

idea with merit. However since our youngsters get such an overdose of females as teachers in the public schools already, I think it's refreshing as well as more therapeutic to have them exposed to some males who are carefully selected models of human decency and high ethical concern.

In mentioning all of this, I still recognize that it does not answer some of your questions — to which I can only say, I don't know. I wish I did.

On Sexuality

Dear sirs:

In the Letters to the Editor exchange between Owen Clark and Victor Cline (Spring, 1972), an important issue was raised but not confronted. Mr. Clark was responding to Dr. Cline's warning (Spring, 1971) about the dangers of transference and countertransference leading to infidelity both with professional and Church counselors. Dr. Cline had suggested that to avoid being "trapped by an intense passion" we ought to be cautious with emotional attachments for those of the opposite sex and we ought to have the protection of a good marriage, lest our "well . . . run dry." Mr. Clark expressed the hope that we would not let the fear of infidelity isolate us from tender feelings and emotional closeness with those we counsel and suggested that it is possible for those who have allowed themselves to experience both emotional intimacy and sexual feelings to differentiate the two and consequently to better control them. Dr. Cline responded that his basic point — "that too many Mormons including skilled professionals, do get involved in illicit and adulterous relations which had their origins in an attempt to help, counsel, console and comfort a member of the opposite sex" — still stood; but he did not answer the most important issue — why this is so and how we should handle it — except to reiterate that a healthy marriage is a good defense. Mr. Clark expressed an alternative approach (*i.e.*, "Church counselors may be better advised to acknowledge their feelings and to learn to differentiate them rather than to attempt to deny them."), and if the question were merely one of transference and countertransference, there would be no need to expand upon his very perceptive comments.

The issue is, however, much broader, both in that it involves not just counselors, but everybody who is past puberty, and that it raises the general question of our theoretical assumptions about the nature of sex and the psychological nature of man. The dominant view of sex in our culture centers around the "sex drive" which is an almost instinctive, hormonal urge which is seething in our bodies waiting for a chance to sweep us away into uncontrollable passion. There are only two responses to this drive: either give in to it as often as possible or fight it and deny it every step of the way. If this idea is true (and it is widely accepted in both our society and our Church) and if man is, in the final analysis, at the mercy of his sex drive, then Dr. Cline is right. The best strategy is to avoid emotional intimacy except with a spouse and to use a healthy marriage as a necessary escape valve for sexual urges. If, however, this view is a myth and man is capable of reacting intelligently to his sexual feelings and thus controlling them, Mr. Clark's comments make more sense. If it is possible to have and express emotional feelings without sexual involvement, then

the best defense against infidelity caused by countertransference is experience in expressing such feelings non-sexually and the strategy of avoiding and denying emotional intimacy would be counterproductive and make one more susceptible.

Admittedly, acceptance of this latter view of sex is essentially an act of faith (as is the acceptance of the more popular view), for it depends on theoretical assumptions that are not provable. However, the theory it flows from is academically respectable and fits well with the Mormon notion of some sort of meaningful free agency for man. The theoretical support of this position fits into the phenomenological school of psychology and more particularly as part of the cognitive theories. Its best expression is in the personal construct theory of George Kelly. The basic postulate of this system is that a person's actions (and reactions) depend greatly upon the way he anticipates events. This does not deny the existence of biological drives or external forces, but suggests that man does not merely respond to these stimuli automatically but rather, he teleponds (reacts to them purposively and in ways mitigated by his perceptions). Specifically, a person's reaction may be influenced by his definition of the stimuli, the situation, himself, and the meaning of his response. A wide variety of evidence supports this position including the findings that eating behavior is caused by many non-physical factors; the striking cross-cultural differences in both sexual and non-sexual areas, *e.g.*, the fact that morning sickness is unknown in some cultures (even though pregnancy is rather common); and the inappropriate reactions of people to placebos or deceptively identified drugs.

It logically follows from this assumption that man's sexual behavior is largely determined by the way he defines sex. If this is true, by appropriately defining sexual feelings, emotional affinity, and each relationship, it is possible to control sexual behavior. (This does not imply that such cognitive control is conscious. It can be but usually isn't.) That people can and do differentiate between emotional intimacy and sexual intimacy is receiving preliminary substantiation in some current research of mine. That they use this differentiation to control and deny emotional intimacy is abundantly clear in several studies of "swingers" (mate-swappers) and traditional adulterers. That they can use this distinction to control sexual intimacy is suggested by reports from encounter groups where emotional and even physical intimacy frequently occurs without sexual involvement. The evidence is not conclusive and my treatment of it has been superficial, but I hope it is enough to demonstrate that this alternative view of sex is a respectable hypothesis which deserves consideration and more research.

What are the consequences of our acceptance of the "sex drive" assumption? In the all important area of adolescent purity and premarital chastity we respond by admonishing our youth that they must maintain a constant vigil or they will be swept away by wild passion. This often results in frustrating (and therefore short) courtships and sometimes in early and/or unhappy marriages. And if, by chance, in an unguarded moment a young couple feels a special closeness and warmth accompanied by an increase in sexual desire, they are apt to think, "Oh no, I'm being swept away. Oh well, I can't control it. It's too late; I might as well give in." (The most devastating thing about this view is its self-prophetic nature — if we believe that our sexual urges are

uncontrollable, they will be. This also makes it impossible to disprove this theory because there are always examples of people getting carried away by passion. I would argue, however, that they are carried away mainly because they expect to be.)

On the question of marital fidelity, the problem of transference can be expanded to include every married couple. By accepting the "sex drive" notion we become very suspicious of any relationship with a member of the opposite sex. This means that we shut out the possibility of emotional closeness with half of the human race and since we have already severely limited the possibility of emotional intimacy with the other half because of fear of latent homosexuality, we effectively shut ourselves off from a vast range of positive emotional experience and expect to have all of our emotional needs satisfied by one person. Then we often make unrealistic demands upon our spouse (for as Dr. Cline notes, "No man ever satisfied all of his wife's needs and no woman ever understood and met all of her husband's desires.") This can lead to marriages that are not really happy and again we become more susceptible to the forbidden attractions offered by extra-marital relationships.

The alternative is to accept the idea that we can be involved in intellectual, emotional, and even physical intimacy with persons of the opposite sex (and with persons of the same sex) without becoming involved sexually and that this emotional sharing need not be a threat to the marriage, but can be a very rewarding experience, making life and marriage happier and more complete. I propose that this opening up to others and the sharing of affection with many friends will also be the best defense against marital infidelity. (Knowing through experience that sexual intercourse is not an inevitable and necessary part of expressing love makes a conscious decision about sex more likely. It does not imply that sexual control can be obtained without effort, but focuses that effort intelligently.) This may sound risky (and indeed may be risky), but it can work and the old view has not been without risk. This issue definitely deserves more dialogue.

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