



The Woman's Dilemma

Masters and Johnson vs. Freud

By DANA DENSMORE

(LNS) Masters and Johnson, in their book *Human Sexual Response* proved conclusively that there are not two orgasms (an immature, masculine clitoral orgasm and a mature womanly vaginal orgasm) as Freud postulated in *Three Essays of Human Sexuality*.

All orgasms take place in the clitoris, whether they are induced through direct stimulation of the clitoris, through indirect stimulation of the clitoris during conventional intercourse, or occur as a result of fantasy of mystical concentration.

"Frigid" women, that is, women who are unable to have "vaginal orgasms," are not suffering from a psychological block, but are responding in a perfectly predictable way to anatomical considerations. The clitoris simply does not get much stimulation during sexual intercourse.

The entire concept of frigidity should have been killed by the Masters and Johnson report. Women fail to achieve the vaginal orgasm because there is no such thing, and not because they are neurotic, unable to adjust sexually to their womanhood. And yet the propaganda from doctors, psychiatrists, and marriage counsellors continues to terrorize women with the same threats, and the women's magazines continue to play them up.

The power of sexual surrender

In April, 1969, *Pageant* magazine ran a book excerpt from a "popular" book by a "female doctor, Dr. Marie Robinson." It was called *The Power of Sexual Surrender*. *Pageant* states in the introduction, ". . . More than 40% of American married women are either totally or partially frigid — and (Dr. Robinson says) that this frigidity destroys the possibility of happiness in marriage." Moreover, according to Dr. Robinson, "it also endangers the health and happiness of her husband and children."

These are strong threats. More is involved here than a fleeting physical gratification. Her whole marriage, and the health of her husband and children, depend on her making the necessary adjustment to escape frigidity.

Those doctors and marriage counsellors who have realized that clitoral stimulation is necessary for a woman's orgasm have urged that the husband not seek only stimulation for himself, but to seek out the ways in which to give pleasure to and stimulate his wife and enable her to experience orgasm. Dr. Robinson deals with this: "A common myth exists that the husband is to blame for the frigidity problem. This is highly unlikely. In saying this, I am running counter to a vast body of published information that says any failure of a woman is due to the faulty technique of her husband. This is simply not true. While a husband, through tenderness and understanding, may help a woman face the nature of her problem, he cannot, through any mechanical means, get her over it. Neither can any man other than her husband."

Now, having made it clear that the frigid woman

has no hope of happiness in her marriage and will, in fact, ruin the health and happiness of her husband and children, and making it clear that the failing is entirely her fault and has nothing to do with anything her husband might be failing to do (such as stimulate her) Dr. Robinson proceeds to describe the "normal" woman who is able to experience orgasm.

Essential altruism

"This woman is very much at home in the world. She is very, very glad to be a woman, with all the duties, responsibilities and joys it entails. . . She also gets profound delight in giving to those she loves. Psychiatrists call this characteristic the hallmark of the truly feminine character, 'essential feminine altruism.' When a woman does not have this altruism available to her, or when she denies that it is a desirable trait, life's continuous small misfortunes leave her in a glowering rage, full of self-pity. Sexually, she almost always reaches a climax during the act of love. . . Lest you think that her altruism makes her a martyr, let me say no. In her quiet way she is self-centered. She has self-love, takes pride in and loves her body. She likes to be clean as a cat and neat as a pin. . . And once children are here she gets her supreme joy out of home-making."

If a woman is not essentially altruistic, life is difficult for her only because such altruism is demanded of her. Men are not essentially altruistic and they get along in life better than women do, are even better able to cope with the world and its small misfortunes. The climax she reaches "in the act of love" is obviously a vaginal one; the act of love is the husband stimulating himself by contact of his penis against her vagina. She has self-love, but predictably this has nothing to do with her mind, or will, or character, or interests intellectual or spiritual. Her self-love is something between keeping herself clean so as to be acceptable to him and narcissism. In any case, self-love for a woman is love of her body. And she takes her supreme joy in home-making. Joy. Her joy. Again, a woman doctor telling other women to stay home.

Dr. Robinson then discusses the partially frigid woman, "who trembles on the verge of sexual maturity, but cannot quite step over the line." This probably strikes a familiar chord in a lot of women who are trembling on the verge of orgasms during vaginal intercourse, but can't quite step over the line because the indirect stimulation just isn't enough. Dr. Robinson continues, "In love she has all the normal responses except that she can't come to orgasm or at least does so quite rarely."

Then (in April 1969) the Freudian two-orgasm propaganda again: "In still another type of woman, the orgasm takes place on the woman's clitoris exclusively. She does not feel the orgasm in her vagina, which is really the center of sexuality in women. This clitoral woman is very definitely suffering from a form of frigidity which is extremely widespread." I'll bet it's widespread.

Resentment against the male

Dr. Robinson then gives a case history of a "classical clitoral woman." "Toni herself was a driving competitive woman who was very successful in the business world, having graduated from a leading woman's college. . . Sexually Toni took the lead, just as she did in social matters. (Please note that this is a reversal of the usual pattern in sexual love: it is usually the man who initiates sex.) Her orgasms were never deep of satisfying, because she had a real fear of vaginal feelings. This type of woman very early 'learns' that womanhood is dangerous, a slavish and humiliating role. Only men are powerful and secure; she identifies with them exclusively." It appears that "clitoral" woman are just those smart enough to know where their orgasm is. Apparently, however, Toni wasn't aggressive enough to demand direct stimulation from her husband. This is probably the reason her orgasms were "never deep or satisfying" — the orgasm resulting from direct stimulation is usually more intense.

"Now that we have seen the misery frigidity causes, you might ask, 'How does one change?'"

"My answer is that, since the log jam called frigidity is held in place by two basically neurotic attitudes — a neurotic attitude toward man and a neurotic attitude toward real womanhood — these attitudes must be changed."

"Sometimes a person can do this by feeling his (sic) feelings. For example, a patient of mine kept complaining about her husband's sloppy habits; she was always picking up after him. As she talked and talked, it turned out that she wasn't angry, she was enraged and furious. She felt he was sloppy not merely because he was but because deep down he wanted to humiliate her, enslave her, because he felt she had nothing to do but pick up after men. Men considered themselves superior, she went on. All they wanted from a woman was sex." As you search out these negative feelings, Dr. Robinson says, you will discover they are only feelings, not reality. "Usually they have been picked up unconsciously in childhood."

She is ready to surrender

"When the frigid woman has divested herself of the destructive fears and attitudes about men she previously held, a profound change begins to take place inside her. . . we say, she is ready to surrender. This means, in the broadest sense, that she is prepared at long last to become a woman. . . And because they are feminine tasks, household work and keeping the children busy soon lose their irksome and irritating quality and become easy, even joyful. . . Soon, if a woman has truly pursued the goal of self-surrender with her husband's help, the ability to achieve orgasm must inevitably arrive."