by making it the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people, then individual persons will have to forego pleasure for others. The problem is that pleasure and happiness are elusive goods that are experienced by individuals at the “I” level and not by groups.\textsuperscript{353} Sacrificing the happiness of the individual for the group fails to accomplish individual pleasure and happiness; therefore everyone is a potential object to be used to achieve happiness.\textsuperscript{354} This type of egoism put into practice cannot become altruistic because it is based on the individual’s selfish interests.\textsuperscript{355} Utilitarian principles do not meet the demands put forth by Christ to love others because such principles can involve using people in order to maximize pleasure and, if necessary, harming or disregarding the welfare of others to maximize the greatest perceived good.\textsuperscript{356} Thus, utilitarianism is contrary to pope’s teachings because utilitarianism, or the using of people, does not uphold the dignity of the person or conform to the teachings of Christ.

Jesus said the two great commandments are to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself (Matt 22: 36-40). Jesus’ ethic is consistent with what John Paul II calls the personalistic norm:

This norm, in its negative aspect, states that the person is the kind of good which does not admit of use and cannot be treated as an object of use and as such the means to an end. In its positive form the personalistic norm confirms this: the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love. This positive content of the personalistic norm is precisely what the commandment to love teaches.\textsuperscript{357}

\textsuperscript{352} Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 35-39.
\textsuperscript{353} Ibid., 37.
\textsuperscript{354} Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{355} Ibid., 37.
\textsuperscript{356} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{357} Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 41.
Because of the elevated dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God, people must be treated with the dignity and respect due to them. God created us to love and to be loved; anything less is of the world and contrary to the original plan. When a man and woman truly love each other, they love not only the attributes of the person but they primarily love the person. Motivated by a disinterested love for the person, they consequently enjoy all of the qualities of the person due to their personal relationship with the person, which Augustine called “frui.” If someone “loves” another to primarily enjoy attributes or qualities of the person, they do not love them; they are using (uti) the person to enjoy those qualities. If people lack self-control, they will not be able to attain happiness because they will lack the freedom to give themselves to the other person, and they will have a tendency to consciously or unconsciously seek the person primarily for other values, not love.

John Paul II argues that the distinction between loving and using is especially important in the area of sexuality because sensual pleasure is so powerful there is a susceptibility to use others as means to attain those pleasures. There is also a risk of being overwhelmed by the sexual value to the detriment of not appreciating their value as a person. This heightened sensitivity to another person’s sexual value is felt and described as an urge. The sexual urge in humanity is different from the instinct of an animal because an urge indicates a person is offering some internal resistance; they are engaging their intellect and will. There is also a realization that very strong internal desires might be in conflict with our freedom to choose or not to choose. The desire to engage in sexual acts was given to people by God along with the abilities to reason and

358 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 42.
359 Ibid., 40-44, 60-61.
360 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 30, 43.
361 Ibid., 45-53.
362 Ibid., 45-46.
choose, all of which were to guide us toward our ultimate end, loving God in the
Kingdom. Because of sin, the urge is what remains of the original desires given by
God, which were to inspire Adam and Eve to unite as a communion of persons in life
giving love. Because people must choose how to respond to this urge there is not a
predetermined conclusion to the choice people will make. One of the results of following
this urge is the procreation of children and thus the existence of the human race.

Some might claim God is using people and their urges to continue the existence of
humanity, but God is not using people; God is allowing them to choose how to respond to
these desires. If they choose to give themselves to each other and love one another as
persons, then this leads to the ‘fruit’ or the enjoyment of each other with the side benefit of
pleasure. God makes use of their sexual union, but does not use people because this
would violate their elevated nature and dignity. In the pope’s theology, even the
existence of the human race is subordinate to the freedom and dignity of the person.

Scripture Reveals What Spousal Love is Supposed to Be

John Paul II claims that marriage is the primordial sacrament through which
human persons and the fulfillment of God’s plan have entered the world. Marriage is to be
a physical expression of God’s love between the three Divine persons as well as God’s
love for humanity. In many instances the prophets speak of the love of God as the love
of a husband for his wife. When the Word becomes flesh, Jesus, who is fully Divine
and fully human, makes visible the invisible and shows true spousal love by laying down

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365 Ibid., 59.
366 Ibid., 60.
367 Ibid., 59.
368 John Paul II, The Theology of the Body, 333-336; and West, The Sacramentality of
Marriage (tape 1).

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his life for his bride, the Church (Eph 5:25).\textsuperscript{370} John Paul II sees a connection with Adam and Eve giving themselves to each other in spousal love, and the Word becoming flesh and giving himself up for his bride the Church.\textsuperscript{371} John Paul II believes there is continuity between the original plan of God in marriage and the redemptive love of Jesus in that both have a spousal character.\textsuperscript{372} Jesus' love demonstrates that true spousal love is a conscious, total, life-giving gift of oneself.\textsuperscript{373} John Paul II goes so far as to say, "Marriage as a sacrament remains a living and vivifying part of this saving process."\textsuperscript{374} Married couples are called to imitate the spousal love of Jesus as part of the active process of redemption.\textsuperscript{375}

Out of love God freely created life and all the blessings of the earth. Therefore, to imitate God, humanity must also have the capability of creating life through a choice to love.\textsuperscript{376} God designed it so the marital embrace would create life at certain times, and thus human persons could procreate with God. This loving embrace would not only create life, but would also symbolize the life giving love and true unity of the Trinity.\textsuperscript{377}

Because of sin humanity became more self-centered and less loving, thus our ability to reflect and imitate God was diminished.\textsuperscript{378} The pope's phenomenological analysis of scripture concludes that, in the story of Genesis, after the fall, Adam and Eve began to see each other as objects of lust. Jesus referred to Genesis when he appealed to people to stop lusting after others in their hearts. John Paul II says that the weakness to use someone as an object for pleasure is always a particular risk in the area of sexuality because sensuality is oriented toward the sexual value of the body and the

\textsuperscript{370} John Paul II, The Theology of the Body, 313-314.
\textsuperscript{371} John Paul II, The Theology of the Body, 332-333.
\textsuperscript{372} Ibid., 322.
\textsuperscript{373} Ibid., 313.
\textsuperscript{374} Ibid., 354.
\textsuperscript{375} Ibid., 347-354.
\textsuperscript{376} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{378} Ibid., 115-116.
attainment of enjoyment.\textsuperscript{379} He adds that to oppose lust a person needs God’s grace, to practice the Christian virtues of self-control and chastity, and then to imitate God’s love by making oneself a total gift to their spouse. Because we are thinking and choosing creatures, we need to consciously seek the value of the person above their sexual value. When a spouse seeks to withhold something from their spouse during the marital act, they are doing something contrary to the self-giving and unitive design the marital act was to symbolize and make present.\textsuperscript{380} When couples prevent the life-giving capabilities of the marital act, it radically changes the meaning of their embrace.\textsuperscript{381} Smith offers a quote from John Paul II explaining why he sees the use of contraception as falsifying the language of total self-gift:

When couples, by means of recourse to contraception, separate these two meanings [the unitive and procreative] that God the Creator has inscribed in the being of man and woman and in the dynamism of their sexual communion, they act as ‘arbiters’ of the divine plan and they ‘manipulate’ and degrade human sexuality- and with it themselves and their married partner- by altering its value of ‘total’ self-giving. Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality.\textsuperscript{382}

The pope also claims that a true union between the couple cannot take place because the use of ABC contradicts the language the marital embrace expresses, a full giving and receiving of each other:

It can be said that in the case of an artificial separation of these two aspects, there is carried out in the conjugal act a real bodily union, but it does not correspond to the interior truth and to the dignity of personal communion: communion of persons. This communion demands in fact that the ‘language of the body’ be expressed reciprocally in the integral truth of its meaning. If this truth be lacking, one cannot speak either of the truth of self-mastery, or of the truth of the reciprocal gift and of the reciprocal acceptance of self on the part of the person. Such a violation of the interior order of

\textsuperscript{379} Wojtyla, \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 108.
\textsuperscript{380} Ibid., 60-63.
\textsuperscript{381} West, \textit{Sex & Christian Discipleship: A Reflection on the 6th and 9th Commandments} (tape 2).
\textsuperscript{382} Smith, \textit{Humane Vitae: A Generation Later}, 256.
conjugal union, which is rooted in the very order of the person, constitutes the essential evil of the contraceptive act.\textsuperscript{383}

John Paul II believes that couples using ABC are not loving as God intended and that their actions distort conjugal love. Even though their intentions may be good and they may be seeking a good end, they are still using the person as a means to an end because they are not fully giving or fully accepting their spouse.\textsuperscript{384} They are withholding their fertility even though they are expressing an act of total giving with their bodies. Although total self-gift may be difficult and at times even impossible to achieve, there is a difference between someone who is unable to be totally self-giving and someone who is preventing the full giving of self while their body engages in an action that expresses total giving and unity. Because they are seeking certain values from the spouse and not embracing the total person, they not allowing full unity to occur, which means they are using, not loving their spouse.

Chris West provides an example of why total self-giving must be sought. If a spouse were to imagine having intercourse with another person’s spouse while engaging in the marital act with his or her own spouse, would such thoughts be wrong? Immediately we think of Christ’s words of committing adultery in the heart and at the same time we also instinctively know this is a violation of their spouse’s dignity. In this scenario, the spouse with the adulterous heart is using the body of their spouse and at the same time not giving him/herself interiorly in the marital embrace. The adulterous spouse is practicing a type of dualism by using the body of their spouse for sensual pleasure while denying a deeper emotional and spiritual union, which consequently prevents this from being a loving embrace.\textsuperscript{385} This is a clear violation of God’s intention and design for

\textsuperscript{383} Smith, “Pope John Paul II And Humane Vitae,” 239-240.
marital sexuality. Even if both spouses agree to imagine they are making love to another person, they are still practicing dualism and using each other, which is contrary to Jesus’ command to love and to what the pope calls the personalistic norm.

John Paul II believes God designed people to express the interior person with their bodies, and also designed the marital act to be an expression of the life-giving love of the Trinity. When people perform internally contradicting actions, like the example above, they are guilty of injustice toward God and their spouse. Couples who use ABC are falling into a type of dualism similar to West’s example. They are eliminating the life-giving power from their bodies, yet their bodies are performing the actions that give life. Those who claim what is important is their relationship and not what happens with or to their bodies are misunderstanding the Christian teaching about the unity between body and soul. People who use ABC cannot achieve unity with their spouse because by rejecting their fertility they have rejected part of their personhood or part of their spouse’s personhood. Even though they are seeking very important values, when they reject a portion of the person they eliminate the possibility of truly uniting with the whole person. Seeking a partial value from a person instead of the whole person is considered by the pope to be using the person. This is particularly harmful to their relationship because intercourse is meant to be the embodied language of love and unity, the bodily expression of the love of the Trinity.


388 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 121-124, 167-170, 237-244.
NFP Compared to ABC

John Paul II emphasizes the necessity of chastity, self-control, and choosing according to revealed truths and values. These virtues are essential requirements of a couple practicing NFP. According to the pope, the virtue of chastity is an essential requirement of Jesus' command to have purity of heart. John Paul II explains that chastity is the adversary of lust and how only the chaste person is able to appreciate the value of the person over the sexual value.\(^{389}\) For a person to be chaste, they must have self-control, which implies that a person has the freedom to choose whether to engage in intercourse or to refrain. This understanding of freedom echoes St. Paul's words to the Galatians, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Gal 5:13-14).\(^{390}\)

Freedom is a human right and to lack freedom is in contrast with our dignity of being created in the image and likeness of God. Only the couple that can choose when to have and when not to have the marital embrace is truly free. For a couple to live the pedagogy of NFP, both spouses must have self-control and thus have the freedom to have intercourse or not have intercourse.\(^{391}\) On the other hand, if a person cannot resist these urges, they are not free to offer him/herself as a gift to their spouse. They may want to make a gift of themselves to their spouse, but if they lack self-control they are not in possession of themselves and thus not truly able to give themselves to their spouse.\(^{392}\) One must have possession of something before it can become a gift. They may love their spouse, but if they lack freedom can their actions truly be loving actions, or is freedom a requirement to love as the pope claims?


\(^{391}\) Ibid., 208-217.

NFP is not merely a method; it is a pedagogy that requires the virtues expressed in scripture. The discipline of NFP fosters a counter-cultural attitude toward marriage and sexuality. NFP is a lifestyle requiring self-knowledge, knowledge of the spouse, communication, sacrificial love, and an understanding of God's design of the human person. When a couple using NFP unites in the marital embrace, their bodies express that they are giving themselves totally. If both have developed the freedom to choose when and when not to unite, both people possess the freedom to give themselves to the other in love.

In the United States couples using NFP have a divorce rate of only 2% compared to more than 50% for those who use other methods of birth control. Why such a drastic difference between couples who live in relatively the same culture? NFP is not just a biological answer to the fertility issue; it is a pedagogy that involves the full person by calling for a lifestyle that requires the practice of sacrificial love for the sake of their relationship and their family, and the giving of oneself in order to find oneself. (GS24) It requires the couples to reflect regularly on what is important to them and to communicate with each other at an intimate level. By design it encourages couples to develop other ways of communicating and expressing their love for each other. NFP fosters personal development by requiring people to become more sensitive, understanding, knowledgeable, and sacrificial in their spousal relationship. NFP honors God by cooperating with the original design and fosters a total self-giving, which is necessary for spousal love.

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A couple using ABC is expressing total giving with their bodies, but then doing something to prevent the total giving or receiving of each other. The use of ABC does not require the couple to have the same level of communication, understanding of their fertility, or self-mastery to effectively regulate their fertility. ABC tends to reduce the need to integrate the virtues of chastity and self-control into the sexual aspect of their marriage. One of the reasons why people claim ABC is needed is because some couples are unable to resist their sexual urges. If chastity and self-control are two of the fruits of the Spirit, how does the lifestyle of using ABC respond to the gospel message to seek perfection and foster the development of these virtues?

**Summary**

The foundations of John Paul II’s teachings on love, sex, and marriage are based upon an existential personalism understood in the light of Revelation. People are made in the image and likeness of God; therefore, the only appropriate response to another person is to love as God loves. Through a phenomenological analysis of scripture, John Paul II concludes that humanity is called to return to the original plan God had “in the beginning.” His analysis of scripture indicates that there is a weakness and susceptibility for people to seek selfish ends and to use people, especially in the area of sexuality, because of the powerful and real values involved in sexual intercourse. However, Jesus’ sacrifice has caused an effective redemption of the human race that frees people from the bondages of sin. When people respond to God’s grace and live in the Spirit, they form and bring themselves closer to perfection in imitation of Jesus. The pope views NFP as one way to oppose the weaknesses of our fallen, yet redeemed nature, and as a way of helping people to develop an attitude of self-giving and self-sacrifice that is consistent with the spousal love demonstrated by Jesus. On the other hand John Paul II sees the use of

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ABC as only accepting partial values from the spouse, which does not reflect the love of the Trinity, or the spousal love of Jesus. Also, because ABC does not allow total giving and receiving between the spouses, it makes unity with the person impossible because of the embodied nature of humanity. By eliminating fertility, ABC fosters division of body/soul integrity and division between the couple by contradicting the language the marital embrace signifies. Instead of being a remedy against the consequences of the fall, ABC succumbs to these weaknesses, which are destructive to the moral maturity of the person, and therefore hinder the spousal relationship.
CHAPTER 3
ANALYSIS OF HOW WELL THE CRITIC'S ENGAGE
JOHN PAUL II'S ARGUMENTS

The goal of this thesis is to analyze the arguments of John Paul II on fertility regulation and determine which critics’ arguments engage his positions and further the debate and which arguments misrepresent him. I will combine and summarize some of the arguments and use quotes to present others. In the first half of this chapter it will appear as if the pope’s positions have been misrepresented, but as the chapter progresses it will become apparent that some of the critics’ arguments are engaging John Paul II’s positions and furthering this debate. In conclusion, I found the critics’ arguments fall into at least one of three categories: arguments that misrepresent the pope’s positions, arguments that engage the pope’s positions but need further support and explanation, and arguments that are engaging the pope’s position and deserve a response from him or his supporters.

Body, Passions, Emotions, and Sensuality

Luke Timothy Johnson and Ronald Modras both claim that John Paul II does not value the body, passions, emotions or sexual pleasure, and that he describes these goods as being obstacles to authentic love. Contrary to these claims, Wojtyla actually advocates sexual passion, claiming that: “The Creator designed this joy, and linked it with love between man and woman in so far as that love develops on the basis of the sexual urge…” He later adds that: “An exuberant and readily roused sensuality is the stuff from which a rich – if difficult- personal life may be made. It may help the individual to respond

401 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 61.
more readily and completely to the decisive elements in personal love. Primitive sensual excitability...can become a factor making for a fuller and more ardent love. Such a love will obviously be the result of sublimation.\textsuperscript{402} Wojtyla even warns that the lack of sensual pleasure can threaten the health of the spousal relationship:

It is necessary to insist that intercourse must not serve merely as a means of allowing sexual excitement to reach its climax in one of the partners, i.e. the man alone, but that climax must be reached in harmony, not at the expense of one partner, but with both partners fully involved.\textsuperscript{403}....

...There exists a rhythm dictated by nature itself which both spouses must discover so that climax may be reached... and as far as possible occur in both simultaneously. The subjective happiness which they then share has the clear characteristic of the enjoyment which we have called ‘frui’, of the joy which flows from harmony between one’s own actions and the objective order of nature.\textsuperscript{404}....

...if sexual arousal is not terminated by detumescence, which in the woman is closely connected with orgasm...if she derives no satisfaction from intercourse... This may lead to the collapse of the marriage.\textsuperscript{405}

Modras also claims, according to the pope, “Genuine love is the antithesis of emotional desire, and a couple ‘must free themselves from those erotic sensations which have no legitimation in true love.”\textsuperscript{406} John Paul II actually says to speak of love without emotion is absurd: “Emotions play an enormous part in the development of the subjective aspect of love - it is impossible to imagine the subjective aspect of love without emotion. It would be absurd to want love ‘free of emotion’, as the stoics and Kant did.”\textsuperscript{407} The pope believes that sensuality and emotion are components of love but not love itself:

We have said that sensuality and emotionalism furnish so to speak, 'raw material for love', i.e. they create states of feeling 'within' persons, and situations 'between' persons favourable to love. None the less, these 'situations' are not quite love. They become love only as a result of integration, or in other words by being raised to the personal level, by reciprocal affirmation of the value of the person.\textsuperscript{408}

\textsuperscript{402} Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 109.
\textsuperscript{403} Ibid., 272.
\textsuperscript{404} Ibid., 272-273.
\textsuperscript{405} Ibid., 273-274.
\textsuperscript{406} Modras, Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, 152.
\textsuperscript{407} Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 154.
\textsuperscript{408} Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 159.
The pope does not advocate decreasing sensuality or the emotions, on the contrary, he encourages people to increase and integrate these raw materials into love for the person. Passions and urges are internal drives to seek the true, good, and beautiful, which ultimately is God. 409

Although Wojtyla does say, couples “must free themselves from those erotic sensations which have no legitimation in true love” he often makes statements that at first seem contradictory, but are actually meant to exist within a tension. A single line or sentence does not fit until the entire vision is presented. In the context of his arguments, Wojtyla is explaining how sensual or emotional values can blind someone to the real motivation for his or her interest in a person. On the page preceding the quote Modras used, Wojtyla explains what he means:

This is why the function of integration is so important. Love cannot remain merely a subjective ‘situation’ in which sensual and emotional energies aroused by the sexual urge make themselves felt. If it does, it cannot rise to the level appropriate to persons, and cannot unite persons. For love to attain its full personal value, and truly to unite a man and a woman, it must be firmly based on the affirmation of the value of the person…. The longing for true happiness for another person, a sincere devotion to that person’s good, puts the priceless imprint of altruism on love. But none of this will happen if the love between a man and a woman is dominated by an ambition to possess, or more specifically by concupiscence born of sensual reactions, even if these are accompanied by intense emotion. 410

Wojtyla isn’t vilifying emotion or sensuality; rather, he is keeping these two subjective values subservient to the divinely revealed value of the human person as the image of God. When Wojtyla says that couples: “must free themselves from those erotic sensations which have no legitimation in true love.” This must be understood in context with statements such as: “emotions give love a ‘relish’, but do not always contain its objective essence, which is inseparable from reciprocal affirmation of the value of the person.” 411 Wojtyla does not see eros to be in opposition to what is true or good:

410 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 145.
411 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 145.
Eros and ethos do not differ from each other. They are not opposed to each other, but are called to meet in the human heart, and, in this meeting to bear fruit. What is worthy of the human heart is that the form of what is erotic should be at the same time the form of ethos, that is, of what is ethical.412

The pope claims that passions can cloud our intellect and will, but is he right? Who has not said or done something in a moment of passion they did not regret? If passions are not integrated into love for the person they can lead to egoism.413 If someone with tremendous passion seeks satisfaction of their desires without regard for the welfare of their spouse, this would be wrong. John Paul II is “suspicious” of the passions, but he only requires they be sublimated into love.414

Modras claims, “Wojtyla does not explicitly describe sexual feelings as dirty, but he does imply it when he writes that ‘sensations and actions springing from sexual reactions and the emotions connected with them tend to deprive love of its crystal clarity’”415 Modras is misrepresenting Wojtyla by taking his statement out of context. Sexual reactions and emotions do not make love dirty or bad in any way; they can be so powerful, however, that they overshadow the value of the person. Wojtyla says that emotion can cloud our judgment because “emotion in itself has only a subjective truth; genuine emotion may inform an act which objectively is not good.”416 He adds:

This is why the function of integration is so important. Love cannot remain merely a subjective ‘situation’ in which sensual and emotional energies aroused by the sexual urge make themselves felt. If it does, it cannot rise to the level appropriate to persons, and cannot unite persons. For love to attain its full personal value, and truly to unite a man and a woman, it must be firmly based on the affirmation of the value of the person. ...

...Love must be so to speak pellucid: through all the sensation, all the actions which originate in it we must always be able to discern an attitude to a person of the opposite sex which derives from sincere affirmation of the worth of that person.417

414 Ibid., 109.
415 Modras, Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, 152.
417 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 145-146.
Although sensuality, emotion, and sexual reactions are important (raw materials of love), one must put the value of the person above those values and test if one is motivated primarily by emotional or sensual satisfaction, or if someone is moved by true love: a desire for the good of the person. The pope says that because emotion is such a powerful component of love that draws people toward intimacy, it can be difficult to distinguish it from love:

The very exuberance of the emotions born of sensuality may conceal an absence of true love, or indeed outright egoism. Love is one thing, and erotic sensations are another. Love develops on the basis of the totally committed and fully responsible attitude of a person to a person, erotic experiences are born spontaneously from sensual and emotional reactions.418

Every emotion is genuine and real to the person experiencing it. What may feel like love might not be genuine love, but might be sensual or emotional reactions producing intense feelings.419 Chastity requires the emotional and sensual values to be integrated into love for the person because chastity allows one to demonstrate they are motivated by genuine love, and not merely using the person to obtain the sensual or emotional values inherent in the person.420

Modras claims: “Wojtyla espouses a stratified concept of the human person. Like the pagan stoics and medieval schoolmen, he views the emotions as dangerous if not evil.”421 This is a misleading oversimplification. Wojtyla describes emotions as sensory reactions to material and/or nonmaterial values, which we perceive in a particular object.422 Wojtyla affirms their goodness saying: “The ability to experience emotions which are at once profound and powerful seems to constitute a particularly important factor in the interior life.”423 However, the pope believes emotions can be a danger,
because, if they are not integrated into love for the person, a person may respond to others in a way that violates their human dignity. Emotions become dangerous when they control, compel, and dominate a person to the extent the person is no longer free to resist them.\textsuperscript{424} Freedom is a requirement for love and to lack freedom is experienced as being contrary to human dignity.\textsuperscript{425} The pope believes emotions make love possible because emotions allow us to experience the other person as a value:

But if human love begins with an impression, if everything in it (even its spiritual content) depends upon that impression, this is because the impression is accompanied by an emotion, which makes it possible to experience another person as a value, or putting it differently, enables two persons, a woman and a man, each to experience the other as a value. For this reason we must in our further psychological analysis of love constantly refer to values.\textsuperscript{426}

Because of our fallen nature, it is important to be aware of what is drawing us toward another person. Are we merely seeking an emotional or sensual value from that person, or are we aware of their beauty, equality, and value, and thus desire to give ourselves to them in response?

Wojtyla does say that unrestrained sensuality or emotions can lead a person into sin or egoism. He claims that sensuality and emotion are both oriented to satisfy a specific need or value, and those values are found in people. Emotional and sensual attributes are true goods, but they remain merely building blocks of love unless they are sublimated into appreciation for the objectively higher value of the person.\textsuperscript{427} The raw materials to make a plow are the same ones used to make a sword; it depends on the intellect, will, and ability of the person to determine how those raw materials will be integrated. We have all experienced the power of emotions clouding our ability to see and

\textsuperscript{424} Wojtyla, \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 150-156.
\textsuperscript{425} Ibid., 135-138.
\textsuperscript{426} Ibid., 103-104.
\textsuperscript{427} Ibid., 156-163.
understand things objectively. Wojtyla’s concern is that emotions or sensual attraction can mistakenly become the supreme values overwhelming the value of the person.\textsuperscript{428}

Sensuality always implies experiencing a particular value bound up with this sensory awareness. Specifically we are concerned with a sexual value\textsuperscript{429}....

...sensuality by itself is not love, and may very easily become its opposite. At the same time, we must recognize that when man and woman come together, sensuality, as the natural reaction to a person of the other sex, is a sort of raw material for true, conjugal love....

...Sensuality in itself is quite blind to the person, and oriented only towards the sexual value connected with ‘the body’.\textsuperscript{430}

If the sexual value of the person is experienced to be more important than the integral value of the person, then we do not have someone motivated primarily by love, but by lust. Lust is the enemy of love because instead of seeking unity and the sincere giving of self, lust seeks appropriation. With lust there is no self-giving or true appreciation of the value of the person; instead the person is reduced to primarily an object to satisfy desires.\textsuperscript{431} Wojtyla believes appreciation for the person needs to be experienced not only intellectually but also emotionally: "The value of the person must be not merely understood by the cold light of reason, but felt."\textsuperscript{432}

Modras claims, “Wojtyla describes love as a ‘duty’ whereas sexual desire or concupiscence ‘means a constant tendency merely to ‘enjoy’"\textsuperscript{433} Wojtyla calls love a duty because Jesus commands us to love one another.\textsuperscript{434} Wojtyla further explains:

For to be just always means giving others what is rightly due to them. A person’s rightful due is to be treated as an object of love, not as an object for use. In a sense it can be said that love is a requirement of justice, just as using a person as a means to an end would conflict with justice.\textsuperscript{435}

\textsuperscript{428} Wojtyla, \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 156-163.
\textsuperscript{429} Ibid., 105
\textsuperscript{430} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{431} John Paul II, \textit{The Theology of the Body}, 125-127.
\textsuperscript{432} Wojtyla, \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 199,
\textsuperscript{433} Modras, \textit{Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body}, 152.
\textsuperscript{434} Wojtyla, \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 40-41.
\textsuperscript{435} Ibid., 42.
I do not find anything wrong with the pope’s claim that concupiscence “means a constant tendency merely to enjoy.” Concupiscence seeks to satisfy a desire and once it is satisfied the desire temporarily subsides only to come back stronger with the next temptation.\footnote{Wojtyla, \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 148-150.} Many people can attest to this experience and have felt the compelling power of concupiscence.

Emotion, passion, sensuality, pleasure, sexual intercourse, and all of the attributes that people associate with marital love are affirmed and upheld by John Paul II as being true goods that are necessary for and enhance true love. Critics have misrepresented the pope’s positions and hindered the debate by claiming he is against these goods when in reality he advocates their development, but makes them subservient to love of the person.

Cahill also claims the pope has put too much emphasis on restraining sexual passion. She cites the work of Mary Durkin and her book \textit{Feast of Love} as an example of someone who has worked with sociologists and has come to a different conclusion on sexual passion. Cahill says, “Indeed, more needed in the marital experience of many is encouragement to nurture their sexual attraction, rather than to control and restrain it.”\footnote{Cahill, “Divorced from Experience,” 176.} Cahill implies that the lifestyle advocated by the pope will inhibit and “restrain” “sexual attraction” rather than “nurture” it. Cahill does not cite a text indicating where the pope is against nurturing sexual attraction, nor does she cite studies indicating that people who use NFP have decreased levels of sexual attraction or that those who use ABC are nurturing sexual attraction in their relationship. Cahill’s conclusion would be a good argument to make, but she neither develops the argument nor provides evidence that her conclusion is accurate. Although she cites Durkin and implies that Durkin has come to a different conclusion about sexual passion than the pope, Durkin actually says that the
pope’s teachings will help nurture passion in the relationship: “We have engaged in these reflections on the Pope’s theology of the body and sexuality as a way to develop a spirituality ... that will allow us to participate in the sexual feast.”

**Procreation and Concupiscence**

Modras explains the pope’s position as, “Sexual emotions or enjoyment are not evil in themselves, but only if dissociated from procreation.” This is an oversimplification of John Paul II’s teaching that misrepresents a foundation of his arguments. Sexual emotions and enjoyment are considered to be values experienced subjectively, and they are always goods or values, never evil in and of themselves.

One of Wojtyla’s foundations throughout his writings is that each person has such value and dignity that the only appropriate response is to love them. If one is seeking to unite with one’s spouse only for procreation and not as an act of loving, then this is also using one’s spouse, which is a violation of their dignity. One of the objective values of sexual intercourse between people is procreation, but this value, like sexual emotions and pleasure, is subservient to the value of the person and should only occur under the motivation to love. Love of the person entails an acceptance of the person in their entirety, which includes the subjective emotional and sensual values as well as the objective value of their fertility. To not accept the person in their entirety is to only accept or seek certain values possessed by the person and not the person themselves, which is why the lack of total acceptance is the key criterion for measuring the use of persons.

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442 Ibid., 122-125.
443 Ibid., 57-61, 66-69.
444 Ibid., 121-125.
Johnson says, “But self-control is not the entire point of sexual love; celibacy is not the goal of marriage!”\[445\] This may be a great point, but against whom is Johnson debating? Wojtyla says people crave freedom, but people only want freedom so that they can love. To be free requires an ability to choose, to be in control of oneself, and to not be compelled in one’s choices. Self-control is necessary for someone to be truly free, and freedom is a prerequisite to love; therefore, self-control is a prerequisite to love; and the reason for self-control is not for its own sake, but so that one may love. One must have self-mastery to be able to give oneself to the other in marriage.\[446\] That God created people to have freedom and self-determination so that people could choose to love is a foundational principle of John Paul II’s existential personalism. Those who have not thoroughly read the pope’s writings may be mislead by Johnson’s statement.

Modras implies that the pope sees spontaneous sexual desire as evil when he equates it with concupiscence: “More problematic, however, is his discussion of the spontaneous sexual desire that Catholic theological tradition has come to call concupiscence.”\[447\] The claim that concupiscence is the same as spontaneous sexual desire is not how the pope or Catechism of the Catholic Church presents it. John Paul II explains concupiscence this way:

Concupiscence is a consistent tendency to see persons of the other sex through the prism of sexuality alone, as ‘objects of potential enjoyment’. Concupiscence, then, refers to a latent inclination of human beings to invert the objective order of values. For the correct way to see and ‘desire’ a person is through the medium of his or her value as a person. We should not think of this manner of seeing and desiring as ‘a-sexual’, as blind to the value of ‘the body and sex’; it is simply that this value must be correctly integrated with love of the person – love in the proper sense of the word.\[448\]

For John Paul II the problem with concupiscence is not the desire of sex, but the tendency to use a person as an object to satisfy desire. This is degrading to the person because

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\[447\] Modras, Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, 153.
\[448\] Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 159.
the dignity of a person demands they not be used, only loved in their integrity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers an etymological definition of concupiscence as well as a theological definition:

> Etymologically, ‘concupiscence’ can refer to any intense form of human desire. Christian theology has given it a particular meaning: the movement of the sensitive appetite contrary to the operation of the human reason. The apostle St. Paul identifies it with the rebellion of the ‘flesh’ against the ‘spirit’. Concupiscence stems from the disobedience of the first sin. It unsettles man’s moral faculties and, without being in itself an offense, inclines man to commit sins. CCC 2515

Johnson also misrepresents the pope’s positions by equating concupiscence with sexual desire:

> John Paul II and his apologists seem to think that concupiscence is our biggest challenge. How many of us would welcome a dose of concupiscence, when the grinding realities of sickness and the need have drained the body of all its sap and sweetness, just as a reminder of being sentient!

Is Johnson really calling for an increase in concupiscence, one of the consequences of original sin for disobeying God? In the context of John Paul II’s writings, concupiscence is an “appetite contrary to the operation of human reason” because reason should tell us that the person’s greatest value is not their sexual value, but their value as a person in the image of God. The pope advocates intense passion or desire, for they are gifts from God, and can make for a rewarding and fulfilling life, but they must be sublimated into love for a person. If Johnson really wants more concupiscence, he is definitely at odds with John Paul II; if on the other hand, he wants greater passion or desire, then he is agreeing with the pope. Both Richard Grecco and Ronald Modras cite the terminology of the pope as

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449 Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), Love and Responsibility, 28-34, 150-152.
452 Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), Love and Responsibility, 109, 159.
being difficult to understand.\textsuperscript{453} In order to accurately debate the issues, the terminology needs to be explained and applied accurately by both sides.

Modras says since concupiscence is natural, the pope is asking too much from people:

Karl Rahner, the foremost Catholic theologian of our century, has pointed out that concupiscence is natural, since, according to Catholic tradition, freedom from it is preternatural and so not required by human nature.\textsuperscript{454} If Adam in the Genesis story was free from concupiscence, it did not stop him from sinning. It follows, moreover, that if concupiscence limits our totally free self-giving to virtue, it also limits our totally free self-giving to vice. If it keeps us from being angels, it keeps us from being demonic as well.\textsuperscript{454}

John Paul II claims that Jesus understands human nature and how people suffer from lust in the heart, yet Jesus still calls for purity of heart and a return to the beginning.\textsuperscript{455} The pope sees Jesus' incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection as being efficacious and redeeming humanity.\textsuperscript{456} Because of our redemption, we cannot blame our fallen nature and accept sin as 'natural'; on the contrary, we must choose and practice divinely revealed virtue to deter concupiscence. John Paul II says failures in trying to live according to revelation should not be looked upon as proof that Christ's call to have purity of heart is impossible. He believes that with persistence, God's grace, and the sacraments, people can overcome their weaknesses. The pope sees the use of ABC as capitulating to our fallen nature and not seeking Jesus' call to perfection, and returning to God's original intentions. In opposition to John Paul II's position, Curran and Cahill both say Jesus' teachings may be ideals to be sought but not always achieved.\textsuperscript{457} Are Jesus' teachings ideals or are they true commands? The answer to that question needs to be

\begin{itemize}
\item Grecco, \textit{Recent Ecclesiastical Teaching}, 147; Modras, \textit{Pope John Paul II's Theology}, 155.
\item Modras, \textit{Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body}, 155.
\item Cahill, "Catholic Sexual Ethics," 150; Curran, \textit{Issues in Sexual and Medical Ethics}, 15.
\end{itemize}
further investigated, not only for this debate, but also because of its implications for many other theological questions.

Dualism

Modras claims: "Wojtyla still maintains the old Platonic dualism with its suspicion of the body and its passions."\(^{458}\) I find this to be an unsubstantiated claim because Modras does not explain how the pope is dualistic or cite texts that indicate dualism. John Paul II often talks about the unity between body and soul, and how human actions express the interior person. The pope says the dualistic mentality of Manicheans is contradictory to the gospel message and has sometimes mistakenly been applied to Christ's words.\(^{459}\) For the pope the soul and body are so connected that one's actions affect one's soul by forming their character. In the *Theology of the Body*, John Paul II claims that: "The human body...expresses the person in his ontological and existential concreteness, which is something more than the individual. Therefore the body expresses the personal human 'self,' which derives its exterior perception from within."\(^{460}\) He later adds that: "The body as an element which, together with the spirit, determines man's ontological subjectivity and shares in his dignity as a person...In its masculinity and femininity, the body is called "from the beginning" to become the manifestation of the spirit."\(^{461}\)

Johnson also implies that the pope is dualistic. Johnson argues that we must learn from our bodies because they are part of who we are:

We cannot detach ourselves from our bodies as though they were simply what we "have" rather than also what we "are." We are deeply implicated and cannot distance ourselves from the body without self-distortion. Our bodies are not only to be schooled by our minds and wills; they also instruct and discipline us in often humbling ways. Should not a genuine "theology of the body" begin with a posture of receptive attention to and learning from our bodies":? Human bodies are part of God's image

\(^{460}\) Ibid., 56.
\(^{461}\) Ibid., 163.
and the means through which absolutely everything we can learn about God must come to us.\textsuperscript{462}

Although Johnson seems to be opposing the pope, I do not see how the pope’s writings contradict anything Johnson is saying, nor does Johnson offer citations to refer to where the pope is opposing this position. People who have not read the pope’s writings will be mislead by these statements. Critics who claim that John Paul II is dualistic are misrepresenting his positions and hindering the debate unless they can give evidence to support their claims.

Cahill also claims the pope is dualistic, but in a slightly different way:

The writings of John Paul II, to the extent that they romanticize and idealize the interpersonal love relationship, while grounding substantive norms in the physical act, continue to discourage the true integration of spirit and body as sources of sexual ethics. What is needed is a sexual ethics that recognizes both the physical and interpersonal aspects of sexuality, marriage and parenthood. Moreover, the goal of an integrated view of sex, love, and procreation will not be achieved until due attention is accorded to the broader economic and social settings in which these relationships have their concrete existence.\textsuperscript{463}

Cahill claims that the pope emphasizes the physical act to the detriment of the relationship. She also indicates that John Paul II’s teachings on sexuality do not recognize the “interpersonal aspects of sexuality, marriage and parenthood.” Cahill does not adequately explain why the pope’s perspective is detrimental to the “interpersonal aspects,” or how the pope is flawed in his reasoning. Neither does she adequately explain how the pope’s requirement to be open to procreation during the act of intercourse flaws his personalist arguments. Supporters of John Paul II’s theology claim that the lifestyle and pedagogy associated with his theology would foster the development of persons, families, and communities that would support the interpersonal aspects that Cahill seeks. John Paul II claims that because a human person is an “(embodied) spirit,

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{462} Johnson, “A Disembodied ‘Theology of the Body’,” 14-15.
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not merely a ‘body’\textsuperscript{464} and that human persons have the “power of self-determination...manifested in the fact that a man acts from choice\textsuperscript{465} that by respecting the order of nature and the cycles of fertility and infertility inherent in women, human persons show justice “towards God the Creator.”\textsuperscript{466} John Paul II claims:

Thus, in the sexual relationship between man and woman \textit{two orders} meet: \textit{the order of nature}, which has as its object reproduction, and \textit{the personal order}, which finds its expression in the love of persons and aims at the fullest realization of that love. We cannot separate the two orders, for each depends upon the other. In particular, the correct attitude to procreation is a condition of the realization of love.\textsuperscript{467}

Cahill’s position is somewhat different than Modras and Johnson in that she indicates the pope is being dualistic because he undermines the importance of the relationship by advocating a fertility regulation method that calls for periodic abstinence. Though it is not clear to me why “grounding substantive norms in the physical act, continue to discourage the true integration of spirit and body as sources of sexual ethics,” Cahill believes they do. Cahill would advance the debate if she were to articulate more specifically where John Paul II is in error. Such arguments would engage the pope’s positions and further the debate, but they have not yet been developed.

\textbf{Johnson’s Criticisms}

Johnson says that the pope’s arguments are illogical and that he contradicts himself:

He minimizes the flat internal contradictions among the conferences. For example on October 1, 1980, the pope declares that a husband cannot be guilty of “lust in the heart” for his wife, but a week later, in the conference of October 8, he states confidently that even husbands can sin in this fashion.\textsuperscript{468}

\textsuperscript{464} Wojtyla, \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 121.
\textsuperscript{466} Wojtyla, \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 246.
\textsuperscript{467} Wojtyla, \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 226.
Johnson’s claim of internal contradictions illustrates his fundamental misunderstanding of John Paul II’s position. It would be surprising if a philosopher of John Paul II’s caliber would be so careless as to flatly contradict himself within one week, while presenting a series of lectures taking him almost five years to complete. This should have been a warning flag to Johnson that he is misunderstanding and thus misrepresenting the pope’s ideas. If one misunderstands a foundation of John Paul II’s argument, (that the dignity of a person requires never using them) how can one hope to understand the nuances in his explanations, or give an accurate theological critique? On October 1, 1980 John Paul II was discussing lust in the heart (which Jesus opposes), and considering hypothetically a legalistic interpretation that it would not apply to a man who looks at his own wife this way, because he can’t commit adultery with her, and thus has a right to look at her lustfully.

After giving this interpretation John Paul II says:

The reasoning in support of this interpretation has all the characteristics of objective correctness and accuracy...Nevertheless, good grounds for doubt remain as to whether this reasoning takes into account all the aspects of revelation, as well as of the theology of the body. This must be considered, especially when we wish to understand Christ’s words...above all, a deepening.

In previous addresses the pope described how lust is an attack on the dignity of the person and how lust is the enemy of love. It would not make sense for him to justify something he previously showed to be contrary to human dignity. This would be in contradiction with the fundamental principles on which he bases his teachings. On October 8 John Paul II says, “Man can commit this adultery in the heart also with regard to his own wife, if he treats her only as an object to satisfy instinct.” This fits the theology John Paul II has been presenting all along. It makes sense if one understands the vision of love, marriage, and sex he was trying to convey. One who merely sees a flat

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470 John Paul II, The Theology of the Body, 155;
471 Ibid., 157.
contradiction misunderstands a foundational principle of the pope’s theology\textsuperscript{472} and is not aware of the pope’s method of analyzing a topic from multiple views before coming to a conclusion. John Paul II often holds ideas in a tension, in a both/and paradox, but this is not one of them. John Paul II’s true paradoxes need further explanation by his supporters and/or to be shown to contain incompatible contradictions by critics. Johnson’s argument demonstrates he has failed to understand or portray John Paul II’s position accurately, and thus misleads people in this debate.

Johnson claims the pope’s theology of the body is too narrowly focused on sexuality:

Do not the sins of gluttony and drunkenness and sloth have as much to do with the body as fornication, and are not all the forms of avarice also dispositions of the body?...Reducing a theology of the body to a consideration of sexuality falsifies the topic from the beginning...it must also embrace all the other ways in which human embodiedness both enables and limits human freedom through disposition of material possessions, through relationships to the environment, through artistic creativity, and through suffering—both sinful and sanctifying.\textsuperscript{473}

John Paul II readily admits:

We must immediately note that the term “theology of the body” goes far beyond the content of the reflections that were made. These reflections do not include multiple problems which, with regard to their object, belong to the theology of the body (as, for example, the problem of suffering and death, so important in the biblical message). We must state this clearly. Nonetheless, we must also recognize explicitly that the reflections on the theme, ‘The redemption of the body and the sacramentalality of marriage,’ can be correctly carried out.\textsuperscript{474}

John Paul II did not intend for his book to be a comprehensive theology of the body. It is true the pope does not spend a significant amount of time on the individual vices Johnson mentions, but he does address how they are in their opposition to life in the Spirit when he uses Galatians 5:19-21.\textsuperscript{475} However, Johnson is correct that a thorough theology of the body should investigate the other effects of embodiedness,

\textsuperscript{472} West, \textit{A Response to Luke Timothy Johnson}, 2-3.
\textsuperscript{473} Johnson, "A Disembodied ‘Theology of the Body,’" 12.
\textsuperscript{475} John Paul II, \textit{The Theology of the Body}, 193.
which could have implications for this debate. The pope should expand and explain the other implications of his theology.

Johnson says the pope is too focused on the physical act and not on the couple’s overall dispositions:

I am far from suggesting that specific acts are not morally significant. But specific acts must also be placed within the context of a person’s character as revealed in consistent patterns of a response. The difference is critical when the encyclical and John Paul II insist that it is not enough for married couples to be open to new life; rather, every act of intercourse must also be open, so that the use of a contraceptive in any single act in effect cancels the entire disposition of openness...The focus on each act of intercourse rather than on the overall dispositions of married couples is morally distorting.476

Johnson and John Paul II disagree on the importance of each act. The pope maintains that each time couples use ABC they are seeking particular values and not the entire person, so they are using their spouse to attain those values. Each act is significant because each use of ABC violates the dignity of both people, fails to achieve true unity, and falsifies the language they are expressing with their bodies. Each act of intercourse is important because it is an intimate act between persons and because every act has a role in forming a person’s character. Johnson’s argument that the overall disposition is more important than the individual act is an argument that has been publicly debated.477 However, this argument has not been adequately resolved and John Paul II has laid out personalist reasons why the individual acts form a person’s character and affects their overall dispositions. Because John Paul II has presented detailed personalist arguments explaining why the individual act is so important, it is my opinion that critics who claim that John Paul II is undervaluing the overall disposition of the couple need to respond to his arguments to further this debate.

Johnson says the pope’s theology ignores the concerns of too many people:

“Human love and sexuality can appear in only one approved form, with every other way of being sexual or loving left our altogether. It is not important at least to acknowledge significant portions of humans... are homosexual?” 478 Johnson also makes the argument that solitude is not cured by marriage as the pope claims:

A theology of the body ought to speak not only of an ‘original solitude’ that is supposedly cured by marriage, but also of the ‘continuing solitude’ of those both married and single, whose vocation is not celibacy yet whose erotic desires find, for these and many other reasons, no legitimate or sanctified expression, and, in these papal conferences, neither recognition nor concern. 479

Johnson and Modras are correct that little attention is given to the single vocation or to people with a homosexual orientation, but the principles in John Paul II’s theology can be helpful for a great number of people. I believe his explanations on how lust is a distortion of love, and the positive role of sensuality, eros, and emotions in developing love could help many people to understand more clearly what they are experiencing in their relationships. I also think his explanations of why freedom, self-mastery, fidelity, and the biblical virtue of chastity are necessary for true love could help people to understand why these virtues are important. Nevertheless, the pope should offer a more thorough explanation of homosexuality and the single vocation in light of his “theology of the body.”

Johnson, however, misrepresents the pope by claiming that according to the pope, marriage will cure solitude. The pope actually says that solitude is not limited to the male-female relationship and that solitude has another meaning. Solitude expresses the superiority, subjectivity, self-knowledge, self-consciousness, and self-determination of humanity (male and female). 480 John Paul II also explains that even though Adam and Eve remained married in the story of Genesis, lust limited their ability to live in the unity

479 Ibid., 16.
and communion of persons that God originally intended. The pope says: "The more lust dominates the heart, the less the heart experiences the nuptial meaning of the body."  

Johnson claims the pope’s theology can be reduced to an affirmation for procreation:  

John Paul II recognizes two ends of sexual love, unitive intimacy and procreation. But from the other side of his mouth he declares that if procreation is blocked, not only that end has been canceled but also the unitive end as well. He has thereby, despite his protestations to the contrary, simply reduced the two ends to one. This can be shown clearly by applying the logic in reverse, by insisting that sexual intercourse that is not a manifestation of intimacy or unity also cancels the procreative end of the act.  

I just do not find Johnson’s argument that the pope has reduced the two ends to one convincing. For example: being a mammal is a requirement and necessary for being a dog; however, being a dog is not a requirement for being a mammal. In a similar way, being open to procreation could be a requirement for unity, but unity would not necessarily be a requirement for procreation. The pope reasons that couples using ABC cease to be capable of full unity because the spouses are excluding part of who they are, their fertility.  

Johnson says, “the theology of the body is reduced to sexuality, and sexuality to ‘the transmission of life.’ The descent to biologism is unavoidable.” Johnson does not explain how sexuality was reduced to the transmission of life or why the pope’s arguments are biologistic, nor did the other critics who make that claim. John Paul II’s arguments are not merely natural law, act-centered theology, based on biology, or restricted to the transmission of life. The pope’s theology is, that as visible images of God, our bodies express the invisible and the life-giving love of the Trinity; to use ABC falsifies what the act of intercourse is meant to express. Intercourse is meant to make visible the total giving

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and uniting of one person to another in a joyful embrace of life-giving love, forming a communion of persons. John Paul II is supportive of the order of nature, natural law, and procreation, but to ignore his yet deeper personalism and sacramental theology is to misrepresent his arguments.\textsuperscript{485} If critics can demonstrate that the pope’s arguments are merely biologistic arguments, that would further the debate, but to claim he is advocating biologism without addressing the deeper dimensions of his sacramental theology and personalism, misrepresents his positions and this debate.

**Emphasis on Procreation to the Denigration of the Relationship**

Cahill claims, “Traditionalists, including the magisterium, tend to so tie procreation to acts that their affirmation of procreation is premised on what amounts to a denigration of the relationships in which it takes place.”\textsuperscript{486} John Paul II responds that, by excluding the “possibility” of procreation, the marital act becomes pleasure-centered and not person-centered. The pope claims the relationship is injured when only the values desired by the spouse are accepted and not the person in their entirety, because this reduces the spouse to being used as a means to an end.\textsuperscript{487} The conclusions of Cahill and John Paul II are almost completely opposed regarding how the use of periodic abstinence and not altering the life-giving potential of the marital act affects the relationship. To further the debate, Cahill needs to explain why periodic abstinence and not altering the life-giving potential of the marital act denigrates the relationship. Cahill engages the pope’s position but does not offer a thorough explanation for her conclusions.

Cahill claims that the pope is overemphasizing procreation to the detriment of the person:

> While a loving union has been recognized as an equal purpose of sexual relations since about the time of the council, the welfare of the person, couple, or family is still

\textsuperscript{485} West, A Response to Luke Timothy Johnson, 4.
\textsuperscript{486} Cahill, “Catholic Sexual Ethics”, 150.
\textsuperscript{487} Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 234-236.
never permitted to take precedence over the ‘natural’ goal of procreation. Among other effects, this inhibits our ability to see sexuality in relation to total personal development, and tends toward a view of women as primarily wives and mothers, usually in the home, prepared to give birth and raise children.\textsuperscript{489} Is the pope giving precedence to the natural goal of procreation over the family and welfare of the person as Cahill says? In the pope’s writings, love involves affirming the whole person and seeking their true good and fulfillment. According to the pope, seeking procreation without love is to use one’s spouse, which would be morally wrong.\textsuperscript{489} Clearly that is placing the welfare of the person and the relationship ahead of procreation. However, Cahill seems to be arguing that the spiritual development of the person, couple and family should be the primary concern of a theology on marriage. John Paul II believes that, if one fails to conform their lives to the natural order created by God, there will be negative consequences in the personal order. He would further argue that procreation does foster true spiritual development, but even without the blessing of children the biblical virtues practiced in NFP will aid the spiritual development of the persons involved. Cahill engages the pope’s ideas, but once again she needs to offer a more thorough explanation.

Cahill also argues that John Paul II’s perspective “tends toward a view of women as primarily wives and mothers, usually in the home, prepared to give birth and raise children.” The pope does say, “the mystery of femininity is manifested and revealed completely by means of motherhood…”\textsuperscript{490} However, does his affirmation of motherhood and homemaker invalidate his arguments about ABC denigrating women and men, and causing harm to their relationship? Plus, NFP can be just as or more effective than the use of ABC in avoiding motherhood. The pope certainly has a high appreciation of motherhood, but that does not invalidate his arguments supporting the use of NFP and

\textsuperscript{488} Cahill, “Morality: the deepening crisis,” 496-499.
\textsuperscript{489} Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 67.
\textsuperscript{490} John Paul II, The Theology of the Body, 81.
opposing the use of ABC. Because NFP can be very effective in avoiding procreation, critics need to explain how the pope’s support of NFP and opposition to ABC causes his arguments to undermine the dignity and value of women.

The Couple’s Experience Is Not Taken Seriously

Johnson, Modras, and Cahill all claim that the pope has not truly listened to married couples and women adequately when formulating his theology.\(^{491}\) Johnson indicates that the pope’s portrayal of human love is not how people actually experience it: “no real sense of human love as actually experienced emerges in these reflections. …an occasional glance toward human experience as actually lived may be appropriate, even for the magisterium.”\(^{492}\)

Although John Paul II acknowledges that he has not been married, he claims his experiences with thousands of couples, though second hand, has provided him with insights into love, marriage, and sex, allowing him to give a broad perspective. Although Johnson says the pope’s reflections do not represent people’s lived experience, lust seems to be a common human experience.\(^{493}\) Granted, this is not edifying, but it is a “glance toward human experience,” which is what phenomenology and moral theology are suppose to evaluate.

However, Johnson’s main point is that, even though the pope claims to be analyzing the role of sex within marriage through the philosophical method of phenomenology, the pope “seems never to look at actual human experiences. Instead he dwells on the nuances of words in biblical narratives… pronouncements are made on the basis of textual exegesis rather than living experience.”\(^{494}\) Johnson adds, “I would welcome the honest acknowledgement that for many who are married the pleasure and

\(^{492}\) Ibid., 12-13.
comfort of sexual love are most needed precisely when least available, not because of fertility rhythms, but because of sickness and anxiety and separation and loss.  

Should moral theology or a theology on marital love be based on "actual human experiences" or popular opinion, especially with the high rates of divorce and marital dissatisfaction in our culture? In John Paul II's opinion, scripture offers two models of spousal love as God intended it: Adam and Eve before the fall and the love of Christ for his bride the Church. John Paul II uses phenomenology to study people's experiences, but what modern people experience to be desirable or important must be evaluated according to scripture. There are testimonials of couples who have switched from ABC to NFP who say the pope echoes their voices on sex and marriage. Likewise, critics could provide testimonials of couples that echo their opinions, and can claim that a majority of Catholics disagree with the pope's conclusions.

According to Cahill, part of John Paul II's overemphasis on procreation is due to his lack of real dialogue with married couples and their experiences of marital love: "The testimony of married persons should have a prerogative in normative evaluations which has not been granted thus far." Cahill also doubts that couples would say that procreation is as important to conjugal love as the pope portrays: "On what basis is it affirmed that marital experience requires procreation as the completion of conjugal love (especially if tied to each sex act)?"

However, the pope does not require couples to seek or achieve procreation to complete conjugal love. The pope holds many ideas in a tension. He requires the

495 Johnson, "A Disembodied 'Theology of the Body'," 16.
497 Cahill, "Divorced from Experience," 171.
“possibility of procreation” to be left open in order to guard against using the person, but not that procreation is achieved or even sought.\textsuperscript{499} John Paul II actually says:

There is no reason to hold that sexual intercourse must necessarily have conception as its end...We cannot therefore demand... that they must desire to procreate on every occasion....

...Marriage is an institution which exists for the sake of love, not merely for the purpose of biological reproduction. ...A certain tendency to over-emphasize the intention to procreate is perfectly understandable in married people who have been long childless....

...When a man and woman who have marital intercourse decisively preclude the possibility of paternity and maternity, their intentions are thereby diverted from the person and directed to mere enjoyment: ‘the person as co-creator of love’ disappears and there remains only the ‘partner in an erotic experience’.\textsuperscript{500}

His ideas on the role of love and procreation in marriage are further expressed in other statements in \textit{Love and Responsibility}, such as:

Marriage serves above all to preserve the existence of the species...but it is based on love. A marriage which, through no fault of the spouses, is childless retains its full value as an institution. No doubt a marriage serves love more fully when it serves the cause of existence, and develops into a family. This is how we should understand the statement that ‘procreation is the principal end of marriage’.....It should be added that if their love is already more or less ripe procreation will ripen it still further.\textsuperscript{501}

One can see there are many tensions in the pope’s words: “Marriage serves... the existence of the species,” but “marriage...exists for the sake of love.” Another would be “procreation is the principle end of marriage,” but “there is no reason to hold that sexual intercourse must necessarily have conception as its end.” The pope does require the possibility of procreation to be left open, but he has not offered empirical evidence to support his claim that couples feel used if procreation is not left open. Cahill suggests that the pope has misunderstood how couples view marital intercourse and that he is applying his experiences and not the couples’ experiences:

As Rosemary Ruether observed early on in this debate, it is important to understand that, while the celibate cultivates sexual self-control and asceticism, that ethic should not dominate the sexuality of wives and husbands. Ruether insists rightly

\textsuperscript{499} Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 234.
\textsuperscript{500} Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 233-234.
\textsuperscript{501} Ibid., 218.
that a married person ‘has sublimated the sexual drive into a relationship with another person,’ the demands of which are ‘real and meaningful demands.’ Cahill’s quote of Ruether implies that John Paul II has not understood that couples have “sublimated the sexual drive into a relationship with another person” nor does he appreciate the “real and meaningful demands.” Earlier I quoted the pope advocating the importance of pleasure in intercourse for the stability of the marriage and that in true love sensuality is sublimated into love for the person. I believe I have given evidence to call into question her portrayal of the pope’s position on this issue. Have all married couples “sublimated the sexual drive into a relationship?” What is the evidence or criteria that indicates a couple has “sublimated the sexual drive into a relationship?” A related question that would benefit this debate is: how does the use of NFP foster/inhibit the sublimation of the sexual drive into love for the person? Or, how does the use of ABC foster/inhibit the sublimation of the sexual drive into love for the person? It is comforting to hear that couples have sublimated their sexual drive into love, but marital rape and the high rates of divorce should call into question how many couples really have sublimated their sexual drive into love. These arguments by Cahill and Ruether do engage the pope’s positions, but their arguments require more evidence and explanation to truly further this debate.

Ultimately, Modras believes the pope’s analysis is out of touch with real people and their experiences. “The greatest challenge to the pope’s theology of the body and its sexuality is people’s experience. … What the pope approaches from the outside and calls lust, they live on the inside and call love.” Johnson agrees with Modras, claiming that:

John Paul’s work…has little to say to ordinary people because it shows so little awareness of ordinary life…Because of its theological insufficiency, the pope’s teaching does not adequately respond to the anxieties of those who seek a Christian

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502 Cahill, Sex, Gender & Christian Ethics, 204.
503 Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), Love and Responsibility, 273-274.
504 Ibid., 109
505 Modras, Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, 155-156.
understanding of the body and of human sexuality and practical guidance for life as sexually active adults.506

Some people have found that the pope’s writings do respond to their anxieties and others have not. If one is looking to justify a lifestyle or action that has traditionally been condemned, they will not likely find justification for it in John Paul II’s writings. However, if one is looking for a greater understanding of why something is considered sinful by the magisterium, or for a scriptural exegesis of spousal love, then the pope’s writings will provide new insights into those teachings. I also think his teachings on how lust limits people’s freedom and prevents true love by compelling people toward sensual satisfaction and not self-gift is useful for people who are struggling to live chaste lives, because he provides reasons why chastity is necessary for love.

I think the arguments made by Johnson, Modras, and Cahill about the experiences of people and what couples have to say do engage the pope’s positions and deserve a response. Along with Janet Smith, I also believe that many of their arguments need to be more developed to engage the pope at the philosophical level.507 Although both sides can offer personal testimonies to support their positions, more research needs to be done to understand what people are experiencing at a deeper level physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.

The Changing of the Kantian Imperative and the Problem of Using People

Modras is the only critic who points out that Wojtyla changes the Kantian imperative:

If there is a weakness in Wojtyla’s argument, it hinges upon the word merely. Although he states the Kantian imperative correctly the first time he quotes it, he thereafter regularly omits the crucial word merely. We cannot help but make use of other persons as means, as we deal with each other. The pope uses cardinals the way the rest of us use mechanics... Kant’s principle forbids using persons “merely” as

means without recognizing their value “at the same time as an end.” Wojtyla simply asserts without further argumentation or qualification that ‘anyone who treats a person as the means to an end does violence to the very essence of the other.”

John Paul II admits he changes the Kantian imperative because it does not include the condition that people have a God given right to decide for themselves the end of their activities, and not be used as a blind tool for someone else’s ends. Because people are created with intelligence and free will, people have a right to make use of their talents to achieve personal ends. The pope explains that there is a moral difference between “using” someone and “making use” of someone. Two conditions that prevent people from being used are to be on even footing and for both to be seeking an objective common goal; when these two conditions are present, it is less likely that one will use the other.

John Paul II claims utilitarianism (using) fails to adhere to Jesus’ command to love and the personalistic norm because utilitarianism ultimately results in egoism, and using others, which is incompatible with altruism and the unification of persons which occurs with love. John Paul II does consider a couple using ABC to be using each other. If critics can show that ABC does not involve using someone, or that using someone and making use of someone is the same, it would cause a great deal of damage to John Paul II’s position. Likewise, the pope’s claim that people using ABC are using and not making use of their spouse needs to be further developed. These arguments deserve a response because Modras furthers the debate by developing arguments that engage the pope’s actual positions.

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508 Modras, Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, 151.
510 Ibid., 25-34, 40-44, 58-60.
511 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 32-42.
512 Ibid., 25-30.
Biblical Scholarship and Exegesis

Modras also criticizes the pope’s exegesis of scripture. “The work is not one of biblical scholarship; the pope does not pretend to be a biblical scholar and only infrequently relies upon modern biblical exegesis.” However, Modras does not demonstrate where John Paul II misinterprets scripture. Johnson, a critic and scripture scholar, says that the pope did not misuse the texts in any major way.

In the pope’s exegesis of scripture Modras is uncertain who Adam represents: “The reader may be confused at first, since one is not altogether sure whether Adam ("humankind") is regarded as a historical individual engaged in historical events or a symbolic representation of ourselves in our present human condition.” Modras’s explanation is oversimplified to the point of being inaccurate. John Paul II offers a page of footnotes citing scholars who define what “mythic” means and the purpose of the Genesis stories. What is important to John Paul II is that these mythic stories teach us about the metaphysical and what is “unknowable” yet common to all human experiences. These stories answer metaphysical questions such as, who we are and why there is suffering. The pope presents Adam as a representative of humanity before sin and also as a representative of ‘historical man’ with a fallen nature after sin. Modras continues: “In either case, the pope uses the creation stories not so much for substantiation as for inspiration or a jumping-off point for his own personal reflections.” The pope maintains these stories are necessary because they are the texts Jesus referred to twice when he was asked about marriage. They are fundamental in explaining God’s original intentions

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513 Modras, Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, 152-153.
515 Modras, Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, 153.
517 Ibid., 95, 108-116, 131-132.
518 Modras, Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, 153.
for humanity and marriage, and why we are the way we are now. In discussing Jesus’ references to the beginning, John Paul II claims: “He appealed to the words of the first divine regulation...This means that this regulation has not lost its force, even though man has lost his primitive innocence.” The pope says these texts help us to understand human nature and God’s intentions for humanity: “It is impossible to understand the state of historical sinfulness without referring or appealing (and Christ appealed to it) to the state of original (in a certain sense, ‘prehistoric’) and fundamental innocence.”

Johnson’s scriptural arguments are directed at the pope’s selection of scripture, his lack of explanation for his scripture choices, and the impression he gives about being ‘pure of heart’:

As for the pope’s way of reading Scripture, the grade is mixed. Certainly he is careful with the texts. Nor does he misrepresent those aspects of the text he discusses in any major way—although he leaves the impression that Matthew’s “blessed are the pure of heart” (5:8) refers to chastity, when in fact he knows very well that the beatitude does not have that restricted sense. Even more questionable are the ways John Paul II selects and extrapolates from specific texts without sufficient grounding or explanation.

Once again Johnson is either careless in his reading, or he misunderstands John Paul II’s point and his oversimplification misrepresents the pope’s actual positions. John Paul II clearly says:

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Mt 5:8)... (Mt 15:18-20)...Here Christ spoke of all moral evil, of all sin, that is, of transgressions of the various commandments. He enumerates ‘evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander,’ without confining himself to a specific kind of sin. It follows that the concept of purity and impurity in the moral sense is in the first place a general concept, not a specific one. All moral good is a manifestation of purity, and all moral evil is a manifestation of impurity.

Later in the Theology of the Body, John Paul II offers a detailed explanation of how purity of heart is associated with chastity in Paul’s letters. However, John Paul II again clarifies

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that purity of heart is not restricted to matters of the flesh: “Purity of heart means freedom from every kind of sin or guilt, not just from sins that concern the lust of the flesh.”524

Contrary to Johnson’s claim, the pope describes purity as a manifestation of “all moral good” and one of these moral goods based on Paul’s teachings is temperance or chastity.525 Johnson recommends that other texts be analyzed to see how they impact the pope’s theology and that more study should be done on the texts the pope uses. This is an excellent suggestion to further the debate, but it does not prove John Paul II’s exegesis to be wrong. Johnson also argues:

John Paul II does not deal with some of the difficulties presented by the texts he does select. For instance, he manages to use Matthew 19:3-9, on the question of marriage’s indissolubility, without ever adverting to the clause allowing divorce on the grounds of porneia (sexual morality) [sic] in both Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. What does that exceptive clause suggest about the distance between the ideal “in the beginning” evoked by Jesus, and the hard realities of actual marriages faced by the Matthean (and every subsequent) church?526

In my judgment this is the best argument put forth by any critic who has responded to John Paul II’s writings. This criticism directly engages John Paul II’s actual positions with a scriptural text adjacent to the texts he uses. Although the pope spends some time explaining why divorce is wrong, he does not explain how the exceptive clause fits with his theology. The clause appears to stand at odds with John Paul II’s theology and on this point Johnson deserves a response.

Johnson says that sexual morality in modern culture needs improvement, “but the remedy is not an uncritical reading that moves directly from the ancient story to an essential human condition.”527 Modras has a similar concern; “The pope interprets these texts not within their own distinct historical contexts but in the light of one another, assuming that they share a common theological vision and attitude toward the body and

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524 John Paul II, The Theology of the Body, 197-211, 212.
its sexuality." Cahill also questions the application of an ancient text directly to a modern condition without taking into account the historical and cultural differences. Cahill calls for a "... more explicit and nuanced development of the method or means by which one moves from biblical 'evidence' to a contemporary interpretation, and for the justification of such means." She is also concerned about the original meaning of the texts and how they affect the method and conclusions:

The personalist language of 'mutual self-gift' and 'total surrender' of spouses through sexual union does not fit comfortably into Israelite views of marriage, nor even into the Genesis creation stories, though the latter are quite exceptional in the originally equal status given to the woman, and in the importance given to the couple as distinct from the family.... neither the first nor the second creation story speaks of the institution of 'marriage' as such, and certainly not of any 'sacramental' marriage...the 'one flesh' unity of Genesis 2 is proposed in the context more of a social partnership than of a procreative one.

Cahill, Modras, and Johnson all have criticisms with the pope's method, interpretation, and application of scripture. John Paul II claims the key-texts contain truths independent of the historical conditions. In the footnotes he provides references to numerous scholars who claim mythic stories are meant to portray the human condition and answer questions about humanity we otherwise could not know. Jesus himself combined and used archaic texts that are centuries apart to tell his disciples about marriage in God's plan. Nevertheless, John Paul II doesn't address this issue thoroughly enough and the arguments about how he interprets, combines, and applies texts deserve a response.

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528 Modras, Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body, 153.
529 Cahill, "Divorced from Experience," 174.
530 Ibid., 173.
John Paul II’s Positions Undermine Women

Johnson and others are also concerned about how the pope portrays women:

John Paul II wants, for example, to have the term “man” mean both male and female. But the Genesis 2 account pushes him virtually to equate “man” with “male,” with the unhappy result that males experience both the original solitude the pope wants to make distinctively human as well as the dominion over creation expressed by the naming of animals. Females inevitably appear as “helpers” and as complimentary to the already rather complete humanity found in the male. Small wonder that in virtually none of his further reflection on sexuality do women appear as moral agents: Men can have lust in the hearts but not women; men can struggle with concupiscence but apparently women do not; men can exploit their wives sexually but women can’t exploit their husbands sexually.533

John Paul II states clearly in his writings that solitude is a condition of both genders:

It is also significant that the first man (‘adam)…is defined as a ‘male’ (‘is) only after the creation of the first woman. So when God-Yahweh speaks the words about solitude, it is in reference to the solitude of ‘man’ as such, and not just to that of the male…. 534

The pope portrays Adam as representing all humanity (male and female) and even though Adam has solidarity, Adam is not complete until he makes a gift of self, “man ‘can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself’ (GS 24)."535 John Paul II indicates equality between males and females when he talks about the double solitude and unity of Adam and Eve:

We can conclude that the man (‘adam) falls into that “sleep” in order to wake up “male” and “female.”… in his double unity as male and female.…

… therefore, the woman is created, in a sense, on the basis of the same humanity….536

…the woman is for the man and vice versa, the man is for the woman….537

In this way the meaning of man’s original unity, through masculinity and femininity, is expressed as an overcoming of the frontier of solitude… solitude is the way that leads to that unity which, following Vatican II, we can define as communio personarum.…

…The communion of persons could be formed only on the basis of a ‘double solitude’ of man and of woman…All that constituted the foundations of the solitude of each of them was indispensable for this reciprocity. Self-knowledge and self-

535 Ibid., 63.
536 John Paul II, The Theology of the Body, 44.
537 Ibid., 45.
determination, that is, subjectivity and consciousness of the meaning of one’s own body, was also indispensable.\textsuperscript{538}

John Paul II describes men and women as being complementary to each other: “They are two complementary dimensions of self-consciousness and self-determination and, at the same time, two complementary ways of being conscious of the meaning of the body.”\textsuperscript{539}

The woman is just as much a helper for the man as the man is a helper for her. Being a helper or even a servant does not lessen one’s dignity. At the last supper before Jesus gave us his body, he washed his disciples’ feet, yet he did not lose his dignity. John Paul II’s ideas of self-mastery, self-awareness, and self-gift require women and men to be regarded as equals with moral agency, otherwise they could not consciously give themselves to or receive each other totally.\textsuperscript{540}

Johnson’s claim that in the pope’s writings women do not have lust in their hearts, struggle with concupiscence, or exploit their husband’s sexually is another misrepresentation. The pope says that all people suffer from concupiscence, but he adds that men experience lust the most acutely: “Genesis 3:16 seems to indicate the man especially as the one who ‘desires’...Nevertheless, both the man and the woman have become a human being subject to lust.”\textsuperscript{541}

Cahill and others question if complementarity is a subtle way of maintaining or supporting domination by men or undermining the power of women. Does it mean equality as the pope says, or is does it support inequality and two levels of humanity and moral agency? According to the pope’s writings, he appears to use complementary in a way that expresses equality and equal moral agency. Yet his stance on issues like women’s ordination to the ordained priesthood causes some to wonder if this is just lip

\textsuperscript{538} John Paul II, \textit{The Theology of the Body}, 46.
\textsuperscript{539} Ibid., 48.
\textsuperscript{541} John Paul II, \textit{The Theology of the Body}, 123.
service. This thesis, however, is focusing on the arguments about fertility regulation. The argument about complementarity concealing inequality engages the pope’s positions, but critics need to explain how the pope’s use of complementarity undermines women in the fertility regulation issue, specifically as it applies to NFP and ABC.

Johnson claims that it is not ABC that treats women as objects, but that NFP treats women as objects by the attention NFP puts on analyzing women’s fertility cycles:

John Paul II’s reading of Scripture tends to reduce the moral agency of women within the marriage covenant and sexual relationships. This becomes glaringly obvious in the argument that artificial birth control is wrong because it tends to ‘instrumentalize’ women for men’s pleasure by making the woman a passive object of passion rather than a partner in mutuality...few things sound more objectifying than the arguments of the natural family planners, whose focus remains tightly fixed on biological processes rather than on emotional and spiritual communication through the body.542

Johnson is misunderstanding how the pope is using the word ‘object.’ John Paul II claims that everyone is a subject and an object of their own actions, and every person is perceived as an object, or as an objective ‘somebody’.543 The use of ABC inhibits the fertility of the spouse so the sexual value can be pursued. Instead of accepting the spouse in their entirety (including their fertility), sensual or emotional satisfaction becomes the primary reason for intercourse, which reduces the person to an object of pleasure, instead of the object of one’s total self-gift.544 Johnson does not provide a passage from the pope’s writings indicating that women are passive, or have less moral responsibility. On the contrary, John Paul II’s theology requires moral agency, self-mastery, equality, and personal responsibility from both the man and the woman.545 It would benefit the debate if Johnson could provide a more thorough explanation of why he thinks the pope’s exegesis reduces the moral agency of women.

542 Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), Love and Responsibility, 21-23.
Cahill claims Jan Grootaers questions John Paul II's "role identification and human classification," which has served to "substantiate genuine discrimination and prejudice against them (women)."\textsuperscript{546} Cahill says this is fostered by the pope's use of sexist language.\textsuperscript{547} Cahill also claims that John Paul II seems too eager to stereotype women and men according to traditional roles: \textsuperscript{548} "Moreover, if woman and men are to be equal partners in the conjugal relationship, their reproductive, familial, and social contributions must be seen in genuinely equal terms, and their control over family size must be shared."\textsuperscript{549} Cahill doubts if couples can live the vision of the pope, especially with regard to the equal contribution of each spouse to this vision: "Are the ideals of unity and mutual donation really conceived equally for men and women?"\textsuperscript{550} She also questions if the primary role of motherhood for women is consistent with the idea of equality and shared responsibility:

Yet the practical consequences of biblical and personalist themes are far from receiving full recognition. One is struck by the coalescence of a sexual ethics of procreation and union represented in each and every sexual act, and a social context in which motherhood must constitute the primary identity of women.\textsuperscript{551}

Cahill's concerns about motherhood constituting the primary identity of women, shared responsibility and equality between the spouses, the use of sexist language and the stereotyping according to traditional roles all deserve a response. Likewise, although John Paul II honors motherhood and the role of women in parenting, critics need to more fully explain how his arguments denigrate women, decrease the responsibility of men, or foster inequality in the relationship. Specifically, critics need to demonstrate how supporting NFP inhibits equality between men and women, fosters inequality in the

\textsuperscript{546} Cahill, "Divorced from Experience," 174.
\textsuperscript{547} Cahill, Accent on the Masculine, 90.
\textsuperscript{548} Ibid., 91.
\textsuperscript{549} Cahill, Sex, Gender & Christian Ethics, 201.
\textsuperscript{551} Cahill, Sex, Gender & Christian Ethics, 205.
relationship, and decreases men's responsibility in the family. These concerns do engage
the pope's writings, but they need to be explained more thoroughly, specifically with
regard to the fertility regulation debate.

An Unlivable and Inhuman View of Sexuality and Marriage

Grecco, Modras, and Cahill all question whether it is possible to live out the vision of
the pope. They would like to hear what other professions are saying. Modras claims,
"Psychologists will question whether a completely self-giving love is possible, and if
complete rational self-control to the detriment of spontaneity is altogether desirable."552
The pope's position is that in the natural and physical order it is impossible to give oneself
away. Because we are creatures with an untransferable personhood, it is impossible to
give ourselves completely to another; however, in the order of love it is possible.553

According to John Paul II:

What is impossible and illegitimate in the natural order and in a physical sense,
can come about in the order of love and in a moral sense. In this sense, one person
can give himself or herself, can surrender entirely to another, whether to a human
person or to God, and such a giving of self creates a special form of love which we
define as betrothed love. This fact goes to prove that the person has dynamism of its
own, and that specific laws govern its existence and evolution. Christ gave expression
to this in a saying which is on the face of it profoundly paradoxical: 'He who would
save his soul shall lose it, and he who would lose his soul for my sake shall find it
again' (Matthew 10:39).554

John Paul II then explains how through love a person goes beyond the natural order:

In the natural order, it (the human person) is oriented towards self-perfection,
towards the attainment of an ever greater fullness of existence – which is, of course
always the existence of some concrete 'I'. We have already stated that this self-
perfection proceeds side by side and step by step with love. The fullest, the most
uncompromising form of love consists precisely in self giving, in making one's
inalienable and non-transferable 'I' someone else's property. This is doubly
paradoxical: firstly in that it is possible to step outside one's own 'I' in this way, and
secondly in that the 'I' far from being destroyed or impaired as a result is enlarged and

552 Modras, Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body, 155.
553 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 96.
554 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 96-97.
enriched – of course in a super-physical, a moral sense.... The world of persons possesses its own laws of existence and of development.555

According to John Paul’s explanation it is possible to give oneself to another because persons have a dimension outside the natural or physical order: “In giving ourselves we find clear proof we possess ourselves.”556 This is supported by Jesus’ claim that one must lose one’s life to save it and by Gaudium et Spes 24 where one finds oneself by making a gift of oneself.

Modras also questions whether “rational self-control to the detriment of spontaneity” is altogether good. The pope argues that self-control is not in opposition to spontaneity and that one needs self-control in order to even have spontaneity. Once again the pope holds both ideas in a tension, a both/and paradox. Spontaneity should not be confused with compulsion. Someone who is compulsive is driven by an inner desire beyond one’s control. If it is beyond one’s control, it is overwhelming one’s freedom and violating one’s dignity as a freely choosing person in the image of God. If one is compelled to do something, one is not freely choosing the action, but internally coerced into doing the action. This is not spontaneity but compulsion. Spontaneity implies a sudden freely chosen decision to take a particular action. For something to be freely chosen, one must also have the freedom or self-control to choose to not do it. Spontaneity requires freedom and self-mastery.557 Even though spontaneity includes a rational decision, it doesn’t mean it has to be a practical decision. For instance, if a person is walking through campus and the sprinklers come on and they decide to run through the sprinklers because they think it sounds like fun that would be spontaneity. Someone who is unable to resist running through the sprinklers or is compelled to do a particular action would not be acting spontaneously but be acting under compulsion.

555 Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 97.
556 Ibid., 98.
Compulsion is a manifestation of a lack of self-mastery, whereas spontaneity actually requires self-control and human freedom.

Grecco has similar concerns about freedom and spontaneity:

John Paul II’s approach to the meaning of the body seems to be overly structured, almost mechanistic or pre-programmed. His emphasis, for example, on re-creating, re-constructing, rediscovering the meaning and then re-reading the language of the body appears somewhat exaggerated. What does such an emphasis say about the spontaneity of human expression and about human creativity and individuality?558

Grecco’s concern is that the pope does not seem to have much flexibility for individual creativity and freedom of expression. Is the pope’s perspective of human nature too fixed and rigid? Is human nature something that already exists with fixed possibilities that we merely bring to perfection, or is human nature much more malleable and changing? Is what is appropriate or moral for people different today than what was moral for people 100, 1,000 or 10,000 years ago? John Paul II believes that many of the theological differences concerning morality are based on conflicting perspectives about human nature, and that anthropology is the key to determining morality. Curran and Härting brought forth the argument against Humane Vitae that human nature is changing; Grecco echoes this argument against John Paul II’s teachings. Both John Paul II and his critics are in agreement that it is extremely important for this debate to gain a greater understanding of human nature. Is human nature something that reaches it’s pinnacle in Jesus, and therefore we must model ourselves after the imitation of Jesus as John Paul II claims? Or is human nature much more malleable, and changing, to the point where even the imitation of Jesus might not be the ultimate expression of what every person should seek? Critics are not claiming that we should not imitate Jesus, but if human nature is changing, could the historical person of Jesus become obsolete? If more light can be shed on how fixed or changeable human nature is, then more will be known about what

humanity is realistically/unrealistically capable of and what people are bound/not bound to do.

Grecco is also concerned that the pope’s theology requires a level of subjectivity and consciousness that is too high for most people to achieve:

Finally, there are a few questions that need exploration.
(a) About subjectivity. John Paul II pays relative inattention to the social sciences and this has consequences. For example, of man and woman he says, “their conjugal union presupposes a mature consciousness of the body” (21 Nov. ’79). The way to such “maturity” entails a search in all three dimensions of experience. But developmental theories of consciousness indicate that many, if not most people never achieve the high degree of authentic subjectivity that he describes. Can Church teaching realistically presuppose such keenly developed levels of subjectivity? If empirical data show that it cannot, then is not the implication a revision to the Church’s teaching on indissolubility?⁵⁵⁹

In the footnotes Grecco cites writings on developmental theories. Grecco implies that psychologists will say that most people are incapable of reaching the level of personal development the pope is requiring.⁵⁶⁰ Critics argue that the Second Vatican Council calls for open dialogue in search for the truth and part of this dialogue includes recognizing the findings of different disciplines. However, psychology is not theology, and psychologists might not be able to account for the role of grace and the sacraments. Can fallen human nature, in light of the Christian redemption, and God’s grace, achieve the level of development necessary to live according to John Paul II’s theology? Is it necessary for all people to seek this level of development? These arguments about the livability of this vision for all people and what other disciplines have to say accurately engage the pope’s position, further the debate, and deserve a response.

Cahill has a similar concern, “the elevated self-gift language of papal writings romanticizes sexual commitment.”⁵⁶¹ Cahill doubts whether any couple can achieve

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⁵⁵⁹ Grecco, “Recent Ecclesiastical Teaching,” 146-147.
⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 146-147.
complete self-gift, especially each and every time within the marital act.\(^{562}\) Cahill concludes that the pope’s ideas are not realistic and says, “human realities do not always conform to the general ideal, however admirable, and that morally right choices will often depend on prudent, practical adaptation of the ideal to reality.”\(^{563}\) Instead of insisting on complete and mutual self-gift, the pope should do more to encourage equal responsibility in sexual intimacy and family life.\(^{564}\) Cahill finds another problem with “the nuptial meaning of the body” – is its isolation from the social conditions necessary for its realization, especially the structure and social location of the family, and the roles of women within the family.\(^{565}\) Cahill’s concerns over the practicality of total self-gift with each and every act, and if the social conditions exist which will allow people to live according to this vision, engage the pope’s actual positions and deserve a response.

**HIV: Condoms and Genocide**

Johnson implies that the pope’s universal condemnation of ABC lacks compassion and that to condemn its use under all circumstances is irresponsible:

But what about couples who can no longer have sexual relations because one of them has innocently been infected by HIV and not to use a condom means also to infect the other with a potentially lethal virus? ... Given the fact that in Africa AIDS affects tens of millions of men, women, and children (very many of them Christian), is the refusal to allow the use of condoms (leaving aside other medical interventions and the changing of sexual mores) coming dangerously close to assisting in genocide?\(^{566}\) Johnson implies that the use of condoms would allow safe intercourse between an infected and noninfected partner, and that condoms would decrease the AIDS epidemic in Africa, but he does not offer any empirical evidence on the success of condoms decreasing HIV in Africa, nor does he offer evidence that condoms have proven to be


\(^{563}\) Cahill, “Catholic Sexual Ethics and the Dignity of the Person: Double Message,” 150.


effective long-term protectants. Some countries in Africa are focusing on chastity and abstinence education and others are relying primarily on condom distribution and sex education. It should be studied which programs are having the most success and thus doing the most to prevent genocide.\textsuperscript{567} Johnson could have a good argument, but he lacks sufficient evidence to support his conclusions.

Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis has been to analyze the arguments of John Paul II that support the use of NFP and to oppose the use of ABC and to examine the arguments of his critics to determine which critics' arguments are engaging the pope's actual positions and furthering the fertility regulation debate and which ones misrepresent the pope's positions. I have offered some of the best arguments that critics have published against John Paul II's 'theology of the body' on the issue of fertility regulation, and I have sought to present each side as accurately as possible so this thesis would contribute to the debate and not further misrepresent the arguments. Based upon my analysis I have sorted the arguments into three general categories: those criticisms which do not engage John Paul II's actual positions, those criticisms which engage his positions but need more evidence or explanation to provide an argument that furthers the debate, and those criticisms which engage his positions with a developed argument and deserve a response. The critics' arguments that misrepresent the pope and hinder this debate include: the pope devalues the body and is against sexual passion, emotions, and pleasure; the pope has a dualistic view of humanity, the pope is relying on biologism, and the pope's positions contradict themselves. The criticisms which engage the pope's actual positions, but require further explanation or evidence to make a sound argument include: NFP inhibits the relationship and personal development, the pope places the body above the

\textsuperscript{567} Wayne Laugesen. "Catholic Teaching Has the Best Way to Stop AIDS," \textit{National Catholic Register}. (August 11-17, 2002).
relationship, the pope places too much emphasis on the importance of a bodily action as opposed to the totality of acts and the overall relationship, the argument that complementarity conceals inequality, John Paul II’s use of terminology, the argument about the changing of human nature and the role of the teachings of Jesus, and the argument that the pope’s teachings are contributing to genocide. The third category of criticisms were those that engaged the pope’s positions and deserve a response because they have developed a sound argument include: the pope’s avoidance of the Matthean clause on divorce, how the pope changes the Kantian imperative and the argument over using verses making use of one’s spouse, how he combines, explains, and applies ancient texts to modern conditions, his lack of trust for the opinions of the social sciences and the opinions and experiences of the majority of married couples, how he uses terminology, that his vision of total self-gift with each act is unlivable, his silence on homosexuality and the single vocation, and that he fosters inequality when he uses sexist language and stereotypes women according to gender roles. Many of the arguments brought forth (by critics and John Paul II) in this thesis needs to be explained more fully and whenever possible verified by thorough research. Both sides claim to hold positions that are better for people and their relationships. The next steps in this debate is for theologians to carefully and charitably engage in discussion over the strengths and weaknesses in their arguments and to investigate how the different disciplines and studies support or oppose the claims made by both sides.
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