CURRENT THEOLOGY

CONJUGAL SEXUAL LOVE AND CONTEMPORARY MORAL THEOLOGY

In the last few years moral theological literature has flooded that area of human sexuality which, for lack of a better neutral term, I will call its "nonprocreative" dimension. In itself this is not new. Throughout the Christian tradition theologians have at times turned from the procreative value of sex and discussed its other values, e.g., its value as a remedy for concupiscence. What is new, as we all know, is that this recent moral theology (or Christian ethics) has viewed these nonprocreative values more broadly and positively than ever in the past. What is hardly as well known is a strange lacuna in this recent theology. Little of it deals with those questions concerning the nonprocreative side of sexuality that arise for Christian married people *in* their married life.

The present bulletin centers its attention on this lacuna. First, I will illustrate, by way of examples, the silence of theologians on these questions, particularly in contexts where one would expect them to take the questions up. Secondly, and more importantly, I will give some idea of the work of a small number of theologians who are beginning to move into the neglected area and discuss these questions. I will be concerned to show how the investigations are beginning to shape states of the questions and thus open avenues for further inquiry.

I

We now are having ample moral theological discussion of the sexuality of the unmarried: sexual education of children, teen-age sexual development, premarital sex in general, homosexuality, etc. We also have ample discussion of sexuality married people engage in *outside* their Church-recognized marriage, e.g., various forms of adultery (such as in "open marriage") and of divorce and civil remarriage. One way or another, what underlies contemporary moral theological discussion of sex turns out again and again to be one question: What is permitted outside marriage?[1] Rare is the central question: What are the values and practical responsibilites and opportunities of sex within marriage?

[1] This is striking when the authors have announced the subject of their inquiry to be human sexuality in general. Thus, neither the title nor the preface nor the foreword of the valuable, pioneering *Sexuality and Moral Responsibility* (Washington, D. C., 1968) of Robert P. O'Neil and Michael A. Donovan prepares the reader for the absence of any discussion of "sexuality and moral responsibility" in marriage. The sexual-moral problems to which the book primarily attends are concerned with sexual fantasy, masturbation, and premarital sex. A similarly restricted practical perspective is seen in the equally pioneering

There is one obvious exception. In recent years article after article, book after book have tackled one question which is intrinsic to nonprocreative, married sexuality: Under what conditions, if ever, may married people ensure that their marital relations are exclusively nonprocreative? That is, under what conditions, if ever, may they use contraceptives? All moral theologians dealing with this question have recognized that there are nonprocreative sexual values for which husband and wife may and should strive. Many of the theologians make such values part of their argumentation for or against the morality of contraceptives. But hardly any attempt a thorough, rigorous examination or justification of the values themselves.[2]

This lacuna in current moral theology is all the more surprising in the face of the "marriage crisis" of our times. We witness an unmistakable sociocultural development of Western civilization. Men and women

---

and valuable essay of Charles Curran, "Sexuality and Sin: A Current Appraisal," *Contemporary Problems in Moral Theology* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1970) pp. 159-88. The concrete questions of sexuality to which Curran applies his general analyses of sin concern extramarital sexuality, procreation, masturbation, and homosexuality. Nothing is said about sins of married people neglecting or obstructing nonprocreative values of married sexual love. The Task Force of the Council on Church and Society, the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, could report that "we stressed the relational and celebrational aspects of sexual activity at least as much as the procreative. The purpose of our Lord in coming that we might 'have life and have it abundantly' surely must include an appreciation of our sexual nature as one avenue for realizing that promise, whether or not a procreative purpose is served at the same time" (*Sexuality and the Human Community* [Philadelphia, 1970] p. 8). But note the list of the specific issues and problems dealt with: Education in Human Sexuality for Children and Adolescents; Masturbation and Dating; Male and Female Homosexuality; Contraception; Abortion; Courtship and Marriage; Sterilization; Artificial Insemination; Single Adult Persons. Again, I am choosing a pioneering, highly commendable study, not to fault it but to illustrate how little attention is being given in Christian ethics to conjugal sexual love and how the fact does not seem to be even noticed. Concluding their general debate, certainly to be located at the cutting edge of contemporary "kirchlicher Sexualethik," Stephan Pfürtner and Bernhard Stöckle choose as the two "pedagogical and pastoral" questions for discussion, masturbation and premarital sex ("Fragen kirchlicher Sexualethik III," *Herder Korrespondenz* 27/8 [August, 1973] 390-99). This corresponds to the same choice of Pfürtner in his earlier, highly controversial *Moral—Was gilt heute noch? Erwägungen am Beispiel der Sexualmoral* (Zurich, 1972) pp. 26-30. At times it is even flatly stated that the question of what is permitted outside marriage is *the* real problem of sexual morality today (William F. Allen, "Case in Focus: Human Sexuality Updated," *Pastoral Life* 22 [1973] 44-45).

[2] Most of these writers do not spend more than a few sentences directly on the values they posit (e.g., that marital relations express the total self-giving of husband and wife). A few do devote some space to them, and I am making a critical judgment when I claim that they do not "attempt a thorough, rigorous examination or justification of the values." Hopefully, the remainder of this article will give some idea of what a serious examination and justification would have to include and thus support my judgment of how rarely it is being done.

expect great personal happiness and fulfilment from marriage. Their actual married lives often fall short of these expectations and are judged by them as failures. The disappointment and frustration come in various sectors of married life, but not least of all in their sexual loving.[3]

One cannot declare a priori that theology has anything useful to say to a Christian couple going through this common crisis of the times. There is, however, good evidence a posteriori that the married couple will not solve their problems and have together a satisfying sexual love life simply by persistent good will, recourse to prayer and the sacraments, and requisite enlightenment concerning human biology, sexual techniques, etc. On the contrary, the couple relying purely on grace, their love for each other, and the sex manual are often found to dig themselves deeper into their problems if one or both of them personally lack an openness to and appreciation for the concrete values of human sexual love. The crucial importance in sexual love of the constellation of values permeating each partner's life is argued from perspectives as widely different as those of Rollo May and Masters-Johnson.[4] The theologians declining to

[3] Helmut Harsch, "Zur Einführung: Auf dem Weg zu einem neuem Bild der Ehe," in *Das neue Bild der Ehe*, ed. Helmut Harsch (Munich, 1969) pp. 9-10, 15-16, and Urban G. Steinmetz, *The Sexual Christian* (St. Meinrad, Ind., 1972) e.g., pp. 32–35. Both Harsch and Steinmetz invoke general marriage-counseling experience. Steinmetz's example illustrates graphically the need for hard Christian thinking, theoretical and practical. What must Sally's husband learn to see in their sexual relationships so that he can become "loving" in them and make Sally feel like a wife and not "a cross between a personal prostitute and a brood mare"? An answer based on the common moral theological thesis that in each act of intercourse the spouse should see himself making a total donation of himself is not only pastorally unrealistic (uncommunicable to the husband in question) but, as I hope will emerge in the course of this article, questionable in theory. The kind of urgent questions arising out of the modern marriage crises which Harsch sets forth in the introduction are mainly ignored by Johannes Gründel in the chapter representing Catholic moral theology, "Das neue Bild der Ehe in der katholischen Theologie," *op. cit.*, pp. 37-73.—One source of the marriage crisis is the way our culture has newly become permeated with the ideal of "successful" sexual lovemaking. That the wife has now become a playmate is a major thesis of Herbert Richardson's *Nun, Witch, Playmate: The Americanization of Sex* (New York, 1971). Andrew Greeley makes the same point and notes that in this way "the challenge that the sexual revolution imposes on husband and wife is a severe one" ("Developing Your Sexuality," *Critic*, January–February 1973, p. 41; this article appears subsequently as a chapter in Greeley's *Sexual Intimacy* [Chicago, 1973]). Micheline Colin, a marriage counselor, observes the same phenomenon in France: "Mais, dans tous les cas, l'absence de jouissance n'est pas un devoir, c'est un échec ou une maladie. Prenons en pour temoins les mouvements de spiritualité du couple qui parlent du devoir d'épanouissement des époux et qui vont jusqu'à faire une idéalisation de la réussite sexuelle" ("Les conditions nouvelles de la vie sexuelle," *Lumière et vie*, March–May, 1970, p. 11).

[4] A major thesis of Rollo May's *Love and Will* (New York, 1969) is that the life and love of modern man is in trouble because, for all his new sexual freedom, information and techniques, he has lost contact with the deeper values of sexual love. Cf. May's "Reflections on the New Puritanism," in *Sex: Thoughts for Contemporary Christians*, ed. Michael J.

inquire into these values are evidently assuming that the work the Church must do here is only educational and pastoral. They are evidently assuming that the pertinent Christian values of sexual love have been made clear enough now by the theologians so that no further theological working on them is needed at the moment.[5]

One reason for this assumption is probably the consensus of many contemporary theologians on the "meaning" of human sexuality and thus on its concrete value in conjugal loving. This meaning is seen as ignored or neglected by the Christian tradition, but discovered by twentieth-century theology, Catholic and Protestant. It provides a new basis for Christian sexual morality, broader and solider than any in the past. No need, therefore, for further theological discussion of this foundation.

According to this view, the meaning of human sexuality is to express human love. Not any kind of love, but deep responsible love. The love that sexuality properly expresses is the complete giving of two persons to each other. Human sexuality is also and essentially procreative, but this is only a consequence of its expressing that love. Such a definition of human sexuality is common to so many contemporary efforts at grounding a new Christian sexual morality that it can be seen as characterizing the major modern alternative to the traditional understanding of sexuality.[6]

Taylor, S. J. (New York, 1972). According to Masters and Johnson, the individual's sexual value system affects powerfully his or her sexual functioning or disfunctioning; see *Human Sexual Inadequacy* (Boston, 1970) e.g., pp. 56-57, 215-26. Cf. Fred Belliveau and Lin Richter, *Understanding Human Sexual Inadequacy* (Boston, 1970) e.g., pp. 72, 102, 157-61.

[5] There is assuredly educational and pastoral work to be done here. One welcomes the swelling stream over the last five years or so of Christian "marriage manuals," quite concrete and explicit, yet accepted, recommended, and even endorsed by Christian churches. Among other things, these books work at reforming value constellations concerning sexuality. They seek to dispel certain long-standing prohibitions and inhibitions still binding many Christian couples and to make clear how certain actions, or ways of acting, are not only morally permitted for the Christian, but good and virtuous. But the audience they envisage and their practical purpose give them little occasion for doing theology. For the most part, they presume moral theological answers without investigating the questions. Inasmuch as some answers may be challenged as "old-fashioned" or "way out," they underline the need for theological investigation of the questions at issue. Creditable examples of this literary genre are William Fitch, *Christian Perspectives in Sex and Marriage* (Grand Rapids, 1971) and José de Vinck and John T. Catoir, *The Challenge of Love* (St. Meinrad, Ind., 1971 [1969]), though the latter book also manages to get some useful theology done en route.

[6] E.g., W. Norman Pittenger, *Making Sexuality Human* (Philadelphia, 1970) pp. 32-36; Urban T. Holmes III, in collaboration with Henry R. Oliver and Warren Breed, *The Sexual Person: The Church's Role in Human Sexual Development* (New York, 1970) pp. 11-14; Joseph MacAvoy, *Valeurs de la vie conjugale* (Paris, 1971) p. 75; John B. Gruenenfelder,

The trouble is, as Richard Roach, speaking up for the tradition, points out, that the new trend thus far has simply begged the question.[7] Its exponents offer no proof that this is the meaning of human sexuality, at least not the meaning that determines its moral use. And a little reflection, Roach argues, shows it could not be. A deep responsible love is, according to Christian teaching, the kind of love I ought to have for as many persons as possible. But neither the Christian teacher nor anyone else would approve my expressing this love sexually with as many persons as possible.

It does not help to more narrowly identify the love as one of complete self-giving. Basically the same objection holds. The Christian is encouraged to complete loving giving of self to another in relationships where sexual expression is recognized as inappropriate.

> But there is complete giving in a christian sense without marriage. I think many marriages, even good marriages, lack the depth, the complete giving, that existed between Francis and Clare, between Ignatius and Francis Xavier, between Jesus and John if you wish. Why not full sexual expression?[8]

One might add to Roach's examples of complete self-giving loves other common ones such as those of many a parent for its child, or of many a child, once grown, for its parent. Or many a brother-sister love. In brief, the kind of love sexuality should express, according to the new trend, often has to be expressed only in nonsexual ways.

But the new "meaning" of sexuality does not distinguish sexuality from other expressions of love. Consequently, the new moralists have not established the meaning of human sexuality determinative of its moral use.

I submit that Roach is right. As proof of the meaning attributed to human sexuality, one finds in the writings of the new theological trend at most a biblical reference, especially to Gn 2:24 ("That is why a man leaves his father and mother, and clings to his wife, so that they form one flesh") and its echoes in the New Testament. Or one gets an appeal to the findings of the behavioral sciences.[9] But neither the sciences of biblical

---

"The Unity of the Marital Act," in *Sex: Thoughts for Contemporary Christians* (n. 4 above) pp. 105–12; Richard McCormick, S.J., "Human Significance and Christian Significance," in *Norm and Context in Christian Ethics*, ed. Gene H. Outka and Paul Ramsey (New York, 1968) pp. 249–54; O'Neil and Donovan, *op. cit.*, pp. 129–34; Charles Curran, *op. cit.*, pp. 177–78 (not presented as Curran's own position).

[7] Richard Roach, S.J., "Sex in Christian Morality," *The Way* 11 (1971) 148–61, 235–42.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[9] "[The depth sciences] have shown that sexual acts are an engagement of the whole person, involving the whole range and depth of the instinctive-emotional register. They have shown us that no act of sexual expression can be viewed as the simple manipulation or

exegesis and hermeneutics nor the behavioral sciences permit so simple a reading of their respective data.[10]

Roach is right, too, that the new meaning attributed to human sexuality does not explain how sexual expression of love differs significantly from other expressions of love. And this question is basic to any moral applications of the new meaning. Particularly to the point of the present article, the question is basic to any clear understanding and appreciation of the specific values of conjugal sexual love. As long as the question concerning the distinctive nature of sexual expression of love is not adequately answered, any description of the values of that love and expression is no more than an hypothesis.

II

A few contemporary theologians do face this question. The purpose of the remainder of this article is to chronicle some of their answers, as found in literature published during the last six years, 1968–73. The

---

coupling of organs and that one who views human sexuality in this way is speaking out of another century. The depth sciences have thus provided the empirical evidence to corroborate an analysis of coitus which understands it as the expression of a total personal sharing and donation. Far from undermining traditional moral norms, this evidence has provided a more realistic and adequate basis in which to anchor them" (McCormick, *op. cit.*, p. 249). McCormick gives no further explanation. He does not explain, for instance, the methodology by which the findings of the empirical discipline can be extrapolated to "corroborate" and "anchor" the anthropology of moral theology. Can one even assume that the two disciplines mean the same thing when using the same word? McCormick seems a few years later to have misgivings about the adequacy of this corroboration. He discusses P. Bongiovani's "Fornicazione e rapporti tra i fidanzate," *Palaestra del clero* 51 (1972) 25–41: "P. Bongiovani repeats the rather standard arguments against premarital intercourse.... Similarly, as an expressive act, sexual intercourse between the unmarried is an 'existential lie,' because there is a 'donation of bodies' without a corresponding stable and definitive gift of the persons 'which alone on the human plane can justify and guarantee the bodily gift.' I am not arguing that these reflections are without their degree of validity, but only that they are not developed by Bongiovani beyond the condition in which he found them in other authors" ("Notes on Moral Theology: April–September, 1972," THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 34 [1973] 79).

[10] The simplicity of the theologians arises in part from their reliance on earlier authorities. The interpretation of Gn 2:24 is often the one that goes back to Karl Barth (cf. Urban Holmes, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–15). McCormick appears to be echoing the assertion of Marc Oraison which O'Neil and Donovan quote (*op. cit.*, p. 119). This article is not the place for a critique of the views of Barth, Oraison, or any other twentieth-century "authority." But how can one simply presuppose their conclusions as established beyond question and needing no explanation? For a critique rejecting such conclusions from the viewpoint of biblical and behavioral sciences, see Hermann Ringeling, *Theologie und Sexualität* (Münster, 1968) pp. 220–27. The least one has to concede to Ringeling is that "total" and "complete" have many meanings. To apply it to sexual love, one needs to make clear exactly what one means and what proves that this meaning is verified in full sexual love.

chronicle can, unfortunately, touch only some of the publications and only selected points made in them. The random soundings, however, will locate some central questions emerging in the discussion and suggest some of the further theological work they demand.

What, therefore, makes the sexual expression of love different from other expressions of love? The theologians now under consideration start with a general, well-known phenomenon which, in effect, refutes a presupposition of Roach. The sexual expression of love is unique in part because the kind of love which sex most commonly and most naturally expresses is different from all other kinds, e.g., from that between mother and son or between Ignatius and Xavier. It is not generally considered to be the highest kind of human love, though it can (and many say it should) fuse with a higher love. It is personal, but perhaps the least spiritual of human loves. Body, imagination, and emotion play a large part in it. Men call it "sexual love" or "erotic love." At the risk of raising eyebrows, hackles, and goose-pimples, I will use the two terms interchangeably for the rest of this article.

Although erotic love is not in itself the highest personal love, neither is it mere physical sex.[11] Nor is it necessarily the love with which physical sex is had. Husbands and wives can, and unfortunately often do, love each other and have sexual relations regularly and yet experience hardly any sexual or erotic love for each other. Their love is asexual. Their sex is purely physical. It is a physical release for the man, with which the wife co-operates purely out of her general loving concern for her husband. It may also be a loving act of fidelity on the husband's part in that he has withstood temptations to more alluring possibilities in order to have his sex exclusively with his wife. But neither feels erotic love for the other.

The theologians inquiring into the value of erotic love in marriage are not claiming that it makes up the most important component of married love. But it is one that our times have made an ideal, challenge, and even obligation for married couples.[12] And it is historically a component of married love thoroughly neglected by the Church. The spiritual love of husband and wife has been extolled often by theologians. Both theologians and Church authorities have maintained the intrinsic goodness of physical sexuality in marriage as part of God's creation and plan. What the Church and its theologians generally ignored before the twentieth century was the value of that dimension of love between man and woman which is not mainly spiritual nor merely physical, namely, erotic love. The Church neglected the positive contribution this love has to make to married love. The neglect was undoubtedly caused in good part by the

[11] Cf. May, *Love and Will*, e.g., pp. 52, 56, 65.

[12] Cf. n. 3 above, particularly the remarks of Richardson, Greeley, and Colin.

historical fact that medieval society envisaged erotic love as occurring only outside marriage. But the neglect continued in the Church long after secular Western society had learned that erotic love could fittingly lead to and continue in marriage.[13]

In fact, no positive evaluation of conjugal eros is yet to be found in statements of the supreme authorities of the Catholic Church. The often-cited statement of the Second Vatican Council affirms that conjugal love is a high Christian value and conjugal physical sexuality is intrinsically good. As noted above, both these affirmations are found in the tradition, though the Council gave them a greater exposure and official endorsement than they had ever had.[14] The Council characterizes conjugal love and its relation to sex in purely spiritual terms.[15] No word indicates that this love should have an erotic dimension. Presumably, the sexual expression of love the Council speaks of would be fully verified in the case (referred to two paragraphs above) of the physically absorbed faithful husband and the frigid, spiritually loving wife.

The ambiguity in the Council's statement resulted from a deliberate

[13] For documentation of the picture of medieval theology presented in this paragraph, see Michael Müller, *Grundlagen der katholischen Sexualethik* (Regensburg, 1968) pp. 148–51, 38–39. Cf. Richard Bruch, "De parvitate materiae in sexto: Bemerkungen und Ergänzungen zu einer moral-historischen Studie," *Theologie und Glaube*, 63 (1973) 68–69; Rosemary Haughton, *The Mystery of Sexuality* (New York, 1972) pp. 68–69. Important Christian studies of eros have been done in the twentieth century by D'Arcy, de Rougemont, C. S. Lewis, Nygren, Thielicke, Tillich, among others. The progressively positive appreciation of eros by Christians and Christian thinkers in modern times is traced, in illuminating fashion, in the massive historical, sociological, and theological study of Ringeling (n. 10 above). He argues convincingly, however, that the new sexuality and eros of our contemporary culture has still not received its Christian theology.

[14] *Gaudium et spes*, no. 49. Those who believe that the statement of the Council represents an unprecedented break-through in Church teaching on the relationship of conjugal sexuality to conjugal love would be surprised to learn of the views of Thomas Aquinas, ably presented and documented by Joseph Fuchs, S. J., *Die Sexualethik des heiligen Thomas von Aquin* (Cologne, 1949) pp. 132–36, 258–59. For Aquinas, too, sexual intercourse can and should express, fulfill, and feed the spiritual love of the spouses.

[15] Such spiritualizing, widespread in Catholic theology before and after the Council, Sidney Callahan explains as a "retreat to romanticism." "Confronted with legalistic discussions of coitus, human beings fight back. In the resulting counterrevolution, married sexuality becomes mystical, ethereal and spiritualized. In the name of love, sex is affirmed, but it seems to have little to do with ordinary human male and female bodies.... Sex blooms as an exercise in encounter, an I-Thou experience..." (*Beyond Birth Control: The Christian Experience of Sex* [New York, 1968] p. 135; cf. pp. 9–10). I believe Callahan and I are referring to the same thing. One "spiritualizes" conjugal sexuality, or speaks of it in "purely spiritual terms," when one puts its principal value in what pure spirits can also do: encountering another person, communicating with the other, expressing love for the other, giving self to the other, etc. (Since "spiritual" has a bad press today in certain quarters, spiritualizing Christian writers generally eschew the word and say "personal" instead, not using, however, "personal" in its full modern sense.) The objection to spiritualizing

and successful tactic of the "progressives" in the preceding discussion. To win over the more conservative fathers of the Council, the champions of conjugal love and its sexual expression were willing to highlight the spiritual side and leave in the shadow the emotional, passionate, and distinctively sexual.

> The fathers who wanted to accord to love its value and primary role had to defend themselves constantly against prelates and conservative theologians accusing them of yielding to hedonism and pansexualism. They consequently had to emphasize the place of the will in love and its kinship with charity, and correspondingly to leave in the shadow its sensual [*sensible*] aspect.[16]

Since the Council, most progressive theologians have continued this emphasis.

But the few whose theological investigations we are considering began to urge the opposite strategy. "Christianity needs to affirm afresh the positive significance of sexuality and the erotic, and to indicate convincingly that the realisation of such a goal is perfectly consistent with the Good News." [17] Johannes Gründel believed the "new picture of marriage" had already appeared among twentieth-century Christians as they say "a clear 'Yes' to their own sexuality and sexual love with its

---

sexuality is not what it puts in there but what it leaves out. Man does do these spiritual, personal things in his sexual life (encounters, communicates, expresses love, etc.) and they do constitute the principal value of human sexuality, but not solely. The bodiliness and sexualness with which he does them changes intrinsically their nature and therefore their value from what they would be in a nonbodied, nonsexual person's life. Examples of spiritualizing of sexuality are found in the writings of Bernard Häring, *The Law of Christ* 3 (Westminster, Md., 1966, esp. pp. 267–79, 361–64), and Eugene Kennedy, *What a Modern Catholic Believes about Sex* (Chicago, 1971) esp. pp. 72–82, and *The New Sexuality: Myths, Fables and Hang-ups* (New York, 1972) esp. pp. 61–83. The two writers have made great contributions to the Christian thought and life of our times. But they seem to me to illustrate the spiritualizing of sexuality I am talking about and thus provide an illuminating foil for the theologians of eros about to be considered in this article, particularly those who insist that the distinctively human values of sexuality (not just the reality but the values themselves) are constituted by an irreducible polarity of human and nonhuman, personal and impersonal, etc.).

[16] Philippe Delhaye, *L'Eglise dans le monde de ce temps: Constitution pastorale "Gaudium et spes"* 2 (Paris, 1967) 404. The point is repeated frequently and developed through pp. 396–429. Cf. Victor Heylen, "Fostering the Nobility of Marriage and the Family," in *The Church Today*, ed. Group 2000 (New York, 1968) e.g., pp. 99, 105–7, 118–19.

[17] Jack Dominian, *The Church and the Sexual Revolution* (Denville, N.J., 1971) p. 16; cf. p. 73. Dominian is a British Catholic psychiatrist; the book contains essays which appeared in the *Tablet*. Similarly, Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sexuality and the Christian Tradition* (Dayton, 1969) p. 3.

immanent pleasure and satisfaction as long as this takes place within the framework of true personal love." [18]

Perhaps one of the greatest errors in earlier religious teachings on marriage and sexuality was the almost constant refusal to accept the human value of full sensual satisfaction. With so much emphasis on the spiritual aspect of the union of man and wife, religious teachers have generally taken for granted that the sensual and erotic aspects of the marriage were inferior, material, that they needed to be downgraded rather than developed. This attitude disregards the deeply human and almost universal need for dynamic and perfective sexual relations. What happens, then, is that a considerable number among the best and holiest of couples, conforming to rules of negative discipline rather than positive development, live in a narrow and somewhat fearful way. . . .

Is there any answer to this growing anguish, to this so common frustration? [19]

James Hitchcock exemplifies how radical a rejection the new theological affirmation of erotic values meets from other Christian thinkers. He writes: "The fundamental question posed by the sexual revolution is whether there is such a thing as lust and whether it is morally wrong." [20] Correspondingly, the whole thrust of his article bears on the restraints Christianity, following its tradition, should set to human sexuality. He thus denies what the theologians we are considering contend, namely, that the sexual revolution poses a second question, equally fundamental and morally significant: Is there such a thing as erotic love and is it valuable and responsible for husband and wife to strive together for the fulness of it? Incidentally, Hitchcock would bewilder them—not to mention many a husband and wife—by his assumption that such striving is "easy" and that only the restraint of sexual urges requires effort, "mastery," and "self-denial." [21]

[18] Gründel, *op. cit.*, p. 56. Unfortunately, Gründel says little in his essay about sexual love, and less about its immanent pleasure and satisfaction.

[19] De Vinck and Catoir, *op. cit.*, p. 52. Similarly Stephan Pfürtner, "Probleme kirchlicher Sexualethik," *Herder Korrespondenz* 27/3 (March, 1973) p. 148. "What is deplorable [in Christian moral theology in general] is not the determination of norms—though we might quarrel with the rationale behind the attempt—but the determination of norms apart from any statement of the maximal possibilities of erotic experience for the Christian" (Blenkinsopp, *op. cit.*, p. 4). Francois Chirpaz makes the identical point. "Le défaut fondamental que nous sommes à même de discerner dans le code moral n'est pas sa rigueur. *Il est bien plutôt le silence qu'il entretient sur la réalité même du sexe, le refus où il s'enferme de considérer la totalité de l'expérience sexuelle: le refus de comprendre et dire le tout de l'éros*" ("Sexualité, morale et poétique," *Lumière et vie* 19 [1970] 79; cf. pp. 81, 87. The emphasis comes from Chirpaz).

[20] James Hitchcock, "The Church and the Sexual Revolution," *America*, Sept. 23, 1972, p. 198.

[21] Cf. my "In Defense of Christian Hedonism," *Critic*, May-June, 1972, pp. 24–30. By his reference to our "eroticized civilization," Hitchcock would bewilder, too, those analysts of

The theologians looking for the Christian meaning and value of erotic love turn inevitably to actual contemporary experience of that love. The Bible does say some good things about erotic love.[22] But its view of sexuality reflects the culturally conditioned experience of the time, e.g., patriarchal and androcentric.[23] Nor does the Bible claim to teach *the* essential meaning of sexuality.[24] Church teaching has, as noted, offered little positive evaluation of erotic love. Strangely enough, and perhaps inadvertently, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council encouraged attention to the actual experience of sexual love. In pointing to sexuality as an important "sign" of conjugal love, they invite and almost command theologians and faithful to turn their gaze to sexual experience and see concretely how it "signifies" love. Signs signify only to the extent to which they are experienced. It is true that to study this experience, one can turn to the Christian tradition inasmuch as it reflects the experience the Christian community has had of sexual love over the centuries.[25] But one needs to recall once more the limits of the tradition in regard to the values of eros as well as the profound evolution of sexual ideals, attitudes, and experiences that has gone on among Western men and women in our time.[26] It is, above all, the experience of today's Christians that has to be the point of departure for theological reflection.[27]

---

our civilization who deplore its "non-feeling (a-pathetic) and anti-erotic sexual atmosphere," e.g., Rollo May (cf. nn. 4 and 11 above) and Herbert Marcuse (e.g., in *Eros and Civilization*). The latter phrase I quote is of Warren Reich, "Whither Sexual Ethics?" *Linacre Quarterly*, August 1971, p. 191.

[22] E.g., the Song of Songs or Proverbs 5:15, 18–19, quoted by Fitch for married couples (*op. cit.*, p. 39).

[23] Cf. Ringeling, *op. cit.*, e.g., pp. 18–33.

[24] Thus Reich. *art. cit.*, p. 185. Blenkinsopp contends, and his book is an attempt to prove, that much insight concerning eros can be mined from the biblical tradition. However, he repeatedly affirms that the theological evaluation of eros must be rooted in contemporary experience (*op. cit.*, e.g., pp. 11–13.)

[25] This is the point emphasized by Haughton (*op cit.*, pp. 56–57) and McCormick ("Notes on Moral Theology," THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 33 [1972] 83–84).

[26] This evolution is the starting point for the *cahier* of *Lumière et vie* devoted to sexuality (19, no. 97 [March–May 1970]). Similarly, Denis Read, O.C.D., "The Human Sexual Context," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 164 (1971) 257.

[27] "This is the time for *inquiry*. This is the time for *research*, for openness, for humility. This is the time to identify our experiences. As Roy Fairchild has said, 'We do not even have the words to identify many of the things which we have experienced.' We have so suppressed the sexual sphere that we lack words with which to express the sexual qualification of our lives" (Gibson Winter, "The Outlook for an Adequate Ethic," in *Sexual Ethics and Christian Responsibility*, ed. John C. Wynn [New York, 1970] p. 47). For determining sexual morality, Philipp Schmitz, too, urges a methodology that starts with the concrete human experience of sexual activity (*Der christliche Beitrag zu einer Sexualmoral* [Mainz, 1972] pp. 16–18). Schmitz elsewhere elaborates and defends this methodology for determining moral norms in general (*Die Wirklichkeit fassen: Zur "induktiven"*

Most radically of the writers I read, Maurice Bellet insists on the role of experience in determining the moral values of sexuality. Sexual morality is simply to love. Sexual morality is, therefore, not a sphere of application of a general moral system, but a life lived, an actual transformation of the power of loving which is man, of his desire, his libido. Such a morality is rigorous, not with the rigor of a system but with the rigor of love, of reality, of life, a rigor found only in experience as we make our way there, a rigor both simple and infinitely complex, which one cannot escape if one faces experience. Bellet recognizes, however, that the "human sciences" are needed to interpret the experience and the old-style moral principles are needed to direct the individual's behavior.[28]

In actual experience, as the venerable theologian and historian of Christian moral theology and spirituality Michael Müller points out, erotic love displays characteristics different from the two other loves with which Christian spouses ideally love each other, i.e., friendship and agape. Although all three loves are appropriately expressed by conjugal sexuality, erotic love is most naturally and appropriately. Eros does see the beautiful soul, but even more the beautiful body. It is movement of the mind (*geistiges*), but borne along by sense experience and sense pleasure. It reverences the "thou" but desires it for itself. With all tender concern for the beloved, the lover is even more concerned with his own happiness. Eros lives from the happiness of loving, from all the values—the increase in emotional powers, in warmth and vitality—which the ego obtains from this kind of loving. Basically, eros is egocentric.[29]

How can sexual relations permeated by erotic love be an expression of other-directed Christian love? How can eros express agape? Some theologians answer that it cannot and agape must eliminate eros.

> Let us suppose that sexual desire has become a desire for increased intimacy and communion with another, an expression of deepest friendship. Let us suppose that one seeks, through a sexual relation, not his own satisfaction and orgasm, but the joy of perfect sharing. Such sexual desire is a totally different thing from eros love. It is an "agapic" love. . . .[30]

Normenfassung einer "Neuen Moral" [Frankfurt, 1972] esp. pp. 109–16). Eugene Kennedy, too, accords a determining role to contemporary Christian experience in the formation of moral principles of sexuality (*What a Modern Catholic Believes about Sex*, pp. 10–11).

[28] Maurice Bellet, "Réalité sexuelle et morale chrétienne," *Etudes*, February 1971, pp. 263–83, and March 1971, pp. 437–56. The two articles came out in book form in Paris under the same title the same year.

[29] Müller, *op. cit.*, pp. 136–58.

[30] Richardson, *op. cit.*, pp. 106–7. "When yoked to love, sexuality is concerned with the transformation from Eros, a sexual love, to Agape, an unselfish, giving love." (Michael

Richardson proposes this agapic form of sexual desire as a practical ideal for married people. Other theologians do not explicitly exclude self-loving from ideal Christian sexual love, as Richardson and Valente do, but they do not speak of it. By their silence they imply that self-loving would be absent or of negligible importance in truly Christian sexual expression of love.[31]

Is such an ideal in any way real? Can one transform an instinctual drive into its contrary? Can one leave eros behind in sexual love? Is it the experience of a deeply loving Christian husband or wife over the years that his or her sexual and emotional satisfaction has become irrelevant. I can only agree with Tom Driver that experience forces us to accept both the other-directed and the self-directed dimension of all sexual love.

> Sex is a force that streams impersonally through nature. If we ask that this force be an expression of love, we must be aware of the several realities that are expressed by this one English word. Love is not only responsibility and agape. It is also *eros*, which means desire. Sexual desire is not only desire of the 'other'. . . . It is also desire for self-gratification. The great power of sexual desire comes from the fact that it combines desire for the other with desire to gratify the self. If we are not speaking of this Janus-force we are not speaking of sex but of other things that are deemed good in association with it.
>
> No sexual ethic, including a Christian one, can be valid if it does not recognize the sex-force as power in its own right and in both its other-directed and self-directed aspects.[32]

Pastorally harmful, I submit, is the repudiation or neglect in current Catholic moral theology of the spouse's self-love, whether one is speaking only of married sexuality or of married life as a whole. What marriage counselor does not know that in a good marriage self-love and love of the

---

Valente, *Sex: The Radical View of a Catholic Theologian* [Milwaukee, 1970] p. 150). "The sacramental nature of marriage means that every facet and aspect of human marriage assumes a supernatural dimension. This is true above all of love. Love becomes charity. Eros, while retaining all its natural force, becomes agape, the expression of a love which is essentially orientated to God, a love of two Christians with all that this implies" (Denis O'Callaghan, "Marriage as Sacrament," *Concilium. The Future of Marriage as Institution*, ed. Franz Böckle [New York, 1970] p. 106).

[31] James T. Burtchaell, C. S. C., "The Rituals of Jesus, the Anti-Ritualist (Presidential Address, 1971)," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 29 (1971) 513–25; Charles Curran, *Contemporary Problems in Moral Theology* (Notre Dame, 1970) pp. 173–74 ("a brief overall view of sexuality that should be the starting point of any more particular consideration"), and the following pages where he applies this view to practical moral questions; Read, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 262–64; Reich, *art. cit.*

[32] Tom Driver, "On Taking Sex Seriously," in *Moral Issues and Christian Response*, ed. Paul Jersild and Dale Johnson (New York, 1971) p. 102; the chapter appeared originally as an article in *Christianity and Crisis*, Oct. 14, 1963. Cf. my "Love and Sex in Marriage," to appear in *National Catholic Reporter* this fall.

other intertwine and fuse? After the romantic dust settles down, the motif is not best put as: I love you and you love me. Better: we love us. Contrariwise, the spouse insisting that he or she tries to live only for the other (and children) usually doth protest too much. Setting selfless love as one's ideal is often a redoubtable defense against probing, by self or others, of one's real motives. It easily leads to unnecessary guilt feelings, for one cannot come close to the ideal. Or to feelings of resentment, often repressed, for the ideal threatens to thwart one's personal fulfilment. As is pointed out frequently these days, the Christian ideal of selfless love and total self-giving has been one of the most effective instruments of the oppression of women. Practically better for all concerned and more genuinely Christian is the ideal of loving one's neighbor *as oneself.* Consequently, more authentically Christian and pastorally promising than most current moral theologies of sexuality would be one, such as Stephan Pfürtner's, centered and based on the value of happiness (*Glück*), one's own and others'.[33]

Besides its self-loving characteristic, eros displays in actual experience a second trait or complex of traits, which is not easily integrated into prevalent ideals of Christian conjugal love. One speaks of the "impersonal" or "subhuman" or "irrational" or "animal" component of human sexuality. These labels do not all mean exactly the same thing, but they all point to more or less the same loose complex of puzzling facts about eros. Again Tom Driver states the issue incisively by taking an extreme and extremely intelligent position.

> Sex is not essentially human. It is not inseparable from the human in us, and it cannot be fully humanized. . . .
>
> Laughter at sex is the only way to put sex in its place, to assert one's humanity over against that impersonal, irrational, yet necessary force that turns even the best of men into caricatures of themselves. Not only "sinful" sex does this; lawful sex, safely within the limits of marriage and love, does it too, as everybody knows; and he who does not laugh about it must be humiliated by it. . . . But Christianity should no more idealize sex than it should scorn or fear it. It sees sex as a fact of created nature. This natural force can no more be made fully "human" than can mountain goats or ocean currents. Like them it can, if accepted, be used by man for his own good, within a life of faithfulness and praise.[34]

[33] Outlined in the form of theses in his *Moral—Was gilt heute noch?* (n. 1 above) pp. 23–25, and, more at length, in his *Kirche und Sexualität* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1972) pp. 281–86. An English version of the theses is provided by Adolph Schalk in *National Catholic Reporter,* Dec. 22, 1972, p. 16. Pfürtner pithily sums them up in the debate with Stöckle cited in n. 1 above (*Herder Korrespondenz,* June 1973, pp. 292). Cf. Gregory Baum, "Tendenzen in der katholischen Sexualmoral," *Orientierung,* Dec. 31, 1972, pp. 270–73.

[34] Driver, "On Taking Sex Seriously," p. 102–4. I believe Driver is saying the same thing, but this time recognizing not its comic but its tragic side, when he writes years later:

A *Concilium* bulletin reports on various writings of the 60's which essay, from a Christian or a secular point of view, to identify various manifestations of this impersonal, subhuman side of human sexuality.[35] The authors are apparently more hopeful than Driver of a humanization of sexuality. Nevertheless, both these essays, and others that have appeared since, show that the theological discussion of the problem is still at a rudimentary stage. As the bulletin puts it, "What has been said so far shows how far the theological approach is from the philosophical and anthropological one. The theologians have only begun to survey the terrain and are trying to catch up." [36]

Certain noteworthy theological efforts at catching up pursue a more positive line of thinking than Driver's. Whether or not the impersonal, irrational elements of eros can ever be fully humanized, these very elements can take a distinctively human form in human sexual experience. For instance, eros can be considered nonhuman and impersonal insofar as it is absorbed in pleasure. Yet the very absorption of pleasure in love-making often takes the form of play. Greeley argues that men differ from animals in their profound need for variety and playfulness in their sexual relationships. As Greeley expresses it, they need not only to have sex but to be sexy. To be sexy is to be aware of one's body as an instrument of playfulness and delight and to communicate this awareness to others—in other words, to invite potential sexual partners and to commit one self to a gift of that body in a mutual search for pleasure, delight, variety, and playfulness.[37]

José de Vinck and John T. Catoir affirm the same profound need in men and women for distinctively human variety and play in their sex. Speaking of human sexuality's "endless potential of good, of healthy, dynamic and sporting fun that may be developed within the rich relationship," they write:

> If the basic man-and-wife couple is to remain the building block of civilized society, then this living of two together must be made to satisfy the natural hungers, hopes and dreams of both partners. There must be enough of the spice of

"having embraced modern sexuality with ease, [Andrew Greeley, in *Sexual Intimacy*] has forgotten that Dionysus and the Christ are by no means the same. I count myself a Christian, and I long for Dionysus. I think that's where many of us are, and it seems to be one reason why our culture trembles" (*America*, Dec. 8, 1973, p. 448; these are the final sentences of Driver's review).

[35] Concilium General Secretariat, "The Humanization of Sexuality," *Concilium. The Future of Marriage as Institution* (n. 30 above) pp. 155–71. Cf. Blenkinsopp, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34.

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 170–71.

[37] "Developing Your Sexuality," cited in n. 3 above. Greeley's moral framework is traditional. Being sexy in some degree or other belongs outside as well as inside marriage. But being fully sexy and having sex belong within.

variety to avoid boredom, enough mutual concern to avoid hedonism, and enough freedom to allow the male and female bodies the full range of their natural games.

Whole books have been written on the play value of sex. This aspect seems never to be stressed, or even mentioned, in morally oriented manuals. Yet while work is a necessity imposed upon man, play is the supreme form of rational activity. It is in play that man and woman are themselves, creative, new, uninhibited. It is in play that they can sufficiently let go to be totally themselves. No other human activity lends itself so naturally as sex to this freedom of being oneself, resulting in humor, laughter and fun.[38]

Sidney Callahan, too, extols the value of human play and pleasure. For her (in apparent contradiction to de Vinck and Catoir), an important part of the value lies in its irrationality.

The capacity of human beings to be active for pleasure alone is a measure of their freedom. A whole history of culture can be written of man as the playing animal par excellence. Play is intimately related to culture, contemplation, and through sexuality to human wholeness and healthy equilibrium. With sexual play, pleasure must be the mainspring of activity; pleasure is a means of recovering and enjoying the unconscious dimensions of man which are not tapped in rational, purposive activity like work or abstract thought.[39]

Unfortunately, the elements of sexuality that may be most crucial for opening husband and wife to this new intensity of life are persistently the "nonhuman" ones they have been conditioned to suspect and fear. Such elements are not merely pleasure-loving and the gratuitousness, purposelessness, and frivolous play involved in seeking and sharing it. There is also the violence of "the violent desire and violent release." [40] It is through violent physical desires and violent pleasures that comes a primitive joy of intense consciousness of self, a heightened sense of identity in time.[41] In addition, the violence requires passive surrender to the involuntary.[42] One has to open self to be "delighted by the irrational violent process, the very involuntariness of release which renews the self through escape from control and isolation." It is "joyously human to actively accept and cooperate with forces beyond human mastery. A lover can welcome eroticism and passion just as a mother in childbirth can consciously and exultingly welcome the expulsive waves arising from within." [43]

The very fact that the involuntary violence to which one must abandon

[38] De Vinck and Catoir, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[39] Callahan, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–38; cf. pp. 4–6, 39, 47–56.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.
[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 12–14, 24–25, 49–50, 149–54.
[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 49 and 12.

oneself comes from one's unconscious depths and anonymous animal nature contributes to one's distinctively human life.

> Man need not fear his anonymous animal nature, but must rather accept it. Man can only reach the heights of humanity by going through his anonymous instinctual nature, not by attempting to climb over or around it or to destroy all vestiges of irrationality. . . . Part of the restorative delight of loving intercourse resides in its incorporation of unconscious depths of personality. Secure selves are not afraid of self-giving in passion, self-abandonment. The individual personality and mutual unity of the couple can be refreshed by participating in one of the fountains of reality, irrational instinct.[44]

Focusing like Callahan on the irrational, impersonal pleasure principle of sexual love, Francois Chirpaz offers a more narrow but also more carefully phenomenological study of the humanness of the nonhuman side of human sexuality.[45] He respects both the biological procreative function of sexuality and the channels which present society and culture have laid for it. Moreover, he emphasizes that only a deep interpersonal relationship gives human sexuality its full meaning. But to understand human sexuality, one must start where it actually begins in human experience, namely, with the sexual desires human beings experience. At first, these desires are not experienced as procreative or interpersonal. Rather they awake the thickness of one's flesh (*épaisseur charnelle*). The fleshly thickness is directly felt in the pleasure that arises with desire. The thickness is not a burden or prison, for it makes possible the expanding reverberations of pleasure. Pleasure thus reveals one's bodily being by making the body live and vibrate and draw attention to itself. In pleasure, unlike pain, one experiences a coincidence of self and body.[46]

Moreover, "it is in the thickness of desire and pleasure that passes the path leading to the other."[47] Pleasure does something which planning and action do not. In planning and action, one often meets the other, but always with a view to the common project. When one meets the other in pleasure, the meeting serves nothing else and is an end in itself. It is a unique experience of presence, one simply for the sake of being and being present. In brief, "by sex, across the experience of desire and pleasure,

[44] *Ibid.*, pp. 137–38.

[45] Francois Chirpaz, "Dimensions de la sexualité," *Etudes*, March 1969, pp. 409–23; "Sexualité, morale et poétique" (n. 19 above) pp. 72–88. The two articles form a unified development. In the later article Chirpaz announces a third to be published in *Esprit*, but it has not yet appeared.

[46] "Dimensions...," esp. pp. 409, 416–17.

[47] "Sexualité...," p. 80. It is only this dimension of "relation and rencontre" which makes man's sexuality truly human, and not merely one of his lower needs. Cf. pp. 81–84, and "Dimensions . . .," pp. 410–21.

existence discovers another dimension of its being, fleshly presence to the other and to itself." [48]

Chirpaz acknowledges he has not resolved the enigma of human sexuality but only identified it: the lived contradiction of human erotic experience, of self-centered, impersonal pleasure being the concrete event of meeting the other as other. One can resolve or move beyond the contradiction only through "a holy affirmation," relearnt by a long, difficult path back toward the innocence of childhood.[49]

It is worth noting that these theologies of conjugal eros lead to practical moral principles, some of which are different from the corresponding traditional ones. For instance, when actual intercourse is impossible (e.g., because of the husband's inability to have an erection at the time) and the wife is sexually eager, "there appears to be no reason why she could not be satisfied by methods other than coition. Any caressing or kissing acceptable to both partners that would bring her the needed relief would be an act of conjugal love that should not be considered in the least immoral." [50] Similarly untraditional is Sidney Callahan's strong condemnation of "sexual sloth or accidie."

> The other's [sexual] desire is equally important. One needs and wants to be wanted, not to take part in some calculated expression of an extrinsic motive even if the motive is affection. When one partner participates, for the sake of the other's desire, in a non-passionate although affectionate act of intercourse, the lack of mutual unity blights the unity of the couple. ... Nothing is more depressing than sacrificial accommodation. Thou shalt not be tepid is a basic marital commandment.[51]

Callahan considers also whether a married person may encourage a

[48] "Sexualité . . .," p. 85. "Proximité charnelle de soi avec soi, le plaisir réalise du même mouvement la proximité de l'autre, la présence charnelle de l'autre" ("Dimensions . . .," p. 417).

[49] "Dimensions . . .," pp. 419–21; "Sexualité . . .," pp. 83–88. A *belle phrase* of Chirpaz: "Etrange est le sens de ce monde du sexe de pouvoir conduire vers la personne de l'autre, en passant par l'impersonnel du désir, de conduire vers la vérité d'une rencontre á travers cet opaque et 'infracassable noyau de nuit,' comme le dit si bien André Breton, mais c'est bien en cela que réside son sens," ("Dimensions . . .," p. 419). Is it possible that Driver, on the one hand, and Chirpaz and Callahan, on the other, are describing the same human experience with equal accuracy but from different perspectives, that of Protestant pessimism and that of Catholic optimism concerning nature after the Fall? And yet the insightful pages of Sam Keen on the carnal and bodily show their Protestant origin and background, and are as positive and affirmative as those of Chirpaz and Callahan (*To a Dancing God* [New York, 1970] e.g., pp. 46–52, 141–60). Despite its kinship with theologies of eros, *To a Dancing God* has not been dealt with in the present survey because it says little directly about sexuality or about conjugal love.

[50] DeVinck and Catoir, *op. cit.*, pp. 53–54.

[51] *Op. cit.*, p. 145.

friendship with one not the spouse when the friendship is strongly marked by sexual attraction and desire. Should one take pleasure in the erotic dimension of the relationship and seek to continue the relationship as such? While coming down solidly for monogamy and against adultery, Callahan gives more positive an answer to these questions than traditional moral theology would.[52]

Limits of space force a stop to this survey. Another full-length study would be needed just to identify more precisely and correlate with each other the questions raised by these varying essays at theological understanding of conjugal eros. Another study would be needed to report on some of the peculiarly theological input of these essays. The present survey has restricted itself, for the most part, to the anthropological contribution of the essays, as they draw on twentieth-century experiences, sciences, and anthropologies. However, one needs to study, too, the various ways in which the writers see Christian faith and understanding as both reinforcing and reinterpreting the values of human eros.

Such further studies would, I submit, confirm the principal conclusion of the present survey: this whole theological enterprise is very important, but also very much in its beginnings. If the reader of this survey finishes it feeling frustrated, it has perhaps achieved its goal. That goal has been to give some sense of how much clarity is needed concerning certain questions of Christian married love—and how little clarity has been reached even about the states of the question. Hopefully, even the confident aphorisms of a Chirpaz or a Callahan have stirred up in the reader a horde of further questions rather than given satisfying answers, for that is where the inquiry presently is in moral theology.[53]

Brown University JOHN GILES MILHAVEN

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

[53] William Meissner, S. J., puts it thus: "Theology has begun to make peace with some aspects of man's instinctual life. It has begun, for example, to initiate a halting approach to man's libidinal life. . ." ("Towards a Theology of Human Aggression," *Journal of Religion and Health*, October 1971, p. 324). To get beyond a beginning stage, the current theological re-evaluation of conjugal eros will have, first of all, to use contemporary experience, sciences, and anthropologies much more extensively and systematically than it has thus far. Secondly, it will have to integrate this use thoroughly into a total Christian anthropology and theology. For example, the theological literature surveyed in this article cites frequently, and often approvingly, Freud, Jung, Erikson, Fromm, May, Marcuse, Norman Brown, etc. Isolated theses of these masters are applied in certain contexts. But one finds no thoroughgoing, Christian *Auseinandersetzung* with any of them. One reason for the lacuna, I suspect, is that the advances called for, e.g., a fully articulated Christian anthropology and theology integrating a given psychoanalytical theory, would have to be a team enterprise. That is not something easy to plan, much less to carry out. Another reason for the lacuna is perhaps the fear, not without ground, that any synthesis of psychoanalytic theory and Christian faith and understanding is likely to end up unsettling and rearranging the whole hierarchy of human values of the millennial Christian tradition.