

Fruits Borne of (Super)Natural Decree:
Concerns of Health Literacy within *Humanae Vitae*

by

Hedra Taylor-Bledsoe

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved November 2010 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Maureen Daly Goggin, Chair
Peter Goggin
J. Kent Wright

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2010

ABSTRACT

The aim of this project is an exploration of health literacy as found in the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. The rhetoric of the Catholic Church clearly demonstrates its creation and promotion of moral authority over the health practices of the faithful. As such, the encyclical illustrates the means by which Catholic conscience dictates corporal existence. Through its denunciation of the evolving social mores of the 1960s, its condemnation of contraception, and its encouragement in the reception of natural law, the document offers the merits of Catholic marriage as guiding principles beneficial to all good men. Ultimately, group morality is conveyed as the path to health. Consideration of *Humanae Vitae* through a Burkean logological lens allows an inquiry into the elements of theology and biology, and evaluates the foundational language of each as a form of action. As well, the oracular nature of the rhetoric merits analysis, for the Church continues to maintain the encyclical as the final declaration of sexual rectitude. However, many Catholics and members of secular society disagree, necessitating a forecast which questions the rhetorical retention of the text.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this dissertation and degree would not have been possible without the tremendous support and encouragement of a number of people, all of whom I wish to now thank. My committee members – Dr. Maureen Daly Goggin, Dr. Peter Goggin, and Dr. J. Kent Wright – are amazing scholars and mentors, and it has been a joy and honor to work with the three of them. I will forever be deeply appreciative of their time and effort on my behalf. Sheila Luna is a stellar Program Manager and advisor, and my time spent with her during this degree has been marvelous and inspiring. Finally, I'd like to recognize my family, who were – as always – incredibly loving and patient as I devoted myself to this academic process.

One more expression of gratitude remains: *Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-hehyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi'anu la-z'man ha-ze* ("Blessed are You, LORD, our God, King of the universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season").

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
1 TOPICAL DEVELOPMENT AND METHODOLOGICAL APPLICATION	1
2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	17
Foundational Text	17
Methodological Texts	18
Rhetorical Texts	20
Health Literacy Texts	25
Theological Texts (Doctrine and Analysis)	26
Gender Texts (Health and Self)	33
Sustainability Texts	39
3 METHODOLOGY	45
4 HISTORICAL NOTES REGARDING THE CATHOLIC STANCE ON CONTRACEPTION	59
5 LEADING AND LEARNING THROUGH LOGOS	71
6 CONCLUSION	104
REFERENCES	124

CHAPTER 1

Topical Development And Methodological Application

For those of faith, sacred text is living, breathing *logos*, simultaneously word and action. In Christianity, the Holy Bible is the Word of God, which believers note has existed in either oral or written form from the nativity of time (John 1:1). Additional governing texts arise within Christian denominations, generally created by and supported through the authority of evangelical councils. The Catholic Church shares expansive divine revelation through supplemental documents authored by the reigning Pope. These works often take the form of letters (encyclicals) addressed to the Bishops of the Church, but are also ultimately made available to the audience of the faithful. While each letter offers further elucidation upon matters of faith, none have raised such controversy amongst believers and secularists alike as did *Humanae Vitae*. Decades after its revealing, Mary Eberstadt declares, “Even in the benighted precincts of believers, where information from the outside world is known to travel exceedingly slowly, everyone grasps that [*Humanae Vitae*] is one doctrine the world loves to hate” (35). Issued by Paul VI on July 29, 1968, the epistle largely focuses on the changing social and sexual mores of the age, reiterates the superiority of natural law, and advises its audience to maintain the merits inherent to Catholic marriage. The outcry amongst its intended assembly and those outside of the Church walls was instant and insistent, leading Andrew Greeley to observe, “I have no doubts that historians of the future will judge *Humanae Vitae* to be one of the worst mistakes in the history of Catholic Christianity” (21).

At the core of *Humanae Vitae* is the concept of natural law, which affirms the accordance of man's very nature with God's eternal wisdom. According to the *Catechism*, this deific canon – which is both spiritual and material in character – “hinges upon the desire for God and submission to him, who is the source and judge of all that is good” (1955), and is “present in the heart of each man and established by reason” (1956). As such, natural law is “universal in its precepts and its authority extends to all men” (*Catechism* 1956). Expressed in the Decalogue as a grouping of ethical decrees of Mosaic law, its teleology offers a triad of assistance to mankind:

The natural law, the Creator's very good work, provides the solid foundation on which man can build the structure of moral rules to guide his choices. It also provides the indispensable moral foundation for building the human community. Finally, it provides the necessary basis for the civil law with which it is connected, whether by a reflection that draws conclusions from its principles or by additions of a positive and judicial nature. (*Catechism* 1959)

Humanae Vitae extensively addresses these manners of assistance through the application of natural law to the moral conduct of the individual and married couples, as well as to society as whole, with specific instruction for priests, physicians, and legal authorities. Thus, the anticipated influence of the encyclical ranged from the private to public spheres.

Humanae Vitae insists upon “calling men back to the observance of the norms of the natural law, as interpreted by its constant doctrine” (11). The

consistency of the doctrine of natural law is emphasized throughout the encyclical (10, 11, 16, 18, 19, 23, 28, 31), although *Humanae Vitae* is itself an exploration of the importance of natural law in a changing world. The *Catechism*, which consists of canonical, interpretative, and traditional dogma of the Catholic Church, notes that the application of natural law “can demand reflection that takes account of various conditions of life according to places, times, and circumstances” (1957); however, it “is *immutable* and permanent throughout the variations of history; it subsists under the flux of ideas and customs and supports their progress” (1958). *Humanae Vitae* considers the evolution of social and technological processes regarding the regulation of birth, and affirms the unchanging wisdom with which God has endowed the Church. Paul VI offers respect to those who will use science to

succeed in providing a sufficiently secure basis for a regulation of birth, founded on the observance of natural rhythms. In this way, scientists and especially Catholic scientists will contribute to demonstrate in actual fact that, as the Church teaches, “a true contradiction cannot exist between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to the fostering of authentic conjugal love.” (24)

Additionally, the encyclical maintains that the Church maintain members of the medical establishment in the highest esteem if they, “in the exercise of their profession, value above every human interest the superior demands of their Christian vocation” (27). It should be noted that the profession itself is, according to the Church, Christian in nature, even if the physician is not. Paul VI urges

those in the medical field to “persevere . . . in promoting on every occasion the discovery of solutions inspired by faith and right reason . . . [to] strive to arouse this conviction and this respect in their associates” (27). The healer working in accordance with Catholic doctrine, however, may find his or her options limited. *Humanae Vitae* dictates that which is not of natural law is to be avoided, and the fetus is to be saved at all costs; disease alone (one assumes such as cancer) causes therapeutic means (hysterectomy and such) to be considered licit (7). This principle, known as the doctrine of totality, has thus become irrevocably linked to natural law, and offers further dictates of health for body, mind, and spirit.

Modern totality was explored some sixteen years before *Humanae Vitae* in an address to the First International Congress on the Histopathology of the Nervous System. In his exposition upon *The Moral Limits of Medical Research and Treatment*, Pius XII avows that new medical procedures, research methods, and treatments must adhere to a morality that considers not only the interests of science, but also that of the individual and the “bonum commune” (5). The principle of totality, in its ideal application, honors all three areas of interest, and asserts that the part exists for the whole and that, consequently, the good of the part remains subordinated to the good of the whole, that the whole is a determining factor for the part and can dispose of it in its own interest. This principle flows from the essence of ideas and things and must, therefore, have an absolute value. (*The Moral Limits* 34)

The correlation between totality and contraception is clearly delineated in *Humanae Vitae*: if contraception harms the mother, father, or future fetus in any

fashion, it is not beneficial and henceforth condemned as unnatural. Furthermore, in accordance with the logic of the doctrine, if contraception harms the individual, it also harms society. Yet regardless of what secular society may practice, the Catholic individual is held to a standard declared to be free of impairment to him and others.

Catholic social justice and social roles within the Church have long intrigued scholars. Given the status of women within the Church (mother or nun rather than priest), coupled with the ban on contraception, Catholicism is a subject rich in inquiry for theorists of gender issues (notably Bromley 1965, Kelly 1963, Küng 2001, Reiterman 1965, Sulloway 1959). *Humanae Vitae* offers relevant material in this vein, as is apparent in its illustrations of Catholic matrimony and the duties therein (see Moffett 1994, Komonchak 2001, Smith 1991, Gudorf 2003, Carmody 1986). While the scholarship has been exceptional, I want to move beyond these topics to a noticeable gap in research: the potential effects of the encyclical on the health literacy of its audience. Certainly, the principle of totality, and the world which does not necessarily embrace it, produces an intriguing dichotomy. Consideration of this duality led to the research question and subquestions around which this project is based:

- (1) In accordance with its stance on contraception, does *Humanae Vitae* lay the groundwork for a health literacy possibly informed by a greater degree of faith rather than science?

- a. In what way(s) does the Church support its authority over individual health practices, and how does the encyclical offer evidence of this influence over the private sphere?
 - i. What rhetorical devices are employed within *Humanae Vitae* to demonstrate the power of health as/through group morality?

These questions – and surrounding issues – are relevant in their very timeliness, as seen in the deliberation of the political climate, the ever-increasing need for management of disease, and offering of preventative care (specific to the United States). As the American government seeks an answer to the quandary of health care, the debate over abortion rages on, as largely staged by the religious right against an administration deemed liberal. A November 10, 2009 *Wall Street Journal* article notes the lobbying and grassroots efforts of Catholic churches resulted in “an amendment to [the House] health-care bill barring anyone who receives a new tax credit from enrolling in a plan that covers abortion,” which was, according to author Peter Wallsten, “a once-unthinkable event in Democrat-dominated Washington.” It may have been considered far-fetched for other reasons, as well, chief among them being the perception that American faithful practices seem to be in decline. While there was a surge of religious activity after the terrorist attacks of September 2001 (as noted in 2006 by the Barna Group, which tracks Christian demographics), churchgoing and other such traits have decreased. Catholicism has dealt with heavy audience deficit, as have other denominations, as evidenced by a survey conducted by the Pew Forum on

Religion & Public Life in the spring of 2008. According to the broad survey, which considered the responses of more than 35,000 American adults, “Catholicism has experienced the greatest net losses [of any American religion] as a result of affiliation changes” (5-6). The Forum further notes, “While nearly one-in-three Americans (31%) were raised in the Catholic faith, today fewer than one-in-four (24%) describes themselves as Catholics,” numbers which “would have been even more pronounced were it not for the offsetting impact of immigration” (6). Indeed, “[R]oughly 10% of all Americans are *former* Catholics” (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 7, emphasis added). Despite the downward trend, there are still an estimated 1.13 billion Catholics in the world – more than enough to hold sway on public policy in some form (Aloisi). Indeed, while I am not addressing the alternation in the American landscape of creed and conviction per se, I posit that, *despite* the postmodern resurgence of *non*-faith, the Catholic Church may still hold sway over the reception of public information regarding health, as is specifically seen in arenas of reproduction such as bioethics. The *locus* of the Church is well established, both physically and in its principles. While the Church stands upon Biblical scripture as a spiritual foundation, it offers additional tenets through supplemental texts and teachings, and – as seen in *Humanae Vitae* – showcases the shaping of traditional wisdom to current social crises. The creation of such a mechanism opens the possibility of dialogue regarding the maintenance of authority, especially in consideration of subjects such as genetic manipulation (a topic not tendered in the Holy Bible). It is possible that the Church uses the concepts of imagination and mystery, as

described by Kenneth Burke, to supplant that which is technologically known in the field of medicine, such as reproductive choice.

Of course, in order to adequately explore such issues, foundational definitions must be offered, such as literacy/health literacy and infallibility. For the purposes of this project, health literacy is of specific interest, and a foundational definition of literacy is critical. As Roger King observes, “‘Literacy’ is an ambiguous term”: it may be minimally defined as the basic ability to function in a textually-driven society (69). However, literacy itself is best characterized in this space not as that relegated to only reading and writing, but moving beyond what Brian Street terms the autonomous model to that which is ideological or contextual. Street, James Gee, and Paolo Freire are all concerned with context and the demonstration of literacy: Street notes that literacy “is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles” (“Introduction” 7); for Gee, the words of “the situation, the physical setting, and the assumed knowledge of the speaker” come into play (75); while Freire’s application of the library model offers context as “a reading of the world and the word,” one in which language is understood for its relationship not only with the speaker, but also with the reader, and thus with reality (45). Literacy, both pluralistic and contextual in nature, necessitates the conditional use of symbols – for, per Burke, man is a symbol-using animal – as further evidence of literacy (*Language as Symbolic Action* 16).

To define health literacy is to consider the contextualization of the physical body, both at home and in society. Ilona Kickbusch assembles a number

of definitions in her article, “Addressing the health literacy divide,” the simplest of which comes from the Center for Health Care Strategies: “Health Literacy is the ability to read, understand, and act on health care information” (293). In contrast, the World Health Organization (WHO) offers, “Health literacy represents the cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health” (qtd. in Kickbusch 293). Similarly, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies’ oft-cited *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End* relies upon the definition proffered in the Healthy People 2010 study (as set out by the National Library of Medicine): “The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions” (4). For the work at hand, an individual who maintains health literacy incorporates elements of totality, in that he or she must have a basic comprehension of the human body and the issue of impact both by and on the world around it (giving consideration to nutrition, pollution, bacteria, viruses, etc.); he or she must consider the social restraints or influences of his or her culture (including religious faith) in regards to health, including but not restricted to sexual/procreative health; and he or she must have some sense of the consequential elements of healthcare or lack thereof, and determine the immediate and future impact of treatment or prevention upon not only the individual, but also the general population (if applicable). Is this an ideal integration that reflects a high level of health literacy? Yes. Will many people achieve it? Regrettably not,

according to studies such as that conducted by Laurie Martin et al., the results of which appear in “Developing Predictive Models of Health Literacy.” Martin and her co-authors estimate that low health literacy (LHL) “remains a formidable barrier to reducing gaps in health care quality,” and point out that “Approximately one-third of the population (36%) is estimated to have basic or below basic health literacy” (1211). The Committee on Health Literacy’s findings offers an even more shocking number: “approximately 90 million adults may lack the needed literacy skills to effectively use the U.S. health system” (*Health Literacy* 8).

While the estimates may vary, the underlying concerns do not:

[R]esearchers contend that the complexity of the health care system, the medical jargon used by many providers, and the exposure to novel health concepts (many times while under a great deal of stress), have the potential to negatively impact one’s health literary skills, even among those with adequate literacy. Therefore, the prevalence of limited literacy is even higher when considered within a health context. (Martin et al. 1211)

Of note is that Martin and her team looked at a variety of predictors such as “gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, poverty status, marital status, residence in a metropolitan statistical area (MSA), language other than English spoken in home, and years residing in the United States,” but did not consider religion as a variable (1211-12). Nor is faith offered as an impacting factor in the *Health Literacy* study: church doctrine was not considered as a source for health information, unlike the Internet, family and friends, news media, advertising, and

physicians (126). Is this an oversight or testimony that there is no demonstrable influence of religion upon health? I firmly believe that the former rather than the latter applies, given that religion has been analyzed as a factor impacting health through studies focused on faith healing (see Hickey and Lyckholm 2004; Whitfield et al. 1954; Vellenga 2008; Finkler 1994). Thus, I strive to show that Catholic doctrine, specifically *Humanae Vitae*, carries the potential to affect the health literacy of the faithful. Its messages revolving around natural law and the principle of totality combine to create a demonstration of care of self. The language of the encyclical clearly merits discussion through its very rhetorical power, which acts as a supporting pillar of historical, current, and future Catholic doctrine.

For the project at hand, health literacy obviously must reflect or integrate multiple literacies, including theological literacy. Indeed, *Humanae Vitae* and its teachings are symbolic of theological literacy, which is arguably acquired rather than learned (Gee 177). Furthermore, any form of health literacy as gleaned from the encyclical or those papal letters to follow is rooted in the Church's discourse rather than strictly in that of the medical or technological fields. *Humanae Vitae*, perhaps more than any other encyclical before or since, provides a means of intertwining natural law and science into complementary and, ultimately, overlapping spheres. While health literacy is constructed upon – or, at the very least, influenced by – both social and scientific elements, the coinciding of the two when considered from a theological viewpoint may present a unique form of navigational knowledge.

While the authority of the Church over the care of the individual will be considered in a later chapter, a brief introduction of the Church's proclamation of perfected knowledge is helpful. The hierarchical structure and power of Catholic discourse is aptly reflected in *Humanae Vitae*, with numerous mentions of the Church as infallible in deed and judgment (4, 6, 7, 11, 16, 18, 19, 20, 25, 28, 31). In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, scholar Patrick Toner points out that the definition of infallibility is multilayered:

[It] means more than exemption from actual error; it means exemption from the possibility of error; . . . it does not require holiness of life, much less imply impeccability in its organs; sinful and wicked men may be God's agents in defining infallibly; . . . [and] the validity of the Divine guarantee is independent of the fallible arguments upon which a definitive decision may be based, and of the possibly unworthy human motives that in cases of strife may appear to have influenced the result. It is the definitive result itself, and it alone, that is guaranteed to be infallible, *not the preliminary stages by which it is reached*. (2, emphasis added)

Furthermore, Toner insists that the Scriptures provide proof of the Church's infallibility; indeed, taking the Word as proof is a method he finds to be "a perfectly legitimate logical procedure" of *a fortiori* value (3). Specific recognition of infallibility is indicated in *Humanae Vitae* through references to "the light of the Holy Spirit" (30), which provides perfect wisdom, and citing the Church as teacher of "imprescriptible demands of the divine law" (25). The relevant supporting Biblical verses are found in Matthew 28:18-20 (Christ's

commission to the Apostles); Matthew 16:18 (the strength of the Church in its foundation); I Timothy 3:15 (the Church being constructed from truth); and John 14-16, paired with Acts 15:28 (revealing, reception, and evidence of the Holy Ghost as infallible teacher). Ultimately, the Church maintains that those who do not accept the Scriptural and traditional bases of infallibility (the latter being seen in the theology and praxis of the saints) cannot adequately discuss the issue. Per the Church, there is no argument as to its being free of “tainted knowledge,” whether in the personage of the Pope, ecumenical council, or simple believer;

Toner notes:

We assume as antecedently and independently established that God can supernaturally guide and enlighten men, individually or collectively, in such a way that, notwithstanding the natural fallibility of human intelligence, they may speak and may be known with certainty to speak in His name and with His authority, so that their utterance may be not merely infallible but inspired. And it is only with those who accept this standpoint that the question of the Church’s infallibility can be profitably discussed. (8)

This stance is potentially problematic in that it assumes knowledge of the Church’s infallibility is granted *only* to the believer; as such, the Church may be viewed as dismissive of any critical consideration. Hence, the aspect of infallibility remains key to this analysis because it is interwoven with the issue of authority: if the Church is infallible, it renders questioning of its authority pointless (in accordance with the Church’s doctrine, rather than that of secular

academia). Regardless, I believe these issues merit inquiry, not the least for their Foucauldian undercurrents.

While scholars have considered the far-reaching effects of *Humanae Vitae* for its reverberations upon areas such as gender studies and the feminist movement (see above), it compels an approach through the angle of health literacy, utilizing the methodology of Burkean logology. The development of this technique will show that there is much to be learned of the motivation behind its creation and application, both in the acceptance and tension it inspires. To fully comprehend the text and its consequences, the methodology employed for this project focuses on scholarly research, as developed through two techniques. First, rigorous textual analysis is utilized, with *Humanae Vitae* being the crucial source; the Holy Bible, papal commentary, and academic appraisal provide secondary material. This analysis is paired with relevant theoretical application and interpretation, including power, theology, and literacy theories as markers of historical and future consideration and contextualization. Specifically, the appropriate qualitative methodology when considering *Humanae Vitae* is that of Burkean logology, which provides a technique of examining the language and experience of the text. Through logology, one is able to unpack the meaning behind the words of a text, as well as the actions it may inspire, without becoming mired in emotional response. Yet it is this same influence that demands a *metahodos* (most simply translated as “the path taken”) moving beyond the simplicity of Burkean dramatism to something more multifaceted and, conversely, more focused.

Given that Burke's logology is concerned with the intersection of language with theology, perhaps it is best stated as the study of the language referencing God and/or the supernatural. To delve into the sociological aspects of the Church as wrought by *Humanae Vitae* would necessitate volumes of composition; to use logology as a means to explore the very language of the work and the activity wrought by/through that language adequately narrows the focus. This is not to say that logology as praxis is devoid of dramatism; rather, Burke's utilization of logology "'completes,' 'transcends,' or 'perfects[] his dramatisitic perspective'" (Garlitz 86). Indeed, religious words embody the Pentadic elements to create symbolic action, in what has been termed "the master analogy of Logology" (Garlitz 88). The method thus combines/considers theory, phenomena, dialect, *and* praxis, and as such provides a fluid examination of that language which is simultaneously elevated to the divine and employed on a daily basis by believers (Crusius 215-6). In its offering of the Order-Guilt-Redemption cycle, logology makes possible a causal categorization system that assists in the comprehension of ways in which morality and health literacy may intersect. The Burkean negative to the group studied must also be taken into account; in this case, the negative consists of the secular world and its reception/reaction to the language and symbols, as well as language-as-symbol, of *Humanae Vitae*.

This study provides an investigation into the motivational authorship and influence upon audience – essentially, the consubstantiation of the Church and the believers – evidenced by the specified papal letter. It is not a question of whether the scholar or audience believes in God; instead, it is a matter of examining the

belief of a group evidenced by a holy text, and the gatekeeping offered therein. Indeed, when logologically examined, will the encyclical evidence the equivocation of care of body with care of conscience? Will it showcase contemporary problems arising within the moral framework of society, as believed by the Church to stem forth from contraception? Through logology, a non-emotional viewing of the blessings and curses of technological development, as espoused by the Church, is possible, and the method allows for the drawing of a clear conclusion regarding the totality of doctrine versus dichotomization. Comprehension of these logological routes is best offered through examination, application, and extension/expansion of work done in the field of rhetoric and religion, as will be discussed throughout the text. A cohesive review of literature is provided in Chapter Two, while the reasons behind choosing logology as a methodology are explained in Chapter Three. Chapter Four offers a brief historical consideration of contraception and marriage amongst the Catholic population, while Chapter Five deliberates the health literacy promoted by *Humanae Vitae*, with specific attention paid to natural law health methods (such as the rhythm technique), as well as practices banned (such as contraception and in-vitro fertilization). Finally, Chapter Six presents a conclusion, which consists of a potential forecast detailing how *Humanae Vitae* and similar texts have altered or may ultimately alter the cultural, technological, and medical landscapes of America for believers and nonbelievers alike.

CHAPTER 2

Review Of Literature

Foundational Text

At the center of this analysis is the aforementioned *Humanae Vitae*. Addressed to “Venerable brothers and beloved sons” – thus defining the audience and gendered authority – Paul VI discusses the regulation of births as impacted by population growth, changing gender roles, and scientific advancement. However, the situated faith and social positioning of the author (and institution) is quickly made apparent: “In considering the problem of birth regulation . . . one must look beyond partial perspectives – whether biological or psychological, demographic or sociological” (*HV* 11). Instead, one must “make one’s consideration in the light of an integral vision of man and of his vocation, not only of his natural and earthly vocation, but also of his supernatural and eternal one” (*HV* 11). Core to the issue is what Paul refers to as conjugal love, the characteristics of which are “human,” “total,” “faithful and exclusive,” and “fruitful” (*HV* 12-3). This love is an act of “free will,” but in regards to reproduction, man and wife are undoubtedly “not free . . . to proceed at will, as if they could determine with complete autonomy the right paths to follow” (*HV* 12, 14). Should couples embrace artificial contraception, Paul warns, “how wide and easy a road would thus be opened to conjugal infidelity and to a general lowering of morality” (*HV* 20). He positions – or perhaps reaffirms the position of – the Church as guardian of public and private sector, for who else “will prevent rulers from favoring, and even imposing upon their people, the method of contraception they judge to be the

most effective, if they should consider this to be necessary?” (HV 20) The language is clear: Paul denies the authority of those who challenge the Church, whether they may be individuals or government systems (HV 21). This admonition is further developed in the following passage:

The Church was not the author of the moral law and therefore cannot be its arbiter; she is only its depository and its interpreter, and can never declare to be permissible that which is not so by reason of its intimate and unchangeable opposition to the true good of man. (HV 21).

The Church stands for God, the Author of natural law, and Paul cautions that society is not to condemn the gatekeeper of said law. He reprimands civil leaders, and urges them, “Do not allow the morality of your people to be degraded; do not accept that by legal means practices contrary to the natural and divine law be introduced into that fundamental cell which is the family” (HV 24). *Humanae Vitae* thus serves as an enchiridion, one which illustrates the means and manners by which one may conduct one’s sex life and plans one family, as well as offering reprimand of any and all attempts to hinder such practices.

Methodological Texts

Key to this study of *Humanae Vitae* is Burke’s rhetorical trilogy, as specified in the preceding chapter. Burke’s *The Rhetoric of Religion* is admittedly the most applicable of his three works, given the scholar’s deft dealing with both secular and sacred rhetoric so as to offer a greater understanding of persuasion and audience. His analyses of Augustine’s *Confessions* – a text held in high esteem by the Catholic Church – and the first three chapters of Genesis offer

insight into the tremendous scope and function of religious language. Burke's treatment of authority in issues of creation and covenant are readily applicable to this study: the former "implies authority in the sense of originator, the designer or author of the things created," while the latter "implies authority in the sense of power, sovereignty – the highest or most radical sovereignty in case the Covenant is made by God," and both have been commandeered by the Church as its private forms of power (*Religion* 174).

A Grammar of Motives, in which Burke offers the dramatist pentad, is likewise significant. Mapping the Pentadic path is not a simple task: Burke discerns, "[S]ince each philosophic idiom will characterize this background differently, there will remain the question as to which characterization is 'right' or 'more nearly right'" (*Grammar* xvii). Through his introduction of ratios and the respective ranges and elements of determination, Burke outlines a systems analysis that strives toward nature more than outright definition.

Burke's *A Rhetoric of Motives* is also beneficial to this project; indeed, Pentadic exploration was considered as a form of critical methodology for this study, as will be discussed in the following chapter. Burke's identification with rhetoric as persuasion, which in turn creates or reflects social hierarchy, leads to a consideration of the motivation behind various rhetorics. His contemplation of Kierkegaard's Biblical "psychologizing" is reminiscent of papal orders, given that, "[B]y grounding an argument in Biblical texts as 'revelation,' the dialectician can put in terms having 'universal' authority," while the function of the dialectician "is exclusively that of translating the implications into

explications,” resulting in “a *strategic addition* to a Biblical text” (Burke, *Rhetoric* 250). Such additions (specifically encyclicals) have arguably been utilized as tools of education and promotion of Catholicism as a social force and authority. The truth of religious language is perhaps found in the translation and/or creative additions (revelations) to a supernatural authority previously established; the concepts underlying the discourse are as important as the words presented.

Rhetorical Texts

Since Burke is the principle methodologist employed, theorists who have expounded upon his teaching have proven helpful. Two are outstanding: Timothy Crusius and Robert Garlitz, both of whose work has provided notable assistance. Crusius, author of *Kenneth Burke and the Conversation After Philosophy*, reads Burke’s hermeneutics as stretching beyond Marxist or Hegelian boundaries, which allows the theorist to “[retain] materialistic insight without taking materialism as the Truth . . . [and] engage in formalistic critique without being trapped its ‘all or nothing’ mentality” (124). In *Kenneth Burke’s Logology and Literary Criticism*, Garlitz helps to further unpack the layers of logology through examination and application of the principles found in Burke’s *Religion*. Garlitz muses that sacrifice is necessary: “Logologically we need a victim that will join the supernatural with the natural and the tautological with the narrative” (102). Further, “The word is our victim, enabling us to establish verbal orders, redeeming the choice . . . of one mode over another” (Garlitz 102). It appears that polarity rules the day.

A number of other prestigious scholars have considered rhetorical theology as an arena, with Don Compier offering a particularly impressive tome. In *What is Rhetorical Theology?*, he reflects on the *ethos* of rhetoric, evident in its practicality, public/popular nature, active state, contextuality, contingency of character, polemical aspects, and holistic quality – all of which are exemplified in the Catholic texts used for this research (Compier 10-1). Indeed, the *ethos* of *Humanae Vitae* and other such papal letters supports the author’s conclusion that “theo-logos as discourse will inevitably become a rhetorical performance,” for what are religious mores if not enacted rhetoric? (Compier 18) Compier notes, “[W]e must enter into the ongoing fray of interpretation and argue for readings that fund action in the defense of lives” (40). While rhetoric may be used to promote epistemological and moral relativism, he insists that rhetorical method itself is far removed from these categories and objectivism (Compier 40). This parallels George Kennedy’s *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, which offers excellent definitions and applications of deliberative, epideictic, and judicial rhetoric.¹ Catholic rhetoric is, at its very core, epideictic; indeed, Kennedy enounces, “most modern preaching is epideictic, for it usually aims to strengthen Christian belief and induce a congregation to lead the Christian life” (74). Yet Catholic rhetoric is also deliberative, “as when a preacher seeks to answer objections raised against the authority or teaching of Christ or against his own actions” (Kennedy 74). Kennedy explains, “The Bible speaks through ethos, logos, and pathos, and to understand these is the concern of rhetorical analysis”

¹ These categories, tied into rhetorical criticism, offer the potential of new interpretation, which is clearly relevant to rhetorical and/or theological study.

(159). Representatives of the Holy Bible *and* the Church – such as the Pope and the priests – speak and write of the faith, and thus can be tested through these three proofs. Referencing this hierarchy and proofing method, Kennedy insists that religious systems are “attempts to communicate perceived religious truth,” and that, while, “Sacred language affects to be outside of time . . . the very process of casting it into words casts it into history” (158). Words fashion the weaving of culture, for “Words create and reflect their culture, and to read them outside that culture [invites] a basic level of misunderstanding” (Kennedy 159).

The issues arising from sacred language/text as rhetoric is further evaluated by Chaïm Perelman, Amos Wilder, and Nancey Murphy. In *The Realm of Rhetoric*, Perelman offers, “People who argue do not address what we call ‘faculties,’ such as intellect, emotion, or will; they address the whole person” (13). He then notes, “[D]epending on the circumstances, their arguments will seek different results and will use methods appropriate to the purpose of the discourse as well as to the audience to be influenced” (Perelman 13). This premise is decidedly applicable to Catholic text and its interpretation by clergy for the faithful.

Of course, there are risks inherent to the consideration of sacred texts, as Wilder explicates throughout his own work, *Early Christian Rhetoric*. The author points out, “It is not surprising that philosophy is today occupied above all with language, or that social science interest itself in the rhetoric of propaganda, or the Church with the task of communication” (Wilder 1). As such, Wilder is most concerned with the following question: “How does the whole phenomenon of

language, speech, communication, rhetoric present itself in the rise of Christianity?” (3) He notes,

[T]he thesis . . . holds that the faith identifies itself fundamentally with the arts of hearing as against those of sight and touch. Even when the Christian paints or carves or dances or sings he does so to a text, and identifies himself with an archetypal dialogue between God and man.

(Wilder 12)

This dialogue of man’s existence and relationship to God is founded on the Text, but is not limited by Scriptural memorization. Wilder offers Christianity as language-as-action, and delves beyond the Word’s history to that of its believers. His work indicates issues of identification, as emphasized by Scripture’s narrative character (largely visible in anecdotes and parables, many of which were used by Jesus Christ to illustrate the truth to His followers) (58). He concludes that the story has not ended, but rather must be continued by Christian followers throughout generations: “The Church needs to be sustained in all centuries by the original dynamic speech and conceptions, though their significance needs constantly to be quickened and rendered transparent anew” (Wilder 125).

Murphy addresses this “quickening” through her own analogy of Christian tradition as “a three-dimensional series of webs,” one in which the original webs “are what we now call scripture, where later webs constitute what we call ‘tradition’ or historical theology, and where the most recent is constructive or systematic theology,” with each web’s edge or boundary being the Christian experience respective of the era (*Reasoning and Rhetoric in Religion* 206).

Furthermore, the theology itself is “subject to four controls: scripture, tradition, experience, and reason” (N. Murphy 206). This is why any Christian denomination “will necessarily be interconnected with contemporary theological and ethical positions, and with formulations from the past, both scriptural and others” (N. Murphy 210). Thus, the Catholic Church’s authoritative ethical position (*ethos*) is arguably strengthened by not only the Holy Bible itself, but by the additional writings of the Church which are founded upon scripture, draw upon and strengthen tradition (best seen through the utilization of *pathos*), emphasize the Catholic experience, and appeal to Catholic reasoning (*logos*) through series of rhetorical marks and conclusions. Through various analyses and exercises, Murphy offers a work that is at once a “critical reasoning text and survey of current theory of knowledge” and “essay in philosophy of religion and apologetics”: Murphy does not shy away from religion as an intellectual discipline, one which may be judged by “standards of reasoning” (*Reasoning* xvi, xv). Such standards are necessary in order to fully contemplate the authority of the Catholic Church over the believer, and any potential influence over the nonbeliever.

Can religious ideology survive without the secular as a differentiation, and vice-versa? What came before either? A religious rhetorical slant of Foucauldian analysis – applicable for the theorist’s exploration of natural law – is offered by Russell McCutcheon in *The Discipline of Religion: Structure, Meaning, Rhetoric*. Drawing on the works of scholars such as Emile Durkheim, Thomas Idinopulos, Gustavo Benavides, and Cantwell Smithian, McCutcheon tackles the practice of

dichotomization and its rhetorical importance. He draws upon Foucault's notion of "governmentality" and offers support to the idea of an interior life (McCutcheon 261). Regarding the schism between the religious and political arenas, McCutcheon advises, "[O]ur goal as scholars is not to adjudicate between these two sets of participant perceptions but, rather, to study the conflict between the two as they meet in a specific, historical and material setting" (268). He further adds that religious scholarship, "as opposed to our thoroughly historically grounded scholarship on the discourse of religion – is more an exercise in conflict management and self-help than it is a bold analytic activity" (McCutcheon 287).

Health Literacy Texts

Catholic health literacy, as may be defined by *Humanae Vitae*, does not offer contraception per se; as such, the question arises to what degree health literacy exists as promoted by the Church. Marriage, sex, and procreation are sacred; assorted encyclicals and papal addresses confirm this position of the Church, as seen on the Vatican's web site.²

For the general picture of literacy, Street, Gee, and Freire – as noted in the previous chapter – prove helpful, given their readings of literacy as situational and/or constructed. Elizabeth Birr Moje and Cynthia Lewis examine literacy opportunities within a sociocultural context and, while their work was conducted within classrooms, their method of combining activity theory, cultural theory, and critical discourse analysis lead to an investigation into identity, agency, and power that is applicable to society at large (46). Articles by scholars such as Katherine

² The site -- www.vatican.va – offers an extensive catalogue of Church documents in a variety of languages.

Lynch, Kenneth Hickey and Laurie Lyckholm, along with Theodore Groat's collaboration with Arthur Neal and Evelyn Knisely, explore health literacy – or the lack thereof – within faith movements.³ Taken from a different level of the same spectrum, Martien Pijnenburg's "Catholic Healthcare Organizations and the Articulation of Their Identity" examines the extent to which these facilities provide assistance, and the degree to which they are sculpted by dogma rather than the reality of a fallen world. The issue is further explored in the psychological and philosophical arenas, as documented by Thomas Pink in "Natural Law and the Theory of Moral Obligation." Ultimately, however, the task of promoting health as morality belongs to the Church itself, and may be viewed as an attempt at resolution of mortal proportions.

Theological Texts (Doctrine and Analysis)

Addressing conflict, let alone resolving it, may not be a task quickly fulfilled by the Church. Aside from *Humanae Vitae*, a number of works dealing with Catholic doctrine and theory support the extensive process and timeframe at which change may occur in the Vatican and thereafter spread to the masses. However, reiteration of a historical stance, such as the Church's condemnation of contraception, occurs at a much more rapid pace and on a somewhat regular basis. Sources offering historical backgrounds on Catholic doctrine in regards to contraception include George Moffett's *Critical Masses*, George Kelly's *Birth Control and Catholics*, Dorothy Dunbar Bromley's *Catholics and Birth Control*,

³ The articles referenced are, respectively, "Theoretical and Analytical Approaches to Religious Beliefs, Values, and Identities During the Modern Fertility Transition," "Child Welfare Versus Parental Autonomy: Medical Ethics, the Law, and Faith-Based Healing," and "Contraceptive Nonconformity Among Catholics."

and Ronald Lawler, Joseph Boyle, and William May's *Catholic Sexual Ethics: A Summary, Explanation, and Defense*.⁴ Moffett observes correlations within the commandment of Genesis to "go forth and multiply" and that of Augustine's fifth century lambasting of contraception. "In Augustine's scheme, contraception was an instrument of the sin of lust, turning the wife into a 'harlot' and the husband into an 'adulterer,'" thus branding both with the guilt of a mortal sin (Moffett 242). Yet in the current age, such views contradict other Catholic teaching:

[I]n an era of AIDS, and in the face of the vast number of unsafe abortions resulting from unwanted pregnancies in Catholic countries each year, the Church's views on contraception are at variance with its own doctrine regarding the sanctity of human life. (Moffett 245)

Hence, the outcome of Catholic rhetoric regarding contraception may not be the abortion of a fetus, but slow, painful deaths to adults who knowingly or unknowingly infect others with HIV. Through his investigation of various population and planning models, Moffett addresses food scarcity, environmental erosion, selectivity, and response to faith's intervention in each. His scrutiny of the language and impact of *Humanae Vitae* is at once succinct and forceful, given his consideration of regulations governing both clergy and laity. Bromley, whose work arose on behalf of the Planned Parenthood Federation of American, offers affirmation from Catholic and secular leaders and scholars that effectively attests to prevalent attitudes regarding contraception in the 1960s. Incidentally, Bromley

⁴ It is important to note that, while Moffett and Bromley seek to offer objective analyses, Lawler, Boyle, May, and Kelly firmly state that their explanations are on behalf of and in order to benefit the Church.

is able to conclude what many Catholic scholars seek to avoid: the seeming lack of Scriptural authority for the condemnation of contraception necessitated a new explanation of natural law (39). Thus, “advice manuals” were created for Catholics, such as the text *Family Planning and Modern Problems*. In it, Father de Lestapis defends the rhythm method as being allowed through natural law. Bromley examines a passage from the text, one exalting the rhythm method as promoting regulation rather than “technic,” quality rather than quantity, art rather than artifice, the “open universe” rather than the “closed universe,” and offering insistence that rhythm is “*compatible with the spiritual life*: birth control, in practice, takes no account of this life” (47-8). Inclusions and informed discussions of texts such as this make Bromley’s work valuable for the historical evidence offered. One bewildering aspect, however, is the utter lack of discussion of women. The Catholic couple is addressed, but rarely the woman herself.

Kelly offers an excellent example of Catholic rhetoric through his text, which expounds upon classic and current teachings regarding contraception and the Christian family as a whole. His is a dogmatic tone, as seen in the following passage: “[M]any persons think that contraception is a sin only for Catholics. *Contraception is a sin for everyone*” (Kelly 81). Kelly insists throughout his work that there isn’t any exception to this rule; situational ethics do not exist in this instance, since it is a matter of natural (God’s) law, and thus not open to debate. Continence, or abstinence during certain days of the months during which the woman is fertile, is a somewhat different matter, but one that requires mastery and is therefore open to praise. Kelly uses glory-by-denial rhetoric to promote

periodic continence: “[A]s a result of your training and conditioning, you react to certain stimuli. Knowing this, you must then put your will into combat with your reflexes which may have been conditioned over a long period of time” (163).

However, the author surprisingly states that “the periodically continent couple should also avoid the extreme of limiting their demonstrations only to times when the wife is sterile” (Kelly 233). This is a “kindness” not extended in a number of texts arising around the time of *Humanae Vitae*. All the same, Kelly tenders the final analysis as follows: “[I]n the year 3000, murder, blasphemy, adultery – and contraception – will still be mortal sins because even then God’s law will stand firm, awaiting our obedience” (80).

Although Lawler, Boyle, and May’s text stands decidedly in support of Catholic doctrine, it serves as an effective source due to the persuasive tools employed. The arguments and terms contained therein are well laid-out and defined. The apologists consider the reception of *Humanae Vitae*, and maintains that the authority of the Church is infallible: “[T]o ‘dissent’ from this teaching is not simply to disregard commands of prelates but rather it is to attack what the Church presents as confirmed by divine teaching” (Lawler, Boyle, May 157). In addition, he remarks, “The apparent disregard of the Church’s teaching on contraception by many Catholics shows that the connection between this teaching and Catholic faith needs to be better understood” (Lawler, Boyle, May 157). Per Lawler, Boyle, and May, a lack of comprehension is all that stands between those who embrace NFP rather than contraceptive intercourse. Regardless, persons who disagree with the Church’s position are referred to as “dissenters,” who may even

“argue that the Holy Spirit is guiding their dissent. But, even though they may have noble intentions, their claim of support . . . is very far from proved” (Lawler, Boyle, May 158). Dissenters may argue the biological effects (benefits) of contraception, to which the authors reply, “The Church’s teaching on contraception is not based on a physicalist sort of natural-law theory,” but rather that “It is the anti-life *intent* together with the anti-covenantal and anti-sacramental effects, and not the mere biology involved, which are held to be morally determinative” (Lawler, Boyle, May 165). While their defense of Catholic sexual mores is worthy of note, Lawler, Boyle, and May’s text ends with the common image of the patient and suffering saint: “Those who take their stand . . . are not lonely; they stand with the apostles, the Fathers, and the saints of all the ages: their faithfulness to principle is love and compassion, not legalism” (226). It is arguable that *Humanae Vitae* is an excellent example of legalism, albeit one cloaked in divine conviction.

While sources providing historical context have proven intriguing, they have also proven quite similar in conclusion to those of the current day. Benedict XVI makes clear in his first encyclical, *God is Love (Deus Caritas Est)*, that he is an agent of stagnation rather than change where gender, marriage, and contraception are concerned. Benedict implores, “The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible,” which may explain “her” dealing with women, although the Pope continues, “[T]he promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns

the Church deeply” (*DCE* 36). As well, the encyclical asserts the position of Church over State:

This is where Catholic doctrine has its place: it has no intention of giving the Church power over the State. Even less is it an attempt to impose on those who do not share the faith ways of thinking and modes of conduct proper to faith. (*DCE* 35)

However, the Church masterfully navigates for the creation of social norms beneficial to its Canon, as seen in Church involvement within and influence upon powerful organizations such as the United Nations. Despite this, as Tissa Balasuriya points out in his encyclical commentary, the Church must enact “a critical social analysis of a given situation,” or it will be unable “to influence the laity and church organizations to take political action to bring about justice,” which, although not explicitly discussed, also applies to the matter of reproductive rights (258). Balasuriya shows that while many contemporary Catholic clergy may be radical in their visions of the Church’s power to reach the masses – he, for instance, recommends non-violent protests in the form of refusing to pay taxes – it is apparent that birth control is not, and more than likely never will be, considered by the Church to be an instrument of peace (259). Yet hope is offered in that “Some re-thinking [of human sexuality] already appears to be underway; the Vatican recently granted married couples permission to use condoms when one of them has AIDS” (Balasuriya 232). The author advises that Pope Benedict, “Having opened an understanding window onto the world of human sexuality . . . might consider further attempts to heal a doctrinal wound that has been largely

responsible for the exodus from the Church of so many of good will” (Balasuriya 232). Despite this tenuous optimism, other sources such as *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI* testify Benedict cannot support situational ethics, but instead must rely upon “the divinization of subjectivity, the infallible oracle of conscience, never to be doubted by anyone or anything” (387). Benedict’s words are in concordance with the Church’s own *Catechism*, and are further disseminated by the Pontifical Council for the Family.

While the core procreational values of the Church remain the same, theologians and secular scholars alike continue to mine *Humanae Vitae* for additional subject matter. None have done such a thorough job as avowed Catholic Janet Smith, whose *Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later* offers impressive commentary on nearly every possible aspect of and brought on by the encyclical. Natural law (original conception and possible revision), marriage, philosophy, and classicism versus historicism are just a sampling of the subjects found in the text. Especially important is Smith’s claim that “*Humanae Vitae* cannot be held accountable for addressing all the kinds of disputes that its teaching has spawned,” but that it rather “speaks to those who share the principles of that tradition and attempts to answer any questions raised about its teaching in terms of that tradition” (35). Through drawing on the teachings of Vatican II (which drew on the teachings of Scripture), Smith leads her reader through a maze of totality, enacting the idea of a lesser evil, and exploring the possibility of double effect – all of which she says have been inadequately used as foundations for partaking in contraception (97). Per Smith, *Humanae Vitae* does not take

away freedom, but rather restores it. Although she disassembles a number of arguments on behalf of contraception, she is not entirely convincing in her belief that *Humanae Vitae* and traditional Catholic teaching supports gender equality.

Gender Texts (Health and Self)

The claim of gender equality within Catholicism may be considered fantastical to many feminists; indeed, woman-as-vessel has been a topic of debate for decades. Two scholars in particular offer theory that readily applies to the project at hand. Susan Bordo, whose work is often referenced in studies of feminism and corporeality, delves into the physical-psychological link behind the female appearance in her work *Unbearable Weight*. She offers a superb analysis of Descartes' offerings of humankind's dualistic nature, and the ever-present battle between the physical and the spiritual (as is patently apparent in the Church). Bordo delineates the historical assertion that "the body is the locus of *all that threatens our attempts at control*," as is often observed in Catholic texts and teachings (145). Similarly, Judith Butler ponders in *Gender Trouble* the issue of performative gender:

Is 'the body' or 'the sexed body' the firm foundation on which gender and systems of compulsory sexuality operate? Or is 'the body' itself shaped by political forces with strategic interests in keeping that body bounded and constituted by the markers of sex? (129)

Furthermore, Butler posits, "[W]hat grounds the presumption that identities are self-identical, persisting through time as the same, unified and internally coherent?" (16) The Church teachings regarding women and contraception

assume this self-identical *group* identity, and presuppose a unity that may not truly exist.

The performative gender of Catholic woman is also found in *Women in Christianity*, written by renowned theologian Hans Küng. His historical investigation of the Christian woman demonstrates the view that she was created as a vessel of subservience, not leadership. It is a shining example of performative gender, albeit in a text unlikely to be linked to that of Butler. The denigration of woman's contributions, soul, and body have damaged the Church and relationships between priest and followers, husband and wife, leading Küng to conclude "there is no reason to wonder at the constant resigned departure of women from the Roman Catholic church in particular, which can be demonstrated both statistically and empirically, and to shed crocodile tears over it" (102). This stance is supported by Denise Lardner Carmody's *The Double Cross*, in which the author laments, "At no time did the moral theology of either the church or Western society at large think that women ought to have the first, last, or even equal word about the control of their own fertility" (103). Carmody also takes the Church's mistrust of women further than does Küng: she declares that Biblical passages have been interpreted so as to show "Women – close to nature, blood, children, and all the messy rest – [as] the enemies of such higher things as intellectualism, celibacy, and full-time devotion to religious service" (Carmody 103). Such a willful separation of Church and the female gender tie into Pierre Bourdieu's theories as set out in *Masculine Domination*. Bourdieu refers to this domination as a "paradoxical submission, an effect of what I call symbolic

violence, a gentle violence,” one that barely revealed “even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely, misrecognition), recognition, or even feeling” (1-2).

His discussion of the body’s social determinations include

The probability of experiencing the body with embarrassment (the form par excellence of the experience of the ‘alienated body’), malaise, timidity or shame rises with the discrepancy between the socially demanded body and the practical relation to the body that is imposed by the gazes and reactions of others. (Bourdieu 65).

The female body, as found within Catholicism, is at once a symbol of that which is fallen and that which is sacred; women, if they are loyal to the Church and its doctrines, raise themselves up to the sacred, while those who alienate their bodies through contraception invite fragmentation within their bodies, souls, and spiritual/social status.

Once this fragmentation has been experienced, women may choose to leave the Church, as referenced by Küng, or stay within its walls and try to bring forth change. Both are admittedly daunting events. Elizabeth Johnson explores the predicament in her excellent article, “Feminism and Sharing the Faith: A Catholic Dilemma.” She questions how the gospel may be shared without reservation “when our own community’s institutional structures and official attitudes are pervaded by sexism and therefore harmful to the well-being of women and men?” (E. Johnson 108) This discrimination may be fought with feminism, Johnson notes, which provides greater strength, for “The engine that

drives feminism is women's experience of being marginalized, with all the suffering this entails" (108). This suffering was created by gender-based bias within the Church, and influenced by patriarchal figures such as Augustine, who argued women's inferiority to man, with only the latter being created in the image of God; Aquinas, who categorized women as "defective mates"; and Tertullian, who deemed every woman a Lilith (a symbol of temptation) (E. Johnson 113). Despite these historical depictions, Johnson finds three strengths for women within Catholicism: the gospel, which bears witness to gender equality through the discipleship of Mary of Magdala; community, which allows for tremendous networking amongst women; and imagination, as evidenced by the "rich heritage of sacraments, sacramentals, prayers, spiritual writings, practices, and guides," all of which help create "new patterns of wholeness," which make possible for "feminist spiritualities [to] draw from deep wells in the Catholic tradition while they comfort, challenge, and empower women to resist the debilitations of religious sexism" (117-120). Johnson's conclusion is supported by Ruth Wallace, whose "Catholic Women and the Creation of a New Social Reality" considers the role of externalization both within and outside the Church, and credits secular education with strengthening women's purpose (28). Objectification, notes Wallace, has provided a form of limited empowerment, as has internalization through the potential, if not actual, re-creation of the Church (Wallace 33). Like Johnson, Wallace notes that the feminist believer will always face an uphill battle, since "the pope, bishops, or priests [attempt] to resurrect a childlike and subservient position for women in the church" (36).

A number of feminist theorists' work overlaps into the topic of sustainability. In "Contraception and Abortion in Roman Catholicism," Christine Gudorf offers a historical assessment of Christian birth control before addressing Catholicism itself. She points out that infanticide was the chosen form of fertility control, and that it was "more effective than contraception, less dangerous to the mother than abortion, and it allowed for sex selection, which was a prime concern for premodern groups" (Gudorf 56). Infanticide is clearly not a moral option; however, if contraception is *not* widely practiced, the mortality rate of babies and children could well skyrocket due to environmental issues such as food and fuel paucity, overcrowding leading to disease, fouling of water, etc.

The suffering of historically large Catholic families arises frequently in the topic literature, as is eloquently attested to by Flann Campbell's population analysis in "Birth Control and the Christian Churches." Campbell illustrates the Church's concern over demographic trends that became readily apparent mid-century (falling birth rates within Catholicism), and provides a historical examination of the Church's dismissal of the negative consequences of overpopulation. For generations, the Church turned a deaf ear to the suffering of large families, such as "too many children and too little money" and "physical exhaustion resulting from too frequent childbearing" (Campbell 133).

Through "Voluntary Motherhood; The Beginnings of Feminist Birth Control Ideas in the U.S.," Linda Gordon situates the cultural forces that helped bring contraception into the public arena, as well as the rhetorical and theoretical lenses through which both those fighting for and those fighting against

contraception envisioned their society. Gordon observes that, rhetorically speaking, “the main objection to contraception was that it was ‘unnatural,’ and the arguments reflected a romantic yearning for the ‘natural,’ rather pastorally conceived, that was typical of many nineteenth-century reform movements” (7). Ironically, this bucolic notion may well have assisted in a population increase that now threatens the global environment.

Dennis Hodgson and Susan Cotts Watkins analyze a similar scenario in “Feminists and Neo-Malthusians: Past and Present Alliances,” which details the 1994 United Nations Program of Action and its feminist and neo-Malthusian influences. The Program views falling birth rates as a goal to be achieved, one which will help in social stabilization (Hodgson and Watkins 470). The Program is in direct conflict with the goals of the Pontifical Council for the Family, which insists that “[N]o one has ever shown any direct cause-and-effect relationship between population growth and the degradation of the environment” (5). As well, the Council warns of the existence of “a vast international network of wealthy organizations which direct their efforts toward reducing population” (8). The Program, however, seeks to ensure women have “the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so,” similar to the aims of a family planning program that “employs no ‘form of coercion,’ uses no ‘incentives and disincentives,’ and imposes no demographic ‘targets’ or ‘quotas’ on providers” (Hodgson and Watkins 469).

Such quotas are of concern to scholar Asoka Bandarage, whose *Women, Population, and Global Crisis* addresses Malthusian theory and practice,

contraception, capitalism, authoritarianism, and the intertwining of fertility and environment, all issues that affect the world at large as women are urged to either bear more children or bear none. Although Bandarage does not address the Church or feminism at length, she delves into the above issues with acuity. Unlike Hodgson and Watkins, Bandarage calls out the ugly side of Neo-Malthusianism, which often blames “poor Third World women and their fertility, for the global crisis,” citing that, “in the process of trying to feed their larger families from already damaged fragile natural environments, poor women cause further environmental destruction” (51). Moreover,

In the absence of such broader social changes required for the empowerment of women and the poor, the ‘new’ reproductive rights approach will become another example of the capitulation of liberal feminism to the Malthusian interest in controlling the numbers of the poor. (Bandarage 55)

Not surprisingly, Bandarage is as suspicious of some forms of modern feminism and neo-Malthusianism as is the Church, although she soundly supports gender equality and justice.

Sustainability Texts

Although Alvah Sulloway maintains in *Birth Control and Catholic Doctrine* that the far-reaching hand of the Church on non-Catholic society must be considered as legalism rather than divinity, and that “[I]t is in the interest of society that the Church be encouraged to restate its position [on contraception],” Catholics and Christians of other similar denominations as a whole do not appear

keen (158). As a group, it appears that evangelicals are intent upon population as solution rather than problem. Per Calvin DeWitt (popularly known as a “visionary” of Christian environmentalism since the publication of his book *Earth-Wise*), there are seven degradations of creation perpetuated by man: land conversion and habitat destruction; species extinction; land abuse; resource conversion and wastes and hazards production; global toxification; alteration of planetary energy exchange; and human and cultural abuse (36). The cycle is simple: God, who blesses His children, insists that they bless the rest of His creation. However, DeWitt insists, this “does not give us license to use whatever means we have at our disposal to address environmental problems,” and warns, “The fact that many people justify abortion as a population growth control method does not mean that Christians need to see this as a logical solution to environmental abuse” (75). There is no further mention of contraception, which sets up abortion in the sinful Catholic category, and poses environmentalism as a “lesser” sin than overpopulation. Once again, this rhetorical tool of redemption/salvation is set up against sinning/judgment (or, in Burkean terms, pollution and purification). This is the antithesis of Herschel Elliott’s argument found in *Ethics for a Finite World*. Elliott maintains that a new era calls for a radical new morality, one that cuts across lines of faith, ethnicity, culture -- in essence, there is no need for ethics if there is no environment to support humans. In turn, we must support the environment. However, his cycle of blessing is far different from that of DeWitt. Elliott insists, “The first duty of moral behavior is to preserve the endurance and the resilience of the Earth’s system of living

things” (18). Elliott asserts that actions predict the future, in consideration of “how many children [humans] have, how they use their land, energy, and resources, and how they protect their environments,” all of which “determine the opportunities, rights, freedoms, and the quality of life that are possible in their finite environments” (108-9). Elliott attends to issues such as overpopulation (referred to as “unnecessary and excessive births”) and further industrial development (which he deems immoral) (37). There are obvious theoretical clashes between Elliott and Catholicism as a whole, in that the Church declares all births to be miracles of God, while Elliott paints a picture of the mistakes of humankind. He is joined, albeit with a somewhat gentler tone, by Robert Engelman, who asserts in “Hope in Numbers” that the laws of conservation and nature require that we practice sustainability through controlling population numbers that would otherwise devour the earth’s resources to the point of human and environmental destruction. Engelman cautions that a global future hinges upon “reducing both the average individual’s consumption and aggregate rates of population growth, as well as applying technological change to reduce human impacts on the environment” (193). Given the Church’s intense distrust of technology and absolute condemnation for “artificial” measures of birth regulation, Engelman’s article serves as a reminder of Catholicism’s current *insustainability* concerning contraception.

In “The Argument from Overpopulation – Logical and Ethical Considerations,” Jesper Ryberg follows a philosophical path somewhat analogous to that of Elliott and Engelman and considers overpopulation from two angles:

the “*argument from overpopulation* . . . [which] justifies policies which reduce population size,” and the “*argument against overpopulation* . . . [which allows] that present problems can be handled without population reductions” (411).

While the Church argues that overpopulation is not an issue, environmentalists insist the converse is true. Ryberg offers something of a middle (and perhaps less flawed) ground with a theory of optimum population. This premise may be morally divided into the total view, which “holds that the desirability of a state of affairs is determined by the total sum of well-being” or the average view, which “determines the desirability of a state of affairs by the average amount of well-being” (414). Ryberg finds the former view to be more credible. Conditions contributing to the totality of well-being include technological capability, which may have a positive or negative impact on the population and/or environment, and distribution of both population and resources (Ryberg 416). Ryberg notes that non-demographic side effects, found in “economic, ecological, social, psychological, and cultural factors,” may harm the optimum population size and existence (418).

Contrary to Engelman, Elliott, and Ryberg and closer in view to DeWitt is Jack Hollander. His controversial text, *The Real Environmental Crisis: Why Poverty, Not Affluence, is the Environment’s Number One Enemy*, takes on Malthus and declares, “This belief holds that global population will continue to grow until it is unsustainable, eventually crashing with disastrous consequences, including resource exhaustion and widespread famine and disease” – and pronounces the lot a “doomsday view of population growth” (29-30). Ultimately,

“[P]opulation growth per se should no longer be looked upon as a serious long-term global problem, environmental or otherwise. The real problem is poverty” (Hollander 37). He proposes that persons living in affluent countries have taken advantage of political and economic options to have smaller families, and those in impoverished countries are following their lead as their economic circumstances ameliorate, but he ignores the issue of faith as an option or controlling factor (Hollander 37).

While the Church promotes a just and peaceful world, its legalism may deny such a worthy goal, the tenets of which are found in E.F. Schumacher’s *Small is Beautiful*. The text remains one of the foremost foundational texts of ecological economy and is filled with exceptional foresight, in its addressing of issues such as social equality, limited fossil fuel, and nuclear capability. Among the unifying themes of the book is the author’s recommendation that humanity return to the Four Cardinal Virtues: *prudentia, justitia, fortitudo, and temperantia* (Schumacher 316). In relying upon this traditional wisdom, mankind would surely transform the world into a far more prosperous and just abode for all (Schumacher 318). The Church’s stance against contraception hedges that these four virtues – so extolled by papal authority, especially in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries -- are not applicable to Catholic women as autonomous individuals.

The literature gathered for this study has been hefty in scope and volume; the authors and works mentioned above have assisted in essentially shaping the topic of research, providing an evolution from the abstract into the tangible. With

their aid, it is now possible to consider the impact of *Humanae Vitae* – in all of its glory and resulting effects upon society – as examined through the Burkean logological layers. These rhetorics include, but are not limited to, those of protection versus exploitation; damnation versus salvation; crisis versus normalcy; sin versus innocent compliance; and disability versus health. In addition, the rhetoric of evangelistic eugenics is to be considered as part of the ultimate quest for (symbolic) perfection, that logic which Burke deems as one which “involves not only a principle of *theological* perfection, but also a principle of *logological* perfection” (*Religion* 295). With this in mind, one must turn to *Humanae Vitae* (and the relevant Church texts that followed) to determine the literacies promoted under the authority of the supernatural perfect.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Does *Humanae Vitae* impart health literacy to its followers and, if so, is it evangelical, biological, or something altogether different in nature? For the purposes of this study, an exploratory approach to this question is necessary, one prescribing a close textual analysis – essentially, a modern hermeneutical study. However, rather than applying traditional hermeneutics set forth by scholars such as Paul Ricoeur (whose work is grounded in theology), or analyzing the encyclical through a phenomenological lens, Burkean logology is utilized. His manner of interpreting linguistic structures is at once poetic and stark; while he recognizes the aesthetic beauty of language extolling the divine, he also acknowledges that this language serves to set up hierarchies on earth, social systems that speak of the negative (or evil) as much as the positive (or good). Thus, while practicing a faith offers solace, it also establishes social control (Burke, *Language* 352). As a study of “words about words,” logology is an appropriate methodology given its means of analyzing the roots of these social systems: discourse prevalent in the verbal and ideological hierarchies evident in the Church.

Humanae Vitae was the Church’s response to evolving social views concerning sexuality and reproduction, an intended stalwart stand against a perceived crumbling moral code. Given the anticipated social impact of *Humanae Vitae*, its research value is tremendous. The work itself is quite short: a bound version spans a mere fifteen pages and is divided into thirty-one sections.

It largely focuses on the modern problems associated with the transmission of life, and offers a response to the findings of the commission formed to deal with the issue of contraception. In outlining doctrinal principles and pastoral directives, the text serves as a reinforcement of the Church's authority in affairs both natural and supernatural. A total of forty-one references to past Church teachings are included in the work, providing evidence that the Church's historical stance will be retained in the present and future. This stance is dedicated to the Church's interpretation of God's design for man's purpose as individual and as married partner; as such, a good portion of the text is devoted to the subject of married Christian couples. While this indicates group conscience as moral guide and raises the possibility of health literacy linked to care of self (referred to as "integral wholeness"), two sections addressed to scientists and physicians bring health literacy into even sharper focus (*Humanae Vitae* 18). When this caught my attention, I re-read the text a number of times, paying greater attention to admonishments of spouses and rulers who would put their own needs and/or desires above the guidance of God, who would dismiss the principle of totality for reasons of selfishness. Although I did not fully agree with the Church's view, its argument was compelling, if emotional. Ultimately, this was enough to encourage further research.

Armed with a general idea of topical interest, I began to look for primary and secondary sources. As noted in the preceding chapter, the research is reliant upon analysis of the foundational text of *Humanae Vitae* and supplemental religious and academic materials. I amassed an assemblage of information

through obtaining relevant Church documents, a number of which are readily available in print (including encyclicals and texts devoted to the academic discussion) and others accessible through electronic retrieval (notably the Vatican web site and scholarly databases such as JSTOR). I searched for articles and books that dealt with *Humanae Vitae* in detail, as well as works dedicated to the overall establishment of Church authority and Catholic history. I conducted keyword searches for the three main areas of research: Catholicism, logology, and health literacy. I also searched for a number of specific terms, such as “*Humanae Vitae*,” “Catholic infallibility and authority,” “Catholicism and contraception,” “health and medical literacy,” “group conscience,” “bioethics,” and “Burkean methodology.” Purely academic articles (those not originating within the Church) were included only if they were peer-reviewed. Additionally, I only considered full-length articles, although reviews and responses were often helpful in leading to new sources. After amassing an extensive library of sources, I chose to narrow my general focus to sources ranging from the late-1950s to present-day, given the chronology of the social development the encyclical addresses.

As is the case with many faiths, Catholicism has proven itself to be a topic ripe for research. The Church is currently in crisis due to a sexual abuse scandal ranging from decades (coincidentally, the same time-line from which I chose my sources). A friend recently declared, “The Church has lost all credibility. Why is any study of Catholicism worthwhile?” Regardless of its current embattlement, the Catholic Church remains a cultural bastion. Its influence upon Western

society has been, and still is, far-reaching. It evokes righteous anger, both on behalf of its believers and those who dismiss its teachings. Even after wading through the respective apologist and vitriolic texts (none of which were found in academic journals), the source materials were overwhelming in number; fortunately, many proved to be of excellent quality. It should be noted that at no time did I seek to prove or disprove the validity of Catholicism; instead, I took heed of Randall McCutcheon's wary forecast:

Although all social formations are founded on contradictions of various sorts – something Marx told us so very long ago – their institutions function in concert to gloss over and constrain such social self-destruct mechanisms; they will not suffer gladly critics who are foolhardy enough to stick their fingers in the collective eye by pointing them out. (16)

Scholars strive to remain as objective as possible, but to do so absolutely is difficult. In addition, a suspension of disbelief – or even stepping outside of one's own beliefs – is compulsory. Murphy notes:

The main structure of our belief system must rest on a set of beliefs that are 'foundational' in the sense they are self-supporting – that is, obviously true and therefore not in need of justification of any sort. . . . The foundationalist point of view is that . . . questioning has to stop somewhere or the whole argument can never get started. And, furthermore, those special starting grounds must not only be ground that we simply *do* not question, but rather, grounds that no one *could* (reasonably) call into question. (*Reasoning* 200)

Similarly, Benedict XVI asserts, “What characterizes man as man is not that he asks about the ‘can’ but about the ‘should,’ and that he opens himself to the voice and demands of truth” (Ratzinger 29). Such was the goal of my topical exploration.

Admittedly, arriving at an appropriate research question and methodology was not a simple process. My interest in Catholicism does not arise from being one of the flock; rather, I was rather raised Episcopalian (although this denomination is often referred to as “Junior Catholic” or “Catholic Lite”). As witnessed in my upbringing, there were four looming differences between the two denominations: Episcopalians do not have an infallible leader; Episcopalians do not believe in Purgatory; Episcopalians may not be excommunicated for divorce; and confession does not apply to Episcopalians. As I continued to explore denominational differences in early adulthood, I added an additional – albeit personal – distinction: I found the works of the Catholic saints to be significantly more interesting. Works by Hildegard, St. John, and their ilk were of great comfort while I struggled with a chronic illness, and their words led me to consider spiritual matters from a difference perspective. Yet as I delved more deeply into the study of Catholicism, I discovered that, due to my voluntary tubal ligation, I committed a mortal sin. My unearthing of this bound-for-hellfire declaration shocked me, since I had undergone surgery to ensure that my husband and I would not risk children being born with the same condition with which I had struggled for over thirty years. Initially armed with curiosity, I decided to pursue a scholarly project focused on feminism and Catholicism in the hopes of

determining whether the two could ever intersect at the points of autonomy and faith. Contraception was a key focus point; other opportunities for exploration included gender inequality in Church-sanctioned roles (a study reminiscent of Butler in the idea of Catholic woman strictly as vessel) or the potential environmental impact of the Church's regulations. However, as I moved forward in my research, I realized that I was more concerned with the *language* of the holy. What is this *Humanae Vitae* at its core? What are the traditions responsible for its being, and what presuppositions are possessed by the individuals who accept it as their own?

Ultimately, even these research questions were too broad; the rhetorical focus occurred as a result of considering anew the research gaps in the scholarly fieldwork. Although academia and mainstream culture are essentially flooded with impressive treatments of both the feminist perception of *Humanae Vitae* and the encyclical's general social reverberations, a substantial issue has not been addressed: the possibility of *Humanae Vitae* as an influence upon Catholic health literacy. Rather than a reconsideration of the research already offered in areas such as those detailed in the preceding chapter, the immediate topic impacts male and female believer alike and considers the health/medical knowledge of a considerable portion of the American population. A study of such impact is significant, and the objects of study are certainly valid; a deeper reading into the text and its implications is needed to enhance the field. In order to do so, one must consider the dissemination of knowledge, which occurs through the channels of the Church (as seen in the encyclicals) and the conversations arising from

outside of these channels (largely academic, fueled by believer and non-believer alike). Furthermore, within the hermeneutical analysis of the health literacy as (potentially) set forth by *Humanae Vitae* are the literate practices of theory, history, technology, and social/political issues, ensuring a cultural continuum is at play. The Church, while arguably seeking a protective space for its believers, is obviously not immune to the issues affecting society as a whole.

The methodology of a project is certainly as critical as the research question; one arguably cannot thrive without the other, and the relationship is such that the method must lead the researcher to an answer after a research question has been chosen. A quantitative analysis could have proven interesting (through the distribution and consequent examination of responses of surveys attending to the encyclical, contraception, and health knowledge of believers), but I was far more interested in analyzing the foundational text and the resulting scholarly response for clues as to whether health literacy is promoted and, if so, what specific type is present. Foucault was considered for his systems analysis of transformative uses and values, but ultimately it was Burke whose logology proved most fruitful in its multilayered scrutiny. Indeed, Burke, whose theoretical frameworks span over fifty years, offered two distinct possibilities of methodology: dramatism and logology. For the means of this study, dramatism was initially considered as a method of analysis. Pentadic scrutiny appeared quite promising, given that it serves as an investigative tool into motive (and the motivation behind holy texts/teachings often proves intriguing). The system is decidedly helpful to those involved in matters of consideration rather than

creation: Burke maintains, “My job was not to help a writer decide what he might say to produce a text. It was to help a critic perceive what was going on in a text that was already written” (“Questions” 332). Indeed, in his introduction to *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke declares that motives necessitate “five terms as generating principle”:

. . . the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*), and the *purpose*. . . . [A]ny complete statement about motives will offer *some kind of answers* to these five questions. (xv)

Dramatism is, above all, “a logic of inquiry, an instrumental logic which may be used to investigate hypotheses about particular problems” (Overington 133). The language of the encyclical, then, offers a specific problem through its very rhetorical power, which acts as a supporting pillar of historical, current, and future Catholic doctrine. However, after some months of research and composition, I was well aware of Phillip Keith’s awe in musing, “And on we can go through this dizzying series of shifting perspectives. . . . The system can be complicated almost to infinity” (139). I initially assumed that the pentad – with its offerings of motive, polarity, and dispersal – would aid in examining the rhetoric of *Humanae Vitae*, which is at once inclusive and exclusive and thus calls to mind the reflection, selections, and deflections of reality addressed in *Grammar* (59). I quickly discovered that far too much overlapping occurred within the categories:

the boundaries were incredibly blurred between all five key terms. I went over Burke's major works again, and then discovered his essay "Dramatism and Logology." I quickly understood why the classification process was not flowing smoothly: I was trying to make it into something epistemological, when, in fact, dramatism is ontological (Burke, "Dramatism and Logology" 91). I was far more interested in the Catholic thought/language/story than the ontological fact of a religious group known as Catholics. This correlated with the following passage from "Dramatism and Logology":

Whereas Nature can do no wrong (whatever it does is Nature) when STORY comes into the world there enters the realm of true, false, honest, mistaken, the downright lie, the imaginative, the visionary, the sublime, the ridiculous, the eschatological (as with Hell, Purgatory, Heaven, the Transmigration of Souls, Foretellings of an Inevitable wind-up in a classless society), the satirical, every single detail of every single science or speculation, even every bit of gossip—for although all animals in their way communicate, only our kind of animal can gossip. There was no story before we came, and when we're gone the universe will go on sans story.

(90)

The completed model of logology, with its ready application to theological language and concepts, provides a far better means of examination: rather than focus on the ratio of Act-Scene-Agent-Agency-Purpose, the Guilt-Purification-Redemption-Rebirth cycle is fitting for the theological subject/story at hand. After a preliminary and yet marathon study of the materials, I (re)positioned the

context of the encyclical and supporting texts within the framework of logology, bearing in mind that Burke avers, “Logology relates to all ‘ologies’ in asking, as its first question, ‘What all is going on, when someone says or reads a sentence?’” (“Technology and Logology” 175) Where was the Guilt, the Redemption, the Perfection? Who and where was the Scapegoat? After all, one may deny the existence of the supernatural, but one is not able to support a denial of supernatural *language* and the resulting impact upon human existence.

Burke’s logology also provides for the consideration of the perfection principle (entelechial in nature), which showcases the possible implications of language usage. Per Burke,

[I]ts powers along that line are terrifying. It showed up repeatedly in theological charges of heresy, in which the heretics were nearly always saddled with the same list of hateful vices. And in our day the Nazis did the most outrageous job with “perfection” in that sense by the thoroughness of their charges against the Jew. It takes very little inducement for us to begin “perfecting” the characters of our opponents by the gratuitous imputation of unseemly motives. Thus, all told, in my logological definition of humankind, I put a high rating on my clause, “rotten with perfection.” (“Theology and Logology” 155)

This passage illustrates that language can lead to implications, which in turn bring forth acquired behaviors. Convergence against another (the Other) is a historical motivator for action, whether seen in the Crusades, the Holocaust, the era leading

to the Civil Rights battles, or any countless other instances of schism. This relationship of polarity is depicted as the following:

THEOLOGY

(mind-body binary)

LOGOLOGY

(distinction between symbolic action and nonsymbolic action)

BEHAVIOR

(melding of verbal and nonverbal actions)

Burke maintains that the act of acquiring and using language causes the development of the human personality, and that the symbolic dimension of words “cannot be monistically reduced to the order of physical motion alone,” with a necessary duality occurring in mind and body, individual and community (“Theology and Logology” 156-7). According to John Hatch, such relationships are appropriate for logological scrutiny:

From a logological perspective, social actors need not limit themselves to *either* adopting *or* rejecting the specific agents/agencies and plots of redemption commended in religious traditions; rather, by engaging such narratives and rituals they may come to understand the terms of present society and their own identities in new ways and find agency newly constituted to undergo the inevitable sacrifices in remaking the social order as a moral community. (4)

Integral to this sacrifice is the participation of individual and community in logological rituals of duplication and substitution, which are translated into acts

“as a mode of *classification* that abstracts from any particular occasion, just as numbers become abstracted from any one particular instance of their use” (Burke “Theology and Logology” 159). While society offers marriage rites as a form of duplication, theology offers Christ as the ultimate substitute: “Thus, in terms of the specifically ‘Christian Logology,’ the most perfect divine Logos also became the perfect fiend, in serving as the substitute vessel for the guilt of all” (Burke “Theology and Logology” 159). The death of Christ, in historical fact and linguistic consideration, is vicarious. Another example of dualism is as follows:

The “selfhood” of a Catholic priest must obviously be grounded in Catholic doctrine, which is necessarily “spiritual,” on the side of what logology would call public “symbolicity.” But he expresses the sense of his separate identity in terms of immediate sensation, which is the realm of the individual’s sheer physiology. (Burke “Theology and Logology” 161)

This issue of sensation is, in fact, significant to logology: it returns to the co-existence of the symbolic action and nonsymbolic motion as physiological effect.

Burke’s *Rhetoric of Religion* considers the theological and logological linking of Genesis (Creation) with the Fall of man, thus setting up the foundation for Order as being separate from Divisiveness, the distinction between Law and Disorder/Disobedience. Burke notes, “Order in the first three chapters of Genesis, under ‘primal’ conditions involving an audience for whom the poetic ways of story came first,” although later these same expressions would be “sophisticated by the ‘traumatic’ step from poetry and mythology to criticism and critically mature theology” (“Theology and Logology” 166). The mature

narrative – as pronounced and followed by the Catholic Church – leads to implication among terms within a narrative. The narrative provides function, through which terms can effectively “confront each other as antithetically as ‘reward’ and ‘punishment’” (Burke “Theology and Logology 170). Furthermore,

Terms like “disorder,” “temptation,” “disobedience,” come to life when Adam is assigned the role of personally representing the principle of sin, and Satan is assigned the role of ultimate tempter. God has the role of setting up the Order and giving the critical negative order, so terministically necessary before a Fall can even be possible. (Burke, “Theology and Logology” 170)

Ergo, every term has its antithesis; every concept is also crystallized in its contrast. As such, the negative is key to logological study.

Logology’s . . . contribution to the cause is the reminder that . . . the Law . . . is the flowering over the humanely, humanistically and brutally inhumanely ingenious addition to wordless nature, the *negative*, without which a figure like Satan could be logologically impossible, as also it would be impossible to put next [to] a live wire a sign saying: “Danger, don’t touch.” Could ever heaven be possible, if not defined by its reference to its polar contradictory, hell? (Burke “Theology and Logology” 171)

It is only through understanding the other – in the case of heaven, the other is hell – that one can fully appreciate the present topic.

Nevertheless, there is an aspect of logology with which one may disagree: Burke states, “[L]anguage is innately innovative. No one could go on making his words mean the same, even if he expended his best efforts to make them stay put” (“Theology and Logology” 185). The words of the Catholic Church remain the same unless a change is authorized by the Church itself; if not, there is no *reinterpretation* to be had. Thus, the *consequences* of that rigid language need to be considered, as is the purpose of this work. Indeed, given the importance of each word choice in *Humanae Vitae*, the document *as a whole* necessitates logological analysis. The Church’s writing process is painstaking, given the expanse of the intended audience, and thus it is reasonable to expect the wording of papal documents to be exacting. Employing a secular means of consideration – and Burke considers his methodology to be such – assists in providing a rigorous scrutiny (“Theology and Logology” 151). Of Biblical references, Burke muses, “[O]nly God knows how to interpret their literal meaning – and the nearest we can come is by understanding them as figures of speech” (“Theology and Logology” 151). David Lyon posits in his postmodern study of Christianity, “The transcendent is beyond the immanent human world, but it is accessible through special means of communication” (59). This communication – its forms, methods, and consequences – provides the focus of the next chapter: an exploration of the historic Catholic response to contraception.

CHAPTER 4

Historical Notes Regarding The Catholic Stance On Contraception

In order to better comprehend the Catholic position on contraception, one must consider the Church's extensive history in promoting fruitfulness. The Vatican's stance against birth control remains strong (as discerned through the speeches and writings of Pope Benedict XVI). For the purposes of this work, birth control is understood to be or defined as a family planning mechanism in the form of a device (such as diaphragms and prophylactics) or a hormone (whether orally ingested, injected, or absorbed through patches).⁵

A fascinating aspect of Catholic doctrine overall is that sacred text begets sacred text. While the Holy Bible is the sacred foundation of the faith, its teachings provide fertile ground for theological offshoots. The delivery of *logos* inspired by the Heavenly Father and spoken through the earliest prophets and Holy Fathers began in Genesis and stretches to the present. The 1973 *Declaration in Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church against Certain Errors of the Present Day* notes:

It is true that there exists an order and as it were a hierarchy of the Church's dogmas, as a result of their varying relationship to the foundation of the faith. This hierarchy means that some dogmas are founded on other dogmas which are the principal ones, and are illuminated by these latter. But all dogmas, since they are revealed, must be believed with the same divine faith. (4)

⁵ Abortion will not be considered in this work, for it is highly improbable that the Church – or Christianity as a whole – will ever lift the ban- on the willful termination of pregnancy.

Such illumination is brought to doctrine largely through the Pope (although bishops may also be accepted as gifted with revelation). As the chosen representative and mediator between mankind and the Heavenly Father, the Holy Father's service is integral to the structure of the Church. As such, papal teachings, as divine revelations and additions to the Holy Bible, are distributed through a number of avenues. The encyclicals convey the utmost authority of the Church and her governance over conduct mortal and immortal, moral and immoral. Although many encyclicals have been produced over the Church's history, a select few have possessed a profound impact upon issues of marriage, and arguably none more than *Humanae Vitae*.

The Church's standpoint on contraception may very well have sprung from two founts: a belief that God and, through His discretion, the Church, has absolute power over marriage, and a fear of the faith's annihilation through depopulation (arguably a form of evangelistic eugenics). Through maintaining sway over what scholar Alvah Sulloway deems "a sacramental contract of matrimony," the spouses and the Church as a whole may reap the benefits of children. In his landmark work *Critical Masses*, George Moffett points out that the first phase of Catholic doctrine regarding contraception, which lasted through the sixteenth century, "evolved in response to one set of historical circumstances, including the plagues and famines lasting through the Middle Ages, that decimated Catholic populations in Europe" (241). Moffett notes the commandment of Genesis to "go forth and multiply," and its Catholic connection to Augustine's fifth century lambasting of contraception. The latter scathingly

deems any form of birth control to be “an instrument of the sin of lust, turning the wife into a ‘harlot’ and the husband into an ‘adulterer,’” and brands both spouses with the guilt of a mortal sin (in Moffett 242). Flann Campbell further elucidates this Augustinian tenet within overall Christian doctrine:

The primary (some Fathers of the Church claim the *only*) aim of sexual intercourse in marriage was the procreation of children. Secondary aims . . . were much less important in the marriage relationship. Any artificial interference with the natural process of coitus and conception was contrary to the laws of God, and must be condemned as gravely sinful. St Augustine of Hippo wrote: “*Sexual intercourse even with a lawful wife is unlawful and shameful, if the offspring of children is prevented. This is what Onan, the son of Juda, did, and on that account God put him to death.*” (131, emphasis added)

The term *artificial interference* is noteworthy, as it brings to the forefront the definition of contraception as anything that unnaturally interferes with the creation of life. Apologists Ronald Lawler, Joseph Boyle, and William May insist,

The contraceptive act is directly aimed against the realization of the procreative good. One is not simply declining to promote that good; one is taking positive steps directly against it. One is choosing precisely to make the sort of act that, of its very nature, is open to the transmission of new life to be closed to this good. (161)

The Church's view was prevalent in the thirteenth century: in his injunction of 1230, Gregory IX stated that contraception was detrimental to marriage; some forty years later, his successor Gregory X asserted that marriages not intent upon procreation were lawfully negated.

The second phase of Catholic doctrine dealing with regulated birth began as, and continues to be, according to Moffett,

one of a halting, reluctant, limited accommodation to another set of historical circumstances: the improving status of women, greater scientific knowledge of the reproductive function, the rise of the birth control movement, and the population crisis itself – the combination of which has produced a slight relaxation in the Church's absolute standard.

(241)

While the afore-mentioned Gregory IX and Gregory X's decrees warned of the sinful path of birth control, the following seven centuries would see the Church apparently waver and prepare to soften its stance. In 1930, Pius XI released his encyclical *Casti Connubii (Christian Marriage)*, in which His Holiness acknowledges that marital relations during a woman's infertile period could promote "mutual aid, the cultivation of mutual love, and the quieting of concupiscence" (in Moffett 242). However, the encyclical also addresses the "divinity of the marriage institution, reasoning that since its rights and responsibilities are laid down by God himself it is beyond the power of any human being or any human law to circumscribe them" (in Sulloway 53).

Despite his insistence that one cannot alter natural law, Pius XI witnessed a frenetic Western society's backlash against puritan values. In his work titled *On Christian Marriage*, he notes,

Christian doctrine establishes, and the light of human reason makes it most clear, that private individuals have no power over the members of their bodies than that which pertains to their natural ends; and they are not free to destroy or mutilate their members, or in any other way render themselves unfit for their natural functions, except when no other provision [as when surgery may be necessary] can be made for the good of the whole body. (in Bromley 85)

Pius XII saw further demonstration of fission arise between tradition and trend, and hedged that "acceptable medical, economic, and social grounds exist for avoiding procreation. The position, which still pertains," Moffett notes, "is as close as the Church has ever come to legitimizing family planning" (243). Yet Pius XII remained an outspoken opponent of the birth control pill, bluntly comparing it to surgical sterilization (Bromley 85).

An option offered to the desperate faithful by an anxious Church was the Rhythm Method, also referred to as Natural Family Planning (NFP). In 1959, Sulloway observed of NFP:

While it is unfortunate that a technique which has been free from criticism on religious or social grounds is not altogether satisfactory for scientific or practical reasons, future research and clinical experience may remove whatever uncertainty now exists as to the feasibility of the Rhythm,

enabling its users to pinpoint more precisely the exact date of ovulation.

(107)

The morality of the new method was dependent upon a three-fold requirement: the participants must be married couples, the husband and wife must be able to weather any resultant strain, and there must be an underlying morally-sanctioned reason for utilization of the technique (such as severe disease) (Sulloway 108). If these prerequisites were met, a mortal sin would not be committed if a couple engaged in NFP.

Irregardless of the gift of the Rhythm, Catholics continued to clamor for further consideration of the Pill by the Church. This dissatisfaction necessitated the convergence of the Second Vatican Council under John XXII in 1963. The Birth Control Commission was founded to reconsider the Church's stance on contraception. Over the course of three years, the Commission consisting of sixty-four laypersons (including scholars and professionals in the medical and sociological fields) and theologians sought statistical and personal input, and consulted various Catholic families. Ultimately, the fifteen cardinals participating in the ultimate session of the Commission presented a position far different from that of the Holy Father. Despite pledges of secrecy, Clare Booth Luce notes, a whirlwind of whispering offered confirmation that:

- (a) a majority of the commission members thought that God's injunction to "replenish the earth," unlike many of His other commandments, was being obeyed so diligently that the earth was groaning under the burdens of replenishment; and (b) while the divine command is certainly still valid,

God may not have intended to apply it to every single act of marital love; and (c) if (a) and (b) were the case, in human fertility, as in all else, moderation might well be hailed as a Christian virtue; and (d) it was not clear that means other than the highly uncertain rhythm method were beyond moral sanction. (194)

Popular rumor, as discerned by Luce, insisted that the majority view of the Commission supported the tenet that “physically harmless birth control means, short of sterilization (which is sexual suicide) and abortion (which is self-violence and infanticide), should be accepted by the Church” (198). The actual vote tally was as follows:

[T]he first and most fundamental question: Is contraception intrinsically evil? Nine bishops said no, three said yes (one of these with reservations, and three abstained The second question was then presented: Is contraception, as defined by the Majority Report, in basic continuity with tradition and the declarations of the Magisterium? The vote here was nine yes, five no, and one abstention. The third question was: Should the Magisterium speak on this question as soon as possible? Fourteen said yes, one no. (McClory, *Turning Point* 127)

Participant Bishop Dupuy prepared an introduction to the report, which reads in part, “What is to be condemned is not the regulation of contraception but a selfish married life, refusing creative opening out of the family circle,” and concludes, “As for the means that husband and wife can legitimately employ, it is their task

to decide this together” (McClory 128). The Commission felt a thoughtful contraception was appropriate, and declared that

It is proper to man, created to the image of God, to use what is given in physical nature in a way that he may develop it to its full significance with a view to the good of the whole person. (qtd. in McClory *Turning Point*, 177)

The Commission acknowledged the cultural shift that had occurred in social, economic, and health arenas, and stated that if couples “are to observe and cultivate all the essential values of marriage . . . [they] need decent and human means for the regulation of conception” (qtd. in McClory, *Turning Point* 177).

The Church, however, disagreed, causing Paul VI to note in his landmark work that

the conclusions reached by the Commission could not be considered by us as final, nor dispense us from a personal examination of the serious question; and this also because, within the Commission itself, no full agreement of judgments concerning the moral norms to be proposed had been reached, and above all because certain criteria or resolving the question had emerged that departed from the moral teaching on marriage proposed with constant firmness by the Magisterium of the Church. (*HV* 5-6)

The undercurrent of discontent bubbled over in scholars and groups of faithful alike: if the Church never had any intention of reversing its stance, why bother convening the Commission? Lest there was any question of relaxation in dogma,

Paul VI released *Humanae Vitae* on July 29, 1968, the main text with which this present study is concerned. Considered the primary encyclical of marital life, it flatly bans the use of contraception. The work addresses the regulation of births as impacted by population growth, changing gender roles, and scientific advancement. Yet far more important than any social evolution is conjugal love, which is offered as a partnership not only between spouses but also between married couple and God (*HV* 12-4). There is no place for men's laws in such a partnership. Paul VI positions – or perhaps reaffirms the position – of the Church as guardian of public and private sector, for who else “will prevent rulers from favoring, and even imposing upon their people, the method of contraception they judge to be the most effective, if they should consider this to be necessary?” (*HV* 20)

Successive Holy Fathers were called upon to reiterate *Humanae Vitae*'s position on contraception, assuring the Catholics and public at large that the Church's authority and teachings were indeed timeless. Per the First Vatican Council,

“All those things are believed by the divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the written or transmitted Word of God and which are proposed by the Church, either by a solemn judgment or by the ordinary and universal magisterium, to be believed as having been divinely revealed.” Therefore the objects of Catholic faith – which are called dogmas – necessarily are and always have been the unalterable norm both for faith and for theological science. (*Declaration in Defense* 6)

This unalterable norm was not impervious to change through revelation. Yet the Church established time and again that social pressure would not cause a reversal in dogma.

It became readily apparent in the 1980s that a Catholic reference manual of “the unalterable norm” was needed. As such, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was compiled in response to the 1985 Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. In John Paul II’s 1997 Apostolic Letter *Laetamur Magnopere*, he declares the compilation to be “a full, complete exposition of Catholic doctrine, enabling everyone to know what the Church professes, celebrates, lives and prays in her daily life” (*The Holy See*). The textual content consists of instruction mined from a number of divine authorities: the Holy Bible, the Mass, the Sacraments, tradition, and the lives of its sainted leaders. The *Catechism* states that it should also “help to illumine with the light of faith the new situations and problems which had not yet emerged in the past” (4). However, the problems introduced or expanded upon in this latest *Catechism* – including abortion, cloning, contraception – are “resolved” with the standard Catholic rhetoric. For the purposes of my research, the constant discussion of fecundity offers but one “relief” in the form of “periodic continence” (i.e., the Rhythm Method), which is quickly followed by a sharp warning that any conjugal action, regardless of its anticipation, accomplishment, or development, that seeks to avoid procreation is “intrinsically evil” (*Catechism* 629). Throughout the work are references to divine duty, such as the directive that all recognize “human life and the duty of transmitting it are not limited by the horizons of this life only,” but that “their true

evaluation and full significance can be understood only in reference to *man's eternal destiny*" (*Catechism* 630).

The eternal destiny of man, and his call to follow God's will rather than that of man in matters marital and otherwise, are reiterated through the teachings of subsequent Holy Fathers. In speaking to the bishops of the Episcopal Conference of the U.S. in 1979, John Paul II emphasized,

In exalting the beauty of marriage you rightly spoke against both the ideology of contraception and contraceptive acts, as did the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. And I myself today, with the same conviction of Paul VI, ratify the teaching of this encyclical, which was put forth by my Predecessor by virtue of the mandate entrusted to us by Christ. (October 18, 1979)

A refusal to consider varying options in contraception would be reaffirmed in 1993's *Veritatis Splendor*, in which John Paul II "attacked the 'irrational control of births preventing the access of new mouths at the banquet of the Lord'" (Moffett 244).

John Paul II's successor, Benedict XVI, continues in this same theological vein. On October 2, 2008, the Pope offered a message celebrating the fortieth anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*. In his speech, Benedict XVI warns, "When love is at stake, technology cannot replace the maturation of freedom. Indeed, as we well know, not even reason suffices: it must be the heart that sees." As such, "Birth control, abortion, and sterilization are all . . . evils opposed to that benefit of matrimony They are said to degrade the marriage institution and trample

upon its sanctity” (Sulloway 55). Ultimately, the sanctity and familial goals of husband and wife are determined by God Himself, with His wishes disseminated through the teachings of the Church.

Catholic doctrine has instructed for centuries that the natural belongs to God and is thus also supernatural, as evidenced by natural law. The application of Catholic moral law to health, specifically as offered through the guidelines set forth by *Humanae Vitae*, will be further explored in the next chapter. The intertwining of health literacy and conscience will be considered, and will seek to answer a query posed by Benedict XVI: “The question arises, How can the community find a new way of life that will once more make possible a common moral existence for life and for the world itself?” (Ratzinger 54)

CHAPTER 5

Leading And Learning Through *Logos*

This consideration of *Humanae Vitae* seeks not only an analysis of its moral authority as deciphered from its rhetoric, but also an investigation into the intertwining of theological *ethos* with health literacy. While the rhetorics of sexuality and individualism are deeply woven into the tapestry of religion, the encyclical promotes faith as the basis of both collective conscience and health. While science is veritably recognized, the divine supersedes the options biological and chemical knowledge potentially offer. One may argue that much of the Catholic doctrine espoused in *Humanae Vitae* seeks to preserve the mysteries of the innermost sexual sanctum (referring to the state of marriage, the act of intercourse, and the banning of contraceptive technologies), even while seeking to direct said mysteries toward a fruitful end. Merely examining the theological concepts provides only a partial assay, while logology offers a tool with which to evaluate the acting language behind the promotion of Catholic sexual health in the encyclical.

It should be noted that this study does not intend to hypothetically separate *Humanae Vitae* from its theological (and theocratic) roots. Rather, the very religiosity of the encyclical makes its language an intriguing object of examination. Within the singular and joined words of the text is an undercurrent of separation, a governing of self in the midst of society so as to glorify God. In fact, as Brian Scarlett points out, “that God is the most salient point in the moral landscape leads to the idea that living in accordance with God’s will trumps all

other values, regarded by the theocrat as secular” (10). It is a matter of revelation preceding revocation, and believer and non-believer alike may benefit from scrutinizing the rhetoric of both elements.

A reminder of logology as “studies in words-about-words” is helpful (Burke, *Religion* vi). Within this area of study, it is not an issue for debate whether God Himself exists, for the *terminology* for the said being is utilized by the faithful and secular masses, thus creating a linguistic reality. The very idea of God assists in the creation of the Order concept, which houses the sacrificial principle so inherent to the vast majority of religious creeds (Burke, *Religion* 4). If Order exists, Guilt is also present, which requires Redemption, which in turn necessitates a Redeemer/Victim (Burke, *Religion* 4-5). As applied to *Humanae Vitae*, if one maintains Order through rules directed by God or His representatives, one may Sacrifice a worldly lifestyle (specifically, sexual relations that seek to avoid or end procreation through available technologies), but one also receives a reward in the ideal balance assuredly granted to a Catholic family. The ethical guidelines set forth in the encyclical illustrate Burke’s view of theology as enigmatic: words originating in the natural may describe the supernatural, and are then used once again to *redescribe* the natural as informed by the supernatural. With this in mind, one may feel compelled to subscribe to C. Allen Carter’s expanded definition of logology: “words about words *as these reveal their own moral obsessions*” (3, emphasis added). With the incorporation of moral instruction and the possibility of resultant moral identification,

dimensions of (super)natural health literacy are presented, as will be considered in this chapter.

Admittedly, logology is critiqued for its supposedly limited application only to Christian language. Celeste Condit insists, “*Rhetoric of Religion* is about Christianity and logology is therefore about language in a Christianized social system” (352). Similarly, Kristy Maddux maintains, that while Burke nearly “seems to understand the speciousness and danger involved in explaining human motive in terms of Judeo-Christian religion, this recognition does not inhibit the undertaking” (211). Yet it could also be argued that, while scholars may find fault in the loose Burkean idea of Christian theology as a universal, the principles of logology can be applied to or considered in numerous faith studies.

John Hatch of University of Dubuque claims that Burke not only puts far too much emphasis on the symbol as the prime component of language, but that the negative is incorrectly considered the defining trait of language use and the drive for hierarchy its goal. In drawing upon Mikhail Bakhtin’s use of utterance as the core of dialogism, Hatch proposes that logology be used in an interactive rather than mechanistic manner (5). He submits reconciliation as

a logological-ethical practice [that] calls humans back to the dance of agency between framing society as it ought to be (a harmonious community in which all enjoy the good) and suffering what it is – broken by violence and bent by injustice. Through narrative and ritual, reconciliation vicariously walks humans through a broken world on a

quest to reassert wholeness and moral order in the midst of the brokenness and the loss of shared moral ground. (Hatch 7)

Hatch's proposed application is intriguing, but it seems to largely arise from his discontent with Burkean terminology and the belief that "Religion offers an 'ought' that can seem too far removed from the 'is' to be applicable" (18).

Regardless of his emphasis on reconciliation, Hatch does not acknowledge the assertion eloquently put forth by Carter: "Logology in the very strictest Burkean sense is a metalinguistic attempt to *decrease* the number of sacrificial victims" (18, emphasis added). Once again, the action and usage of logology is obviously not limited to Christian thought; rather, I hypothesize that it is appropriate to any situation requiring the scrutiny of language that claims to be ethical in nature and thus potentially impacting upon society. The essence of the Word/word is simultaneously its motivation; if one has knowledge of the motivation of the Word/word, one is empowered.

Burke offers St. Augustine's *Confessions* as a model of logology in deed, given the morality firmly entrenched within its pages. While Burke considers Augustine's text to be a testimony to the interpretation of language and its impact on decision-making ability, I posit that *Humanae Vitae* can be read in much the same way, for it explicates the alternating separation of and flowing into Word from word, Word from world, and self from free will. Much like *Confessions*, the encyclical paints a picture of good versus evil, symbols versus "pure" wisdom, and conversion versus perversion. The first three chapters of Genesis are also offered as a logological work, in which classification comes into play, for the

“perfect oneness” prior to the Fall is destroyed (Burke, *Religion* 175). Sacrifice and governance are addressed, as are evident in the linguistic existence of Order/Disorder and Obedience/Disobedience, as well as Order/Counter-Order (Burke, *Religion* 186, 194). Such issues also arise in Burke’s exploration of *Leviathan*, in which Burke uses Hobbes’ definitions to explain social order, Christian doctrine, the concept of Covenant, and the requirement of a Scapegoat (*Religion* 196-200). Disobedience to the Covenant leads to death (whether natural or spiritual), which further assists in edifying a social hierarchy (Burke, *Religion* 207). Order itself is viewed as a continual cycle, one consisting of affirmed and broken Covenants, with “each part implying the other” (Burke, *Religion* 218). Maddux points out, “For Burke, the Order is complete because the notions of Creation, Covenant, Fall, Sacrifice, and Redemption are inextricably bound” (213). These cultural elements are also present in and informative to *Humanae Vitae*, and provide a set of principled and educational guidelines for spirit, soul, and body.

Burke also presents his audience with six analogies: that of words to the Word of God (7); the dimensional expansion of words and non-verbal nature, connecting the realms (16); the importance of “discounting,” or acknowledging the negative in language theory and theology through offering further symbolic rationalization by illustrating that which a word is not (especially prevalent in *Humanae Vitae*) (18); “god-terms” as the result of seeking linguistic entitlement (25); the meaning of a sentence resulting from the units creating the sentence in question, as symbolized through the temporal equation of time creating eternity

(28); and the defining of the relation between object and word, illustrated by the naming of the Holy Trinity (34). The tremendous importance of these analogies is found in the trinity of orders they provide: natural, socio-political, and Logology itself (symbolic order) (*Religion* 14). As well, the essence of this systemic order is apparent in the empirical definition of man:

- (1) The symbol-using animal
- (2) Inventor of the negative
- (3) Separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making
- (4) And goaded by the spirit of hierarchy. (Burke, *Religion* 40)

Arguably, the very source of man's definition of self is in and through language, a provision and communication of ideals and abasement, that which brings reward and punishment. Logology seeks to analyze the creation and distribution of these distinctions, and provides a greater sense of awareness in the reception of religious texts such as *Humanae Vitae*.

So as to fully grasp the importance granted to *Humanae Vitae* by the Church, one must consider the Church's concept of Logos as moral agent.

Benedict XVI asserts,

[T]he Church believes that in the beginning was the Logos and that therefore being itself bears the language of the Logos – not just mathematical, but also aesthetical and moral reason. This is what is meant when the Church insists that “nature” has a moral expression. No one is saying that biologism should become the standard of man. (Ratzinger 67)

The Word not only becomes flesh, but action, in that it offers moral aptitude to man so that he may act in accordance with God.

In Christian liturgy, the word made flesh – incarnated – is discovered, and shares in human life so that humans might share in the divine. Daily, bodily life is hinged to a larger reality through words and through the Word. And because people experience each other as bodily presence, in face-to-face relationships, the word made flesh is mirrored in the everyday lives of participants. (Lyon 61)

Hearers of the Word may become partakers rather than spectators, evolving into members of an active audience. When the spiritual ears are opened, the spiritual heart is opened, allowing the manifestation of two ontological levels of conscience: animanesis and conscientia.

The animanesis instilled in our being needs . . . assistance from without so that it can become aware of itself. But this “form without” is not something set in opposition to animanesis but is ordered to it. It has maieutic function, imposes nothing foreign, but brings to fruition what is proper to anamnesis, namely, its interior openness to the truth. (Ratzinger 34)

Catholic truth is found in Catholic conscience, which Ratzinger cautions must continually be “purified, expanded, and defended against the destruction of memory that is threatened by a subjectivity forgetful of its own foundation, as well as by the pressures of social and cultural conformity” (36).

Maintaining his position as gatekeeper of the collective Catholic conscience grants power to the Pope in deed, an influence further dispersed by the spoken and written word. That which is generally unalterable in sacred text is an underlying authority, whether conferred by an entity to the author or by the author himself. This is apparent in the rapid resolution of authority in *Humanae Vitae* and, correspondingly, the initial conveyance of Order, as seen in the following passage: “None of the faithful will want to deny that the Magisterium of the Church is also competent to interpret the natural moral law. It is, in fact, indisputable, as our predecessors have on numerous occasions declared” (*Humanae Vitae* 4). While the encyclical itself is not deemed infallible, the wisdom of the Magisterium is beyond reproach, claiming perfection in the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Nonetheless, *Humanae Vitae* is not thoroughly embraced by the Catholic community. Andrew Greeley reflects, “One can only speculate whether it was counterproductive in its explicit intent and actually led to an increase in the use of the pill by women who were made angry and disappointed” (23). J. Budziszewski insists, “Though the encyclical letter is magisterial in the sense of being lordly, it is not magisterial in the sense of teaching well,” while Luke Timothy Johnson maintains, “The focus on each act of intercourse rather than on the overall dispositions of married couples is morally distorting” (18, 16). Johnson also warns, “[T]he absolute prohibition of artificial birth control becomes increasingly scandalous in the face of massive medical realities,” and, when confronting the

question of condoms and AIDS, he poses, “When does ‘openness to life’ in every act become a cover for ‘death-dealing’?” (17)

Regardless of the mixed reception, exploring *Humanae Vitae* through the logological lens of the Order cycle demonstrates the impact of the immaterial on the material. Specifically, this logological examination authenticates the ability of sacred text to influence and inform the sphere of health literacy. Kennedy muses,

Rhetorical criticism takes the text as we have it, whether the work of a single author or the product of editing, and looks at it from the point of view of the author’s or editor’s intent, the unified results, and how it would be perceived by an audience of near contemporaries. (4)

This analysis of creation, reception, and generational perception may be made more acute through logology. Assuredly, the very creative process of *Humanae Vitae* must be considered. “Doctrinal development,” Joseph Komonchak explains, “is not an abstract matter of deductions from first principles, natural or revealed” (232). Rather,

It is a complex historical process, by which, in a given period, in response to particular problems and questions, and with the spiritual, intellectual, conceptual, and linguistic resources available, the Church attempts to understand and apply the gospel and succeeds more or less adequately. (Komonchak 232)

The encyclical addresses evolutions in social mores, including fears of overpopulation, economic downturns, educational concerns, the changing status

of women in society, and a new outlook on conjugal acts. However, the area of greatest concern to the Church is clear:

Finally and above all, man has made stupendous progress in the domination and rational organization of the forces of nature, such that he tends to extend this domination to his own total being: to the body, to psychological life, to social life and even to the laws which regulate the transmission of life. (*Humanae Vitae* 1-2)

This evidences the subject matter of health literacy, for the encyclical seeks to inform the believers of doctrinal principles, faithfulness, and the consequences of sinning against God-given law. Thus, Order is once again clearly defined and methods of obtaining it are presented.

The ultimate aim of the encyclical is key to its comprehension, for it is far easier to understand rhetoric when one is able to pinpoint the desired goal of the language. Classical rhetorical studies – specifically the Aristotelian view of rhetoric proffers three proofs in speech and the assertion that, “[O]f the three elements in speechmaking – speaker, subject, and person addressed – it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech’s end and object” (Aristotle 12). The rhetoric of the Church is closest to the political rhetoric described by Aristotle, in which

The . . . orator aims at establishing the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action; if he urges its acceptance, he does so on the ground that it will do good; if he urges its rejection, he does so on the ground that it will do harm; and all other points, such as whether the

proposal is just or unjust, honourable or dishonourable, he brings is as subsidiary and relative to this main consideration. (13)

The goal of encyclicals such as *Humanae Vitae* is to propose a version of Order to a Disorderly world. Papal letters are often rich with the message that, should one reject the guidance of the Church through its texts, one risks impairment or outright destruction; should one accept the teachings, one reaps rewards in both this life and that to come. Acting upon the urgings of Church canon provides the dimensional expansion mentioned in the Burkean analogies, that of the verbal and the non-verbal. Lyon explains,

The transcendent – the realm beyond observable reality – is communicated in immanent terms, and yet to deal with the immanent – that is, all observable reality – the transcendent must be posited as its partner. The sacred symbols of religion point beyond themselves to the transcendent realm, in order to give meaning to the immanent realm, with all its ambiguity, contingency, mortality, and suffering. The transcendent is beyond the immanent human world, but it is accessible through special means of communication. (59)

The challenges of mortality are lessened by religion; indeed, one may find *Humanae Vitae* to be a demonstration of a spiritual charting of destiny, one that seeks to liberate believers from the burdens imposed on them by a world ignorant of divine nature. Katherine Lynch suggests, “Religious traditions exist because they are constantly being renewed, reinvented, and redeployed in battles with various sorts of opponents and enemies, both real and imagined,” and yet these

traditions commonly provide more than a modicum of strength to those who embrace them (38). The material and the immaterial meld together in the actions of language and belief, and often serve to provide better navigation through both realms.

Clearly, in order to wholly follow the guiding principles of sacred text, the audience must be adequately receptive to its speaker/author (*ethos*), the emotions the text's author seeks to stir (*pathos*), and the logic of the argument presented (*logos*). Kennedy clarifies, "In classical rhetoric *logos* is ordinarily regarded as probable argument, not logical certainty, but Christians came to regard the arguments of Scripture as divinely revealed and thus certain" (15 – 6).

Additionally, divine derivatives (supplemental texts to an original sacred work) are often considered foundationally secure. Murphy explains that "claims from biblical and historical studies provide grounds for theological claims; theological claims provide grounds for ethical claims" (*Reasoning* 197). Not surprisingly, various forms of literacy are promoted through and arise from such claims, including the health literacy presented in *Humanae Vitae*.

Given the unitive significance of guidelines dealing with free will and biology, a working definition of health literacy is essential. The individual who is literate in matters of health not only considers the impact of his actions on his own well-being, but that of others, as well; he is able to make an informed decision about physical, mental, or spiritual health treatment and disease prevention; he is knowledgeable in the biological systems of the human body; and he is aware of cultural factors that may cause him to choose one path of proposed

health rather than another (i.e., abstinence rather than pursuing a sexual experience or relationship). A person who possesses a functioning literacy in the area of health is arguably more likely to have mastered self-control to some extent; Scott Vitell et al. aver, “[C]haracteristics of someone high in self-control can be logically tied to moral identity traits such as friendliness, kindness, and helpfulness” (604). Moreover, religiosity often serves as the foundation of self-control: “Religion facilitates self-control by providing standards for the individual. Furthermore, religion provides one’s self-control mechanism with the necessary motivation for actually exercising self-control” (605). A person who operates with a sense of health literacy seeks preservation not only of self, but also of others. Such behavior denotes a sense of cultural competence, and an understanding of physical and psychological aspects of medical ecology.

Debate continues over various methods of literacy reception, and three primary approaches are options for discovering health literacy in sacred texts. The bottom-up approach is reminiscent of Burke’s time-eternity analogy, considering the role every linguistic unit tenders in the whole, while the top-down approach refers to F. Smith’s theory of textual comprehension that is “purposeful and selective in that readers attend only to what is necessary to their current purposes” (qtd. in Hudson 48). The interactive approach may also be exercised, which provides for any number of variables, and is perhaps most widely used in encountering the sacred text itself, as well as any challenges to the core values of the text. This interactive process may be evident in the reactions of religious persons to assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs):

[Individuals] do not believe that new discoveries can dislodge nature, for nature itself is (depending on the tradition) either a divine creation, or at least the given system in within which all existent beings can and must find their meaning. Religious people therefore appropriate only scientific descriptions of the world that can be deployed within existing religious visions of it (often even employing scientific language to elaborate these religious visions). Similarly, they make use of ARTs only when and if they believe ARTs helps them adhere to approved, existing ideas of the divinely-intended natural family. (Traina et al. 20-1)

This illustrates Daphne Ntiri's assertion that "The role that literacy is allowed to play in the process of social transformation is shaped by the dynamics of power relations in social life or the politics of a nation or state" (103). As well, "Literacy must be understood as historically constructed and subject to continuous change as it interacts with social, cultural, and political contexts" (Ntiri 103).

Hudson avers, "[L]iteracy practices are embedded in ideologized contexts involving societal constructions of power and control," and thus literacy is far from an objective practice (50). Since there are numerous acts of negotiation occurring when reading a sacred text and gleaning a sense of literacy, authority may be mistakenly granted. Hudson warns, "Literacy practices relate to social assumptions surrounding the notion of the conventions people have internalized regarding appropriate literacy behavior Literacy becomes a relative term associated with particular practices" (51). These interactive practices assist in manifesting a sense of self. Perelman states, "Everything that is affirmed about a

person is justified by how that person manifests himself, but it is the unity and stability of the person that unifies the totality of his acts” (90). The Church, a fount of literacy/knowledge for its followers, persistently promotes such unity and stability in its literature.

As noted previously, the three crucial areas of importance in health literacy as addressed by the encyclical are marriage (primarily seen as psychologically and spiritually important), the actual sexual act (shown in the light of physical and spiritual significance), and the prohibition of specific technologies (contraceptives and techniques are explicitly banned – and assisted reproductive technologies are implicitly forbidden – due to their interference with natural rhythms, impacting the physical, spiritual, and emotional realms). As may be expected, there are many instances of topical overlapping in *Humanae Vitae*; for the purpose of simplification, these subjects will be considered singularly as is possible, and then jointly.

There is no mistaking that the Church considers marriage to be a gift from God. It should be noted that the Catholic view of marriage remains heteronormative, despite recent legal victories for same-sex unions; a marriage between two gay partners cannot lead to natural procreation, and is summarily dismissed. In 2003, the Vatican released *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons*, which states, “[I]n the Creator's plan, sexual complementarity and fruitfulness belong to the very nature of marriage.” The plan of God for marriage was clearly explicated in *Humanae Vitae*: “Marriage is not, then, the effect of chance or the product of

evolution of unconscious natural forces; it is the wise institution of the Creator to realize in mankind His design of love” (8). The love between husband and wife is not “a simple transport of instinct and sentiment, but also, and principally, an act of the free will,” which, through exposure to the trials and triumphs of a life shared, will eventually lead to the spouses sharing “one only heart and one only soul, and together attain their human perfection” (*Humanae Vitae* 9). This is the reward for spousal communion and reciprocity of self (*Humanae Vitae* 8).

Marital love is based on the duty of fidelity that, while sometimes complicated, it remains “always possible, always noble and meritorious” (*Humanae Vitae* 9).

When a man and woman who have experienced baptism join in holy matrimony, their union carries “the dignity of a sacramental sign of grace, inasmuch as it represents the union of Christ and of the Church” (*Humanae Vitae* 4). Dietrich von Hildebrand muses,

Let us be existential; let us see that the love between man and woman is a specific category and type of love, even if we prescind from the sphere of sex, that it is a beautiful and glorious reality which is destined by God’s will to play a fundamental role in man’s life, and that this love is the classical motive for marriage, that marriage is precisely the fulfillment of this love. And it is this love which we call “spousal love.” (51)

The love between husband and wife fully engages the senses and the spirit, and thus exists at a material and immaterial level (*Humanae Vitae* 9). This love is divine in origin, having begun in God Himself, “from whom every family in Heaven and on earth is named” (*Humanae Vitae* 8).

Per the Church, the inherent mission to marriage is that of “responsible parenthood,” an act relatively free of autonomy; Paul VI warns that spouses “must conform their activity to the creative intention of God, expressed in the very nature of marriage and of its acts, and manifested by the constant teaching of the Church” (10). Order is clearly present in this situation, and fully overrides any sense of will. Lest one be uncertain, Paul VI emphasizes that the physical acts of conjugal love is “noble and worthy,” and remains so “if, for causes *independent of the will of husband and wife*, they are foreseen to be infecund, since they always remain ordained towards expressing and consolidating their union” (11, emphasis added). Every act of this nature committed in marriage (and, according to the Church, such acts should *only* occur in marriage) “must remain open to the transmission of life” (*Humanae Vitae* 11). This is due to the two inseparable purposes of the marital act: union and procreation. “By safeguarding both these essential aspects,” Paul VI notes, “the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its ordination towards man’s most high calling to parenthood” (12). If spouses seek to circumvent these facets of matrimonial joining, they seek to actively thwart God’s will. It is at this junction that the Guilt/Sin of Burke’s Order cycle is perceptible, with the admonition that man does not have dominion over his physicality, nor over “his generative faculties as such,” given “their intrinsic ordination towards raising up life, of which God is the principle” (*Humanae Vitae* 13).

The encyclical demonstrates the vehement interdictment of a number of impediments to creation: “the direct interruption of the generative process

already begun”; abortion, even if required for “therapeutic reasons”; temporary or permanent sterilization of either man or woman; and ensuring that husband and wife take care that “every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or means, to render procreation impossible” (14). In any respect, there is not any validity to intentionally causing a lack of fecundity, and Paul VI admonishes that “it is not licit, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil so that good may follow therefrom, that is, to make into the object of a positive act of the will something which is intrinsically Disorder” (14). Natural law, as established by God Himself, provides the Order necessary for a fulfilling life; to dismiss it is to require Redemption.⁶ Should nature itself go awry and man or woman require surgical removal of a diseased reproductive part, any resulting (but unwilling) barrenness is not sinful (*Humanae Vitae* 15).

Of course, the relevant designation of contraception must be considered. That which denotes mortal sinning springs forth of artificial methods, such as the sterilization mentioned above, prophylactics, hormonal regulation through medication, IUDs, and so forth. Luce explains,

The Church teaches that parents bear the responsibility, before God, of deciding on the number of children they are able to rear and educate. But the Church does not believe married couples have the right, before God, to choose among existing birth-control methods. It maintains that any agent

⁶ Incidentally, the act itself can never be redeemed, although the individual responsible for the act may receive Redemption. This is illustrated by the following passage: “[I]t is an error to think that a conjugal act which is deliberately made infecund and so is intrinsically dishonest could be made honest and right by the ensemble of a fecund conjugal life” (*Humanae Vitae* 14).

of a chemical or mechanical nature that destroys or obstructs life-giving ovum is against the natural law, and therefore that the use of such an agent is immoral. (193)

Accordingly, when utilizing agents that risk avoiding or ending procreation, husband and wife may risk damaging their alliance to each other and to God. “The Church challenges man not to abandon his own responsibility in exchange for reliance on technical means; by this very fact she defends the dignity of husbands and wives” (*Humanae Vitae* 18). In attempting to thwart natural law, “how wide and easy a road would thus be opened up towards conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality” (*Humanae Vitae* 17). Young men could especially be led astray by that which allows them to skirt the boundaries of morality, while husbands who turn to something prophylactic in nature by rote may finally lose respect for the woman and, no longer caring for her physical and psychological equilibrium, may come to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer as his respected and beloved companion. (*Humanae Vitae* 17)

Thus, the Church draws a clear correlation between sex for procreation and hence moral purposes, and sex for mere gratification, which leads to various corruptions. Sulloway poses,

Contraceptives may indeed have converted the sacred obligations of Christian marriage into a kind of pagan orgy, but if this is the case, the consequences of the Church’s argument are inescapable. Any other

method of family limitation which separates sex from childbearing will be objectionable for the same reasons. (80 – 1)

Church doctrine dictates that family planning be promoted as a blessed antithesis to contraception. The former is deemed divinely granted, while the latter is considered bastardized science at best. If Catholic health literacy serves to protect the family, the traumas wrought by a lack of reliable birth regulation bear witness to a theoretical and practical deficiency.

Contemporary usage of the term Natural Family Planning (NFP) references a number of calendar-based techniques of contraception, although in the middle part of the twentieth century it largely indicated the Rhythm method.⁷ In the introduction to Dr. Leo Katz’s text, *The Rhythm*, Joseph Reiner proclaims, “Divine Providence has come to the assistance of mankind at critical periods by unfolding nature’s secrets. It seems to be doing that in the present crisis by enabling scientists to discover ‘the rhythm of sterility and fertility in women’” (1). Through determining that most women are fertile for fourteen days following menstruation and perhaps three to four days prior to the next menstruation, physicians were able to assist a number of patients in spacing out pregnancies. This regulatory system, boasted of as being “as reliable as a physiological law can be,” was best utilized for women who maintained menstrual regularity (Katz 65).

⁷ NFP now includes the symptom-thermal, temperature, and mucus methods, which have reported efficacy rates ranging from 90 – 99%, with the lower numbers provided by the websites of the American Pregnancy Association and the higher rates offered by the Jocelyn Centre for Natural Fertility Management. As with any form of health treatment or practice, anecdotes of success and failure abound.

Humanae Vitae does not speak out directly against this practice, although there are a number of caveats involved:

If, then, there are serious motives to space out births, which derive from the physical or psychological conditions of husband and wife, or from external conditions, the Church teaches that it is then licit to take into account the natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions, for the use of marriage in the infecund periods only, and in this way to regulate birth without offending the moral principles which have been recalled earlier. (16)

NFP is condoned as a method allowing a husband and wife to “make legitimate use of a natural disposition,” while outright contraception is condemned for the impediment of “the development of natural processes” (*Humanae Vitae* 16).

Further explication shows that a only a couple using NFP maintain the ability “to renounce the use of marriage in the fecund periods when, for just motives, procreation is not desirable, while making use of it during infecund periods to manifest their affection and to safeguard their mutual fidelity” (*Humanae Vitae* 16). Katz holds that natural birth control and contraception differ in the

subsequent ways:

The one is natural, the other unnatural; the one is rational, the other irrational; the one is in harmony with nature, the other does violence to nature, and is “intrinsically against nature;” the one is permitted and under certain circumstances, may even be required by the will of God, the other is never allowed under any circumstances. (134)

In his disagreement with this opinion, Sulloway returns to the direct language of the encyclical,

[T]he woman who uses the Rhythm may, no less than the woman who uses contraceptives, ‘fall a victim to the man’s lust, becoming a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his passion,’ for children, if the Rhythm works, will not result from intercourse. (125-6)

The supposition of the Church on behalf of its members, however, is that those engaging in Rhythm or other forms of NFP are acting out of “serious motives” derivative of “physical or psychological conditions of husband and wife, or from external conditions” (*Humanae Vitae* 16). The Church recognizes that the required periodic continence (abstinence), which may last several weeks of each month, may be emotionally difficult for the spouses, but praises the practice as a mastery of self, that “which is proper to the purity of married couples,” which does not harm the relationship, but “rather confers on it a higher human value” (*Humanae Vitae* 21). Lawler, Boyle, and May comment,

To understand chastity within marriage, it is necessary to understand the nature of marriage itself, for the nature of marriage is designed by God to enable people to integrate their sexuality into the service of self-giving and new life. Thus, marriage enables what could degenerate into a selfish and enslaving force to become instead a full and integral part of life in which the greatest goods of human persona are served, and the love which is God himself is revealed. (134)

When done in an honest and holy fashion, regulation of birth may, somewhat ironically, intensify the *agape* love between husband and wife, for it favors attention for one's partner, helps both parties to drive out selfishness, the enemy of true love; and deepens their sense of responsibility. By its means, parents acquire the capacity of having a deeper and more efficacious influence in the education of their offspring; little children and youths grow up with a just appraisal of human values, and in the serene and harmonious development of their spiritual and sensitive faculties. (*Humanae Vitae* 21)

Hence, the Church concerns itself with the social blight of contraception not only for the purpose of its members, but for society (suffering as it is) as a whole. Paul VI questions, "Who will stop rulers from favoring, from even imposing upon their peoples, if they were to consider it necessary, the method of contraception which they judge to be most efficacious?" (17) The tone of the encyclical reflects horror that the government could intrude into that very private of spheres, despite the Church's firm ensconcement in that very location. Instead, the Church is presented as a warrior on behalf of "conjugal morals in their integral wholeness," faithful in seeking "the establishment of a truly human civilization" (*Humanae Vitae* 18). This civilization consists of devoted husbands, tender wives, and cherished children. While this teaching provides an idyllic picture, veracity requires taking note that Catholics who do not adhere to the facets of *Humanae Vitae* – nor, for that matter, persons who are not of the Catholic faith – are also capable of such deep, abiding familial love.

In a sense, *Humanae Vitae* represents a battleground on which faith, culture, and medical technology violently clash. Granted, the encyclical praises men of science who may “succeed in providing a sufficiently secure basis for a regulation of birth, founded on the observation of natural rhythms,” while those in the medical profession are exhorted to continue in their efforts to “persevere . . . in promoting on every occasion the discovery of solutions inspired by faith and right reason . . . [and] consider as their proper professional duty the task of acquiring all the knowledge needed in this delicate sector” so as to provide proper counsel to married couples (24, 27). The issue of medicine as a means of understanding biologism and acting in accordance with natural law is difficult to resolve. In the United States, a troubling statistic was discovered, and consequently reported by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy: despite over a decade of declining birth rates among all ethnic groups nationwide, “the teen pregnancy rate increased three percent between 2005 and 2006 and the teen birth rate increased five percent between 2005 and 2007” (“Why Are the Teen Pregnancy and Birth Rates Increasing?”). Factors that may have impacted this startling development include lack of information regarding contraception, lack of interest in educating oneself about pregnancy prevention, and an “anything goes” society (“Why Are the Teen Pregnancy and Birth Rates Increasing?”). Potter and Mundigo note of such contraceptive trends (or lack thereof) that

The social process through which individuals and couples in a society come to rely on certain contraceptive methods and reject the use of others

is not well understood. However, it is clear that this is a domain in which the past matters and in which uncertainty and misinformation can play important roles. . . . [T]he choices that a society makes early on in the transition tend to be self-reinforcing. (742).

Clearly, it is troublesome that flawed health literacy may be underpinned by ethical intention. Smith asserts, “Many of the features that characterize Catholic moral thought have been developed with medicine in mind as a model, precisely because medicine learns through experience” (“Sterilizations Reconsidered?” 46). Christina Traina et al. offer support to this argument, noting that the definition of natural reproduction did not traditionally consider “sperm ascending the fallopian tubes to fertilize the ovum,” and point out that “nor was the distinction between women’s fertile and infertile periods – now essential to descriptions of Church-sanctioned methods of natural family planning – an element of the rhythm of natural marital sexuality” (53). Regardless, the *Catechism* states,

It is an illusion to claim moral neutrality in scientific research and its applications. On the other hand, guiding principles cannot be inferred from simply technical efficiency, or from the usefulness accruing to some at the expense of others or, even worse, from prevailing ideologies. Science and technology by their very nature require unconditional respect for fundamental moral criteria. (2294)

As knowledge increases, definitions may evolve, but the historical philosophy remains the same. This is potentially problematic, given that a religious work such as *Humanae Vitae* impacts social practice through promoting a health

literacy that is not necessarily adequate for new challenges, regardless of whether these challenges occur at the physical or psychological level.

As culture is constantly being influenced by living experiences, so must health literacy approaches that are coordinated with cultural competence be responsive to cultural change. In meeting the health needs of diverse peoples, cultural competency is essential for the development of health literacy. (*Health Literacy* 113)

Are the codes of belief/behavior set forth in the encyclical culturally competent? *Humanae Vitae* does not address couples other than those joined in matrimony; it does not address teenagers; it does not offer funds to the family barely making ends meet which feels to practice contraception is to engage in mortal (deadly) sin. Jeffrey Baker laments, “It is the world’s uneducated that will suffer the most from the fear of eternal punishment in the flames of Hell,” and that these same persons “stand at the bottom of the economic ladder and . . . can least afford to have large numbers of children” (147). The Church apparently does not grasp the tremendous time and effort that NFP encompasses, not merely with periodic continence, but the actual graphing of information, determination of irregularities, collection of cervical mucus, and so on. Of course, these “minor hardships” are arguably inconsequential in the Church’s eyes when set against the divine calling of procreation. Regardless, it is no small wonder that Catholic women (or women of any faith) would be tempted by the convenience of condoms or the Pill.

It is not merely a matter of practicing what is preached; Kickbusch affirms, “Information is crucial, but will never be sufficient to address many of

the major challenges faced by disenfranchised and marginalized populations” (294). Even well-meaning information based on values of faith may harm the recipient(s).

Given the distinctiveness of Catholic doctrines relating to marriage and family, the moral pluralism characterizing contemporary society, and the various social changes and developments making some type of family regulation imperative for the majority of fertile young couples, we may conclude that the continued observance of Christian marriage ideals appears likely only if Catholic couples acquire a more adequate understanding and appreciation of the Church’s positive doctrine concerning the vocation of marriage, together with the firm conviction that this doctrine remains currently relevant. (Thomas 97)

Information that is relevant may be vastly different from information that is readily available. Paul VI declares that the Church “has always provided – and more amply in recent times – a coherent teaching on the nature of marriage as well as on the correct use of conjugal rights” and marital duty (*Humanae Vitae* 4). The central message of conjugal love has not changed, despite the radically morphing social mores. Is one acting in a literate way if bringing a child into the world will not positively impact the child and will disrupt any harmony or stability in the life of the parent(s)? Sulloway poses,

Although small families are not considered to be as good for the children as large families, a small family achieved by contraceptives is thought to be worse for the children than a small family limited by continence. This

conclusion is based on the theory that continence allegedly requires a spirit of unselfishness and restraint which leaves untainted the moral atmosphere of the home. (91)

If the moral atmosphere of the home is flawed, it could be debated that man and woman joining together in a physical act of love not resulting in conception could actually strengthen the nature of their relationship. The Church disagrees, calling upon the spouses (and indeed, those engaging in sexual relations must be spouses, according to Catholic doctrine) to embrace the Christian manner:

Let them implore divine assistance by persevering prayer; above all, let them draw from the source of grace and charity in the Eucharist. And if sin should still keep its hold over them, let them not be discouraged, but rather have recourse with humble perseverance to the mercy of God, which is poured forth in the sacrament of Penance. (*Humanae Vitae* 25)

While an undercurrent of “faith through works” runs throughout the encyclical, it is at this juncture that Redemption is evident. The Church recognizes that even a good marriage is fraught with difficulties, and makes an allowance for the possibility of Disorder, but it refuses to allow the possibility of a good marriage incorporating contraception.

Worldly tenets that require neither marriage nor abstinence may indeed lead to Counter-Order/Disorder, given that they are born out of considering self before God, further polluting man’s sinful nature. Begetting children is a way in which man can imitate God, for His greatest gift was also the Scapegoat for the human race, Jesus Christ. Thus, Victimage or Purification necessitates primary

consideration of God (much as Christ put not only God's command before His own needs, but also put the destiny of mankind ahead of His own pain). The definitive beginning and ending is housed in the concept of a Holy Trinity, but every day man is presented with the opportunity to move from perversion to conversion all over again. In terms of health literacy and the choices dictated by *Humanae Vitae*, this is indeed a heavy burden. The encyclical is pregnant with meaning, presenting a parallel logological depiction to that of Augustine's *Confessions*. As Garlitz finds,

Man operates in a world which consists of the natural, the socio-political (human), the verbal (symbolic), and, depending upon his choices here, the supernatural, either really or at least in form. Man also operates in a "world" of language with these corresponding divisions. Because of his body, however, man does not live in a world which is wholly and simply the verbal. . . . Man is goaded by the spirits or motives of all four realms even while capable of free action. (96)

The learned Catholic audience is well aware of the essence, if not the theory, of the Burkean Order cycle, as is it continually emphasized in their faith: the Fall, Guilt, Victimage, and Redemption, as well as God's nature (Garlitz 96). Each and every one of these symbols are probable motivators of human behavior. In following the dictates of *Humanae Vitae* and other such articles of faith, mankind enacts the logological analogies. The consideration of words regarding the Word provides stability in Catholic life, a foundation to which one may return again and again during times of moral confusion or when one simply requires comfort, as

well as the consideration of “the qualitative difference between man and nature, between the symbol and the symbolized,” promising that man is at once separate and one with the natural (Garlitz 104). Also present is the concept of negative theology, in which man may not only find what God is and is not but what man should be and should not, which is imperative to the creation of and subscription to moral language/action. Logology further allows the assessment of linguistic entitlement, which sets up a social hierarchy that creates Order and Disorder, determining who will become a Victim, in addition to illustrating a cycle of Redemption present in time and eternity, one that may not have a “direct correlative in the clauses of the definition of man but insofar as it rests on the verbal it would be implicit in the nature of symbol using” (Garlitz 107). Finally, logology offers a means of viewing the relativity of Trinity to a linguistic reality. On these six levels, Catholicism creates an authenticity of language, which in turn corresponds with an authenticity of action.

Subsequently, what conclusions can be drawn from the evidence presented?

- 1) *Humanae Vitae* promotes health literacy of the marital state in emphasizing the significance of fidelity, unity, and accord between spouses, including the unitive conjugal act that must be open to (and, indeed, strive for) the possibility of procreation.
- 2) The encyclical further encourages its specific form of health literacy through a) warning of the possible moral dangers resulting from use of contraceptives, and b) the positive effects of NFP when utilized properly

(in a manner necessarily ethical *and* precise). In doing so, it creates an exclusionary effect – a social hierarchy, in Burkean terms – that promises health to the class of believers.

3) As an article of faith, *Humanae Vitae* testifies to the unchanging ideal of the Church, which may or may not be embraced by its followers.

Does the encyclical promote a healthy marriage? It emphasizes love and honor between husband and wife. Bromley comments, “Through the character of its teaching that marriage is a sacrament symbolizing Christ’s union with the Church, it has more successfully than any other faith imbued its communicants with a spiritual ideal of marriage” (178). Does it promote a realistic image of contraception? On a mainstream level, it does not, especially in contemporary society, although the actions taken in marriage or a sexual relationship are obviously the responsibility of the partners involved. Does the text still hold sway? Without a doubt, although perhaps less so in America than in other Catholic strongholds. In any case, as Hatch presents in his study of reconciliation, “social actors need not limit themselves to *either* adopting *or* rejecting the specific agents/agencies and plots of redemption commended in religious traditions”; instead, he proffers, humans may negotiate such traditions so as to “come to understand the terms of present society and their own identities in new ways and find agency newly constituted to undergo the inevitable sacrifices in remaking the social order as a moral community” (4). For such a course of action, *Humanae Vitae* is indeed a rich source.

In *The Rhetoric of Religion*, Burke avers, “Our purpose is simply to ask how theological principles can be shown to have usable secular analogues that throw light upon the nature of language” (2). Ultimately, words dictate actions, faith dictates actions, languages of faith dictate actions, and, thus, language is an action in and of itself. In addition, acceptance *or* denial of language provides an incredibly strong form of self-identification, one which has the power to be monumentally transformative.

The Burkean Order cycle is of tremendous importance to theological – and, in this instance, health – literacy. The fear of divine judgment, manifested in the human psyche by guilt and shame, can be a powerful tool of situational avoidance. Yet it is not effective in all circumstances and for all people, as is humorously described in the following anecdote courtesy of Daniel Maguire:

At a meeting of scholars from the world’s various religions, a Chinese scholar reported that in China now they are starting to put free condoms in hotel drawers. Mustering as straight a face as I could I said: “We don’t do that in the United States. Instead, we put Bibles in the motel drawers on the assumption that if a couple come to have sex and find the Bible, they will read that instead.” With an equally strained face, the Chinese scholar asked: “Have you any data on this experiment?” I replied: “Yes, a very high rate of unplanned pregnancies.” (23)

With this in mind, the next chapter will offer a forecast on the future of the tenets set forth in *Humanae Vitae*, and deliberate on whether Order and Redemption can

ultimately be found in alternative theological arenas that embrace the willful decision of contraception.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

In the beginning, there was the Word of God.

Thereafter, man commented upon, and thus supplemented, the Word.

Such is the case with *Humanae Vitae*.

The work presented seeks to illustrate the potential authority and influence of the Church upon the believer, as evidenced through the action and philosophies held in the language of the specified papal letter. The rhetoric is rich in promises of papal/patriarchal protection, crisis, guilt, and, to some degree, evangelistic eugenics – all of which correspond to the Burkean Order-Guilt-Redemption-Redeemer/Victim cycle. Moreover, the language of the encyclical illustrates Kennedy's assertion that, "Though rhetoric is colored by the traditions and conventions of the society in which it is applied, it is also a universal phenomenon which is conditioned by the basic workings of the human mind and heart and by the nature of all human society" (10).

Whether or not one subscribes to Catholic doctrine, the controversial papal letter offers insight into the Church's attempted power over its estimated one billion believers. It also provides glimpses into the reception or dismissal of Catholic canon by persons not impressed by an *imago* of the Church. Yet today's generation is arguably far more attuned to prospective social ills resulting of the tenets set forth in *Humanae Vitae*. While the Church adequately acknowledges contemporary issues that arise from changing social mores, its response does not make adequate allowance for changing physical facts in the degradation of

physical resources, an issue steadfastly considered in the 1960s, and even more so in the twenty-first century. Additionally, the Vatican's declared purpose of marriage has not changed, and consequently neither has its stance on contraception, thus showcasing an arguably antediluvian mindset in a modern age. Of course, as is the tendency with religious texts, those of the Church are directed at specific audiences, although they are used to promote values touted as universal. While the god-terms inherent to the encyclical – whether simply “We,” “the Church,” or “Catholic” – serve as self-identifying terms that provide spontaneous cohesion *of* the faithful and separation *from* the worldly, to examine the text as a whole is to operate under the Burkean assumption “that all action, including symbolic action (all forms of discursive exchange, oral or written), is fundamentally ethical,” and that “identification will eventually occur between people whose ideologies conflict if they are committed to communicated productively” (Sheard 298). There can be no question that *Humanae Vitae* seeks the distribution of a well-meaning moral code, one bound only by faith and not by culture; whether it is relevant to global citizenry as a whole is another matter altogether.

Murphy observes, “[W]e can say that the *presumption* in any dispute will always be with the inherited formulation; the *burden of proof* falls on the one who argues for change” (*Reasoning* 205). Tellingly, this leads to the discovery of “one role of history in the theological curriculum: it informs us about past formulations of the tradition” (N. Murphy 205). History also provides a forecast for any necessary situational ethics, a projection necessitated by the doctrine

encapsulated within *Humanae Vitae*. In a world beset by social and environmental tribulations, the health literacy promoted by the encyclical may benefit the few rather than the whole. Despite this, it is undeniable that the impact of *Humanae Vitae* has been significant, although not in the manner the Church intended. Eberstadt specifies,

[S]o many Catholics, embarrassed by accusations of archaism and driven by their own desires to be as free for sex as everyone around them, went racing for the theological exit signs after *Humanae Vitae* . . . just as the world with its wicked old ways began stockpiling more evidence for the Church's doctrine than anyone living in previous centuries could have imagined, and while still other people were actually being brought closer to the Church because she stood exactly as that "sign of contradiction" when so many in the world wanted otherwise. (42)

Correspondingly, McClory details,

[It] created a special crisis of authority for married Catholics. Many who could not accept it left the church and have not come back. Many others rethought the degree of their affiliation and slackened in their church activities. Still others sought some way to hang onto their full Catholic identity without obeying the injunction. The struggle has been difficult. ("Authority in the church: who makes the final call?" 10)

The purpose of this work is not to argue that the masses – faithful or otherwise – steadfastly cling to the coital guidelines reiterated by Paul VI without question or comment. The "freedom" afforded by contraception to secular society was

prevalent then as now, with the touting of physical, psychological, and financial gains. Charles Keely reflects, “By the time Pope Paul acted in July 1968, the train had left the station” (226). Similarly, Harold O.J. Brown of Reformed Theological Seminary observes,

Pope Paul’s arguments failed not because they were unsound, but for other reasons: they interfered (as all divine law, both natural and revealed, will do) with human autonomy; and they came too late, when they had already been overrun by medical developments and the sexual revolution. (18)

Regardless of the ill-conceived timing of the Church’s reiteration of its stance, the letter of the law must be examined for probable impact upon decision-making.

Moffett notes that, while the Church seeks to be actively involved in family planning, its role may be reduced through “Modernization, urbanization, higher levels of education, expanding economic opportunities for women, and the sheer availability of contraception” (215). While American Catholics may choose to practice birth control, whether in an outspoken or furtive manner, Catholics in other countries – especially those deemed third-world – may be far less likely to rebel against the Church’s decree, ensuring that the precepts of Catholic matrimony and sexuality prevail for a good portion of the world’s inhabitants.

This is perhaps due not only to the continual dissemination of teachings, but also to the constant involvement of the Church in international affairs. The Vatican, on par with Switzerland, has been granted the status of “permanent observer nonmember state” in the United Nations, although a nonmember state with the power of conscience: Kissling relays, “From the way the Vatican conducts itself

at the UN, it would appear that it sees little difference between itself . . . and the United States,” and adds, “However, the Vatican is unique among UN members in that it believes itself to be infallible on some matters under consideration by the UN” (196).

The presumed infallibility of the Church continues to be a pressing topic. In his discussion of the controversy surrounding *Humanae Vitae*, Father James Mulligan notes:

To think that something is true *because* the Church says it is true is to miss the whole point. The real point is that the Church receives its faith infallibly and so it says things are true *because, in fact, they are true*. The same thing is equally applicable to the actions of the leadership in the Church. Things are not true because the leadership says so. Rather the leadership says so because they are true. (78)

Due to this truth-telling, the testimony or witness of the Catholic couples who choose to use artificial contraception is considered invalid and very much fallible; Mulligan goes so far as to state that “it was their special witness which led to the writing of the encyclical. It is their witness which the encyclical treats as non-authentic” (80). Moreover, “the fact that a large part of the community has its feelings hurt is no reason in itself for accepting their views as valid” (Mulligan 82). To question the authority of the Magisterium, Richard John Neuhaus admonishes, is a foolish exercise, for “To be obsessed with *what ifs* is to remain captive to fear” (78). Further, “The theo-logic is unassailable,” seeing as “Those who disagree with the official Magisterium are, by definition, not faithful and

therefore are not part of the *sensus fidelium* that bears witness to the truth of what the Magisterium teaches” (Neuhaus 81, 85). Bishop Geoffrey Robinson muses,

I find it strange that, if I were to tell a cardinal of the Vatican that I was struggling with doubts about the existence of God, I would receive sympathy and support. But if I were to tell the same cardinal that I had doubts about papal teaching on contraception and the ordination of women, I would receive a stern lecture on loyalty to the pope. (122)

It is helpful to reiterate that natural law, the basis for the tenets set forth in *Humanae Vitae*, is considered by the Church to be “objective, universal, one and the same for all mankind. In itself it is changeless, but it must be faithfully applied to changing circumstances, times and places” (Scarnecchia 37). Hittinger insists,

Every person may judge according to the natural law. Capacity to judge according to the natural law, moreover, is found wherever there is authority to judge other persons. In either case, the natural law must be preferred to any human ordinance that directly contradicts the divine law. (111 – 2)

In this same vein, “Even those who are not members of the Catholic Church are expected to heed the moral teaching of the Church on human life issues because they are based on reason and the natural law as understood by the Magisterium,” honored as “The arbiter of the whole moral law” (Scarnecchia 135). This is obviously problematic, given the Biblical precept of free will (an example of which is seen in Deuteronomy 30:15).

Even when the word of the Church is presented as infallible, the *analysis* of the same word may not be such. “Since words alone cannot guarantee infallible comprehension of a message, we must look outside the word: in the phrase, in the verbal or nonverbal context, in what we know of the speaker and his audience” (Perelman 44). To do so ensures that we “lessen misunderstanding and . . . comprehend the message according to the intention of the person who gave it. The interpretation, however, must take into account other exigencies, most notably when we are interpreting sacred or legal texts” (Perelman 44). Ironically, reception of *Humanae Vitae* may be constrained by the very fact that its message has remained unchanged in a world that is constantly changing; interpretation is made somewhat easier by this same fact. Arguing for change when the text or idea in question is unchanging is not necessarily uncomplicated, but it does clearly delineate the stance presented. The encyclical inspires liberationist action, one in which “A critical judgment . . . begins with the assumption that oppression which is humanly caused must be remedied by human action” (Osiek 41). This transformative action, much like that explored by Murphy, “will not come from the oppressors,” but rather will come from those who are or have been oppressed, “whose responsibility it is to acquire the critical perspective which will enable them to closely analyze their situation without naïveté” (Osiek 41).

While the Church’s word does not alter, the topics it addresses invariably metamorphose. Although the concept of natural law is often applied to contraception, the Church’s stance on in-vitro and similar technologies shows that natural law is intrinsic to discussions of ceasing or banning life as well as creating

it. If the Catholic couple is not afforded assistance in avoiding procreation, nor are spouses offered external options to bring forth life. The unnatural creation of life is as illicit as the unnatural prevention of existence. The Church dismisses artificial insemination with an anonymous sperm donor in that the resulting child is likely to not have a connection with his biological father; a husband's sperm may only be used if it is collected during the actual act of intercourse (Morris 368). Gerard Brunelle, a proponent of NFP, asserts, "Contraception takes life away from love while in vitro techniques take love away from life. They are the two sides of the same anti-life coin," prompting historian Charles Morris to ponder, "One hopes that God judges epigrammatic smugness more harshly than an adolescent's masturbation" (Morris 368).

The mortal sin of birth control remains a point of pungent contention for numerous Catholics of either sex. In her groundbreaking study, *How Catholic Women Have Changed*, Margaret Murphy introduces a woman who underwent a tubal ligation after the birth of her second child, who insists that she

never regretted the choice, and I have never gotten over my bitterness and rage that "officially" that choice condemns me to hell. Can we respect a church that does not merely ignore our experience, but condemns it outright? Such a church is a smug home for celibate totalitarians, but is an enemy of what Jesus stood for. (40)

Once again, Catholic couples are at a spiritual crossroads: if they wish to limit their families, they must do so for very strict reasons; if they wish to increase their family but cannot do so naturally, they must subject themselves to practices not

borne out by scientific advances, illustrating that “Technology, kinship, and the meaning of nature are recurring challenges for religious traditions” (Traina et al. 19). Regarding the latter faction,

[W]hen religious people are deciding how to react to ARTs they are not typically

deciding between flouting nature and uncritically obeying it. Rather, they are drawing on traditional understandings of nature – making use of precedents and analogies that already have meaning within their traditions – in order to give meaning and place to the new technologies, to whatever degree they may embrace them. . . . Each acceptance of new methods (and each thoughtful rejection) is a transformation of the tradition’s view of nature, inevitably, but on the tradition’s own terms. There is development but rarely a sharp discontinuity. (Traina et al. 20)

It is doubtful whether there will be development in (let alone outright dismissal of) the Church’s traditional view on that considered to be non-natural. Instead, the propagation of natural law follows a Burkean idea of a success story of a circular Order, one which, during “the course of its imaginary attainments . . . brings to the imagination the very ideals that make precisely its ideas of success seem so pressingly desirable,” which leads to the supposed “‘cure’ but reinvigorates the ‘disease,’ and readies the audience for another variant of the same success story the next time” (*Religion* 234). Considering that the Church called for educational programs promoting natural law to be “publicized by every modern means of mass communication – daily newspapers and periodicals,

publications of both a scientific and a popular nature, radio and television” even seven years before the advent of *Humanae Vitae*, it is unlikely that new methodologies or technologies – all of which are deemed as threatening to totality – will ever be embraced (*Mater et Magistra* 223). Succinctly stated, that which thwarts natural law *is not* and, if history is any predictor, *will not* ever be tolerated. This is seen in situations as varied as the individual who suffers from impotence, for those who experience antecedent and/or perpetual sexual incapacity may not enter marriage under the Code of Canon Law, to the currently promising stem cell research, which necessitates embryonic destruction (Scarnecchia 166, 193). Additionally, the advent of the “morning-after” pill has caused great consternation in the Church, and is not to be used even in cases of rape. A woman may use spermicides to kill a rapist’s sperm, since she is “not sinning but performing a good deed, an act of self-defense” (Scarnecchia 254). This does not mean abortifacient drugs such as diethylstilbestrol may be used, for “she has no right to threaten the life of a child who may have already been conceived” (Scarnecchia 254). Shockingly, Scarnecchia goes on to comment of a hypothetical rape victim, “If she could have shoved him off her before he ejaculated within her vagina she would certainly not have been guilty of the sin of *coitus interruptus*, rather, it would have been a good move” (254). Even during a time of assault, a woman should bear in mind that she, too, may actively sin.

Humanae Vitae is offered by some academics and theologians as an example of revelatory and/or prophetic rhetoric, in that it foretold the demise of a society in which contraceptives were easily offered and easily used (Mulligan

1968, USCCB 2009). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops mourns “a loss of belief in the value of [marital] purposes when couples readily treat, as separate choices, the decision to get married and to have children,” as well as “a disturbing trend today to view marriage as a mostly private matter, an individualistic project not related to the common good but oriented mostly to achieving personal satisfaction” (4). While the oft-quoted statistic that half of all marriages end in divorce may indeed be true, it is simplistic to blame this widespread matrimonial failure on contraception.

As is the case with any fruitful topic, many options for exploration remain, whether in the field of rhetoric or beyond. As evidenced, the literature available for this study is the impressive work of dedicated scholars. That none of them chose to consider the encyclical through a Burkean lens was my good fortune, and provided an academic alcove that in turn allowed me to stake a claim. There are many unclaimed niches remaining, even in areas that have already been scholastically excavated. Two apparent options are found in gender and theological studies. Theoretical projects comparing the picture of marriage in *Humanae Vitae* to that presented by the Torah, Koran, or other sacred text could prove valuable, as could a survey of marital practices of intimacy as accorded by the major world religions. Contraceptive practices among specific regions may be considered; impressive work has begun in this theme, and the field is ripe for expansion (see Agadjanian, Yabiku, and Fawcett 2009; Goldscheider and Mosher 1988; and Kertzer 2006). Given that the Church and feminist theory/practice have violently clashed since the latter’s inception, faith and feminism will

continue to intertwine amongst female believers and observers, as is often played out in sovereignty over the female body (see Carmody 1986). Studies may be conducted with organizations that formed in reaction to *Humanae Vitae* and continue to campaign for greater individual rights within the Church. One such group is the former Catholics for a Free Choice (now Catholics for Choice), founded in 1973 on five principles: “the moral agency of women, the primacy of informed conscience, the right of Catholics to dissent from noninfallible church teachings, religious freedom, and social justice” (Wallace 34). While Catholics for Choice seeks to lower the abortion rate, its members do not dismiss abortion as an option, effectively repudiating one of the centric canons of the Church. The group’s acceptance of non-traditional values aligns with Perelman’s analysis of dissociation:

When, faced with the incompatibilities that ordinary thought encounters, a person does not limit himself to conjuring away the difficulty by pretending not to see it, but instead tries to resolve it in a theoretically satisfying manner by reestablishing a coherent vision of reality, he will most often attain such a resolution by a dissociation of the ideas accepted at the start. (126).

Perelman’s dissociation is also evident in groups such as Voices of the Faithful, whose motto is, “Keep the Faith, Change the Church,” and Call to Action, which promotes justice and equality amongst the laity in numerous controversial areas (including sexuality), and sells items such as fair trade coffee and shirts bearing the slogan, “Catholic. Liberal. Faithful.”

Additionally, consideration of individuals whose Catholic identity moves beyond the sanctioned dogma could provide compelling ethnographic data. One such person is Swiss Catholic priest Hans Küng, current president of the Global Ethic Foundation. The Vatican withdrew Küng's authority to teach Catholic theology; his personal theology deviates from Catholicism to New Age. While the GEF stands for morals that are in spirit, if not law, with the promoted traditions of the Church (a non-violent culture emphasizing solidarity and equality, filled with tolerance and truth), its *Declaration Toward a Global Ethic* makes no mention of birth control. Küng, however, is a fervent supporter of woman's right to contraception:

[I]f practised in a responsible way, [it] can contribute to a genuine emancipation of women, provided that it does not lead to the sexual exploitation of women and that the sexual revolution is not identified with the emancipation of women. Having fewer children can make it possible, particularly for women in the lower strata of society, to complete professional training, to co-ordinate a job with family life, and to be free of financial burdens and burdens at work. (99)

In the consideration of burdens, it is unlikely that the Church will ever validate the potentially heavy yokes wrought by childbearing and childrearing. Carmody observes that, "because of medical, economic, emotional, or demographic considerations many pregnancies come as rueful, even bitter news," and while this may ultimately be superseded by "a joy that has a strong basis in biological nature, . . . women and men already hard pressed by family responsibilities can

find another pregnancy debilitating” (114). A survey of progressive Catholic organizations such as those listed above may evidence how practical aid is given to overworked parents who may struggle not only with the doctrine presented by the Church, but by the very real issues of raising a family in a global economy that has been shaken in recent years. Through its banning of contraception, the Church may very well leave families floundering in issues of *mundane* need. To care for those families which have overextended themselves in a conjugal manner, the following ringing endorsement is offered: “[M]ay mutual aid continue to increase among all members of the great human family. This opens up an almost limitless field for the activity of the large international organizations” (*Humanae Vitae* 23). Contrasting to the encyclical, Moffett quotes Guadelupe, a Mexican wife and mother who chose to have a tubal ligation after her second child: “The Church says not to use contraceptives, that it’s a sin, but they don’t come here and say, I see you have all these kids and I’ll help you” (229). Matters of faith do not exclude matters of a fiscal nature, and the sociological impact of banning contraception in families at various income levels is a worthy prospection.

As well, scholars have the opportunity to consider the relevance of *Humanae Vitae* as a reflection of the Church’s heteronormativism, an issue further explored by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the 1986 document *On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*. A precedent to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith’s statement, the declaration cautions, “Homosexual activity is not a complementary union, able to transmit life; and so it thwarts the call to a life of that form of self-giving which the Gospel says is the

essence of Christian living” (7). Catholic and secular news agencies alike erupted in a frenzy of reporting when it was thought that Benedict XVI condones the use of condoms between male prostitutes. In truth, the Pope, in speaking to journalist Peter Seewald, neither justifies homosexuality nor condom use, but rather references the fight against AIDS, and sees this specific situational condom use as a step to avoid disease; an action which may lead to an opportunity for conversion, “a first step in a different way, a more human way, of living sexually” (117-9). While some may express surprise that Benedict’s stance shows a sense of compassion to homosexual persons, it should be noted that the Church has long condemned violence against gay persons; however, “The response to such violent behavior . . . must not be used to legitimize legal recognition of the homosexual lifestyle” (Scarnecchia 222). Given the current battles being waged both at the national and international levels to legalize matrimony for homosexual couples, legal studies detailing the relationship between the Church and homosexuality may also prove a topic ripe for additional discussion. Two striking developments will assist in an examination of this manner: 1) the increased demand for equal rights within the Church of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) believers, a movement headed by Catholics for Equality; and 2) the emergence of “a school of thought . . . that seeks to apply Catholic natural law conclusions to U.S. law,” a mindset upheld by scholars who insist “that the current Supreme Court’s decisions on privacy so violate natural law that they can rightfully and legitimately be resisted” (Kissling 196). Such juridical issues collide in the reproof of the Church; “[W]hen civil

legislation is introduced to protect behavior to which no one has any conceivable right, neither the Church nor society at large should be surprised when other distorted notions and practices gain ground” (*On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* 10). This consideration recalls the following passage from *Humanae Vitae*:

Do not allow the morality of your people to be degraded; do not accept that by legal means practices contrary to the natural and divine law be introduced into that fundamental cell which is the family. There is another way in which public authorities can and should contribute to the solution of the demographic problem; namely, the way of a provident policy for the family, of a wise educational program that is respectful of the moral law and the liberty of the citizens. (*Humanae Vitae* 23)

The Catholic concept of family (man=husband, woman=wife, with the addition of children) is also a potential area of interest, seeing as it is a point of convergence with other conservative faiths.

The above reference to “the demographic problem” is perhaps the most fertile academic ground surrounding *Humanae Vitae*: the matter of population. Lester Brown of the Earth Policy Institute notes that industrial countries, save for the United States, now have stagnant populations, while the vast majority of the 80 million people born each year are citizens of the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, or Africa – all of which suffer from failing support systems (“Food Supply, Climate Change, Population: Stabilizing Tipping Points in Nature” 1). In point of fact, these are countries where the majority of the populations are not

Catholic, but a truly just faith also cares for those outside of its congregation. Be that as it may, the Church continues to either acknowledge the idea of a population explosion without acknowledging its dangers, or simply dismiss the concept of overpopulation altogether.

[I]t is no easy matter to maintain critical balance and objectivity when dealing with the emotion-loaded, frequently propaganda-inflated problems associated with current world population trends. Perhaps in dealing with no other issues are modern Catholics in particular made more sharply aware that they are members of a religious minority that cherishes a distinctive value system in a curiously permissive, morally pluralist society. (Thomas 80)

The permissiveness mentioned by Thomas was a harbinger of doom in *Humanae Vitae*. Perhaps it is less of an arduous task to fight moral pluralism in nations that are not quite so modernized. Indeed, the fact that evangelism and education often go hand-in-hand in Third World or developing countries cannot be dismissed, especially when the Church is intent upon battling what is termed “contraceptive imperialism” by its faithful (see Kopp 1998). It’s no small wonder that the Pontifical Council for the Family warns,

Women are the first to suffer psychologically and physically from campaigns inspired by the ideology of population fear. In these campaigns a false concept of the woman’s ‘reproductive health’ is used to promote different methods of contraception or abortion. These methods

not only can suppress the unborn child's life, but also have grave repercussions on women's health, even risking their lives. (23)

Even if Catholics, and Christians as a whole, accept that overpopulation is a very real concern, DeWitt insists, "Our obligation and privilege to care for God's creation does not give us license to use whatever means we have at our disposal to address environmental problems," as witnessed by "The fact that many people justify abortion as a population growth control method does not mean that Christians need to see this as a logical solution to environmental abuse" (75).

The argument of overpopulation notwithstanding, the Church is clearly very much concerned with population control. This is apparent in documents other than *Humanae Vitae*, as seen in the following excerpt from the *Catechism*:

The state has a responsibility for its citizens' well-being. In this capacity it is legitimate for it to intervene to orient the demography of the population. This can be done by means of objective and respectful information, but certainly not by authoritarian, coercive measures. The state may not legitimately usurp the initiative of spouse, who have the primary responsibility for the procreation and education of their children. In this area, it is not authorized to employ means contrary to the moral law. (2372)

Baker ventures, "The great danger of *Humanae Vitae* lies in the support it gives to organized conservative Catholic resistance to the initiation of publicly financed population control programs" (147). Continued investigation into this area could

prove considerably intriguing to academicians in the areas of business and/or economics, as well as those interested in political science.

Humanae Vitae remains at once *kairotic* and chaotic, stirring debate some forty-plus years after its declaration. While encouraging a life that is, in accordance with Catholic definition, honorable and loving, the encyclical also promotes an existence that is less than autonomous. Elliott theorizes, “Human beings cannot create moral systems that are universally necessary or self-evidently true Nature is the final determinant of the ethics that is capable of directing human affairs in a finite world” (22). Additionally, “The method of proposal and possible rejection makes the gaining of knowledge in ethics an open-ended and evolving process. It can never be certain; it can never be final” (Elliott 23). With this in mind, it is unsurprising that the static stance taken by the Church regarding contraception remains “a clash between the ideals established by the allegedly immutable dogmas of the Church, as defended predominantly by the clergy; and the practical problems of the laity” (Reiterman 232). As it exists today, notes John Hart, the Church may be regarded in two ways:

as an institutional body controlled by a clerical hierarchy and as a community of believers, many of whose lay members are becoming more reflective about church teachings, more analytical about church practices, and more assertive about advancing their own positions and advocating actions that should flow from them. (67)

With this estimation in mind, it should be understood that this project is not meant to condemn the authority of the Church as antiquated, nor condone that of

the laity as absolute. Rather than offer a polemic, I offer textual and rhetorical analysis, keeping in mind the mysteries that *Humanae Vitae* claims to have (re)solved. Burke's "Prologue in Heaven" offers an appropriate design grounded in Mystery, "For, once a believer is brought to accept mysteries, he will be better minded to take orders without question from those persons whom he considers authoritative," since "mysteries are a good grounding for obedience, insofar as the acceptance of a mystery involves a person in the abnegation of his own personal judgment" (*Religion* 307). Moreover, while I may propose that the dictates of the encyclical offer rhetoric that is less than helpful to the contemporary world, what would take its place? What would prove to be the ultimate moral decision, the ultimate choice in health literacy, for the Catholic Church? Is it possible that a new concept of ethics will come into being, and if so, will it arise from the pulpit or the pew? The possibilities are intriguing, but one thing is certain: the power of theology is ever in its language as in its practice. Accordingly, this study closes with the following observation from Joseph Ratzinger, now recognized the world over as Pope Benedict XVI: "In the last analysis, the language of being, the language of nature, is identical with the language of conscience. But in order to hear that language, it is necessary, as with all language, to practice it" (67).

REFERENCES

- Agadjanian, Victor, Scott T. Yabiku, and Lubayna Fawcett. "History, Community Milieu, and Christian-Muslim Differentials in Contraceptive Use in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 48 (2009): 462 – 79.
- Aloisi, Silvia. "Muslims more numerous than Catholics: Vatican." *Reuters UK*. 24 November 2009 <<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKL3068682420080330>>.
- American Pregnancy Association. "Ovulation Calendar: How to Track Ovulation." *American Pregnancy Association*. 13 May 2010 <<http://www.americanpregnancy.org/gettingpregnant/ovulationcalendar.html>>.
- Aristotle. *Rhetoric*. Trans. W. Rhys Roberts. New York: Dover Publications, 2004.
- Baker, Jeffrey J.W. "Science, Birth Control and the Roman Catholic Church." *BioScience*. 20 (1970): 143 – 51.
- Balasuriya, Tissa. "Companion to the Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI on 'God Is Love.'" *Crosscurrents*. Summer (2006): 229 – 60.
- Bandarage, Asoka. *Women, Population, and Global Crisis: A Political-Economic Analysis*. London: Zed Books, 1997.
- Barna Group. "Five Years Later: 9/11 Attacks Show No Lasting Influence on Americans' Faith." *The Barna Group*. 28 August 2006. 3 November 2008 <<http://www.barna.org/culture-articles/148-five-years-later-911-attacks-show-no-lasting-influence-on-americans-faith>>.
- Benedict XVI. "Address of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to Participants in the International Congress Organized by the Pontifical Lateran University on the 40th Anniversary of the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*." *The Holy See*. 3 November 2009 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080510_humanae-vitae_en.html>.
- . *Encyclical Letter, Deus Caritas Est: God is Love*. 25 December 2005. Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2006.
- . *Essential Pope Benedict*. Ed. John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

- Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Masculine Domination*. 1998. Trans. Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2001.
- Bromley, Dorothy Dunbar. *Catholics and Birth Control*. New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1965.
- Brown, Lester. "Food Supply, Climate Change, Population: Stabilizing Tipping Points in Nature." *Mother Earth News*. 14 August 2009. 1 September 2010 <[http:// www.motherearthnews.com/Nature-Community/Population-Growth-Food-Supply-Tipping-Point.aspx](http://www.motherearthnews.com/Nature-Community/Population-Growth-Food-Supply-Tipping-Point.aspx)>.
- Brown, Lester R., Gary Gardner, and Brian Halweil. *Beyond Malthus*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999.
- Budziszewski, J. "Contraception: A Symposium." *First Things*. 88 (1998): 17 – 29.
- Burke, Kenneth. "Dramatism and Logology." *Communication Quarterly*. 33 (1985): 89 – 93.
- . *A Grammar of Motives*. 1945. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.
- . *Language as Symbolic Action*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966.
- . *A Rhetoric of Motives*. 1950. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.
- . *The Rhetoric of Religion*. 1961. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970.
- . "Theology and Logology." *The Kenyon Review*. 1 (1979): 151 – 85.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Campbell, Flann. "Birth Control and the Christian Churches." *Population Studies*. 14 (1960). 131 – 47.

- Carmody, Denise Lardner. *The Double Cross*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1986.
- Carter, C. Allen. "Logology and Religion." *The Journal of Religion*. 72 (1992): 1 – 18.
- Compier, Don H. *What is Rhetorical Theology?* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.
- Condit, Celeste Michelle. "Post-Burke: Transcending the Sub-Stance of Dramatism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 78 (1992): 349 – 55.
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons*. *The Holy See*. 3 June 2003. 1 September 2010 <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030731_homosexual-unions_en.html>.
- Crusius, Timothy. *Kenneth Burke and the Conversation after Philosophy*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1999.
- DeWitt, Calvin B. *Earth-Wise: A Biblical Response to Environmental Issues*. Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1994.
- Elliott, Herschel. *Ethics for a Finite World*. Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2005.
- Engelman, Robert. "Hope in Numbers." *Sustainable Planet*. Ed. Juliet B. Schor and Betsy Taylor. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002. 193 – 208.
- Finkler, Kaja. "Sacred Healing and Biomedicine Compared." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*. 8 (1994): 178 – 97.
- Freire, Paulo and Donaldo Macedo. *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. London: Routledge, 1987.
- Garlitz, Robert. *Kenneth Burke's Logology and Literary Criticism*. Bloomington: Xlibris, 2004.
- Gee, James. *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*. 1991. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Goldscheider, Calvin, and William D. Mosher. "Religious affiliation and contraceptive usage: Changing American patterns, 1955 – 82." *Studies in Family Planning*. 19 (1988): 48 – 57.

- Gordon, Linda. "Voluntary Motherhood; The Beginnings of Feminist Birth Control Ideas in the U.S." *Feminist Studies*. 1 (1973). 5 – 22.
- Greeley, Andrew M. "Council or Encyclical?" *Review of Religious Research*. 18 (1976): 3 – 24.
- Groat, H. Theodore, Arthur G. Neal, and Evelyn C. Knisely. "Contraceptive Nonconformity Among Catholics." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 14 (1975): 367 – 77.
- Gross, Alan G. "Presence as Argument in the Public Sphere." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. 35 (2005): 5 – 21.
- Gudorf, Christine E. "Contraception and Abortion in Roman Catholicism." *Sacred Rights*. New York: Oxford UP, 2003. 55 – 79.
- Gunder, Michael. "Sustainability: Planning's Saving Grace or the Road to Perdition?" *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 26 (2006): 208 – 221.
- Hatch, John. "Between Religious Visions and Secular Realities: (Dia)logology and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation." *"Coming to Terms" with Reconciliation – Working Paper Library*. 27 July 2009 <<http://www.global.wise.edu/reconciliation>>.
- Hehir, J. Bryan. "The Church and the Population Year: Notes on a Strategy." *Theological Studies*. 35 (1974): 71 – 82.
- Hickey, Kenneth and Laurie Lyckholm. "Child Welfare Versus Parental Autonomy: Medical Ethics, the Law, and Faith-Based Healing." *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*. 25 (2004). 265 – 76.
- Hittinger, Russell. *First Grace: Rediscovering the Natural Law in the Post-Christian World*. Wilmington: ISI Books, 2003.
- Hodgson, Dennis and Susan Cotts Watkins. "Feminists and Neo-Malthusians: Past and Present Alliances." *Population and Development Review*. 23 (1997). 469 – 523.
- Hollander, Jack. *The Real Environmental Crisis: Why Poverty, Not Affluence, is the Environment's Number One Enemy*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2003.
- The Holy Bible: New International Version. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.

- Hudson, Thom. "Theoretical Perspectives on Reading." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. 18 (1998): 43 – 60.
- Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2004.
- The Jocelyn Centre for Natural Fertility Management. "The Natural Fertility Management Contraception Program." *The Jocelyn Centre for Natural Fertility Management*. 13 May 2010 <<http://www.fertility.com.au/Docs/Downloads/Contraception%20Program%20Brochure.pdf>>.
- John XXIII. *Encyclical Letter, Mater et Magistra: Christianity and Social Progress. The Holy See*. 15 May 1961. New York: The America Press, 1961.
- John Paul II. *Apostolic Letter Laetamur Magnopere, in which the Latin Typical Edition of the Catechism of the Catholic Church is Approved and Promulgated. The Holy See*. 15 August 1997. 8 January 2009 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_15081997_laetamur_en.html>.
- Johnson, Elizabeth A. "Feminism and Sharing the Faith: A Catholic Dilemma." *American Catholic Social Teaching*. Ed. Thomas J. Massaro and Thomas A. Shannon. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002. 107-22.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. "A Disembodied 'Theology of the Body.'" *Commonweal*. 26 January 2001: 11 – 17.
- Katz, Leo. *The Rhythm*. 1932. Chicago: Latz Foundation, 1942.
- Keely, Charles B. "Limits to Papal Power: Vatican Inaction After *Humanae Vitae*." *Population and Development Review*. 10 (1994): 220 – 40.
- Keith, Phillip M. "Burkeian Invention, from Pentad to Dialectic." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. 9 (1979): 137 – 41.
- Kelly, George A. *Birth Control and Catholics*. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963.
- Kennedy, George A. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

- Kertzer, David I. "Religion and the decline of fertility: Conclusions." *Religion and the decline of fertility within the western world*. Ed. Renzo Derosas and Frans van Poppel. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2006. 259 – 69.
- Kickbusch, Ilona S. "Health literacy: addressing the health and education divide." *Health Promotion International*. 16 (2001). 289 – 96.
- King, Roger J.H. "Defining Literacy in a Time of Environmental Crisis." *Journal of Social Philosophy*. 31 (2000). 68 – 81.
- Kissling, Frances. "Roman Catholic Fundamentalism: What's Sex (and Power) Got to Do with It?" *Religious Fundamentalism and the Human Rights of Women*. Ed. Courtney W. Howland. New York: Palgrave, 1999. 192 – 202.
- Komonchak, Joseph. "*Humanae Vitae* and Its Reception: Ecclesiological Reflections." *Theological Studies*. 39 (1978): 221 – 57.
- Kopp, Brian. "Contraceptive Imperialism and Third World Poverty." *Catholic Education Resource Center*. 8 September 2010 <<http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/population/pc0007.html>>.
- Küng, Hans. *Women in Christianity*. Trans. John Bowden. London: Continuum, 2001.
- Lambooy, Jan G. "Knowledge and Urban Economic Development: An Evolutionary Perspective." *Urban Studies*. 39 (2002): 1019 – 1035.
- Lawler, Ronald, Joseph Boyle, and William May. *Catholic Sexual Ethics: A Summary, Explanation, and Defense*. Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 1985.
- Luce, Clare Booth. "Birth Control and the Catholic Church." *Family Planning in an Exploding Population*. John A. O'Brien. New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1968. 192 – 99.
- Luke, Timothy W. "On Environmentalism: Geo-Power and Eco-Knowledge in the Discourses of Contemporary Environmentalism." *Cultural Critique*. 31 (1995): 57 – 81.
- Lynch, Katherine A. "Theoretical and Analytical Approaches to Religious Beliefs, Values, and Identities During the Modern Fertility Transition." *Religion and the Decline of Fertility in the Western World*. Ed. Renzo Derosas and Frans van Poppel. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer, 2006. 21 – 39.

- Lyon, David. *Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Postmodern Times*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.
- Maddux, Kristy. "Finding Comedy in Theology: A Hopeful Supplement to Kenneth Burke's Logology." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. 39 (2006): 208 – 32.
- Maguire, Daniel C. "Sex and the Sacred." *CrossCurrents*. Fall (2004): 23 – 30.
- Maniates, Michael. "In Search of Consumptive Resistance." *Confronting Consumption*. Ed. Thomas Princen, Michael Maniates, and Ken Conca. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002. 199 – 236.
- Martin, Laurie T. et al. "Developing Predictive Models of Health Literacy." *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 24 (2009). 1211 – 6.
- McClory, Robert. *Turning Point*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1995.
- . "Authority in the church: who makes the final call?" *U.S. Catholic*. March 1993: 6 – 13.
- McCutcheon, Russell T. *The Discipline of Religion: Structure, Meaning, Rhetoric*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Moffett, George D. *Critical Masses*. New York: Viking Penguin-Penguin Books USA, 1994.
- Moje, Elizabeth Birr and Cynthia Lewis. "Examining Opportunities to Learn Literacy: The Role of Critical Sociocultural Literacy Research." *Reframing Sociocultural Research on Literacy*. Ed. Cynthia Lewis, Patricia Enciso, and Elizabeth Birr Moje. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2007. 15 – 48.
- Morris, Charles. *American Catholic*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.
- Mulligan, James J. *The Pope and the Theologians*. Emmitsburg, Maryland: Mount Saint Mary's Seminary Press, 1968.
- Murphy, Margaret. *How Catholic Women Have Changed*. Lanham, Maryland: Sheed & Ward, 1987.

- Murphy, Nancey C. *Reasoning and Rhetoric in Religion*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001.
- Neuhaus, Richard John. *Catholic Matters*. New York: Basic Books, 2006.
- Ntiri, Daphne W. "Toward a Functional and Culturally Salient Definition of Literacy." *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal*. 3 (2009): 97 – 104.
- Osiek, Carolyn. *Beyond Anger*. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.
- Overington, Michael. "Kenneth Burke and the Method of Dramatism." *Theory and Society*. 4 (1977). 131 – 56.
- Paul VI. *Encyclical Letter, Humanae Vitae: On Human Life*. 29 July 1968. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1968.
- Perelman, Chaïm. *The Realm of Rhetoric*. 1982. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.
- Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. *Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Forum Web Publishings and Communications, 2008.
- Pijnenburg, Martien A.M., et al. "Catholic Healthcare Organizations and the Articulation of Their Identity." *HEC Forum*. Vol. 20, No. 1, 2008: 75 – 97.
- Pink, Thomas. "Natural Law and the Theory of Moral Obligation." *Psychology and Philosophy*. Ed. Sara Heinämaa and Martina Reuter. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer, 2009. 97 – 114.
- Pius XII. *The Moral Limits of Medical Research and Treatment: An Address Given September 14, 1952 by His Holiness Pope Pius XII to the First International Congress on the Histopathology of the Nervous System; With Reference to Psychoanalysis: Reprint of an Article from L'Osservatore romano*. 14 September 1952. National Catholic Welfare Conference: Washington, D.C., 1952.
- Pontifical Council for the Family. "Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions of Population Trends." *EWTN.com*. 25 August 2007 <<http://www.ewtn.com/library/icuria/pcftrend.htm>> .

- Potter, Joseph E. and Axel I. Mundigo. "Fertility Planning." *Handbook of Population*. Ed. Dudley L. Poston, Jr. and Michael Micklin. New York: Springer Science + Business Media, LLC. 2005. 739 – 59.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. *On Conscience*. 1984. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007.
- Reiterman, Carl. "Birth Control and Catholics." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 4 (1965): 213 – 33.
- Robinson, Geoffrey. *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Order of Saint Benedict, 2007.
- Ryberg, Jesper. "The Argument from Overpopulation – Logical and Ethical Considerations." *Population and Environment: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. 19 (1998): 411 – 426.
- Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Declaration in Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church against Certain Errors of the Present Day*. Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1973.
- Scarlett, Brian. "On the Logic of Theocracy." *Sophia*. 43 (2004): 3 – 22.
- Scarnecchia, D. Brian. *Bioethics, Law, and Human Life Issues*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010.
- Schumacher, E.F. *Small is Beautiful*. 1973. New York: Perennial-HarperCollins, 1989.
- Seewald, Peter and Benedict XVI. *Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, and the Signs of the Times*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010.
- Sheard, Cynthia Miecznikowski. "Kairos and Kenneth Burke's Psychology of Political and Social Communication." *College English*. 55 (1993): 291 – 310.
- Smith, Janet E. *Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of American Press, 1991.
- . "Sterilizations Reconsidered?" *Christian Bioethics*. 4 (1998): 45 – 62.
- Street, Brian. "Introduction." *Literacy and Development: Ethnographic Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2007. 21 – 6.
- Sulloway, Alvah W. *Birth Control and Catholic Doctrine*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959.

- Thomas, John L. "Population Control and the Catholic Family." *Population Ethics*. Ed. Francis X. Quinn. Washington, D.C.: Corpus Books, 1968. 78 – 97.
- Toner, Patrick. "Infallibility." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 7. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910. 11 Nov. 2009 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/077790a.htm>>.
- Traina, Christina et al. "Compatible Contradictions: Religion and the Naturalization." *Altering Nature*. Ed. B.A. Lustig et al. New York: Springer Science + Business Media, 2008. 15 – 85.
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*. 17 November 2009.
- Vellenga, Sipco J. "Longing for Health. A Practice of Religious Healing and Biomedicine Compared." *Journal of Religion and Health*. 47 (2008): 326 – 37.
- Vitell, Scott John et al. "Religiosity and Moral Identity: The Mediating Role of Self-Control." *Journal of Business Ethics*. (88) 2009: 601 – 13.
- von Hildebrand, Dietrich. "The Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*: A Sign of Contradiction." *Why Humanae Vitae was Right*. Ed. Janet E. Smith. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993. 47 – 84.
- Wallace, Ruth. "Catholic Women and the Creation of a New Social Reality." *Gender and Society*. 2 (1998). 24 – 38.
- Wallsten, Peter. "Catholic Church Emerges as Key Player in Legislative Battle." *The Wall Street Journal*. 10 November 2009. 12 November 2009 <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125781425786840005.html>>.
- Whitfield, L.K. "A Minister Asks About Faith Healing." *Pastoral Psychology*. 5 (1954): 53 – 7.
- "Why Are the Teen Pregnancy and Birth Rates Increasing?" *The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy*. January 2010. 2 May 2010 <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/Briefly_Why-Are-the-Rates-Increasing.pdf>.
- Wilder, Amos N. *Early Christian Rhetoric*. 1964. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.

