

IS THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION A RENEWAL MOVEMENT WITHIN THE TRADITIONAL SEXUAL MORALITY OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY?

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IN HIS ESSAY, “Seksualiteit en cultuurstrijd: Een theologische voorstel tot dialog,”¹ Dutch Reformed theologian, Ad L. Th. de Bruijne, professor of ethics and spirituality at the Kampen Theological University, claims that the cultural war between orthodox Christians and proponents of the sexual revolution and their sexual liberationist ideology, should be left behind. He proposes a move from confrontation to dialogue between the traditional sexual morality of orthodox Christians and sexual liberationist because he claims the latter may be seen as a renewal movement within the understanding of traditional sexual morality. Indeed, he regards the sexual liberationist ideology as a *corrective* moment within the orthodox Christian understanding of the meaning, purpose, and morality of human sexuality. In this article, first, I critically examine de Bruijne’s argument that he gives supporting his claims. Second, I present the critique of Karol Wojtyła (the future John Paul II) of the sexual liberationist ideology but also his response to each of de Bruijne’s claims. Furthermore, I present Wojtyła’s arguments for a Christian sexual ethics.

Erotic Wars²

How does de Bruijne describe “orthodox Christians,” on the one hand, and proponents of sexual liberation on the other? Regarding the former, he says, “By ‘orthodox Christians’ I am referring to those within divergent confessional traditions (Roman

1. Ad de Bruijne “Seksualiteit en cultuurstrijd: Een theologische voorstel tot dialog” [“Sexuality and Cultural Conflict: A Theological Proposal for Dialogue”] in *Religie en Samenleving* 11, nr. 2, September 2016, *God, seks en politiek*, 271–287.

2. For an informative study on the sexual revolution and the dynamics of erotic wars, see Lillian Rubin, *Erotic Wars: What Happened to the Sexual Revolution* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1990). For a devastating account of the effects of the sexual revolution, see Gabriele Kuby, *The Global Sexual Revolution, Destruction of Freedom in the Name of Freedom*, Foreword by Robert Spaemann, trans. James Patrick Kirchner (Kettering, OH: Angelico Press, 2012). See also, Jennifer Roback Morse, *The Sexual State* (Charlotte, NC: Tan Books, 2018). Robert R. Reilly, *Making Gay Okay, How Rationalizing Homosexual Behavior Is Changing Everything* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2014). J. Budziszewski, *On the Meaning of Sex* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2012).

Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Eastern Orthodox) who with intention seek to remain faithful to traditional views of sexuality, based, for example, on the authority of the Bible or the teaching authority of the church.”³ This claim raises the question not only of which orthodox Christians does de Bruijne have in mind—he refers to none—but also whether they have defended their understanding of sexual ethics on the ground of authority alone. Surely Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Karl Barth, Helmut Thielicke, Herman Dooyeweerd, Karl Wojtyła, Germain Grisez, John Finnis, et al., have defended their views of sexual morality on the grounds not only of biblical revelation and the Church’s teaching authority, but also of reason and the natural law (order of creation). By enlightened proponents of sexual emancipation, he means those who embrace the “modern ideal of individual freedom and autonomy” that leads them to “breaking radically with traditional views about sexuality.”⁴ De Bruijne’s major thesis is that these groups will be less confrontational and more dialogical if they come to recognize that “at the deepest level they share the same story.”⁵ He adds, “Orthodox Christians and enlightened advocates of sexual liberation display more affinity with each other on some points than both groups realize. Both groups fit within the same story.”⁶ Where, then, is there common ground?

De Bruijne claims that orthodox Christians have accommodated and hence changed some of their traditional understanding of sex to the views of the sexual revolution.⁷ They have changed their understanding of the meaning and purpose of human sexuality by accepting, for example, contraception. Human sexuality is consequently no longer about procreation and the ordering of one’s sexual desires to the goods of human sexuality; rather engaging in sexual acts is a matter of physical needs, indeed a private matter that renders such acts an instrument of pleasure, or about individual self-realization. Given this change in their view of sexuality, some orthodox Christians have come to accept pre-marital sex, cohabitation, and even extra-marital sex. Divorce and remarriage has also become more acceptable. Significantly, there has been an accommodation to homosexuality insofar as a distinction is drawn between homosexual acts and homosexual orientation; the former is rejected and the latter is accepted. Finally, some orthodox Christians have even come to tolerate homosexuality and even increasingly openly accepted it.⁸

De Bruijne is surely correct that this accommodation has in fact taken place, not just in the wider culture but also among diverse ecclesial communities.⁹ However, he

3. De Bruijne “Seksualiteit en cultuurstrijd: Een theologische voorstel tot dialog,” 273.

4. *Ibid.*, 274.

5. *Ibid.*, 272, 283.

6. *Ibid.*, 283.

7. In an earlier article, de Bruijne resists compromising particularly on the question of homosexuality. See Ad de Bruijne, “Homosexuality: Improving the Traditional Theory?” in *Familie: Verwantschaft, die den Unterschied macht, Family: Kinship that matters*, (Hrsg.) Gerard den Hartog/Jan Roskovec (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012), 103–112, especially 109–110.

8. De Bruijne “Seksualiteit en cultuurstrijd: Een theologische voorstel tot dialog,” 274.

9. On this, see Ad de Bruijne, “Homosexuality and Moral Authority: A Theological Interpretation of Changing Views in Evangelical Circles,” in *Evangelicals and Sources of*

does not give us an example of orthodox Christian thinkers who have made this accommodation but also never asks whether they are biblically, theologically, and philosophically justified in doing so in light of Scripture, tradition, human reason, and the natural law (creation order). What de Bruijne tries to do in justifying this accommodation is to claim that the sexual revolution is in some respects not only a break with Christian tradition but also “in some respects also the positive legacy of that tradition.”¹⁰ In other words, in some respects the sexual revolution is a legacy of Christianity. “At least [four] aspects of late modern sexual morality can be understood on the basis of the preceding Christian story.” Indeed, he claims, “Between the struggle for sexual liberation and the classical Christian tradition there exists, however, not only a psychological relationship, but also a *conceptual* relationship.”¹¹ In what follows, I summarize the four aspects manifesting a common conceptual understanding that de Bruijne describes.

First, individual freedom is central to contemporary sexual morality. This freedom is self-constituting insofar as human beings are free to give meaning and structure/form to their sexuality and sexual practice. We are the architects of the structure and nature of human sexuality. Thus:

Purported meanings that the past supplies us are not binding in that context. A person may look forward and develop their own life. Individual preferences are more important than traditional frameworks. People may break with those frameworks if necessary. That applies as well to boundaries that traditionally were characterized as being natural.¹²

This freedom is absolute so that its exercise has consequently led to considering gender and sex apart from the body’s natural determinations, a sexually differentiated body, a gendered body, even to the extent of dissolving the meaning of the masculine/feminine difference. These natural determinations of a gendered body are alleged to impede self-determination. Admittedly, says de Bruijne, this ideal of absolute freedom is the dynamic behind the emancipatory drive to break free from traditional Christian sexual morality, according to the sexual emancipator. Nevertheless, de Bruijne claims, astoundingly, there is an underlying continuity with the Christian tradition in the latter’s understanding of not only freedom but also “the uniquely exalted place that people receive within created reality as image of God and in relationship to Jesus Christ. . . . They are called and emerge subsequently as co-designers of history.”¹³

Second, human sexuality is an intrinsic good that ought to be sought after for its own sake and not for the sake of something else, such as procreation. “Sexuality no

Authority, ed. Miranda Klaver, Stefan Paas, and Eveline van Sataalduine-Sulman (Amsterdam: VU Press, 2016), 143–162.

10. De Bruijne “Seksualiteit en cultuurstrijd: Een theologische voorstel tot dialog,” 275.

11. *Ibid.*, 276, emphasis added. De Bruijne actually describes four aspects rather than just three that are legacies of orthodox Christianity in the Sexual Revolution.

12. *Ibid.*, 276.

13. *Ibid.*

longer needs to serve higher purposes beyond itself, as it did in earlier cultural stages and in most other cultures. Sex is what it is.” De Bruijne refers to those who take sex to be an intrinsic good to mean that “sex is . . . nothing more and nothing less than a physical primary need and means of pleasure.”¹⁴ Although he acknowledges that it might seem farfetched to see this understanding of sex as a Christian legacy, he nevertheless finds traces of this view in the Christian doctrine of the creation of all things after their proper nature because it affirms sex’s intrinsic goodness rather than merely an instrumental good for the sake of procreation. “The doctrine of creation implied that reality was allowed to be itself under the sovereignty of the creator. Each sphere of life could manifest itself according to its own nature.”¹⁵

Three, human sexuality is at the core of one’s identity as well as of individual self-realization or self-expression. De Bruijne appeals here again to the “biblical emphasis on the value of the individual person and their specific gifts. The . . . emphasis on the freedom of personal conscience functions in this as well. The notion of an internally anchored unique personal identity does not exist apart from the Christian emphasis on the heart.”¹⁶ However, achieving self-realization requires an interpersonal relationship because man by nature is a social being. This view, too, has its roots in the Christian tradition. Furthermore, self-realization and relationality go hand in hand because the latter is at the heart of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and this doctrine, too, has influenced Christian anthropology.¹⁷

Four, the meaning, nature, and structure of human sexuality is open-ended, future oriented rather than oriented to the normative order of creation and the nature of things with its embedded principles and the inherent meanings of the human sexual design. De Bruijne claims that this future orientation is derived from the Christian eschatological perspective of the new creation “in which existing structures would be fulfilled and transformed. Then, for example, procreation would cease, whereas marriage and sexuality would be fulfilled in the communal love relationship of Christians with Christ.”¹⁸ He claims to hear echoes of this eschatological perspective—now secularized—in “a project of people themselves who pursue their own variation of this.” Examples of this project that may receive new positive meaning in light of the future, according to de Bruijne, includes “polyamory, . . . transsexuality, intersexuality, and homosexuality.”¹⁹ Admittedly, says de Bruijne, polyamory—which is the practice of sexual relationships with more than one partner, and thus

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*, 277.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, 277–278.

18. *Ibid.*, 278. In an earlier article, de Bruijne raises this transformation as a possible objection to a creation based ethics. De Bruijne, “Homosexuality: Improving the Traditional Theory?” 106, “When the kingdom approaches, marriage and family will be transformed into new forms of community, and perhaps also sexuality will undergo such a transformation.” What he left there an open question, in this article, under examination, he tries to develop a case for giving an affirmative response to that question.

19. *Ibid.*, 280, 281. On December 7, 2015 the Theological University of Kampen celebrated the 161 anniversary of her existence. Prof. Ad. de Bruijne gave an address entitled, “Seksualiteit in de laatste dagen.” Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QY66hisTfDI>.

rejects monogamy—“as such does not fit with the dominant biblical ideal for marriage.”²⁰ Still, de Bruijne claims the sexual emancipators can help orthodox Christians recover the future orientation of sexuality and hence of sexual diversity that deviates from the natural order of creation, or at least a “static natural law model of creation ordinances,” as he puts it.²¹ Christians have typically and exclusively oriented sexual ethics to the “creation and the natural context of marriage and family.”²² However, “such [transsexuality, intersexuality, and homosexuality] would be able perhaps to receive a new meaning in light of the future.”²³ Here, too, de Bruijne claims to find continuity between the sexual revolution and the Christian tradition in order to justify the possibility of the moral legitimacy of “transsexuality, intersexuality, and homosexuality.” He says:

Rather than retreating to their traditional morality, orthodox Christians should acknowledge the consequences of their own story and still should develop explicitly Christian versions of what their environment has earlier harvested in a secular manner. Suited to this is a renewed and future oriented interaction with sexuality and forming relationships. Even where the conviction remains that the biblical arrangement disallows a vision in which sexual union would henceforth also be suitable outside the context of a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, various new sexual-ethical accents remain conceivable.²⁴

De Bruijne attempts to justify his claim that a Christian sexual ethic that accepts the corrections of sexual liberationist ideology is an alternative version of the same liberationist dynamic by showing that there is a *conceptual* relation²⁵ between the affirmations of the Christian tradition and the alternative expressions of the proponents of sexual liberation regarding these four aspects distinguished above. Put differently, if I understand de Bruijne correctly, the sexual revolution is at its core a Christian renewal movement! In sum, de Bruijne concludes:

Therefore it is unsatisfactory when orthodox Christians simply oppose this sexual revolution. They [orthodox Christians] must acknowledge the *correction* that this revolution is bringing also to their tradition, a correction whose benefits, as we saw, they need not hesitate to share. Often the suitable response, on the basis of Christian traditions, is not confrontational rejection but their own alternative version of the same movement.²⁶

20. De Bruijne “Seksualiteit en cultuurstrijd: Een theologische voorstel tot dialog,” 278.

21. De Bruijne, “Homosexuality: Improving the Traditional Theory?,” 106.

22. De Bruijne “Seksualiteit en cultuurstrijd: Een theologische voorstel tot dialog,” 280.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*, 281.

25. *Ibid.*, 276.

26. *Ibid.*, 276.

However, is that the case? What would have to be the case for there to be a conceptual relation between the affirmations of the Christian tradition and these alternative expressions of the emancipators? De Bruijne does not say. However, his colleague, Theo Boer, in *Christian Healthcare Ethics* at the Kampen Theological University gives a brief account of the importance of preserving the continuity of “fixed anchor points” of the Christian moral tradition. They provide a justification for our moral judgments and choices when addressing contemporary moral challenges and issues.²⁷ The consequence of losing these fixed points of reference is that over time it entails “the end of the entire tradition.” “Stated differently, a tradition must remain recognizable.” He adds, “What is appealing in Roman Catholic thinking is the resolve to test every change by the question: How much change can a tradition endure before it ceases to be tradition?”²⁸ Although Boer correctly focuses here on the question of continuity, he does not tell us that these fixed points of reference ground the tradition in affirmations of faith and morals that possess a determinate content of truth. This point brings us to the issues of meaning and truth in the hermeneutics of reinterpreting the affirmations of faith and morals. In brief, in order to maintain the continuity of the tradition in alternative formulations and expressions of the affirmations of faith and morals, those conceptual formulations and linguistic expressions must keep the same meaning and the same judgment (*eodem sensu eademque sententia*). This hermeneutics grounds continuity in a view of language that has a proper function of referring to reality by virtue of assertions that express propositions, which, if true, correspond to reality. Thus, beliefs about the reality of freedom, human sexuality, the individual’s self-realization, and so forth, presuppose an understanding of the truth content of these beliefs.

Back to de Bruijne’s claim that the sexual revolution is at its core a renewal movement in the Christian tradition, he holds not only that this understanding of the affirmations of the tradition may be expressed differently, but also that these new reformulations by the sexual emancipators, which involve, according to de Bruijne, corrections and a deepening in our understanding of those affirmations, preserve the same meaning and judgment of truth (*eodem sensu eademque sententia*) regarding freedom, etc., and hence the material continuity, identity, and universality of these affirmations in those formulations. Is that true? Or does de Bruijne’s justification amount to little more than a sophistic justification of the values represented by the cultural impact of the sexual revolution?

No, the Sexual Revolution is not a Renewal Movement

Is there, then, a material continuity in conceptual understanding between the secularist concept of autonomous freedom that motivates the sexual liberationist ideology and the biblical concept of freedom? Regarding the former concept of freedom, autonomous freedom is exalted to an absolute such that there are no demands

27. Theo Boer, “Waarom ik Katholieke Ethiek nodig heb,” in *Flirten met Rome, Protestanten naderen Katholieke*, redactice, Almatine Leene (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2017), 37–47, especially 46.

28. *Ibid.*

emanating from beyond the self and rooted in creation and culture, which includes the bonds of solidarity with my fellow man, nature, God, or human reason that man must heed. Rather, freedom creates moral values and norms, implying a denial of the participation of human reason in the wisdom of the divine Creator and Lawgiver. By contrast, a biblical concept of freedom is, according to John Paul II, a “*participated theonomy*, since man’s free obedience to God’s law effectively implies that human reason and human will participate in God’s wisdom and providence.” He adds, “Law must therefore be considered an expression of divine wisdom: by submitting to the law, freedom submits to the truth of creation.” Although the law here is one beyond man’s own making, it is not, as John Paul II correctly notes, a

heteronomy, as if the moral life were subject to the will of something all-powerful, absolute, extraneous to man and intolerant of his freedom. If in fact a heteronomy of morality were to mean a denial of man’s self-determination or the imposition of norms unrelated to his good, this would be . . . nothing but a form of alienation, contrary to divine wisdom and to the dignity of the human person.²⁹

The heteronomy of the moral law is not unrelated to man’s good, because man freely interiorizes the truth of the law, which consists of norms related to his good; otherwise, there would be nothing but a form of self-alienation. Thus, the moral law is not only written on the heart of man (Rom 1:14ff), bearing witness in the inmost recesses of the heart, but also it must be effectually at work in man himself so that “the whole man must be good,” as Herman Bavinck put it, “in intellect and will, heart and conscience.”³⁰ He adds, therefore, “The heteronomy of the law and the autonomy of man are reconciled only by this theonomy.”³¹

It is difficult to see how any conceptual continuity can exist given that autonomous freedom purports to be absolute freedom such that man has the freedom to make the nature of sexuality open-ended—on this view of freedom a reality that cannot be manipulated by the human will does not exist—and the freedom to make whatever he chooses right. Alvin Plantinga describes this view:

[I]t is we ourselves—we human beings—who are responsible for the basic structure of the world. This notion goes back to Prothagorus, in the ancient world, with his claim that man is the measure of all things; it finds enormously more powerful expression in modern times in Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. Call it “enlightenment humanism,” or “enlightenment subjectivism,” or, more descriptively, “creative anti-realism.”³²

29. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 1993 Encyclical Letter, §§40–41.

30. Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation: The Stone Lectures for 1908–1909*, Princeton Theological Seminary (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909), 262.

31. *Ibid.*, 263.

32. Alvin Plantinga, “On Christian Scholarship,” <http://www.veritas-ucsb.org/library/plantinga/ocs.html>.

Such a view is clearly at odds with a Christian theistic view of the world in which the human sexual design has embedded principles and inbuilt meanings in the order of creation.

Furthermore, de Bruijne suggests that this notion of secularized freedom finds its roots in the Christian idea of human dignity and man's central place in reality, along with "the biblical emphasis on the value of the individual person and their specific gifts."³³ However, the notion of freedom in creative anti-realism is at odds with another culturally dominant worldview, namely, naturalism and its attendant materialism and determinism. Naturalism holds that "there is no God, and we human beings are insignificant parts of a giant cosmic machine that proceeds in majestic indifference to us, our hopes and aspirations, our needs and desires, our sense of fairness or fittingness."³⁴ Plantinga elaborates:

From this perspective, there is no God, and human beings are properly seen as parts of nature. The way to understand what is most distinctive about us, our ability to love, to act, to think, to use language, our humor and playacting, our art, philosophy, literature, history, our morality, our religion, our tendency to enlist in sometimes unlikely causes and devote our lives to them—the fundamental way to understand all this is in terms of our community with (non human) nature. We are best seen as parts of nature and are to be understood in terms of our place in the natural world.³⁵

Moreover, materialistic anthropology sees man as a chance product of impersonal matter in motion. There is, consequently, no reason to see man as objectively more valuable than animals. Furthermore, everything about man is explainable in terms of the uniformity of natural causes in a closed system, and hence he is not free to do something because there is an antecedent set of events and circumstances that causally determine us. Again, where is the underlying continuity between naturalistic secular freedom and the Christian tradition, once the creative anti-realist and naturalistic presuppositions are exposed?

Materialistic Anthropology and Its Implications

A materialistic anthropology is at the root of the reductionist claim that the finality of the sexual drive in man is nothing more and nothing less than a physical/biological need and a means of pleasure. However, if we view the sexual drive from the perspective of the whole man as a unified totality that is the body-person, rather than as a mere biological aspect, we can argue that this natural human dynamism is ordered per se to the specific end of man's existence, its extension, procreation. In other words, the existential meaning of this sexual drive is properly grasped only when we see its connection with existence. Karol Wojtyla argues:

33. De Bruijne "Seksualiteit en cultuurstrijd: Een theologische voorstel tot dialog," 277.

34. Plantinga, "On Christian Scholarship."

35. *Ibid.*

Existence is, in fact, the first and fundamental good of every being. The existence of the species *Homo sapiens* is the first and fundamental good of that species. All other goods proceed from this fundamental one. I can act only insofar as I am. Various works of man, creations of his genius, fruits of his holiness, are possible only insofar as this man, this genius, this saint, exists. In order to be, he must have come into being. The natural path for man to come into existence passes through the sexual drive.³⁶

By contrast, a materialistic anthropology locates the sexual drive “below the person and below love.”³⁷ It turns this drive toward the psycho-physiological structure of the other person; sex is sought after for its own sake, and procreation is no longer the purpose of the sexual act; procreation is now rendered marginal and optional. So, one of the implications of a materialistic anthropology is that it misses out on the “objective greatness and meaning of the sexual drive.” As Wojtyła explains:

Precisely this connection with the very existence of man and of the species *Homo sapiens* confers on the sexual drive its objective greatness and meaning. But this greatness appears in the consciousness only when with his love man takes up what is contained in the natural finality of the drive. . . . [T]he love of persons, of a man and a woman, is formed within this finality, in its bedrock, as it were; it is formed as if out of this material, which is provided by the drive. So, this love can be correctly formed only inasmuch as it is formed in close harmony with the proper finality of the drive. . . . The order of human existence, the order of being, does not remain in conflict with the love of persons, but is closely harmonized with it.³⁸

De Bruijne misses seeing the intrinsic connection between human sexuality and existence because he fails to be critical of this materialistic anthropology.

On this anthropology, the sexual act of one person to the person of the other sex is instrumentalized such that the other person is used as a means to an end, a vehicle of self-realization. This means-end relation raises not only an ethical question about how people treat each other but also the objection, as Karol Wojtyła argues, “treating the person as a means to an end, and even to the end that is pleasure—the maximization of pleasure—will always stand in the way of love.”³⁹ Wojtyła raises the ethical question, “For a person should not be merely a means to an end for another person. This is excluded due to the very nature of the person, due to what every person simply is.”⁴⁰ That is, “the person is a kind of good that is incompatible with using, which may not be treated as an object of use and, in this sense, as a means to an end.” In other words, “the person is a kind of good to which only love [not using] constitutes the

36. Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, Translation, Endnotes, and Foreword by Grzegorz Ignatik, New Translation (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2013 [1960]), 35.

37. *Ibid.*, 36.

38. *Ibid.*, 36–37.

39. *Ibid.*, 25.

40. *Ibid.*, 10.

proper and full-mature relation.”⁴¹ The central commandment of love is unrestricted love for God, firstly, and then, secondly, to love one’s neighbor as one loves oneself. In its fullest sense, argues Wojtyla, love for neighbors is grounded in love for persons. In this connection, Wojtyla reflects on the biblical commandment, the personalistic norm, as he calls it, and Christian anthropology.

The Love Commandment and the Personalistic Norm

The commandment to love and the attendant object of this love is the person. In other words, “Love persons.” This love is grounded in the personalist principle and this principle negatively formulated demands, “The person is a kind of good that is incompatible with using, which may not be treated as an object of use and, in this sense, as a means to an end.” In short, “Love is a union of persons,” and this means-end relation with the end being pleasure, reflects a subjectivism, indeed, adds Wojtyla, “an egoism that is most rapacious, using another person for one’s own sake, for one’s ‘maximum pleasure’.”⁴² A positive formulation of this principle states that the person is a kind of good to which only love constitutes the proper response. “And this positive content of the personalistic norm is precisely what the commandment to love brings out.”⁴³ Furthermore, since love is a union of persons, of male and female, Wojtyla explains, “love . . . is the distinct opposite of using the person in the role of a means to an end.”⁴⁴ The personalistic norm is grounded in the value of the person rather than in the value of pleasure, and hence “the person cannot be subordinated to pleasure; he cannot serve as a means to the end which is pleasure.”⁴⁵ Therefore, Wojtyla explains, “The affirmation of the value of the person as such is contained in the essence of love. [In other words,] the love of the person must consist in affirming his supra-material and supra-consumer (supra-utilitarian) value. . . . Therefore, we must seek the proper solutions for sexual morality within the scope of the personalistic norm if these solutions are to be Christian. They must be based on the commandment to love.”⁴⁶

How then does love secure the objective union of persons, of a man and a woman, such that they constitute one common subject of action? The brief answer to this question here must be:

Love . . . is conditioned by the common relation of persons to the same good that they choose as an end and to which they subordinate themselves. Marriage is one of the most important areas for realizing this principle. For in marriage, two persons, a woman and a man, unite in such a way that they become in a sense “one flesh” (to use the words of the Book of Genesis [2:24], that is, so to speak, one common subject of sexual life. How can it be ensured that a person does not then become for the other—a woman for a

41. *Ibid.*, 25.

42. *Ibid.*, 23.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, 12.

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Ibid.*, 26–28.

man, and a man for a woman—merely a means to an end, that is, an object used to attain only one's own end? In order to exclude this possibility, both of them must then have a common end. Concerning marriage, this end is procreation, progeny, the family, and at the same time the whole constantly growing maturity of the relationship between both persons in all the spheres brought by the spousal relationship itself.⁴⁷

Karol Wojtyła, too, rejects the idea that marriage is a means to an end. In his 1960 work, *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła rejects what he calls the “rigorist and puritan interpretation” of the conjugal life and sexual intercourse that sees the latter as instrumental goods serving the purpose of procreation.⁴⁸ Wojtyła carefully distinguishes this interpretation from the Manichean tradition because “this view does not reject marriage as something evil that in itself is evil and unclean due to being ‘bodily’ as was maintained by the Manicheans.” Rather, it “contents itself with stating the permissibility of marriage for the sake of the good of the species.”⁴⁹ Against this view, Wojtyła argues, “By joining in sexual intercourse, a man and a woman join themselves as rational and free persons, and their union has a moral value when it is justified by true conjugal love.” He explains:

For the Creator, by giving man and woman a rational nature and the ability to determine consciously their acts, gave them thereby the power to choose by themselves the end to which sexual intercourse leads in a *natural* way. And where two persons can choose together a certain good as an end, there the possibility of love also exists. Therefore, the Creator does not use persons merely as means or tools of his creative power, but opens before them the possibility of a particular realization of love. It depends on them whether they will place their sexual intercourse on the level of love, on the level proper to persons, or below this level. And the Creator wills not only the preservation of the species through sexual intercourse, but also its preservation based on love that is worthy of persons.⁵⁰

Wojtyła regards procreation to be the primary end of marriage because “procreation is objectively, ontologically, a more important purpose than that man and woman should live together, complement each other and support each other (*mutuum adiutorium*), just as this second purpose is in turn more important than the appeasement of natural desire.”⁵¹ He clarifies here that each of the traditional reasons for marriage, namely, the having and raising of children, mutual help, and *remedium concupiscentiae*, which is a legitimate orientation for desire, are all expressions of

47. *Ibid.*, 14.

48. *Ibid.*, 43.

49. *Ibid.*, 44.

50. *Ibid.*, 44–45.

51. *Ibid.*, 52; see also, 51.

“love as a virtue.” He adds, “However, opposing love to procreation or indicating a primacy of procreation over love is out of the question.”⁵² Wojtyla elaborates:

Besides, the realization of these ends is a complex fact. A complete, positive exclusion of the possibility of procreation undoubtedly diminishes or even eliminates the possibility of durable, mutual co-education of the spouses themselves. Procreation unaccompanied by this co-education and co-striving for the highest good would also be in a certain sense incomplete and incompatible with the love of the person. Indeed, the point here is not only and exclusively the material multiplication of the headcount within the human species, but also education—whose natural substratum is the family based on marriage—cemented by *mutuum adiutorium*. If an interior cooperation between a woman and a man exists in marriage, and if they know how to educate and complement ... each other, then their love matures to become the basis of the family. However, marriage is not identified with family and always remains, above all, an intimate union of two people.⁵³

Thus, significantly, for Wojtyla, love is not an end of marriage; rather, love is the single, that is, integral but complex meaning of marriage that is expressed and fulfilled in each of these ends, though most essentially and fully in procreation, which is the primary end of marriage. Wojtyla’s position emphasizes the centrality of conjugal love in Christian marriage, but without opposing love to procreation, rendering it marginal or optional, nor yet of suggesting that procreation takes precedence over love.

The Roots of Sexual Promiscuity, Hedonism, and Self-transcendence

One must note here, furthermore, that this reductionist claim of a materialistic anthropology—reducing the sexual drive to a mere physical or biological need—has spawned a sexual promiscuity that has led to the fear of commitment and constancy in the quest for enduring interpersonal relationships rather than to sexual fulfillment. At the root of this promiscuity is the profound change in our sexual consciousness brought about by the sexual revolution with its concomitant hedonism, resulting in a consequent inability to defer sexual gratification, and hence a “using” that blocks the way to love, which, as Wojtyla claims, is a union of person. In other words, a materialistic anthropology blocks self-transcendence and hence makes it impossible for the individual to be fulfilled in relationality in which the individual can “fully find himself only through a sincere gift of himself” to the other person.⁵⁴ What is the cause of this blockage?

Lillian Rubin correctly remarks, “Such change in consciousness, however, cannot have taken place without a concomitant transformation in the very structure of desire itself, in when and how desire is activated, experience and acted upon.”⁵⁵ De Bruijne

52. *Ibid.*, 52.

53. Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 52–53.

54. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §24.

55. Rubin, *Erotic Wars*, 156.

seems to recognize the point that Rubin is making when he suggests that perhaps the classical Christian vision was wise in claiming “that a healthy interaction with sexuality requires the regulating and controlling of the passions.”⁵⁶ Rubin adds, “[R]easonable ideas of self-awareness and self-actualization soon became corrupted by a narcissistic involvement with self and a feverish search for instant gratification.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, preoccupation with self—egoism generates a contradiction between our individual self-affirmation and being fulfilled in a relationship. “To become a couple, to be able to commit to being ‘we’, means we must be willing to give over some part of the ‘I’—a need that soon comes into conflict with the quest for personal gratification and self-actualization.”⁵⁸ If absolute freedom is at the root of the sexual revolution and its call for sexual emancipation, and this has led to self-enslavement to the self, this raises the question whether human nature is such that the meaning and purpose of human sexuality is grounded in embedded principles and inbuilt meanings of man’s sexual design.

Yes, de Bruijne disagrees with this notion of absolute freedom at the root of the sexual revolution because it is destructive, resulting in new forms of self-enslavement, such as pornography and the commodification of sex, i.e., prostitution.⁵⁹ This is why he asks a couple of times at crucial points whether the model of sexuality in which sexuality receives its meaning and purpose from a Creator is more in keeping with the nature of human sexuality and man’s dignity. Again, he raises this question, too, in light of man’s sexual self-enslavement:

That can give rise to the question whether, in connection with sexuality, there is nevertheless the element of meaning that is predicated on the basis of the phenomenon itself and transcends what people in their freedom are seeking to do with it and which does not tolerate being ignored (even regardless of what that meaning is).⁶⁰

Still, de Bruijne remains non-committal regarding the embedded principles and inbuilt meanings of human sexuality that precede men’s choices. So then, where is the underlying conceptual continuity?

Significantly, de Bruijne mentions the acceptance of contraception as a mark of the sexual revolution but does not pause to consider its effects on our understanding of the sexual act. That revolution was fueled largely by the effective technological resources that modern science had devised in the 1950s to separate the sexual act from reproduction. Procreation was thus taken to be at the discretion of a married or unmarried couple, in other words, an optional extra, that could “control” by technical means the number of their children and the time interval between them. Separating the sexual act from reproduction led to the public acceptance of sexual activities that were infertile by nature, such as masturbation or same-sex acts, or separated from marriage,

56. Ad de Bruijne “Seksualiteit en cultuurstrijd: Een theologische voorstel tot dialog,” 283.

57. Rubin, *Erotic Wars*, 158.

58. *Ibid.*, 159–160.

59. Ad de Bruijne “Seksualiteit en cultuurstrijd: Een theologische voorstel tot dialog,” 282.

60. *Ibid.*

and hence cohabitation became largely accepted. The culture lost the understanding of marriage as humanity has understood it since ancient times: the lifelong union of man and woman with the essential purpose of giving birth to new life and thus to ensure the future of society. Thus, it is not too much to say that contraception changed the sex act itself by separating sex and babies, separating sex and childbearing from each other. In the contraceptive morality, consequently, the sexual act became a self-sterilizing act, and once the idea took hold in our culture that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with contraceptive sex, there was no longer any reason to deny homosexual sex that by its very nature is sterile.⁶¹ This understanding of the root-significance of contraception is not just a Catholic view, or, for that matter, a Christian view.

Anthony Giddens, for one, identifies contraception as the creation of what he called “*plastic sexuality*.” It “severed [the sexual act] from its age-old integration with reproduction, kinship and the generations, [and this] was the precondition of the sexual revolution of the past decades.”⁶² Sex became what Giddens calls a “pure relationship,” that is, “a social relation . . . entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfactions for each individual to stay within it.”⁶³ Sex is nothing more and nothing less than a physical need and a means of pleasure. Procreation is marginal and optional. Furthermore, as Elizabeth Anscombe noted, “If you can turn intercourse into something other than the reproductive *type* of act . . . then why, if you can change it, should it be restricted to the married?”⁶⁴ Or for that matter to heterosexuals? Consequently, the sex act is separated from marriage, leading to the widespread acceptance of non-marital cohabitation, which in turn has led to the practice that sex and childbearing can be separated from marriage. One of the consequences of this change is that it also transformed our attitude to children, in particular, children became extrinsically related to sex. Furthermore, transforming the sex act by

61. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, with Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report, An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*, trans. Salvator Attanasio and Graham Harrison (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1985), on the section, “Against ‘trivialized’ sex,” where the same argument is made. See also, “Gomorra in the 21st Century. The Appeal of a Cardinal and Church Historian,” <http://magister.blogautore.espresso.repubblica.it/2018/11/05/gomorra-in-the-21st-century-the-appeal-of-a-cardinal-and-church-historian/>. For the whole article in Italian, Walter Cardinal Brandmüller, “Omosessualità e abusi - Affrontare la crisi: le lezioni della storia,” *Vatican Magazin*, Novembre 2018. Online: <http://magister.blogautore.espresso.repubblica.it/2018/11/03/affrontare-la-crisi-le-lezioni-della-storia/>.

62. Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy, Sexuality, Love & Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 27. The next few paragraphs are adapted here from my book, *Pope Francis: The Legacy of Vatican II*, Second Edition (Hobe Sound, FL: Lectio Publishing, 2019), 363-364.

63. Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 58.

64. Elizabeth Anscombe, “Contraception and Chastity,” 1972, tells us what she means by a reproductive type of sex act, “I don’t mean of course that every act is reproductive any more than every acorn leads to an oak-tree but it’s the reproductive type of act.” Online: <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles/AnscombeChastity.php>.

separating it from procreation through contraception resulted in the contraceptive mentality that justified abortion; children were not intrinsically related to the sexual act, and hence they were disposable consequences if unwanted. Giddens writes, “Sexuality came into being as part of a progressive differentiation of sex from the exigencies of reproduction. With the further elaboration of reproductive technologies, that differentiation has today become complete.” Children became a man-made product rather than a gift, a fruit of the conjugal act.

Now that conception can be artificially produced, rather than only artificially inhibited, sexuality is at last fully autonomous. Reproduction can occur in the absence of sexual activity; this is a final ‘liberation’ for sexuality, which thence can become wholly a quality of individuals and their transactions with one another.⁶⁵

Moreover, Giddens also shows that this transformation led to considering gender/sex apart from the body’s natural determinations, a sexually differentiated body, even to the extent of dissolving the meaning of the masculine/feminine difference, and hence for the “moral insignificance of sexual difference.”⁶⁶ As Giddens correctly maintains, “the changes now affecting sexuality are indeed revolutionary, and in a very profound way.”⁶⁷

Finally, contraception also transformed the relationship between men and women. In particular, wrote Harvey Cox, “Sex becomes one of the items of leisure activity that the knowledgeable consumer of leisure handles with his characteristic skill and detachment. The girl becomes a desirable—indeed an indispensable—‘Playboy accessory.’” On this view, “sex must be contained, at all costs, within the entertainment-recreation area. . . . [This view] is basically anti-sexual. [It] dilutes and dissipates authentic sexuality by reducing it to an accessory, by keeping it at a safe distance.”⁶⁸ Last but not least, Paul VI wrote:

Another effect that gives cause for alarm [from the use of contraception] is that a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection (§17).⁶⁹

65. Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 27.

66. Christopher C. Roberts, *Creation & Covenant, The Significance of Sexual Difference in the Moral Theology of Marriage* (New York: T&T Clark, New York, 2007), 186.

67. Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 3.

68. *The Secular City* (New York: The MacMillan Press, 1965), 201, 204. See also, Mark Regnerus, *Cheap Sex, The Transformation of Men, Marriage, and Monogamy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

69. *Humanae Vitae*, July 25, 1968, Encyclical Letter, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html.

However, the problems raised here regarding the presuppositions of sexual liberation make abundantly clear that there is no conceptual relation between orthodox Christianity and proponents of sexual emancipation. Consequently, human sexuality cannot be reduced to a physical or biological need and a mere source of pleasure, but is something of deeper importance because how we live our sexual lives has a deep impact on our relationship with God, on our capacity to love other persons, the stability of marriage and family life, which includes the good of children, and each person's internal harmony and well-being. In short, sex has a moral center that cannot be eradicated.⁷⁰

Creation and its Eschatological Significance

Against this background, particularly troublesome in de Bruijne's perspective, is the open-ended, future-oriented meaning, nature, and structure of human sexuality that he claims is derived from the Christian eschatological perspective of the new creation rather than oriented to the normative order of creation and the nature of things with its embedded principles and the inherent meanings of the human sexual design. Rather than bringing to completion and fulfillment God's work of creation, with all the positive reality and goods of human nature, the good of marriage and its one-flesh communion of two sexes, that will never be lost, de Bruijne speculates that "transsexuality, intersexuality, and homosexuality" may receive new positive meaning and moral legitimacy even here and now in light of the eschaton rather than in relation to the ontology of creation for which de Bruijne sees no ontological and necessary relation.⁷¹ His claim raises the question regarding the eschatological insignificance of embodied sexual difference of male and female that belongs ontologically to creation (Gen 1:27).

Of course the ontology of creation revelation in which God created man male and female does receive an eschatological orientation—Jesus said, "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Matt. 22:30; cf. Mark 12:25, Luke 20:34–36)—in the perspective of the resurrection. Yet, in this eschatological perspective, John Paul II correctly states:

[H]ere we are with a development of the *truth about the same man*. Christ points out man's identity, although this identity *is realized in a different way in eschatological experience than* in the experience of the very 'beginning' and of all history. And nevertheless, man will always be the same, just as he came forth from the hand of his Creator and Father.⁷²

Indeed, John Paul II underscores the ontological identity of man created male and female even in light of Jesus's eschatological declaration. "[B]ut he [Jesus] does not

70. Thomas Joseph White, *The Light of Christ, An Introduction to Catholicism* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 239.

71. Roberts, *Creation & Covenant*, 207.

72. Pope John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 3.69.3.

affirm that this man of the ‘future world’ will no longer be male and female as he was ‘from the beginning’.”⁷³ On the one hand, the redemptive work of Christ is continuous with the restoration of the original intent of creation because sexual difference is not redundant. However, on the other hand, the eschatological fullness of that redemption is more than restoring or recovering that original intent. John Paul II explains:

One can say that St. Paul sees the future resurrection as a certain *restitution in integrum*, that is, as the reintegration and at the same time as the attainment of the fullness of humanity. It is not only a restitution, because in this case the resurrection would be, in a certain sense, a return to the state the soul shared in before sin, outside the knowledge of good and evil (see Gen 1–2). Yet, such a return does not correspond to the inner logic of the whole economy of salvation, to the deepest meaning of the mystery of redemption. *Restitutio in integrum*, linked with the resurrection and the reality of the “other world,” can only be *an introduction to a new fullness*. It will be a fullness that presupposes man’s whole history, formed by the drama of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (see Gen 3) and at the same time permeated by the mystery of redemption.⁷⁴

Furthermore, the understanding of creation and the eschaton relies upon a correct grasp of the relation of nature and grace. The Anglican neo-Thomist Eric L. Mascall gives a correct interpretation of the Thomist maxim, “Grace does not destroy nature but perfects it,” giving us a right reading of two complementary principles in Aquinas’ thought. He states, “‘Grace does not destroy nature but perfects it’, and this is from within because nature always lies open to God.” “Grace presupposes nature”, not in the sense that grace is a mere superstructure erected on top of nature and needing nature only to prevent it from falling through the floor, *but that nature is the very material in which grace works and for whose ultimate perfection grace itself exists.*”⁷⁵ On this view, then, of the relation between nature and grace, the relation is such that grace restores nature rather than abolishes or leaves it untouched and hence grace presupposes nature in order to build on it since nature is the “very material in which grace works and for whose ultimate perfection grace itself exists.” Grace does not make nature superfluous because sexual difference is a material presupposition that it builds upon. Moreover:

In his preaching Jesus unequivocally taught the original [i.e., creational, from the order of nature] meaning of the union of man and woman as the Creator willed it from the beginning. . . . By coming to restore the original order of creation disturbed by sin, [Jesus] himself gives the strength and grace to live

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid., 3.72.3.

75. E.L. Mascall, *The Openness of Being, Natural Theology Today*, 153 (italics added). These two maxims are derived from St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 1, art. 8 *ad* 2, and I, q.2. art. 2 *ad* 1, respectively.

marriage in the new dimension of the Reign of God” (CCC, §1603, §§§1606–9, §§1614–15).

Grace restores nature to function properly according to its divinely intended ends.

On the one hand, then, Jesus calls us back to the law of creation (Mark 10:6–7) that grounds an inextricable nexus of permanence, twoness, and sexual differentiation for marriage. In particular, marriage is such that it requires sexual difference, the bodily-sexual act, as a foundational prerequisite, indeed, as *intrinsic* to a one-flesh union of man and woman, “So they are no longer two but one flesh” (Mark 10:8). On the other hand, inasmuch as grace’s restoration of the creation’s fullness is not a mere recovery of the deepest foundations of created reality, in some sense those foundations are raised to a “higher level” in the eschatological consummation of God’s plan of salvation for the whole creation. The exact sense in which “the redemption by grace of created reality, the reformation of nature, is not merely a recovery, *but raises the natural to a higher level than it originally occupied*”⁷⁶ is a hotly disputed matter, especially in Reformed and Catholic thought. G. C. Berkouwer summarizes this issue clearly in a long paragraph that repays reflection:

This eschaton also, then, will lay to rest the familiar discussions of natural versus supernatural and the eschatological elevation of human nature. The problem of creatureliness has always been central to these discussions; and many have tried to define and do full justice to this “elevation” while consciously avoiding the pitfalls of pantheism.

Furthermore, Berkouwer explains the crux of this discussion:

The meaning and extent of redemption [vis-à-vis creation] are the heart of the issue. Is God’s Kingdom something more than just a *restoration* of what has been lost? Is not the deepest meaning of the eschatological mystery this, that it will supersede and transcend the original created nature of man? The peculiar thing about this line of thought is that those who want to attribute so much to redemption are driven to describe it with mundane analogies that remind one anew of renewal and restoration. It is as if according to God’s intention the glory of creatureliness sets up certain boundaries that cannot be transgressed, and any effort to attribute something more to man in the eschaton runs against these boundaries. Those who defy these boundaries [because they regard them as outdated will always grope for the reality of the eschaton, but they must] be reminded that “it does not yet appear what we shall be” (1 John 3:2). This remark by John sets the limits to our penetration of the eschatological mystery. When we speak of that mystery, however, then, we cannot, *in the very nature of the case*, make a simple identification of end-time [Endzeit] and original-time [Urzeit]. The fact that the eschaton is

76. Jan Veenhof, “Nature and Grace in Bavinck,” *Pro Rege* (June 2006): 10-31, especially 22.

filled with the mystery of history—the *Lamb* in the Book of Revelation—warns us against both over-simplification and speculation.⁷⁷

Three points deserve highlighting. First, although redemption is more than a renewal and recovery of what was lost in the fall, describing the eschatological mystery of creation in earthly analogies (1 Cor. 15:25–53) suggest certain boundaries of creation that will not be transcended, hence renewed, and restored even while fulfilled. This perspective of creation receives support from Christ in Matthew 19:3–8 and Mark 10:6–9, given that his words refer back to the Genesis texts of 1:27 and 2:24. “Back-to-creation” is the *leitmotif* in Jesus’s teaching. In his own teaching regarding marital monogamy and indissolubility, creation texts in Genesis 1–2 have foundational importance, in particular Genesis 1:27 and 2:24, “Male and female he created them” and “for this reason . . . a man will be joined to his wife and the two will become one flesh.” These texts are normative for marriage, indeed, for sexual and conjugal ethics. Jesus unites into an inextricable nexus the concepts of permanence, twoness, and sexual complementarity. Yes, Genesis 2:24 is about the permanence of marriage; it is also about the exclusivity of the relationship, “twoness,” and which “two”: male and female. Hence, it is also about the fundamental prerequisite of complementary sexual differentiation for effecting the “two-in-one-flesh” union of man and woman. “So then they are no longer two but one flesh” (Mark 10:8).

Second, there is also the eschatological mystery that prohibits us from simply identifying the original creation with the eschatological fulfillment of creation. In this light, it cuts off speculation—such as de Bruijne’s attempt to legitimize sexual diversity from an eschatological perspective—about what we shall be with resurrected bodies. Yes, the body will be raised, indeed, the totality of our human nature will be raised.

Third, in this connection, Jesus says, “in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage” (Matt. 22:30; cf. Mark 12:25, Luke 20:34–36). Similarly, Saint Paul asks, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” (1 Cor. 15:35). In light, then, of these passages, the late Catholic theologian Germain Grisez rightly asks, “How, then, can the one-flesh communion of marriage endure forever?” One thing is for sure, according to Jesus, it will not eschatologically endure within the limits of a two-in-one-flesh union being fulfilled by the having and raising of children. Christ states that “in the resurrection they will take neither wife nor husband” (Mk 12:25; cf. Mt 22:30). Still, John Paul II adds, “man will always be the same, just as he came forth from the hand of his Creator and Father.”⁷⁸ Thus, there is a development of the truth about the same man such that in the eschatological experience of the resurrection he will still be male and female as he was “from the beginning.” In other words, grace renews nature from within such that the transfigured one-flesh communion is already, here and now, a concrete anticipation of the Kingdom of God, that communion cannot be abolished in the new creation. So, Jesus does affirm

77. G.C. Berkouwer, *The Return of Christ*, trans. Kames van Oosterom, ed. Marlin J. van Elderen (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 449–450.

78. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 69.3.

that this man of the new creation will be male and female as he was “from the beginning” (Matt. 19:8; Mark 10:6).

It is thus evident that the meaning of being, with respect to the body, male or female in the ‘future world’ should be sought outside of marriage and procreation, but there is no reason to seek it outside of that which (independently from the blessing of procreation) derives from the very mystery of creation and thereafter also forms the deepest structure of man’s history on earth.⁷⁹

In other words, redemption, eschatologically viewed, is not simply a return or recovery of an original state of creation. The one-flesh communion of man and woman of the new creation is perfected by and united specifically with the divine persons (John 14:23), through knowledge and love. Still, although redemption is not merely recovery, it is so much more, that is, it is a supernatural perfecting of created nature, by a transforming fellowship with the triune God. Says Wojtyla, “those who will participate in the ‘future world,’ that is, in the perfect communion with the living God, will enjoy a perfectly mature subjectivity.” He adds:

If in this perfect subjectivity, while keeping masculinity and femininity in their risen (that is, glorious) bodies, . . . then *this is explained* not only by the end of history, but also—and above all—by the eschatological *authenticity of the response* to that ‘self-communication’ of the Divine Subject that will constitute the beatifying experience of God’s gift of self, an experience absolutely superior to every experience proper to earthly life.⁸⁰

In short, the position of John Paul II accounts both for continuity and discontinuity. That is, sexually differentiated embodiedness is ontologically constitutive of human identity (Gen. 1:27), such that, as John Paul II argues, Christ affirms

at one and the same time, that human bodies, which are recovered and also renewed in the resurrection, will preserve their specific masculine or feminine character and that *the meaning of being male or female in the body* will be *constituted and understood differently* in the “other world” than it had been “from the beginning” and in its whole earthly dimension.⁸¹

There is substantial continuity between creation and the eschaton. However, there is also discontinuity regarding the eschatological significance of sexually differentiated embodiedness. Still, the risen and manifested Lord had a body and that guarantees our creational identity, that “I” will remain, indeed the totality of our human nature of which sexual differentiation is an ontological fact.

79. Ibid., 69.3.

80. Ibid., 3.68.2.

81. Ibid., 3.66.4.

Four Foundational Presuppositions to Sexual Ethics⁸²

In Wojtyła's Introduction to the Second Polish Edition (1965) of *Love and Responsibility*, he identifies the primary authoritative sources that provide "an impetus for philosophical reflections concerning sexual problems."⁸³

That superior source is the Gospel together with its extension, the teaching of the Church. This source fostered reflections, whereas experience provides facts for confrontation with doctrine. The Gospel contains relatively few texts that speak directly about sexual and conjugal ethics, for example Matthew 5:27–28, Matthew 19:1–13, Mark 10:1–12, Luke 20:27–35, John 8:1–11, 1 Corinthians 7 (the entire chapter), and Ephesians 5:22–33, not to mention extremely significant texts in the Old Testament, especially in Genesis [1:27, 2:24].⁸⁴

Then Wojtyła states the crucial hermeneutical principle of canonical criticism, attending to the unity and content of all of Scripture. "All the above mentioned passages organically inhere in the whole of the Gospel and must be in this whole as in their essential context. Read in this way, they give an incentive for philosophical reflection."⁸⁵ In this section, I will explain the four foundational presuppositions to sexual ethics, according to Wojtyła/John Paul II.

In *Familiaris Consortio*, the 1981 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Saint John Paul II, the pope writes, "God created man in His own image and likeness: calling him to existence *through love*. He called him at the same time *for love*. . . . Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being." In particular, he says, "God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, *of love* and communion" (§ 11). One might say that being created in and for love, man in his freedom is unintelligible without love. For the Christian faith, love is the supreme value and goal (end) not only of the sexual relationship but of *all* personal relationships, whether sexual, in the whole of their bodily life, or otherwise. Indeed, morality itself is fulfilled when it becomes true love of God and of man.⁸⁶

82. In another paper, I critically examine de Bruijne's approach to divine revelation, ethics and hermeneutics, sexual ethics, and hence his normative proposal for ethical hermeneutics. Note that portions of this section are adapted from my book, *Pope Francis: The Legacy of Vatican II*, 367-369.

83. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, xxvi.

84. *Ibid.*

85. *Ibid.*, xxvii.

86. There is more to say about this love-ethics nature. For one, it is not opposed to universally valid moral precepts. In other words, this ethics has a normative character; it has a *deontological* basis, involving, then, a morality of duty, making judgments about duty in respect of the question: What ought I to do? What is good and what is evil in human acts and why? This love-ethic is also *axiological*, because duty possesses deontic dynamism, that is, duty "always arises in strict connection with the deeper, ontic reality of the person: 'to be good or evil'. Man is 'good or evil' through his acts—he is, or rather 'becomes' such because the act itself not so

In this light, Christian anthropology must consider the reality of the human person in the order of love. Why? Because the “person finds in love the greatest fullness of his being, of his objective existence. Love is such action, such an act, which most fully develops the existence of the person. Of course this has to be true love. What does true love mean?”⁸⁷ Since man—male and female—is created in and for love, accordingly, sexual ethics is, too, unintelligible without love. Hence, this crucial point about finding in love the greatest fullness of his being must also be applied to love between a man and a woman.

In this field also, true love perfects the being of the person and develops his existence. False love, on the other hand, causes quite contrary effects. False love is a love that either turns to an apparent good or—as usually happens—turns to some true good, but in a way that does not correspond to the nature of the good, in a way contrary to it. At times this happens to be the love between a man and a woman either in its assumptions or—even despite (apparently) good assumptions—in its particular manifestations, in its realizations. False love is, in fact, evil love.⁸⁸

A Christian approach to sexual ethics⁸⁹ appeals to the most elementary and undeniable moral truths and to the most fundamental values or goods to which the human person is ordered. For instance, the transcendent and objective value of the human person. Karol Wojtyła explains, “Such a good is the person, and the moral truth most clearly connected to the world of persons in particular is the ‘commandment to love’—for love is the good proper to the world of persons. And therefore the most fundamental grasp of sexual morality is to grasp it on the basis of ‘love and responsibility.’”⁹⁰ In other words, there exists responsibility in love, that is, responsibility for the person, for the person’s true good.

The human person, who is the most perfect being in the visible world, also, therefore, has the highest value. The value of the person is, in turn, the basis of the norm that should govern actions that have a person as their object. This norm may be called *personalistic* to distinguish it from other norms, which

much ‘is’ as each time ‘becomes’. Duty—not as an abstraction but as a reality—always enters into just that dynamic structure. . . . Moral duty is dynamically connected with moral good and evil—and that this connection is both strict and exclusive. *Duty* arises ‘because of’ good or evil; it is always a *specific actualization of the spiritual potentiality of a person in act*; that actualization comes out ‘for good’ and ‘against’ evil.” Furthermore, this love-ethic is also *praxiological* because “*a man, as a man, becomes good or evil through the act.*” This is, therefore, a reality that is thoroughly anthropological and personalistic.

87. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 66.

88. *Ibid.*, 66.

89. On sexual ethics, Karol Wojtyła, “The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics, Reflections and Postulates,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, OSM (New York: Peter Lang, 1993 [1965]), 279–299.

90. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, “Author’s Introduction to the First Polish Edition (1960),” xxii.

are based on the various natures of beings lower than the human being—nonpersonal natures. . . . All norms, including the personalistic norm, as based on the essences, or natures, or beings, are expressions of the order that governs the world. This order is intelligible to reason, to the person. Consequently, only the person is a *particeps legis aeternae et conscia legis naturae*, which means that the person is conscious of the normative force that flows from the essences, or natures, of all beings. In particular, the person is conscious of the normative force that flows from humanity, and this humanity in its individual form always appears as a person.⁹¹

Love separated from responsibility is a denial of itself, and, as a rule, is always egoism. “The more the sense of responsibility for the person, the more true love there is.”⁹² Wojtyła explains:

For the choice of a person is a process in which the sexual value cannot play a role of the only motive or even—in the ultimate analysis of this act of the will—the primary motive. This would contradict the very notion of the “choice of a person.” If the only, or least, the primary motive of this choice were the sexual value itself, then we would not be able to speak of choosing a person, but only of choosing the other sex connected with some “man” or even with some “body that is a possible object of use.” It is clear that if we are to speak of choosing a person, the primary [although not the only] motive must be the very value of the person. . . . And only then, when each of them [choosing a woman by a man or a man by a woman] in this way, is the act of choice interiorly mature and complete. For only then is the proper integration of the object accomplished in it: the object of choice—the person—was grasped in his whole truth.⁹³

Thus, sexual ethics is concerned with an “introduction of love into [sexual] love.”⁹⁴ In the first case, love signifies the central commandment of love—“You should love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments” (Matt. 22:36–40). The central commandment of love demands from us the responsibility that we love our neighbor. Indeed, the command is about responsible love for persons because the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate response is love. “For if Jesus Christ commanded us to love those beings who are persons, then love is the proper form of relating to persons; it is the form of behavior for which we should strive when our behavior has a person as its object, since this form is demanded by that person’s essence, or nature.”⁹⁵

91. Wojtyła, “The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics,” 287.

92. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 113.

93. *Ibid.*, 114–115.

94. *Ibid.*, xviii.

95. Wojtyła, “The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics,” 289.

In the second case, love refers to sexual love, and hence to sexual ethics. There are four presuppositions that are foundational to sexual ethics.⁹⁶

First, there is a distinctive sexual ethics rather than just a general ethics governing interpersonal relationships. On this view, sometimes called the “responsible-relational” (H. Richard Niebuhr)⁹⁷ position, moral norms that prohibit lying, deception, and exploitation are sufficient to render sexual acts morally good. This is how Margaret Farley describes the norms for what she calls sexual justice: refusal to do unjust harm, free consent, mutuality, equality, commitment, fruitfulness, and social justice, promote flourishing, and avoid harm and coercion.⁹⁸

Whatever its undeniable merits—surely all interpersonal relationships should be free of deception, noncoercive, and nonexploitative—this ethics leaves us without a specific *sexual* ethics. The question here that needs attention is: what is the proper end of our sexual powers and their relationship to the nature of marriage? On this view, according to Philip Turner, “sexual acts, like all others, have no particular goods or ends that are proper to them, and for this reason, and for this reason, like all acts, are to be assessed only on the basis of intention on the one hand and results on the other. There is,” therefore, “no act that is ‘inherently right or wrong.’”⁹⁹ By contrast, there are “special moral responsibilities that flow from concern for the human goods [the interpersonal unity that is marital communion and its natural fulfillment in procreation] toward which sexuality itself is ordered [?].”¹⁰⁰ In other words, there can only be special moral responsibilities if sexual acts are uniquely distinct from other bodily acts because they are ordered to real human goods—the natural meanings and ends of man’s sexual powers: union and procreation—that are intrinsic aspects of the well-being and fulfillment of human persons. Patrick Lee rightly states:

It seems that there is something special about sex, and it seems that we can be aware of this point whether we accept revelation or not. For example, it seems clear to most people that a punch in the nose is far less serious than rape, although both involve violence. And it seems that this can be true only if sexual acts have some feature or features making them significantly different from other bodily acts.¹⁰¹

96. Wojtyla states, “To justify the norms of morality means to give reasons for their rightness. In performing this task, moral theologians should have before their eyes, as far as possible, the complete theoretical vision of reality contained in revelation, especially those elements of its that are indispensable for justifying the respective normative judgments, Normative judgments are based on value judgments, which, in turn, presupposes theoretical knowledge of the reality evaluated” (“The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics,” 280).

97. Ronald Lawler, O.F.M. Cap., Joseph Boyle, Jr., & William E. May, *Catholic Sexual Ethics, A Summary, Explanation and Defense*. Second Edition (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1998), 14.

98. Farley, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 231..

99. Philip Turner, “Sex and the Single Life,” *First Things* 33 (May 1993): 15-21.

100. William E. May, *et al.*, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 14.

101. Patrick Lee, “The Human Body and Sexuality in the Teaching of Pope John Paul II,” in *John Paul II’s Contribution to Catholic Bioethics*, ed. Christopher Tollefsen (Dordrecht,

What then is it about sexual acts that make them different from other bodily acts? And if they are uniquely distinct, because they are ordered by their very nature to marital communion and procreation, marital love and children, in short, to the unitive and procreative ends of sexuality, doesn't that mean that there is a distinctive sexual ethics?

Second, one of the central reasons why a distinctive sexual ethics is denied by many is that there is no room, on their view, for a moral law, grounded in the one human nature, willed by God, and known as the natural law.¹⁰² The reason for the rejection of a moral law derives from the view that the meaning of the body is no longer rooted in the very nature of man as an embodied person, male or female; this nature possessing a creational teleology ordering the body-soul person to the sexual "other" and hence to procreation and union.¹⁰³ Put differently, this view seems to be denying that there are meanings and ends embedded in the human sexual design that are grounded in the order of creation (*GS* §48). In other words, since sex is merely a biological category ("interesting external equipment") and gender is a socially and culturally constructed category, this view entails the rejection of the historic Church teaching, indeed of Vatican II, that "the principles of the moral order . . . spring from human nature itself."¹⁰⁴

In contrast to this view, Benedict XVI argues that there is an ecology of man, language and order of nature. Benedict says:

Man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will. Man is not merely self-creating freedom. Man does not create himself. He is intellect and will, but he is also nature, and his will is rightly ordered if he respects his nature, listens to it and accepts himself for who he is, as one who did not create himself. In this way, and in no other, is true human freedom fulfilled.¹⁰⁵

In short, this fundamental anthropology rejects the dualism between person and nature, as well as freedom and nature. Unsurprisingly, this too is the view of John Paul II:

And since the human person cannot be reduced to a freedom which is self-designing, but entails a particular spiritual and bodily structure, the primordial moral requirement of loving and respecting the person as an end [in the medium of its unity as body and soul] and never as a mere means also implies, by its very nature, respect for certain fundamental goods [toward

Netherlands: Springer, 2004), 108. Available online: http://www.patrickleebioethics.com/jp2_on_sex_and_the_body.pdf.

102. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, §59.

103. Levering, "Knowing What is 'Natural': Thomas Aquinas and Luke Timothy Johnson on Romans 1-2," in *Logos* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 135.

104. *Dignitatis Humanae*, §14.

105. Pope Benedict XVI, Christmas Address to the Roman Curia, Friday, December 21, 2012.

which sexuality itself is ordered], without which one would fall into relativism and arbitrariness.¹⁰⁶

In sum, one might conclude that in addition to the denial of a distinction sexual ethics, the problem with contemporary thinking about human sexuality is that “it flouts the embedded principles and the inbuilt meanings of the human sexual design,”¹⁰⁷ or as *Guadium et spes* §51 puts it, “objective criteria . . . drawn from the nature of the human person and human action.”

Third, a key to understanding Catholic sexual ethics is the truth that the human person is a bodily being.¹⁰⁸ This view rejects a dualistic view of the human person—“dualistic in the sense of viewing the self as something which *has* or *inhabits* a body, rather than being a living, bodily entity.”¹⁰⁹ But if the “human person is essentially a bodily being, a unity of body and soul, and that therefore the masculinity or femininity of the human being is internal to his or her personhood (rather than just interesting external ‘equipment’),” as John Paul II has argued, then it seems likely that this view does not do justice to the embodiment of human persons as man and woman and hence to sexual differences between them. By assuming the *insignificance* of sexual difference for making a sexual act morally right, this view fails to grasp the unified totality that is the body-person and hence the human meaning of the body, especially but not only for sexual acts.¹¹⁰ Says John Paul II, “The body can never be reduced to mere matter: it is a *spiritualized body*, just as man’s spirit is so closely united to the body that he can be described as *an embodied spirit*.”¹¹¹

Explains Wojtyła, “The human person is not just a consciousness prolific in experiences of various content, but is basically a highly organized being, an individual of a spiritual nature composed into a single whole with the body (hence, a *suppositum humanum* [that is a person].”¹¹² Indeed, “The human body shares in the dignity of the image of God.”¹¹³ John Paul II’s theology of the body is central to understanding the basic issues in sexual ethics, in my judgment, because that theology emphasizes the bodily nature of the human person, meaning thereby that the body is intrinsic to human beings as bodily persons. Given that my body is intrinsic to myself, there is a unitary activity such that, as the pope says, “[t]he *person, including the body, is completely entrusted to himself, and it is in the unity of body and soul that the person is the subject of his own moral acts*.”¹¹⁴ In short, since the human person is bodily, then sexual moral choices are exercised in and through an act in which my bodily “activity is as much

106. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, §48.

107. Budziszewski, *On the Meaning of Sex*, 35.

108. Patrick Lee and Robert P. George, “Sex and the Body,” in *Body-Self Dualism in Contemporary Ethics and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 176–217. See also, William E. May, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*.

109. May, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 107.

110. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, §50.

111. John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, §19.

112. Wojtyła, “The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics,” 287.

113. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §364.

114. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, §48.

the constitutive subject of what one does as one's act of choice is."¹¹⁵ In short, our bodies can be the subject of virtues, in particular, love of the person in the ethical sense, and therefore as a virtue, that is, "as a concretization (and also, of course, a realization) of the personalistic norm . . . in light of the commandment of love."¹¹⁶

Wojtyla's anthropology regarding the structural whole that is the body-person is really a contemporary expression of Aquinas's anthropology, namely, the soul is the form of the body (*anima forma corporis*), and of the Church's teaching on the unity of the human person as body and soul.¹¹⁷ The then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger explains:

[T]he material elements from out of which human physiology is constructed receive their character of being "body" only in virtue of being organized and formed by the expressive power of soul. Distinguishing between "physiological unit" and "bodiliness" now becomes possible. . . . The individual atoms and molecules do not as such add up to the human being. . . . The physiology becomes truly "body" through the heart of the personality. Bodiliness is something other than a summation of corpuscles."¹¹⁸

That is, in light of considering the human person as a unity of body and soul, we can understand why the *body is personal*. Rather than bodily existence being a mere instrument or extrinsic tool of man's personal self-realization, the body is the indispensable medium, argues Wojtyla, in and through which I reveal myself. In other words, Wojtyla's basic point is that the body and bodily action is in some sense communicative activity that reveals the person as a whole. As John Paul II says in *The Acting Person*, "For us action *reveals* the person, and we look at the person through his action."¹¹⁹ Later he says, "man manifests himself . . . through his body. . . . It is generally recognized that the human body is in its visible dynamism the territory where, or in a way even the medium whereby, the person expresses himself."¹²⁰ And in the theology of the body, we find a sample of statements expressing the same point: "the body reveals man," "the body is an expression of man's personhood," and "the body *manifests* man and, in manifesting him, acts as an intermediary that allows man and woman from the beginning, to 'communicate' with each other according to that *communio personarum* willed for them in particular by the Creator."¹²¹ In sum, "In this sense, the body is the territory and in a way the means for the performance of

115. Finnis, "Personal Integrity, Sexual Morality and Responsible Parenthood," in *Why Humanae Vitae Was Right: A Reader*, ed. Janet E. Smith (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 171-192, particularly 177.

116. Wojtyla, "The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics," 289.

117. John Paul II develops the moral and anthropological significance of the unity of the human person as body and soul in *Veritatis Splendor*, §§46-50.

118. Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology, Death and Eternal Life*, 179-181. Ratzinger is persuaded that Aquinas' philosophical understanding of the "formula *anima forma corporis*: the soul is the form of the body" embodies a "complete transformation of Aristotelianism" (*Ibid.*, 148-149).

119. Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 11.

120. *Ibid.*, 203-204.

121. Pope John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 1.9.4, note 18, and 1.12.5.

action and consequently for the fulfillment of the person.”¹²² Herman Dooyeweerd nicely puts this point, “The human body is man himself in the structural whole of his temporal appearance.”¹²³

Furthermore, human bodily existence has the character of a subject. In other words, given man’s anthropological unity of body and soul, he exercises the capacity for ethical self-determination as a whole man, meaning thereby in and through his body.¹²⁴ John Paul II writes, “Man is a subject not by his self-consciousness and by self-determination, but also based on his own body. *The structure of this body is such that it permits him to the author of genuine human activity.* In this activity, the body expresses the person.”¹²⁵ Elsewhere the pope develops the moral significance that the human person is bodily, namely, that his body is not extrinsic to who he really is, and hence to his moral acts. “The person, including the body, is completely entrusted to himself, and it is in the unity of body and soul that the person is the subject of his own actions.”¹²⁶ This implies, as Schockenhoff rightly argues, “the body is freedom’s boundary.” That is, he explains, “We can respect each other as subjects capable of moral action only when we respect each other in the expressive form of our bodily existence. Only so do we make it possible for each other to unfold a personal existence which is a goal in itself.”¹²⁷ Respecting another person’s bodily life unconditionally is to respect that person himself because the “representation of his person . . . is accessible to us . . . only in the medium of its unity as body and soul.”¹²⁸

A human person’s body is not a mere extrinsic tool, an instrument, to be used for providing him with subjective states of consciousness, such as giving and obtaining pleasure. Rather, the body is intrinsic to one’s self as a unified bodily person; in other words, as a unified whole the one and ontically unique person. This implies that the subject of one’s own moral actions is the unified bodily person so that “bodily activity . . . is,” as John Finnis says, “as much the constitutive subject of what one does as

122. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 205.

123. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, Vol. III, 89. This, too, is the view of Herman Dooyeweerd’s philosophical anthropology, *Reformation and Scholasticism in Philosophy*, vol. 3, *Philosophy of Nature and Philosophical Anthropology*, ed. D.F.M. Strauss, trans. Magnus Verbrugge and D.F.M. Strauss (Ancaster, ON: Paideia Press, 2011), Part II, chapters 1–3, “[T]he human spirit cannot carry out any real acts outside its temporal corporal individuality-structure. For that reason, we said: it is the *individual human being* in the integral unity of ‘body’ and ‘soul’ who accomplishes the acts. The full person as a totality is the subject of the act. . . . In the acts, the ‘soul’ is actually operative in the entire enkaptic structure of the body, and only in the body does the soul have the capacity to do so, insofar as the acts are included in the temporal order of the body. In other words, we can take the ‘acts’ neither to be purely ‘corporal’ nor purely ‘spiritual’. They are *both* inseparably connected and precisely for that reason they bear a *typically human* character. Only the act-structure in *its fundamental dependence upon the spirit* stamps the body as human” (162–163).

124. Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Natural Law & Human Dignity, Universal Ethics in an Historical World*, trans. Brian McNeil (Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 208.

125. Pope John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 1.7.2.

126. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, §48.

127. Schockenhoff, *Natural Law & Human Dignity*, 208.

128. *Ibid.*

one's act of choice is."¹²⁹ This emphasis on the body being intrinsic to one's own self is rooted in the Church's teaching on the unity of the human person. As John Paul II says, "In fact, *body and soul are inseparable*: in the willing agent and in the deliberate act *they stand or fall together*."¹³⁰ Therefore, he adds, we can easily understand why separating "the moral act from the bodily dimensions of its exercise is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and Tradition."¹³¹

Such a separation occurs when the biological dimension of the human person is reduced to a "raw datum, devoid of any [intrinsic] meaning and moral values until freedom has shaped it in accordance with its design."¹³² We saw such a separation in the materialistic anthropology I criticized earlier. That freely chosen design confers on sexual union the personal meaning of causal fun, of spousal commitment, or of procreative openness, and so forth. Significantly, any one of these meanings may be conferred by persons, as well as revoked by them. For sexual union as such does not by its very nature have any definite personal meaning.¹³³ "Consequently," John Paul II adds, "human nature and the body appear as [mere] *presuppositions or preambles*, materially *necessary*, for freedom to make its choice, yet extrinsic to the person, the subject and the human act."¹³⁴ On this view, given that sexual union is devoid of any intrinsic meaning, not having by its very nature any definite personal meaning, and because we can in freedom confer on it an instrumental meaning that is more than merely physiological, sexual union is, therefore, an extrinsic sign or symbol of personal communion, fostering marital love and friendship by signifying it. But on John Paul II's view, the sexual act is much more than a natural bodily symbol; indeed, it embodies marital union, becoming bodily, or organically complete, and thus one, expresses total self-giving and makes it bodily present in the sense that, as Lee says, "this expression is not extrinsic to what it expresses, but is the visible and tangible embodiment of it."¹³⁵

In other words, given man's anthropological unity of body and soul, he exercises the capacity for ethical self-determination as a whole man, meaning thereby in and through his body.¹³⁶ This implies, as Schockenhoff rightly argues, that "the body can be called the concrete limit of freedom." That is, he explains, "the body and physical life are not 'goods' external to human personal realization, standing in a purely instrumental relation to the person's authentic determination as a subject. The body is rather the irreducible means of expression in which human persons in all their acts ...

129. John Finnis, "Personal Integrity, Sexual Morality and Responsible Parenthood," 177.

130. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, §49.

131. *Ibid.*

132. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, §48.

133. John F. Crosby, "The Estrangement of Persons from their Bodies," *Logos* 1, no. 2 (1997): 125-139, particularly 130-131.

134. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, §48.

135. Patrick Lee, "The Human Body and Sexuality in the Teaching of Pope John Paul II," 114.

136. Eberhard Schockenhoff, "A Consistent Ethic of Life (with a Few Blemishes): Moral-Theological remarks on *Evangelium Vitae* and on Some Protestant Questions about It," ed. Reinhard Hütter and Theodor Dieter (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 237-261, and particularly at 249.

are represented."¹³⁷ Respecting another person's bodily life unconditionally is to respect that person himself because a person shows himself only in and through his own body. So, "respect for the personal worth of persons relates not only to their inner convictions or moral values but must also include the inviolability of their bodily existence."¹³⁸ If the body is, then, freedom's boundary, such that respecting one's own body as well as others' bodies is both to respect our own person and other persons, this raises the question regarding the conditions under which a sexual act is morally right.¹³⁹

Fourth, a rehabilitation of the "culture of the person" is necessary because the objective good of the person constitutes the essential core of all human culture. To promote that culture requires a whole nexus of fundamental goods that together determine marriage and family life. Marriage is grounded in God's purpose for creation. It is the two-in-one-flesh union of a man and a woman, with conjugal love being the integrating principle of the whole communion of marriage and family life. *Gaudium et spes* §50 stated it this way, "Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the begetting and educating of children. Children are really the supreme gift of marriage." The question of what is the proper end of our sexual powers and their relationship to the nature of marriage is crucial for considering the issue of why giving oneself in sexual intercourse to the other person is fully justified only in marriage. "[Marriage corresponds to the truth of love and mutually safeguards the dignity of person, only if both a man and a woman perform it [sexual intercourse] as spouses, as husband and wife."¹⁴⁰ This, too, has been lost sight of sexual liberationist ideology and by those Christians who have accommodated themselves to this ideology.

Conclusion

De Bruijne's proposal to transcend the erotic cultural wars is an utter failure. His proposal to transcend these wars between orthodox Christianity's traditional sexual morality and the sexual liberationist ideology by arguing that the latter is really a correction of the former, and hence that we can see the latter as a renewal movement within orthodox Christianity's understanding of the nature, meaning, and purpose of human sexuality, is mistaken on all counts. His understanding of the sexual revolution, its presuppositions regarding the nature of the sexual urge, its materialistic anthropology, absolutizing of freedom, rejection of nature, and its impact on our culture is not really probed to its depth by de Bruijne in order to see why it is at odds with orthodox Christianity's traditional sexual morality and the fundamental presuppositions that undergird this morality.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid.

139. Wilhelmus Luijpen, *Existential Phenomenology*, fourth impression, translated from the Dutch edition (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1965 [1959]), 187–188.

140. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 293.