

EXAMINING OPEN RELATIONSHIPS IN INDONESIA ACCORDING TO THOMAS AQUINAS AND HIS PROPONENTS

MENGANALIS HUBUNGAN TERBUKA DI INDONESIA MENURUT THOMAS AQUINAS DAN PARA PENGIKUTNYA

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between husband and wife is an important part of their bond. Recently, there have been many attempts to reinterpret monogamous relationships based on gender equality. One of these attempts comes from open relationships. They are of the view that monogamy is outdated and needs to be modified. Open relationships shift the sexual exclusivity that husbands and wives have had. Each individual in the marriage allows their partner to have sexual relations outside of their legal spouse. This concept was introduced as part of autonomy, equality, and freedom because of the marginalization of women's rights in the family. Open relationships reformulate the concept of happiness in the family. According to them, happiness in the family can be achieved when couples can eliminate jealousy and competition. The arrangement for this happiness is to give their primary partner the freedom to have sexual relations with other people. Because the partner's happiness with others is their happiness, this study aims to provide a philosophical foundation based on the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas as a means to fill the research gap. This article will review how autonomy, equality, freedom, and happiness should be actualized in the family.

Keywords: Consensual Non-Monogamy, Open Relationship, Open Marriage, Marriage Ethics, Philosophy Of Marriage

ABSTRAK

Hubungan antara suami dan istri adalah bagian penting dari ikatan mereka. Akhir-akhir ini, ada banyak upaya untuk menafsirkan kembali hubungan monogami berdasarkan kesetaraan gender. Salah satu upaya ini berasal dari hubungan terbuka. Mereka berpandangan bahwa monogami sudah ketinggalan zaman dan perlu dimodifikasi. Hubungan terbuka menggeser eksklusivitas seksual yang selama ini dimiliki oleh suami dan istri. Setiap individu dalam pernikahan mengizinkan pasangannya untuk melakukan hubungan seksual di luar pasangan resmi mereka. Konsep ini diperkenalkan sebagai bagian dari otonomi, kesetaraan, dan kebebasan karena marjinalisasi hak-hak perempuan dalam keluarga. Hubungan terbuka merumuskan ulang konsep kebahagiaan dalam keluarga. Menurut mereka, kebahagiaan dalam keluarga dapat dicapai ketika pasangan dapat menghilangkan rasa cemburu dan persaingan. Cara untuk mencapai kebahagiaan tersebut adalah dengan memberikan kebebasan kepada pasangan utama mereka untuk melakukan hubungan seksual dengan orang lain. Karena kebahagiaan pasangan dengan orang lain adalah kebahagiaan mereka, maka penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan landasan filosofis berdasarkan pemikiran Santo Thomas Aquinas sebagai sarana untuk mengisi kesenjangan penelitian. Artikel ini akan mengulas bagaimana otonomi, kesetaraan, kebebasan, dan kebahagiaan seharusnya diaktualisasikan dalam keluarga.

Kata Kunci: Non-Monogami Konsensual, Hubungan Terbuka, Pernikahan Terbuka, Etika Perkawinan, Filsafat Pernikahan

INTRODUCTION

The SDGs are a crucial framework to guide persistent global development (Nabiyeva et al., 2023). This strategic plan refers to a

comprehensive sustainable development program that includes 17 different goals and 169 measurable targets. One hundred ninety-three member states, including Indonesia, have collectively endorsed these goals.

Gender equality ranks fifth as a significant issue in the United Nations (Alisjahbana & Murtiningtyas, 2018). The goal of gender equality is equality between men and women in fulfilling rights and obligations (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023). Women have been marginalized in various fields worldwide, including Indonesia (Doorn-Harder, 2019). The women's movement in America emerged after the Civil War ended in 1960. The emergence of liberal democracy, which demanded equality among citizens, triggered similar demands by feminists (Fukuyama, 2018). A similar movement emerged in France in 1968, rooted in social, economic, and political tensions that led Charles de Gaulle to resign in 1969 (Ionescu & Collange, 2020). France experienced a major upheaval with mass demonstrations, strikes, and riots that shook the country (Rasmussen, 2016). Later, the movement expanded into Europe by shaping international culture and reformulating European relations. This movement was the cultural foundation for the transformation of European society and its subsequent expansion. The premise of this social movement was the aspiration of liberal democracy to promote the recognition of equality and dignity among citizens. The movement resulted from seismic economic, political, and cultural changes in America and Europe that raised gender issues to an unprecedented level. Women started to contest their marginalization.

This social seismic explosion gave rise to a new round of feminist claims by entering various fields of life, including the family (Molony, 2017). The family is the most minor structure in society, and it must modify itself to adjust to the dynamics of the times. One of the demands of this adjustment lies in its structure (White, 2022). Monogamy as a structure that has been protecting marriage has become obsolete. It is considered an artifact in the

modern world because it raises several problems in itself: divorce, domestic violence, traumatic events, and the marginalization of women's rights (Klesse, 2018). Monogamy is considered to perpetuate these things, as women are fed the traditional doctrine that there is no purpose for women other than family honor (Conley et al., 2012). Nena O'Neill and George O'Neill introduced open marriage as an alternative to monogamy, which was considered outdated (O'Neill & O'Neill, 1972). This movement aimed to overcome the shortcomings of monogamy by altering the concept of possession as the foundation of marital relationships. Traditional relationship concepts need to change to achieve the ideal, which aligns with the movement initiated by Nena O'Neill and George O'Neill (Mills, 2017). Conceptually, open marriages are legal marriages that retain the institution of marriage as the overarching structure. However, in sexual practice, each individual has the option to express their sexual impulses towards individuals outside of their legal partner, either through same-sex or opposite-sex relationships. This reality challenged centuries of male-dominated gender roles in the family. Women began to rebel against being treated as such, against being overvalued as love objects, against being mistreated, and against being considered property (Bohren et al., 2019). Women want the same freedom of movement as men.

As a concept, open marriage was a novelty. It modifies the family structure to encourage a woman's growth, thus encouraging her freedom and privacy to grow as a unique person. This model is also intended to overcome the dictatorial style in the family by proposing a contractual concept based on equality and freedom (Silalahi, 2022). The main benchmarks for achieving happiness in an open marriage are equality and freedom objectives that the

marriage partners must uphold. This goal can be achieved if those who form it abandon the traditional, static institution of monogamy. Since marriage is born out of an explicit agreement, there must be an equal role for the freedom of individuals to explore themselves, including the search for sexual pleasure with other partners (Browne & Nash, 2023). For open marriages, the issue is not gender equality and free sex per se, but the wife must be able to make choices for herself. In the name of patriarchy, men have been taking away this freedom of choice for centuries. Open marriages have evolved the term into open relationships and become one of the models of consensual non-monogamy besides polyamory and swinging (Conley & Piemonte, 2021). Consensual non-monogamy is a term that encompasses various configurations of open relationships.

Open relationships have entered Indonesia as part of a new lifestyle for married couples (Oktaviani, 2020). Later, this state of affairs was characterized by the presence of swinging clubs in big cities like Jakarta and Surabaya as a way for married couples to enjoy sex (Emka, 2003). Smaller cities such as Malang, Jember, and Sidoarjo have also seen the emergence of similar groups (Ulumuddin, 2018; Irawan, 2018). This partner-swapping behavior is no longer the monopoly of the big cities but has entered the countryside (Yanti, 2022; Islam, 2018). Recently, Indonesia was shocked by the statement of a controversial figure named Gus Samsudin, who made a recitation video on his YouTube channel that allowed the swapping of partners (Prastyo, 2024). Therefore, the authors will make a philosophical analysis to fill the research gap because marriage is the foundation of a family (Yuvsechko, 2018). In Indonesia, the relationship between husband and wife or marriage law is based on monogamy (Maulida et al., 2022).

The authors assume this marriage model will conflict with existing marriage models. This assumption is based on empirical research that swapping partners between husband and wife has become a commodity to satisfy fantasies and a game-based journey. Swinging clubs organize a couple of swap parties. Swapping marriage partners has become an open form of entertainment among members. It is open because it is conducted across legally married couples within a membership group based on mutual consent and voluntariness. They certainly engage in this sexual activity on a conscious basis. Many news reports that detail the arrest of this kind of sex party also support this information. These initial data prompted the author to investigate further by providing philosophical notes according to St. Thomas Aquinas' natural law. Then, develop the above views to build the author's original ideas. Because the subject matter is quite broad, the author limits himself to reviewing only two subjects that are components of the open relationship. The first point is about human autonomy, equality, and freedom. This section examines how autonomy, equality, and freedom should be actualized in the family. Second, this article evaluates the suggestions regarding happiness promoted by open relationships. This review intends to answer whether it is possible to develop happiness in families based on these ideas.

METHOD

This research design draws on a reflexive, systematic approach to a societal phenomenon. Then, it slices the phenomenon to reveal its ideas. The idea of material data is then approached through data instruments from the philosophical study of St. Thomas Aquinas' natural law. Additionally, data from Thomas Aquinas supporters' texts, manuscripts, books, and monographs—

particularly those from the school of Thomism—enrich this research tool, making it helpful in constructing discussions using information gleaned from open relationships (Bakker & Zubair, 1993). Then, this new thesis can be used as a philosophical and ethical footing for open relationships and the development of further research. Therefore, to get there, the author will analyze the two components that make up the open relationship thesis so that, from the two components described, a philosophical attempt is presented to build an ethical foundation for marriage.

ARGUMENTATION FOR HUMAN AUTONOMY, EQUALITY, AND FREEDOM.

Open relationships are a contemporary approach to relationships that emphasizes the importance of couples redefining their relationship dynamics based on individual needs and preferences (Moors, 2017). The basic premise of open relationships is to rewrite the contract (Silalahi, 2022), considering the couple's needs. Although polygyny is still allowed in Indonesia under Islamic marriage law. According to its followers, open relationships are seen as a more honorable alternative because they promote equality (Moors et al., 2017). Polygyny is a right still held by most Indonesian men who are allowed by Islamic marriage law to have four wives at the same time (Warni & Wijaningsih, 2018). The agreement outlines the open relationship agreement, becoming the basis for their actions (Pamuntjak, 2017). In addition to the agreement, couples involved in open relationships have the same meaning towards this activity (Merial & Baharudin, 2016). This meaning is built from being open with each other (Emka, 2003). This approach suggests a shift from the traditional one-size-fits-all marriage model

to a more personalized and flexible relationship structure that prioritizes the well-being and satisfaction of both parties (Zhou et al., 2017).

According to Silalahi (2022), autonomy between the husband and wife is what open relationships mean by equality. Autonomy is a fundamental aspect of open relationships, representing equality between partners regarding responsibility, judgment, attention, and concern for each other (Vogels-Broeke et al., 2022). This equality of personality means that each partner has the right to individuality and to the differences that make them unique. Equality of responsibility means that each partner has equal freedom to pursue their goals. These goals are meant to meet needs that result in each other's fulfillment and growth. Equality of care means that both partners will equally strive to provide the freedom and respect necessary to maintain personhood and pursue fulfillment. This aspect of fulfillment, known as swinging, is the search for sexual pleasure outside of the official partner, where the husband or wife has the freedom, based on the autonomy of their identity, to develop themselves outside of their primary partner. This process of seeking an outside partner will be an opportunity to reorient relationships, gender relations, and interracial relations (Schippers, 2016). The search for sexual partners outside their official partners is also intended as sexual creativity (Pamuntjak, 2017) that aims to enhance sexual quality with the primary partner (Ryan & Ryan, 2019). The swinger practice agreement should strengthen the existing husband-wife relationship (Diveranta, 2020). However, some swinging couples in Jakarta consider the integrity of their household by giving their primary partner the freedom to seek sexual satisfaction with other people (Emka, 2003; Merial & Baharudin, 2016). Pangkahila stated that dissatisfaction in marital relationships is a contributing factor

to engaging in sexual partner swapping (Prasasti, 2018).

Before reviewing the above thoughts, there must be a fundamental question that must be answered. Do humans have free will? For Thomas, humans certainly have free choice (*liberum arbitrium*). If not, then judgment, insistence, general rules, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments would be absurd (Aquinas, 1952). Without free will as a fundamental aspect of human existence, the previously described elements lose their significance. Because the existence of consideration, insistence, general rules, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments presuppose human judgment (Silalahi, 2023), through this assessment, we can infer the capacity of humans to react to reality. This capacity to react to reality originates from his mind (Aquinas, 1956). We can compare this situation with other living beings. Animals also act with judgment, but not with free judgment. For example, when a deer encounters a lion, it also makes certain judgments, but this irrational creature's judgments are based on its natural judgments (*ex naturali instinctu*) (Oelze, 2018). Based on its natural judgment, the deer should avoid the lion. These natural judgments are a form of self-defense for preserving its species. Because animals cannot compare alternatives (*quia animalia non possunt comparare diversa*), humans are rational beings. Besides having natural judgment, they can identify and judge through their intellect, showing various open paths for their free choice (Baumann, 1999). Humans can judge through reason and will that something should be pursued or avoided. Human freedom gives him autonomy in determining his life path (Dung, 2022).

In contingent matters, the ratio is open to opposites (*in rebus contingentibus, ratio est aperta in oppositis*). The ratio is faced with various possibilities. Human beings

have many choices among these diverse options. According to Kenny (1988), the ability to perform the opposing action is contingent upon capacity and opportunity. One must possess the ability to swim before realizing the act of swimming. Secondly, there is a swimming pool, so those who can swim have the opportunity to swim. A free action is when someone can choose to swim or not swim while being able to swim (Frankfurt, 2020). If another alternative is available, someone can choose to conduct a free action (Kane, 2021). When faced with a particular decision, it is not the exclusive option. However, there are instances where there is just one option to achieve a goal. Therefore, free will must choose that option (Pasnau, 2019). However, this action is not driven by compulsion but by choice (*libera voluntas, libertas voluntatis*); free will acknowledges the necessity of the means. Based on this, the minimum condition for measuring human free will is not placed on the ability to do the opposite action but on his free decision (*liberum arbitrium*) (Hoffmann, 2021).

How do humans structure their freedom? Thomas (1952) believes that when thoughtfully considered, human conduct reaches its ultimate form. Deliberative and goal-directed action must be thoughtful. Human behavior is not random and arbitrary but consistently intentional (DeYoung et al., 2009). Conscious human action (*actus humanus*) should place purpose as the first order that occupies the agent's intention. Intentionality is an act of the will by which the ability effectively wants to achieve the desired goal (Amerini, 2021). If there are activities where the purpose is not within the agent's intentionality, then those actions are not typical of human behavior. These activities are called *actus hominis*, which describe the agent as a living entity with a physical body that moves but does not stem from the unique qualities of humans who

possess reason and volition (Stump, 2023). Because uniquely human action always involves practical reasoning, sometimes it requires an exercise in how best to achieve it. Aquinas argues that human action is a complex and dynamic process. Humans must constantly learn and adapt as they strive to achieve their goals. Practical reason helps them make the right choices and effectively achieve their goals. For example, someone wants to travel from Jakarta to Medan in less than four hours. He will consult the aircraft schedule and plan the journey accordingly. Human actions, then, are intended, purposeful, and volitionally driven. Humans identify what they are interested in and consciously take steps to obtain it. In Thomas' view, we do not aim for what we do not want; when aiming for what we want, we use our intellect (Davies, 2022). Because humans will do what they understand, from what they understand, they will organize goals to achieve their ultimate goal (Stump, 2023). Thomas is aware that we can act intentionally while our minds are preoccupied with other thoughts, like when we prepare Betutu chicken while planning a holiday to Bali. Thomas is also aware that humans sometimes act in ways that are contrary to what would typically entice them (Pasnau, 2019). For example, we visit the dentist or read tedious or confusing philosophy books. However, Thomas does not take any of that as a denial of his claim that man acts as *actus humanus* to get what he thinks he wants. Even if the means of doing so are distasteful or harmful to him, our purpose in going to the dentist is to get rid of a toothache, read something unpleasant to pass a philosophy exam, and so on.

There are, then, four components to consider in this section concerning the autonomy, equality, and freedom that sexual activity outside of one's legal partner offers. Firstly, the genus of action relates to

existence; since existence is interchangeable with the good, all that exists must be good (convertibility thesis) (Aquinas, 1952). Scholastic philosophers generally base existence and goodness on teleological arguments (Stump, 2023). Goodness and existence are the same thing and differ only in notion. The essence of goodness is in its desirability (Pasnau, 2017). Goodness is universally desired. Aquinas (1952) argues that an object or state is only desirable to the extent that it possesses perfection and that its actuality suffices to define its perfection.

Something is realized in proportion to its existence. Existence is what gives things reality. Goodness and existence are identical. It is just that goodness presents an aspect of desire that is not present in existence. Thus, human action has goodness insofar as it has existence. Existence lacks goodness if it lacks something that is due to the fullness of its being (Aquinas, 1952). Since man is a composite being consisting of soul and body, the fullness of his being is related to his faculties and instruments of knowledge and movement (Fitzpatrick, 2017). Therefore, if these instruments are complete, then his existence is good. Therefore, every action has goodness insofar as it has existence. On the ontological level, human existence is good because it serves a purpose (Pasnau, 2022). In contrast, it lacks goodness insofar as that lack results from the fullness of its existence and is therefore considered evil. Hence, the autonomy, equality, and freedom associated with his ontology are good insofar as they correspond to the essentials and accidentals that constitute his existence.

Secondly, because good and evil depend on the fullness or unfulfillment of existence, the fullness of being gives something its species. An action has the species of its object, which is the human action itself. The ultimate good of man's moral action derives from his action (Aquinas, 1952). According to Torrijos-

Castrillejo (2022), human reason is the foundation for good and evil actions. As a result, reason must be in charge of human goodness. Because the intellect considers an action good or evil based on its object, it is from this consideration of reason that human actions diversify because essential differences place different species of actions. After all, good and evil are two different things. So, specific actions are considered humane and moral because they depart from the judgment of reason. An action is considered immoral not due to the absence of an object. However, since the subject matter deviates from rational human thought, sexual acts carried out outside of a marital union have equal influence due to their procreative capacity and ability to generate enjoyment and offspring. However, based on the suitability and appropriateness of reason, sexual acts outside of marriage are not justified because they are not under the order of human reason.

Thirdly, just as natural things receive perfection not only from their substantial form but also from their accidental matters, the same applies to actions. Since the abundance of its goodness is not entirely in its species but also certain adjuncts, a thing increases due to its incidentals, namely circumstances. Circumstances are external to an activity as they are not inherent to its nature but present in action as additional factors (Aquinas, 1952). An object condition is a state of affairs that influences an action. Aquinas (1952) states that the object's condition determines the action. Suppose the object of the action itself, considered as the act performed, does not manifest the good or bad of the action. In that case, we can look to the secondary determinant of morality, which is the state of the human action when it is performed. Human actions must follow themselves and their circumstances to achieve moral goodness. Autonomy, equality, and freedom mean that

offering sexual activity outside of one's legal spouse is something that goes against what one ought to be in oneself and what one is because marriage considers the welfare of offspring, not only in terms of living with one's kind and propagating one's kind but also the development of children as a result of procreation, where the life of the parents becomes a pattern for their offspring. Also, fidelity is a condition that must be maintained because that is where the dignity and property of marriage are placed. The marriage contract is a condition that constitutes the existence of marriage. Based on these three circumstances, which should structure the existence of marriage—autonomy, freedom, and equality—offering sex outside of one's legal spouse is a moral evil because it is incompatible with the conditions that should structure a marriage.

Fourth, purpose is considered part of the goodness of the action (Aquinas, 1952). Good and evil are defined as the ultimate goal. The quality of the end is connected to the quality of the will, as the end is the goal of the will (Aquinas, 1952). A particular will is good because it does not contradict the universal will. For example, a person is caught stealing to fulfill his family's needs. Based on the will of his family members, the person caught stealing should be released from punishment. However, the judge wishes otherwise; based on justice, the judge punishes the thief. There is tension between the judge's will and the thief's family, so how can we resolve this tension? The will pursues a more universal kind of goodness as the human intellect comprehends more universal features of goodness. This universality of goodness is what God understands, as He is the Creator and Ruler of all things. According to Piotr Roszak (2022), whatever He wills, He wills under the aspect of the common good, constituting the good of the entire universe (Osina, 2020). It is this formal aspect that the judge used as the basis for

punishing the thief; he upheld the more universal aspect of the common good.

Meanwhile, the will of the thief's family is private, relating only to the good of his family. The above description is used as a basis for criticizing autonomy, equality, and freedom, which offer sexual activities outside of legal partners. The aspect of goodness they offer must consider the universal good because the particular good must be in harmony with the universal good as its formal basis (Levering, 2022). Thus, one's will is not proper to desire a particular good if it does not refer to the common good as the goal.

The conclusion reached in this section is that humans have free will and, thus, the ability to choose freely (*liberum arbitrium*). Humans have this ability because they have reason and will. Thus, in contingent matters, the ratio has to consider different alternatives. However, these alternatives must be organized by the characteristics of a human being. Thus, human action is not considered random and arbitrary because it considers itself an *actus humanus*, a conscious being who decides everything based on his humanity. Based on this, human action must be organized based on reason and directed toward autonomy, equality, and freedom. Thus, reason, through the will, organizes actions based on ontological aspects, objects of action, circumstances, and goals. Autonomy, equality, and freedom associated with ontology are good if they follow the essence and are accidental. As for the object of action, i.e., the action itself, autonomy, equality, and freedom, which add up to sexual activity outside of one's legal spouse, are not justified because they are not following the order of human reason. It also contradicts the circumstances that should structure the existence of marriage, which considers the benefit of offspring, a life of giving and serving each other, and the

marriage contract. The autonomy, equality, and freedom that open relationships offer are entirely at odds with the purpose of the will, which considers the universality of the good as the aspect that structures the purpose of the particular.

ARGUMENTATION FOR THE HAPPINESS OF OPEN RELATIONSHIPS

According to open relationships, the peak of happiness is the total absorption of the loss of self-interest, i.e., self-transcendence. This peak experience is called the super moment, where our purest and most complete self is present (Silalahi, 2022). Within this framework, the slogan "if the husband is happy, the wife is happy." Even if that happiness is structured around allowing their partner to seek sexual fulfillment with others (Emka, 2003), happiness in open relationships depends on eliminating jealousy and competition by fostering an environment of trust, love and openness between partners (Silalahi, 2022). This happiness involves partner diversity as the basis of the sexual relationship (Williams and Prior, 2015). Couple diversity can foster harmony both collectively and individually. This emphasis on mutual respect and understanding underscores the importance of communication and empathy in navigating the complexities of open relationships (Silalahi, 2022). However, empirical research suggests that challenges such as revenge and jealousy can arise in partner exchange, potentially disrupting harmony and balance in relationships (Jones & Theiss, 2021). Jealousy can be a motivating factor for open relationships (Tempo, 22-10-2010).

Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that dissatisfaction in the marital relationship can be a contributing factor to engaging in sexual partner exchange. Some couples in Jakarta prioritize the integrity of their

household by giving their primary partner the freedom to seek sexual satisfaction with others, highlighting the complexity and individuality of relationships in the context of open relationships (Emka, 2003). This freedom highlights the nuanced nature of autonomy and decision-making in open relationships, where partners navigate boundaries and agreements to ensure the well-being and satisfaction of all parties involved (Rubel & Bogaert, 2014).

The key questions to guide this section are: Do humans have an end goal? Actions performed by human beings alone deserve to be called humane because they are proper for human beings (Aquinas, 1952). Hence, any action is called humane because it considers man the master of his actions. Man is called the master of his actions because of his intellect and will (Vijgen, 2021). This rational nature tends to direct itself to the goal and lead itself to the goal (Dung, 2022). Thus, the end is the end of the will because human actions culminate in what the will desires. This end can be considered in two ways.

Firstly, consider the aspect of the final goal. Since all human beings desire perfection, they have an ultimate goal: fulfillment for themselves (Pasnau, 2022). This perfect fulfillment is related to human desires because the perfect is understood as actualized (*perfectio haec perfecta ad appetitum humanum pertinet, quia perfectum ut actuale intelligitur*) (Aquinas, 2020). At this point, humans agree that they have an ultimate goal in life. Secondly, it considers how this aspect of the ultimate goal is realized. At this point, people do not agree on the ultimate goal. Some people want wealth as their ultimate good, pleasure as their ultimate good, and some want something else. The point is that people want something good in themselves. For Thomas, the most complete good man desires in his affective disposition is

happiness (Aquinas, 2005). Medieval theologians also regarded the pursuit of happiness as essential in the Christian view of man (Elders, 2019).

Since the ultimate goal of human beings is happiness, how do humans organize their happiness? Firstly, we must understand that Thomas's thoughts on happiness stem from Aristotle's (Aristotle, 2000). Thomas developed the main idea of Aristotle's *Eudaimonia* within the context of Christianity (Pasnau, 2022). Thomas places happiness on two aspects beyond what Aristotle has done. Firstly, there is something in itself that we want to achieve. In this sense, man's ultimate goal is the uncreated good, namely God (Aquinas, 1956), who, by His infinite goodness, can perfectly satisfy man's will. Secondly, attainment or possession: man's ultimate end is something created or existing within him, which is nothing but the attainment or enjoyment of the ultimate end (Aquinas, 1952). Therefore, human happiness is uncreated if we consider it a cause or object. However, if we consider it to be the essence of happiness, it is something created. According to Thomas, perfect happiness can be achieved if the human mind is united with God through one continuous and eternal operation (Stump, 2021). If, in this life, we do not achieve that unity and continuity of operation, we will not achieve that supreme happiness either. Aquinas (1956) believed that ultimate happiness is not found in external goods but in the contemplation of truth (*relinquitur quod ultima hominis felicitas sit in contemplatione veritatis*) (Castro, 2021). This type of happiness requires continuous operation. So, whoever directs his actions to realize perfection represents God. Everything that leads to its perfection tends to be like God (*unumquodque tendens in suam perfectionem, tendit in divinam similitudinem*) (Aquinas, 1956; Gilson, 2002).

According to the aforementioned, man can only experience the ultimate happiness that Thomas introduces in terms of his essence through his communion with God (Emery, 2020). This type of happiness, categorized as ultimate happiness, is a vision of the divine essence (*ultima felicitas est visio divinae essentiae*) (Ortlund, 2021). Then, there is derivative happiness, which man can attain through appropriate accidents. This type of accidental happiness involves enjoyment. That means accidental happiness is happiness that exists in its essence (Pasnau, 2022). Accidental happiness cannot exist if the essence does not exist. Thomas's happiness presupposes a sincerity of will, which structures the antecedents of happiness and the circumstances accompanying it. Since the sincerity of the will organizes the ends to achieve the proper ends, the sincerity of the will is a necessary condition for happiness. The logical consequence is that happiness is always composed of something good because the essence that causes happiness is a good God, so God cannot will evil (Aquinas, 1955). As a result, nature cannot justify happiness that is based on open relationships and giving couples the freedom to have sex with people other than their legal partners. Sexual pleasure is not ultimate happiness and cannot constitute the existence of a perfect being, which is derived from communion with God (*beatitudo hominis consistit in visione Dei*). Sexual pleasure is part of accidental happiness. Since accidental happiness considers the essence in which it exists, sexual pleasure, which constitutes accidental happiness, cannot conflict with happiness based on its essence. Therefore, we can rightly say that ultimate happiness does not lie in sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure results from happiness or some part of happiness. This situation can be true for some professions requiring celibacy, such as

Catholic Priests, Hindu Priests, and Buddha Monks. They can still enjoy ultimate happiness even though they are celibate. They can still enjoy ultimate happiness even though they do not enjoy sexual pleasure.

This section concludes that every human has an ultimate goal since he desires goodness. Although goodness is realized differently, everyone desires something good to achieve. That perfect, complete good is recognized and converted into happiness. It is necessary to organize happiness in two aspects. The first aspect is to consider its essence. This type of happiness comes from something uncreated, referring to God as the source of fulfillment. The second type of happiness is derived from its essence and is accidental. It exists in its essence and cannot exist if the essence of happiness is removed. Sexual pleasure, as a part of accidental happiness, is appropriate for living beings. It is not happiness but something that makes up for accidental happiness. Since accidental happiness cannot contradict its essence, it follows logically that the things that make up it cannot. Besides, happiness presupposes a sincerity of will, which constitutes the antecedents of happiness and the circumstances accompanying it. Since the sincerity of the will sets the goal to achieve the proper end, sincerity of the will is necessary for attaining happiness. The logical consequence is that happiness is always made up of something good, so something evil cannot exist in happiness. Therefore, on this basis, the happiness of open relationships, which is based on the freedom to have sex with others, is incompatible with the necessary condition for happiness, which is goodness. Since it does not conform to the necessary condition that constitutes happiness, the thesis of an open relationship is automatically invalidated. It cannot be accepted as a component that constitutes a proper marriage.

CONCLUSION

Marriage, as a matter of human freedom, requires regulation that considers autonomy and equality. These behaviors should be grounded in rationality and aimed toward benevolence. Engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage is deemed immoral due to its contravention of the fundamental objectives of marriage, the welfare of children, and the common good. In order for the human will to be in alignment with intellect, it is necessary for there to be a harmonious relationship between the two. This harmonious relationship means that the more comprehensive one's grasp of the universal good is, the more one will seek to pursue a good that applies to all. A particular will is deemed virtuous when it aligns with the universal will without contradictions. These activities are motivated by rationality and directed towards attaining a specific objective. The concepts of autonomy, equality, and freedom concerning sexual conduct outside of marriage are perceived as being in opposition to human purpose and the common good. This article proposes that the ultimate objective for people is to achieve happiness. The source of this happiness is twofold: the divine (ultimate happiness) and the pleasurable experiences in life (accidental happiness). Genuine happiness necessitates a virtuous disposition and cannot be derived from endeavors such as open relationships. These contradict the concept of attaining genuine satisfaction through a divine being.

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