

**PRE-CONVENTION SEMINAR:\***  
**AN INTRODUCTION TO A DISCUSSION OF**  
**"HUMAN SEXUALITY"**

The book *Human Sexuality. New Directions in American Catholic Thought* by Anthony Kosnik *et al.*<sup>1</sup> deserves serious critical comment. What I present here is an evaluation of the basic theological chapter of the book, as an introduction to a discussion of the book. My interest in this subject is that of all theologians today and of all those who have any pastoral responsibility. Beyond this, I have written an article on contraception<sup>2</sup> in which I offer reasons to justify some instances of direct contraception or temporary sterilization as morally acceptable, but reasons that differ markedly from those offered in *Human Sexuality* and that do not have the implications for extramarital intercourse and some other sexual practices that the principles of the present book have. Also, recent study has led me to an articulation of a methodology of moral reasoning that is relevant to the present book. So, without being a specialist in moral theology, I volunteered to open this discussion.

In my presentation, I would like to concentrate on chapter 4 of *Human Sexuality*, entitled "Toward a Theology of Human Sexuality." That is the core chapter of the book. Chapter 5, "Pastoral Guidelines for Human Sexuality" operates on the principles put forth in chapter 4. The first three chapters—on the Bible, Christian Tradition, and the Empirical Sciences in reference to human sexuality—are supportive of this central chapter. And interpretations in these earlier chapters are influenced by the principles that the authors accept theologically. In this fourth chapter, the authors treat successively the "definition of sexuality," "personhood—the principle of integration for the various purposes of sexuality," and "the moral evaluation of sexual conduct." I will give a

\*[ED. NOTE. This paper is a modified version of a presentation that the author volunteered to deliver at one of the "open" pre-convention seminars. Although not listed in the formal program, it is printed here since it did in fact form part of the "proceedings" of the Toronto meeting. Nothing further on this subject had been scheduled since it was not clear at the time the meeting was planned exactly when the published report would be available. It is expected that this topic will be addressed more fully in the convention of 1978.—L.S. Ed.]

<sup>1</sup> Anthony Kosnik, William Carroll, Agnes Cunningham, Ronald Modras and James Schulte, *Human Sexuality* (Paulist Press, 1977). Page references given in the text are from this book.

<sup>2</sup>"The Principle of the Family Good," *Theological Studies* 31 (1970), 262-74.

summary of the authors' position on each of these topics and then an evaluation of it.

The authors show the context of their theology when they write at the beginning of this chapter that:

contemporary moral theology is challenged to attempt to articulate a theology of sexuality that is both consistent with Catholic tradition and yet sensitive to modern data. (80)

All of us here would agree with this goal, and most of us would agree that there are serious inadequacies in the treatment of sexuality by manuals of moral theology of the recent past. We are still searching for a fully adequate theology of sexuality.

*Definition of sexuality.* The authors show the restricted interpretation of sexuality in traditional moral theology and what follows from this in concrete moral prescriptions. For example, they quote a manual of theology that asserts: "Perfect chastity is abstinence from all expressions of the sexual appetite, both in the external act and internal thought, desire and complacency."<sup>3</sup> In contrast to this, we have today a broader understanding of sexuality. They write:

We would . . . define human sexuality simply as the way of being in, and relating to, the world as a male or female person. . . . Sexuality . . . is the mode or manner by which humans experience and express both the incompleteness of their individualities as well as their relatedness to each other as male and female. . . . This definition broadens the meaning of sexuality beyond the purely genital and generative and is so to be understood in all that follows. (82)

We can say: true enough—as far as it goes. Sexuality pervades all the aspects of our lives—not simply how we are physiologically, but how we feel, how we relate to one another and to our work, how we think and perceive. We can agree that to grow humanly we must acknowledge, accept and integrate our sexuality into the whole of our lives, not deny or repress it. We can agree also that much traditional moral theology made this difficult for us to do because of the excessive fears and restrictions that it induced in Catholics in this area of life. There are indeed expressions of our sexuality that are appropriate in all walks of life. But what we are examining here is specifically the appropriateness of a direct genital expression of love, because the authors of *Human Sexuality* find circumstances where they judge this to be morally good or allowable in a way that contradicts the Church's teaching and that of traditional moral theology.

<sup>3</sup>Henry Davis, S.J. *Moral and Pastoral Theology* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1936), 2:173.

Here in their definition of sexuality they prepare for their further moral evaluation of different expressions of it. In their definition there is a stress on sexuality in its interpersonal meaning that seems to reduce the procreative significance of the genital expression of sexuality. In part they trade on an ambiguity here, for they give the impression that one should judge the specifically genital expression of sexuality by the same norms that apply to the expression of one's sexuality in general, and that moral theology's restrictions on the former constitute of themselves restrictions on the latter. Also when they speak of the procreative or generative, they seem to describe it as a biological aspect of sexuality, whereas when they speak of the unitive dimension of sexuality they describe it in rather glowing humanistic terms. Is not the generative aspect of sexuality as essential to a definition of sexuality as the interpersonal dimension? It is not as human as the unitive dimension, and should it not be given an equal place with the unitive in the definition of sexuality? Is it not at least as humanizing for man and woman in marriage to have an active concern for having and raising children as it is for them to interrelate with one another? If one takes the body seriously, is there any reason to emphasize one of these at the expense of the other? The authors' emphasis here seems to be an overreaction to definitions of sexuality in excessively procreative terms; if this is a correct analysis, their definition does not lead to the balance we need.

*Personhood—the principle of integration for the various purposes of sexuality.* On the basis of their definition, Kosnik *et al.* now turn to the articulation of a principle that expresses the purpose of sexuality, a principle that will govern the moral norms in this area of life. They understand sexuality as "the mode whereby an isolated subjectivity reaches out to communion with another subject" (83). And since impulse to genital union is part of it, sexuality is biased in the direction of heterosexuality. The meaning of sexuality then is the "possibility of shared existence" (85); it is both a realization of the self and an enrichment of the other. It is a call to creativity. Of course, "Procreation is one form of this call to creativity but by no means is it the only reason for sexual expression" (85). In recent Vatican documents there is a greater realization of the value of the interpersonal dimensions of sexuality than there was earlier. In line with this, the authors write:

We think it appropriate, therefore, to broaden the traditional formulation of the purpose of sexuality from *procreative and unitive* to *creative and integrative*.

Wholesome human sexuality is that which fosters a *creative growth toward integration*. . . . In the light of this deeper insight into

the meaning of human sexuality, it is our conviction that creativity and integration or, more precisely, "creative growth toward integration" better expresses the basic finality of sexuality. (86)

They suggest that this principle is consistent with the Bible, tradition and the human sciences and that it better articulates the modern insights into what makes life truly human.

Once more, we can agree that the authors give a beautiful acknowledgement of the interpersonal values of sexuality and specifically its genital expression. But the dimension of sexuality and its meaning that is contained in procreation and the rearing of children is diminished, to say the least. All the emphasis seems to be on the former dimension. In fact, the purpose of sexuality is changed to reduce the import of procreation. They wish to substitute the word creative for procreative, where creative can be understood to be sufficiently fulfilled by the interpersonal relation. It takes quite a stretch of the imagination to hold that this view of the finality of man's sexuality in its genital expression is consistent with Christian tradition. The Second Vatican Council, while recognizing that the marital act is essentially unitive, states that: "by their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown."<sup>4</sup>

We can add that it is very questionable whether the narrowing of the horizon of man's activity in the area of his sexuality is really what the world needs today. There are social scientists today who hold that the illness at the core of the modern world is not so much a repression of sexuality as a repression of death, a denial of the limits that man must face. Acceptance of limits in human life has lost meaning for many modern men and women because there is no longer any horizon of meaning sufficiently transcendent to justify this acceptance to them. And so they narrow their horizon of meaning in order to escape facing death and other limits. One social scientist describes the modern neurosis that results from this:

"Neurotic symptoms serve to reduce and narrow—to magically transform the world so that he [the neurotic] may be distracted from his concerns of death, guilt, and meaninglessness. . . ."

The ironic thing about the narrowing-down of neurosis is that the person seeks to avoid death, but he does it by killing off so much of himself and so large a spectrum of his action-world that he is actually isolating and diminishing himself and becomes as though dead.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Vatican II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," no. 48. W. Abbott (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (America Press, 1966), p. 250.

<sup>5</sup>Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (Macmillan: Free Press, 1975), p. 181. Becker quotes here from Otto Rank.

If this is a correct description of a basic modern illness, and I think it is, then Kosnik *et al.*'s moral principle for sexuality is contributing to this illness. This principle supports modern men and women in the narrowing of the horizon or meaning of their sexual activity, since it leaves out procreation and the rearing of children as essential to this horizon. It is not a compassionate act to offer people a principle of integration that diminishes them and the meaning of their lives or that encourages them to live within a more restricted human horizon.

*The moral evaluation of sexual conduct.* The authors are now prepared to offer criteria for the moral evaluation of sexual conduct. Their position is opposed to an earlier Catholic tradition that:

believed that there is a meaning intrinsic to the very nature of the act itself—a meaning that is absolutely unchangeable and in no way modifiable by extenuating circumstances or special context. (88)

In contrast to this, they do not hold a situation ethics or assert that a good motive is sufficient to justify sexual conduct. Rather, they follow a group of theologians who have been developing a methodology to reflect on proper moral conduct in conflict situations. They write:

Contemporary theologians are once again insisting that any attempt to evaluate the moral object of an action apart from motive and circumstances is necessarily incomplete and inadequate. It is the whole action including circumstances and intention that constitutes the basis for ethical judgment. . . .

. . . we find it woefully inadequate to return to a method of evaluating human sexual behavior based on an abstract absolute predetermination of any sexual expressions as intrinsically evil and always immoral. (89)

Moral evaluation of sexual conduct must recognize both the objective and subjective aspects of this activity. In this evaluation we should ask whether an act is:

predictably an appropriate and productive means of expressing human sexuality? Can it constitute, from a perspective that is broadly humanistic and deeply influenced by the Gospel, an objective value or disvalue? (91)

If such activity serves "creative growth toward integration," then it is morally good and allowable. There are certain criteria that unfold the meaning of this basic principle and serve as criteria to judge whether the sexual activity considered is wholesome and morally good. We should ask whether the act is self-liberating, other-enriching, honest, faithful, socially responsible, life-serving

and joyous (92-5). "Where such qualities prevail, one can be reasonably sure that the sexual behavior that has brought them forth is wholesome and moral" (95).

The authors here are depending upon the work of Bruno Schüller, Josef Fuchs, and Richard McCormick; and they are applying the views of these and other theologians to many areas of sexual conduct. As a prenote to the evaluation I will offer below on this approach in moral theology, I would agree in part that the traditional moral evaluation of man's sexual conduct was within too narrow a compass. In an article I have previously referred to,<sup>6</sup> I developed this view in reference to the question of contraception. Moral theologians and the Church have traditionally argued that contraceptive marital intercourse was always morally wrong because it constitutes a contradiction to the natural finality of the marital act. I acknowledge that this constitutes or is an act directly contrary to the immediate natural purpose of the marital act, for I accept the meaning of the marital act as twofold—namely that it is unitive and procreative. But I argue that the full human meaning or finality of the act involves not simply the procreation but the rearing of children. That is why moral theologians have found premarital intercourse morally wrong—because the couple engages in an act that is procreative of its nature in circumstances that contradict those appropriate for the rearing of children. On the analogy of the moral legitimacy of some forms of excision of organs for the purpose of transplantation to another person, I argue that when the full meaning and goal of the marital act cannot be preserved from serious harm without action against the immediate goal of the act—namely, without contraception or temporary sterilization—then this is morally legitimate. The morally relevant norm is the couple's orientation of their act to its full human meaning, not its immediate; and thus it is not contrary to the moral norm or moral good for them to act against the immediate (procreative) effects of the act in such circumstances.

While this view accepts this intrinsic meaning of the act—the full human meaning and not simply the immediate meaning or finality—as normative, the moral theologians on whom the authors of *Human Sexuality* depend do not accept this as normative when it is considered independently from the intention of the persons involved and the circumstances. Let us recall briefly the position of one of these theologians, Bruno Schüller, on this matter.<sup>7</sup> In an

<sup>6</sup>See footnote 2.

<sup>7</sup>See Bruno Schüller, "Direkte Tötung—indirekte Tötung," *Theologie und Philosophie* 47 (1972), 341-57. Richard McCormick comments on the work of Bruno

important article he wrote on direct killing and indirect killing, Schüller discusses the rationale and legitimacy of the distinction between direct and indirect in Catholic moral theology. This distinction is used in reference to giving scandal that leads another person to sin, cooperation with the sin of another, killing (suicide or killing an innocent person), and contraception. In all these instances, direct action in which one wants and seeks this effect is judged morally wrong because all of these actions are considered intrinsically evil. There are circumstances when, with proportionate reason, one may simply allow such an effect (scandal, etc.) to follow indirectly from one's action. Schüller however makes a distinction in his evaluation of this traditional position. He notes that in the first two instances (scandal and cooperation) the effect of one's action is the sin of another—something that is a moral evil and thus an absolute disvalue. In this case it is right to say that one may never directly seek such an effect, because there could never be a proportionate good to justify such action morally. But in the next two instances (killing and contraception) the effect sought is only a relative disvalue. Life is a relative value (not a moral value) and death is a relative disvalue; procreation is a relative value, and action against this is action against a relative value, thus a relative disvalue. If there are proportionate reasons or proportionate consequences or goods to be gained by acting against a relative value, then in those instances it is reasonable to act against such a value; it is in accord with the order of goods and so in accord with the order of nature or reason. Thus moral prescriptions against killing an innocent person and against contraception are norms that are subject to exceptions. When there are proportionate reasons to justify such exceptions, the killing involved and contraception involved should be called indirect. In this case the evil involved (the death or contraception) should be called a nonmoral evil, not a moral evil. Schüller presents this approach to conflict situations as a teleological type of ethics, since it vindicates moral judgments on the basis of consequences. This is in contrast to a deontological (*to deon*—duty) type of ethics, that argues that certain actions are morally right or wrong regardless of the consequences, as found in traditional moral theology's judgments on contraception and the killing of an innocent person.<sup>8</sup>

Schüller a number of times in his "Notes on Moral Theology." See *Theological Studies* 32 (1971), 89-97; 33 (1972), 68-72; 34 (1973), 61-3; 36 (1975), 91-100; 38 (1977), 70-84. He also examines Schüller's position in his *Ambiguity in Moral Choice* (Marquette University Press, 1973).

<sup>8</sup>See Bruno Schüller, "Anmerkungen zu dem Begriffspaar 'teleologisch-deontologisch,'" *Gregorianum* 57 (1976), 741-56.

The authors of *Human Sexuality* apply a consequentialist methodology to a broad range of sexual conduct. They argue that one cannot assert that any specific kind of sexual conduct is intrinsically evil and always morally wrong. If there is proportionate reason in the form of good consequences, contraception, premarital intercourse, extramarital intercourse and direct genital expression of homosexual love are morally allowable. One must consider the circumstances and intention before making a moral judgment on any specific kind of sexual conduct.

How can we evaluate, within the limits of this paper, this methodology which Kosnik *et al.* borrow and apply so widely? I will evaluate it briefly (1) as a moral methodology, (2) as compared to Thomas Aquinas' methodology, and (3) as related to our needs today.

(1) Schüller seeks to show how his moral methodology relates to forms of moral evaluation or vindication current among ethicists. While this is an important project, it is not an easy matter. The distinction between a teleological and a deontological ethics in moral philosophy today is used primarily to show contrasts among those who develop their ethics within the confines of the philosophies of Hume and Kant and their mutual opposition.<sup>9</sup> The understanding of what is good in a Humean philosophy must be radically different from what it is in a philosophy that has continuity with that of Thomas. Thomas understands there to be a fulfillment or meaning that is proportioned to human being because man has a definite structure and finality. Thus for him, "good" for man is what, at least, perfects him in reference to this finality, what completes him. But Hume and his followers do not have a metaphysics or philosophy of man that justifies our knowing to some extent what is constitutive of man's nature and what therefore fulfills him. Therefore "good" signifies for many of them consequences, or actions that meet common approbation. This is the basis of much liberalism in our time, but there has been a bankruptcy of such liberalism because of the weakness of these criteria. We must evaluate "consequences" as moral criteria in the way that Edward Purcell evaluates "what works" when used as moral criteria:

The test of "what works" was essentially delusive and circular, for practical efficacy was not an objective criterion. Utility as a rationale

<sup>9</sup>See Wm. Frankena, *Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Prentice-Hall, 1973), for a contemporary discussion of the teleological and deontological approaches.



demanded an answer to two questions: useful for what and what was the justification of that purpose.<sup>10</sup>

The very widespread moral confusion of our time is largely due to the approach to ethical questions from a consequentialist standpoint, one not rooted in an understanding of human nature and what fulfills man.

If we ask why some consequences are good for man and others evil, we are finally led to answer that some contribute to his growth, development or perfection while others diminish him. But how can we know this unless we know something of what constitutes the perfection of human being? How then do we know the perfection constitutive for man? Certainly man has to act before he reflects on his actions. Man (not necessarily the individual but the community of men) must experience desires before he reflects on their goodness or badness. By the fact of desiring something, this is an interest or value for the individual or society. But to go further and to say that certain actions, attitudes or objects are valuable for human beings, we have to reflect on their relation or proportion to what perfects man. The moral judgment that some kinds of action are good depends upon this judgment of the intrinsic value of certain kinds of actions for man. For example, we have to understand the relation between sexual desires and activity on the one hand and the good that fulfills man in this area of life on the other. We say that desires and actions in this dimension of life (specifically when this involves direct genital expression) can be evaluated as desirable or valuable through understanding what they contribute to the human good. We can argue, as I have above, that they contribute to this because through sexual activity humanly engaged in man directs himself toward the human good that transcends himself—namely, a relation with one of the opposite sex, and the procreation and rearing of children, a complexus of goods realized in monogamous marriage.

The question remains whether the human good in the area of man's sexual activity is simply the good people should normally seek in this aspect of their life or the essential good. Philosophies that say one cannot from experience understand anything of the nature of man and thus the nature of the human good would say

<sup>10</sup>Edward Purcell, Jr., *The Crisis of Democratic Theory. Scientific naturalism and the problem of value* (Universities Press of Kentucky, 1973), p. 268. Also see Victor Ferkiss, *The Future of Technological Civilization* (New York: Braziller, 1974), for a similar critique of liberal society. For example, he writes: "Reform liberalism today lacks . . . a vision of the good society because it is liberal and focuses on means rather than ends" (p. 62).

that the good we indicated above is ordinarily the good to be pursued in this area, but it is not the good on which the goodness of sexual activity depends. Perhaps sexual activity outside the context of marriage can give one fulfillment and help one grow. I would ask in response to this how one distinguishes the feeling or sense of fulfillment and enlargement of the person from the reality of such fulfillment. In extramarital intercourse, for example, one may have the feeling of being enlarged through loving another and being loved in turn. But do not people have these feelings at times when the reality is diametrically opposed to their feelings? Do they not have these feelings when they are actually diminishing themselves, withdrawing themselves from the full human good to center themselves on something far less and indeed at the expense of turning themselves against the full human good? We have quoted above from Ernest Becker a statement that this is very common in our world today.

If the human good that I have indicated above is what makes sexual intercourse good, then action in accord with this order or for this good is morally good, not primarily because of its "consequences" but because of its direction to the human good in accord with man's nature or with his practical reason directing him properly. If consequences are good because they help one grow toward the human good, then action is good more because it relates one to the human good in accord with reason than because it has good consequences. Similarly, an action contrary to this human good is morally evil more because it is against the human good proper to man in this action than because it has bad consequences for him and society, immediate and remote. To divorce consequences from the human good (and this includes the common good as well as individual human good) as a moral norm is to leave us without criteria for discerning good from bad consequences. To give them priority over the human good as norms is intrinsically contradictory, since their value depends upon their relation to the human good.

It is true that the human good in this area is a "relative value," but this relative value is a participation in the absolute good that is God. Through seeking the human good that completes him, man is seeking God; and through turning away from this good one is turning away from God. As Thomas writes: "God is not offended by us except when we act against our own good."<sup>11</sup> Thus, contrary to Schüller, concrete moral norms that relate us to the innerworld-

<sup>11</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, III, ch. 122.

ly area (e.g. adultery and the direct killing of an innocent person) are not always subject to exceptions. I have argued elsewhere, as I recalled briefly above, that the moral norm against contraception is subject to exception because at times action for the full human good to which man in his sexual activity is directed cannot be preserved from serious harm without action against the immediate good of procreation. But adultery, pre-marital intercourse, direct genital expression of homosexual love cannot in any circumstances be seen in the same context. Action against the human good that fulfills man in his sexual activity is not in these instances action against a partial good for the purpose of preserving the full good that is essential here. Rather, these actions are against the full human good that completes man in this area of life for the preservation of a partial good that completes him. They are then intrinsically evil.<sup>12</sup>

(2) The argument can perhaps be made that Schüller's position is in accord with Thomas' teaching on the sources of the moral goodness of a human act. Thomas teaches that the goodness of the act must be judged from its object, its end and its circumstances, and that we cannot evaluate an act as morally good simply through a consideration of its object and the kind of act that this object specifies it to be. Moreover, Thomas holds that in a human act that comprises both means and end, both external and internal elements, the end is the formal element and the means the material element. The morality of the act depends primarily on the will, and so it and its end are more important in the evaluation of an act than the external character of the act.<sup>13</sup> If this is the case, is it not possible that there are in some circumstances goods to be gained from such acts as extramarital intercourse that would sufficiently justify such an act?

In answer to this, we can agree that Thomas held that the object of an act and thus its moral genus or kind (e.g. the giving of alms), considered aside from its intention and circumstances, is not sufficient to render it morally good. For example, by a wrong intent and end (e.g. vainglory), a generically good act (e.g. giving

<sup>12</sup>Of course, the authors of *Human Sexuality* have a double approach to vindicate some instances of sexual intercourse outside of marriage. The first is to redefine the meaning of genital sexuality so that there are instances of this outside of marriage that are not contrary to its finality, namely the interpersonal relationship. The second is to assert that one may morally act in a way contrary to the intrinsic finality of the act if there are sufficiently good reasons. By our reflection on Schüller we are rejecting this second manner of vindication they use.

<sup>13</sup>See *Summa theologica*, I-II, 20, 1.

alms) can be made morally evil. However, he also writes that there are generically evil acts which no good will or intention can make good.<sup>14</sup> This depends upon an understanding of the human good that is the object of the interior act of the will in a moral act. If one were to understand by the human good some consequences that were good for the individual or society in one's own estimation and in that of one's culture, then there may be instances when acts such as extramarital intercourse would be justifiable. But if one understands by the human good what actually completes man and woman in their sexual activity, given the nature of the act and its intrinsic meaning, then the above does not follow. For Thomas the human good has a definite character, and by asserting that the will's act and its end is formal in a moral act he is saying that it is more important that the will be directed to this human good that completes one in a specific area of human activity such as sexual activity than that one's external act be simply the proper kind of act. But for the act to be morally evil, it is sufficient that the external act not be the proper kind of act. As Thomas writes: "If the will is evil either from the end intended or from the act willed, it follows that the external act is evil."<sup>15</sup>

(3) Finally, an ethics of proportionate reasons in the sense of a consequentialism and the use made of it by Kosnik *et al.* is not what we need today to make the world more human and more Christian. There are many forces at work in our culture to incline people to think that their fulfillment depends upon their preferences, their interests, their freedom, their manipulation of themselves and their environment. In the kind of liberalism that dominates our culture these elements of human activity are given such weight that the character of the human good as proportioned to a human being that has some definite structure independent of the choice of individual or society is obscured. What is necessary today is a deeper understanding of this human good, not a consequentialism that estimates the moral goodness of acts without reference to it.<sup>16</sup> Of course, the understanding that Thomas had of

<sup>14</sup>See *Summa*, I-II, 20, 2.

<sup>15</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>16</sup>See David Norton, *Personal Destinies. A Philosophy of Ethical Individualism* (Princeton University Press, 1976), for an expression of the contrast between the modern sensibility reflected in consequentialism and that of a classical age reflected in Aristotle's "eudaimonism" (p. 216):

"No one chooses to possess the whole world if he has first to become someone else."

Aristotle's words (*Nich. Eth.* 9.4. 1166a) epitomize a radical disparity between moral sensibilities of his time and our own. For surely the motto of

this human good, or that the manuals of moral theology showed, is subject to development and correction. Modern social and personal experience should have something to contribute to our understanding of human nature and its essential fulfillment, and this is relevant specifically in the area of sexual morality. Moreover, we need something more than an understanding of the human good that completes us, no matter how adequate this may be. We need to be able to direct ourselves toward this human good from the context of our interaction with a particular environment, our developmental stages in human growth, our facing and evaluating of the alternative possibilities of life that are open to us. Personal involvement, creativity, responsibility and human relationships that contribute to the development of others as well as of ourselves are impossible if our understanding and appreciation of the true human good becomes murky or compromised. And they are also impossible if we are incapable of distinguishing intermediate human structures and goods from the full human good and the structures that relate us to it. The true basis and locus for an ethics of proportionate goods is only found in a deeper understanding of the intrinsic meaning and finality of human living and a capacity to discern how to relate to intermediate goods and structures in a way that furthers this human living.

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our time runs, "Show me how to possess the whole world and I will become whomever you please."

The disparity is accounted for by the modern loss of a condition of personal life, and a feeling attendant upon the condition, with which the Hellenes were intimately familiar. Their name for both the condition and the attendant feeling was *eudaimonia*. Literally, *eudaimonia* is the condition of living in harmony with one's *daemon* or innate potentiality, "living in truth to oneself." It is marked by a distinctive feeling that constitutes its intrinsic reward and therefore bears the same name as the condition itself. Provisionally we will describe the feeling of *eudaimonia* as 'being where one wants to be, doing what one wants to do.'

As disclosed in previous chapters, the precondition of *eudaimonia* is the unique, irreplaceable, potential worth of the person. It is his readers' sense of this personal worth on which Aristotle relies in his confident assertion that no one would wish to exchange himself, even "to possess the whole world." Today we are without this sense, and rush to exchange ourselves at the prospect of the most trivial rewards. To persons who have no knowledge of who they are, much less of anything in the way of irreplaceable personal worth, nothing is to be lost by such exchange.

David Norton's ethical position depends upon the acceptance of the possibility of a metaphysics. I offer a defense of the possibility of metaphysics in "Developmental Psychology and Man's Knowledge of Being," *The Thomist* 39 (1975), 668-95.