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The Construction of Homosexuality
in Christian Tradition and its Influence on the Meaning of AIDS:
A Psychological Study

Doctoral Thesis

Bruce L. Mills
The University of Ottawa
July 1990





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The Construction of Homosexuality
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A Psychological Study

Bruce L. Mills

Thesis Abstract

This thesis addresses two fundamental questions: What is the meaning given to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)? Where does the meaning of AIDS come from?

In a psychological investigation it appears that the most predominant meaning given to AIDS is homophobic meaning, expressing a profound fear and dread of homosexuality. Homophobia can be traced to two main historical sources. Both of these sources are located within Christian tradition: the Sodom story (Genesis XIX), and discourse on human sexuality originating in the New Testament writing of Paul. These two sources can be shown to influence many attitudes that are expressed in this society towards homosexuality generally and towards the AIDS epidemic in particular.

Homophobic attitudes situated in the context of western society seem to exist in close proximity with prevalent Christian definitions of homosexuality. Much of the meaning given to homosexuality within Christian tradition can be followed as it influences moral systems, psychiatry and homosexual experience itself. The understanding of homosexuality which develops in much Christian tradition seems to provide a central point of reference for the ways homosexuality is perceived and experienced. A psychodynamic model also ascertains that homophobia is partially structured in the unconscious as a form of prohibition against homosexual desire. By taking both conscious and unconscious aspects of homophobia into consideration, the meaning of AIDS and some of the sources of this meaning can be put forward.

The meanings which predicate the AIDS epidemic are religious and psychological in nature. By taking homophobia apart with the tools of psychological deconstruction, the meaning of AIDS may be approached, and some of the implications of this meaning for society, for Christian tradition and for the homosexual person may be demonstrated.

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INTRODUCTION

My heart is sore pained within me:
and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
and horror hath overwhelmed me.

— Psalm 55: 4,5.

The homosexual person, once concealed behind centuries of ridicule, repression, fear and denial, is becoming more visible. As this visibility increases, the homosexual person should be less concerned with fear and ridicule, and growing confidence and self-esteem might tend to replace repression and denial. For a period of time it seemed as though fear and ridicule would be only a small portion of homosexual experience. It seemed as though these things would fade into a homosexual history of liberation that, like its counterpart in the liberation of women and other oppressed groups in our culture, would remain only as a memory of times gone by and signs of a difficult struggle for freedom.

However, for male homosexuals in particular, the appearance of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), a fatal disease which occurred first in the gay male population, presented a sudden interminable obstacle to the achievement of freedom from the oppression of ridicule that had dominated gay experience in the past. Immediately, AIDS and homosexuality became two sides of a fatal vision perpetuated partially by ignorance and partially by a pre-existing prejudice against gay people. This vision of the gay person claims that homosexuals get AIDS and die because they are homosexuals and because they do homosexual things. A rationale accompanying this vision is conceived which thinks that homosexuals get AIDS and

die because they are morally and psychologically estranged from what is conceived to be normal and good. And this vision appears to perceive that the high incidence of AIDS among the gay population is largely due to a process of self-determination on the part of gay people. Gay people are, in this perspective, held by AIDS to be accountable for violating the rules of a normal and good world. Thus, homosexuals are held up as abnormal or bad: they deserve to die of AIDS for these reasons alone.

With its idiom of contagion AIDS has succeeded in restoring the marginalization and otherness of gay people — they are to be avoided because of their disease. AIDS is called a lifestyle disease, a euphemism for a gay disease. In the beginning AIDS was called “the gay plague” and this term is still widely used. Kempton, quoting Shilts writes that AIDS has been conveyed as a “misfortune of people who fit into rather distinct classes of outcasts” (Kempton, 1990: 2) including homosexuals and prostitutes, blacks and drug users (Sontag, 1989). As Cecchi (1984) of New York’s Gay Men’s Health Crisis Center states in his theoretical Stress prodrome to immune deficiency:

[I]mmune breakdown may be the result of stress associated with lack of positive self-image, inability to express feeling and anger, inability to complete relationships, loss of family, lack of community nurturance, lack of supportive role models, and lack of self-acceptance and identity ... AIDS is an illness affecting many people who are in society’s disfavour, people cast out and rejected for their difference (286, 287).

Any thinking about AIDS is dominated primarily by considering the prevalence of the disease among the homosexual population (Antonio, 1986). As it seems to predicate homosexual people with estrangement, deviance and sin, AIDS appears to restore fear and ridicule to homosexual experience. Cecchi writes that, “Society’s ill will has become an opportunistic infection of the mind, and badly managed stress set up a battle which we have lost, resulting in illness, frequently terminal illness” (288).

The connection between homosexuality and fatal disease which has developed in the context of AIDS in turn provokes considerable psychological and religious discussion about homosexuals and their experience, especially as this experience is associated with otherness, disease, punishment and death. This discussion is frequently controversial.

It is specifically the connection between homosexual men and AIDS and the negative associations which stem from this connection which provide the core material for my thesis. I will investigate the way AIDS functions as a magnet for negative thinking about the homosexual person. AIDS seems to magnify the estrangement and the alienation of the homosexual person. If, as Sontag (1978; 1990) has shown us in her classic work, illness is a metaphor, then what does AIDS, as a metaphor, represent? How are the metaphors of AIDS constructed: what does AIDS mean? And where does this meaning come from? These are the key questions which this thesis explores.

Sontag remarks that after cures have been discovered for all of our worst disease certain individuals will still remain alienated. According to Sontag, our culture projects its tensions about the reality of evil on people who suffer from the worst diseases. Hence AIDS has become a signal of the reality of evil which exists in the twentieth century among the family of humankind. AIDS has brought about, says Sontag, a clear differentiation between "us" and "them" -- AIDS is not considered as threatening to the general population since it is a gay disease. Or, as Sontag writes, AIDS is "their" disease and we are protected by virtue of being "we" or "us" as opposed to "them". Because AIDS has targeted the gay population, it follows that evil must dwell among this group ("them") who now suffer the worst disease and are differentiated as the highest risk group within the general population ("us").

A response to AIDS which serves to estrange, marginalize and stigmatize gay people appears to be consistent with much of Christianity's historical and theological treatment of homosexuality. Such a response in the context of AIDS is problematic. It may not be surprising that many Christian responses to AIDS seem to exemplify what is termed "homophobia" and rapidly bear witness to a particularly fearful vision of homosexuality in which the reality of evil is perceived to exist within gay sexuality. Indeed, in talking about AIDS we say "innocent victim" when referring to babies and haemophiliacs who have AIDS or HIV infection, yet use the term "gay patients" when we refer to the homosexual person who is HIV+ or who has AIDS. Our language about AIDS betrays a preconception of "blame" as opposed to "innocence" and the word "victim" seems to suggest that haemophiliacs and babies may indeed have been "victim-ized" by or through some criminal act. Who, however, is this criminal? In some sense the dichotomy in our terminology about AIDS might in fact refer to a deeper reality, pointing toward a historical characterization of gay life in which homosexuals are disenfranchised, criminalized and criminal, evil and perhaps responsible for their own fate.

Indeed, in much Christian discourse in particular homosexuality is stigmatized as a condition which is alien to morality and goodness, threatening to culture in general, and characterized as a condition which is reached by an individual's personal choice for sin resulting ultimately in punishment or death. The high incidence of AIDS within the gay community seems to provide some reinforcement of this notion, and appears to justify a fear of homosexuality based on the idea that gay sex results in punishment or death (fatal disease = AIDS).

A fearful attitude toward homosexuality in the past, and indeed a circumferential fear in the provision of AIDS care in medicine is equally prevalent and problematic. Steinbrook, Lo, Tripack, Dilley and Volberding (1985)

comprehensively discuss the issue of homophobic fear and its impact on medicine. An early study concluded that homophobia complicated a medical response to AIDS, and that the epidemiological connection between HIV infection and the homosexual risk group was the key factor in elevated levels of fear among health professionals (Douglas, Kalman, Concetta and Kalman, 1985). This same study concluded, among the population of health care providers questioned, 32% reported that persons with AIDS receive inferior treatment. Still, a fearful response to homosexuality and/or AIDS as it is related epidemiologically to gay sexual practices, is not confined only to the contexts of medicine and religion, but extends to public perception of the disease as well (Osborn, 1986). This perception includes an exaggerated fear of AIDS contagion, homophobia and high levels of stress and anxiety about AIDS and HIV in general (Fisher, 1986).

A fearful response to AIDS may be more accurately related to a homophobic (fearful) response to gay people in general which describes what can be called the "classic" western attitude toward homosexuality. It has been suggested that a symbiotic relationship exists between religious and secular attitudes toward homosexuality -- that one attitude both influences and justifies the other. The result is a form of prejudice against homosexuals which is institutionalized in both legal and religious systems (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1988). But homophobic attitudes are not confined to systems of religious and secular thought alone. There are also implications for gay people in our culture. For the homosexual person homophobic attitudes are internalized into the self-image (Hirsch & Enlow, 1984). If homophobia is internalized, an individual's sexual identity may become paralyzed through systems of denial (Gronfors, Martti and Stalstrom, 1987). There is little question that despair emerges from this process for gay people in our culture.

What does AIDS mean? And where does this meaning come from? The answers to these two questions are both religious answers and psychological answers. They are religious answers because, in a sense, a western social response to AIDS betrays a Christian history, and related to this history, a distinctly Christian meaning of homosexuality. And they are psychological answers because, in responding to AIDS we do, in a sense, betray some aspects of our selves that exist as psychological features of our own personal or biographical history -- what we have learned and experienced about homosexuality as individuals who live in this society. These two realities -- a religious one and a psychological one -- come to bear on our understanding of AIDS as this disease is connected, religiously and psychologically, to homosexuality. Indeed, I will argue that the meaning of AIDS is both a religious and a psychological construction.

In what follows I will examine these questions about the meaning of AIDS as they develop in much Christian discourse on homosexuality and attempt to develop an understanding of how this discourse originates and evolves. I will also examine some of the ways much Christian discourse on homosexuality influences both contemporary thinking about AIDS and homosexual experience itself. And since the meaning of AIDS is not only related to theological definitions of homosexuality, but also to psychological processes as well, I will show some of the ways psychoanalytic theories provide an understanding of our psychological relationship with homosexuality.

My thesis is based upon the existence of three separate problematics:

- the first problematic has to do with the meaning of sexuality and the ways sexuality is split into "good" and "bad" in much Christian thinking;
- the second problematic relates to the way Christian thinking seems to attach

the "bad" values to homosexuality, and some of the ways this negative valuing of homosexuality occurs;

– the third problematic is related to a succession of events and ideas in western society through which Christian discourse and the meaning of sexuality come to bear directly upon the meaning of AIDS. Indeed, the influence of much Christian discourse on homosexuality upon western, social attitudes in general is an important factor relating to this third problematic. My thesis explores both religious and psychological aspects of these three problems.

In this introduction I will provide an overview of both AIDS and homosexuality from a scientific perspective. I will also outline some trends in thinking about homosexuality in both psychological and Christian sources. By examining these sources the meaning of AIDS may be approached.

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome: An Overview

AIDS is the most recent and severe manifestation of infection affecting the human species. Epidemiological evidence points to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) as the cause of AIDS. This virus, a retrovirus, infects the T₄ helper lymphocyte, one of the major blood cells involved in fighting infection. The HIV multiplies within the T-cell and then escapes through the cell wall and spreads throughout the human body, eventually infecting other T₄ cells. The T₄ cell is eventually destroyed itself during the process of infection explaining the profound effects of HIV-infection upon the human body. The HIV also infects other white blood cells called monocytes, but does not destroy the white cells. It may be through infected white cells that HIV enters the brain of an individual infected with the virus. Further, it is speculated that the intracellular location of the virus

in monocytes and the brain may be the reason why HIV avoids destruction by the antibodies.

Since 1983 it has been shown in international data that HIV can strike anyone. It is neither racist nor sexist; it is, in fact, very democratic (Health & Welfare, 1987: 1). AIDS proceeds under standard disease classification as a physiological opportunity for infection which is the direct result of an immune system compromised by HIV-infection. The severity of AIDS, most uniquely, is commensurate with the level of opportunity available to potential pathological entities which are secondary to the host virus (HIV). Moreover, an individual can be considered in the terminal stages of AIDS when the level of secondary pathology present is sufficiently extreme as to become primary, presenting a mortal threat to the human body as a whole.

A human host is first subject to exposure to the discrete entity referred to as the HIV. HIV is called a retrovirus because it is slow-acting, and it may take up to ten years to become evident. HIV is a virus which rapidly mutates, thus making the development of an effective vaccine nearly impossible. HIV belongs, as its name suggests, to a unique family of viruses. A virus is a piece of genetic information, either DNA or RNA, surrounded by a protein coat that protects it from the environment. Retroviruses are very small viruses composed of a single strand of RNA, the intermediate nucleic acid in the production of proteins. Normally the flow of genetic information starts with a piece of DNA, which makes a piece of RNA, which in turn codes for protein. Everything flows in that direction. Retroviruses contain a unique enzyme called reverse transcriptase which allows this single strand of RNA, the virus, to make itself back into a piece of DNA, going backward against the flow of genetic information. This explains the name "retrovirus", meaning "going backwards." This piece of DNA then inserts itself into the genetic material

of the cell it is infecting, in this case the helper T- lymphocyte, and it remains there intertwined for the life of the cell (Abrams: 16,17). The AIDS virus, then, "writes" its genetic information into the body's own infrastructure, influencing all contingent cellular development. As a result of its "retro"-viral tendencies, AIDS causes the body's immunological defenses to "turn against" themselves, to virtually infect themselves rather than their foreign invader.

AIDS is a condition that, by attacking the immune system, affects the body's natural ability to fight disease. A normal immune system, like a well- organized army, rallies its forces to combat invasion by foreign agents. AIDS weakens these defenses and the body becomes vulnerable to unusual, serious illnesses (VG Bulletin, 1985: 1). Infection by HIV refers to a condition whereby the immunological system is compromised, endangering the individual by causing him/her to be rendered vulnerable to pathologies against which no defense is available since the T-helper cells are preoccupied. Therefore, death by AIDS is actually the result of secondary or opportunistic disease infection. The terminal features of AIDS are thus a result of pathologies which attack the body in its compromised state and cause its eventual demise. AIDS "allows" invading pathologies to "kill" the body by inhibiting the function of the immune system, and death is the logical course of disease for which no natural resistance is available.

Risk of exposure to HIV is increased through several types of behaviour in which bodily fluids are exchanged between individuals. These include sexual activity during which blood, semen or vaginal secretions are passed from one individual to another (London, 1984); by sharing contaminated intravenous devices (Goedert, 1984); or through contaminated blood or blood products (Katz, Cumming, Sandler & Berkowitz, 1984). The virus inhabits bodily fluids:

Scientists still aren't certain [HIV is] the only factor in AIDS. They do know HIV is sexually transmitted through semen and vaginal secretions

and can be passed in blood from needles shared by intravenous drug users. Mothers can pass it to babies in the womb or during birth, and people who required transfusions – among them haemophiliacs and surgical patients – risked exposure ... before the Red Cross began screen blood donations in 1985 (Ubelacker, 1987: B-6).

Some individuals infected with HIV remain healthy and asymptomatic for long periods, up to ten years, while others proceed to develop HIV-related infections or neuropsychiatric dysfunctions (AIDS dementia) shortly after contracting HIV. The term "risk group" denotes a number of individuals with AIDS or HIV-infection who appear to share a number of characteristics that may be "causally, mechanistically or etiologically significant" (Hirsch & Enlow, 1984: 274). Currently the following risk groups have been identified by the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta: gay and bisexual men, intravenous drug users and their sexual partners, recent Haitian immigrants, haemophiliacs and "a small but significant and heterogeneous group without apparent risk factors" (Ibid).

When I prepared the first draft of this thesis in the Spring of 1989 Health & Welfare's Surveillance Update: AIDS in Canada reported that 1350 people in Canada had been diagnosed with AIDS of whom more than 700 had died. The same Update for May 7, 1990 states that the Federal Centre for AIDS reports 3818 AIDS cases among which 53 are pediatric, and further reports a total of 2282 deaths from AIDS to the current period. Health & Welfare estimates that 100,000 individuals in Canada are HIV-infected. According to a polynomial model in the Update of 7 May, 1990, the number of reported cases is currently doubling every 25 months. The polynomial model suggests that by this period in 1993 some 12,890 cases will have been reported to the Federal Centre. In the United States more than 40,000 people have died from AIDS, and the United States Public Health Service estimated in 1986 that at least 179,000 deaths will follow from AIDS by the year 1991 and that medical costs will rise between 8 and 16 billion dollars annually (Hunt, Fall, 1987).

The North American epidemiological data target bisexual and gay men as the group at highest statistical risk (74%) (Hirsch & Enlow, 1984); 20% intravenous drug users and 4% from HIV-contaminated blood or blood products (Ubelacker, 1987: B-6). The HIV has a variable structure and a new strain has been discovered in West Africa (HIV-2). "The cumulative number of cases is increasing and will continue to increase, with more equal distribution with respect to age, sex, geography and means of transmission" (Health & Welfare, 1987: 2).

The HIV had been named Human T-cell Lymphotropic Virus Type III (HTLV-III) until 1986. At this time the International Committee on the Taxonomy of Viruses met and recommended that HTLV-III be called simply human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV.

AIDS, as diagnosed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is the presence of a reliably diagnosed disease that is at least moderately indicative of underlying cellular immunodeficiency in a person without underlying immune deficiency state, or no medications that are known to cause immune suppression, and with no underlying malignancy, such as lymphoma, which can cause immunosuppression (Abrams, 1986: 12).

In Canada, the criteria are alike:

Reliably diagnosed Kaposi's sarcoma (KS), cerebral lymphoma, and/or life-threatening opportunistic infections (OIs), particularly *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia; observed in previously healthy persons in whom conditions known to cause immunosuppression have been excluded...In the presence of a profound deficit in cellular immunity, these definitions are based on end-stage manifestations that apparently are irreversible and associated with extremely high mortality (CD Weekly, 1984: 1).

According to the Canadian Laboratory Centre for Disease Control (LCDC), "a case of AIDS is defined as a clinical diagnosis of at least one of the specific infectious diseases or cancers associated with AIDS (Health and Welfare, 1987: 98). What are some of the main ways in which an AIDS diagnosis is given?

Examples of AIDS Infections

The most common diagnosis (50% of the U.S. AIDS population) occurs around a respiratory infection, *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP). PCP frequently presents with a dry, unproductive cough and progressive shortness of breath, often in association with fever and night sweats. AIDS patients with PCP harbour a large number of organisms in their lungs, therefore an open lung biopsy is required to identify the infection correctly (CD Weekly, 1984: 1). PCP does not, under other circumstances, present peril to the human physiology because it has, by the time of four years of age, developed antibodies against this infection which prevents morbidity. However, in the context of immune suppression, PCP is provided with the opportunity to invade the body due to the compromised status of antibodies. It is specifically along the lines of depleted or suppressed immunological defenses that the diagnosis of AIDS proceeds.

A second pathology which has the opportunity to invade the body in the absence of a healthy immune system is a neuropsychological manifestation which results from infection from the amoebic organism, *Toxoplasma gondii*. *Toxoplasma* (literally "poison plasma" or the coagulate property of blood in which corpuscles float) causes brain abscesses resulting in secondary psychiatric syndromes which must be subsequently treated (Wolcott, 1986). In normal pathological contexts, *Toxoplasma gondii* causes illnesses such as mononucleosis with swollen glands, fevers and fatigue (Abrams, 13). Health and Welfare Canada establishes that *Toxoplasma gondii* is a protozoan parasite which causes pneumonia, inflammation of the kidneys and skin rashes (H&W, 1987: 99). Similarly, *Cryptosporidium*, another infecting protozoan, results in profound diarrhea for AIDS patients which in turn leads to dehydration and potential malnutrition. *Cryptosporidium* generally occurs in later or

terminal stages of AIDS, causing humiliation and distress alongside other normally debilitating features of illness.

Several fungal infections are also included within the broad range of diagnostic criteria for AIDS. Including candida (a yeast which usually presents infection of the female vagina often following antibiotic therapy), fungal infections must manifest in the esophagus to merit inclusion in the AIDS diagnostic spectrum. While many patients present oral candida or thrush, and while this does indicate some level of immune deficiency, the involvement of the esophagus is required to constitute a basis on which an AIDS diagnosis is given.

Cryptococcal meningitis is an is an organic infection which manifests as disease in other individuals who present a compromised immunological system, especially patients receiving chemotherapy for lymphoma or leukemia. For the AIDS patient, indeed cryptococcal infection can result in meningitis presenting symptoms in the central nervous system, but it can proceed to cryptococcal sepsis, infections of the skin, lungs and gastrointestinal tract. A variety of bacterial infections are also associated with the critical diagnostic criteria for AIDS. These include (but are not limited to) mycobacterium avium-intracellulare. This bacteria is related to the organism which usually causes tuberculosis. Other infections continuous with a diagnosis of a suppressed immunological system include chronic mucocutaneous herpes simplex, resulting in herpes lesions around the anus; cryptomegalovirus (CMV) resulting in some hepatitis, or infections so severe as to present symptoms of blindness, CMV pneumonia, colitis and even encephalitis. AIDS is popularly associated with its major presenting malignancies, especially Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) frequently appearing as a noticeable facial lesion, although more usually appearing anywhere on the surface of the body. KS is now most commonly associated with AIDS. Before the AIDS epidemic, however, KS accounted for 10% of all types of

cancer in equatorial Africa. Now, "The incidence of KS has risen swiftly among young gay men who previously were in good health. Gay men with AIDS/KS may have oval-shaped lesions appearing mostly on the upper trunk, head, neck and upper extremities, and their mucous membranes, lymph nodes and intestinal tract are frequently affected" (Hirsch & Enlow, 1984: 274). In Canada, the presence of KS in persons under sixty years of age indicates a diagnosis of AIDS (CD Weekly: 1). KS has occurred in 26% of the AIDS cases reported in the United States, and 7% of these patients also presented PCP. KS presents with papular or indurated lesions, purplish or reddish blue in colour, and appear on the skin, mucosal surfaces or gastrointestinal tract and lymph nodes (CD Weekly: 1). It is a tumour of the blood vessel walls which appear on the skin as purplish lesions. Some clinicians have also reported an increased squamous cell carcinoma of the tongue and rectum (Safai, 1984).

Finally, persistent lymphadenopathy, or swollen glands is sometimes present, along with a condition of low platelet (leading to life-threatening bleeding) also associated with an AIDS diagnosis (Karpatkin, 1984).

AIDS was recognized in the United States in 1981 and a first Canadian case was reported in February, 1982. In 1984 the following relevant and significant developments were achieved: the discovery of the probable etiologic agent – the HTLV-III, identified as causal of infection in the United States and France respectively; and the development of a test which could detect the presence of HTLV-III antibody in serum, as well as a rapid commercial production of HTLV-III antibody test kits (NACA, Canada, 1985: 2). AIDS, whose etiologic agent is now properly referred to as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) describes a variety of physiopathological syndromes and features which occur as a direct result of some invasion of the immunological system by a foreign malignancy. An AIDS diagnosis

is given when, in addition to the presence of the HTLV-III a variety of cohesive opportunistic infections invade the body -- despite differences between individuals. While the prognostic picture may therefore vary considerably between individuals, (because invading pathologies differ extensively) and around its progress, two features are common to every diagnosis: infection and death. Thus, no "common course" of the disease presents, except that infection by the virus leads (in most cases) to death. AIDS is generally considered to be a terminal illness, although numerous cases of remission have been given (Abrams: 20). In the United States and elsewhere, the 3-year mortality for AIDS approaches 100% (CD Weekly, 1984: 1). A Health & Welfare document states, "We know that with the advent of new diagnostic tests and experimental therapeutic agents (AZT, ddI), the interval between diagnosis and death will lengthen. Therefore, we will have to think of AIDS more in terms of a chronic disease interspersed with acute episodes, keeping in mind that AIDS remains an inevitably fatal disease..."(1987: 2). And complicating the prognostic picture further, the World Health Organization reports that neurological and psychiatric disorders occur in 70% of all reported AIDS cases, usually early in the diagnosis (Geneva, 1988: 1). AIDS dementia has become an important region of concern for caregivers all over the world. The person who suffers AIDS dementia may present psychiatric symptoms which compromise rationality, and radical personality changes may accompany early stages of infection (Baer, Hall, Holm and Lewitter-Koehler, 1987).

Homosexuality: Overview

The word "homosexuality" is obtained from the Greek root "homo" which means "same." Homosexuality refers to a preference for sexual activity with members of

one's own sex. For many years homosexuality was considered deviant by most people in western culture, but among certain segments of society, some acceptance was noticeable (Altrocchi, 1980). Recent studies at Indiana University concluded that 3% of all adult men are exclusively homosexual, and another 3% are bisexual (Gagnon & Simon, 1973). Other studies show lower figures (Hunt, 1974), and gay groups consider these estimates low. Hunt's figures (1974) suggest that between 20% and 25% of males have a homosexual experience in adulthood.

The so-called "homosexual life style" can be differentiated into several types. A person may be a primary or a secondary homosexual, or a covert or overt homosexual. Primary homosexual refers to someone who has never had any heterosexual experience during the course of a lifetime. Secondary homosexual describes someone who has had one or more heterosexual experiences in addition to homosexual activity and preferences. The man who maintains a conventional heterosexual marriage while keeping any homosexual activity a secret is considered a "covert homosexual." However, a man who is open about his homosexual affairs and relationships is considered to be an "overt homosexual" (Saghir & Robins, 1973; Zubin & Money, 1973). Still, McCary (1971) estimates that only 15% of male homosexuals are identifiable as homosexual by observers.

Bell and Weinberg (1978) identify five major life styles described by homosexual men and women in their research sample, ranging from close-coupled (resembling marriage) to asexual (having little or no sexual activity). Close-coupled gays reported to Saghir and Robins (1973) that they saw themselves as "just a couple of happily married husbands" (74) (see also Schofield, 1953, 1960, 1965).

Much discussion about the gay person centers on the meaning of the term "coming out." Coming out or "coming out of the closet" is a term which refers to the individual experience of becoming known as a homosexual to one's self, family,

friends and to society (Weltge, 1969). It refers to the experience of acknowledging one's own homosexuality to the extent that this experience can be claimed by the self and known to others without shame or denial (Katz, 1975).

Coming out can be a dangerous experience, fraught with the potential perils of rejection, stigmatization and prejudice, yet it is an experience which fosters growth and affirmation for the identity of the homosexual person. The difficulty of coming out is often rewarded with the strength of a personal identity that may emerge out of a sense of struggle for self-esteem amidst difficult odds. Thus, coming out brings with it the pride of the individual for the whole self, including sexual "otherness" as a portion of this personhood.

Coming out also actively opposes the cultural habit of putting homosexuality in the closet or keeping it hidden from everyday experience. Coming out is a form of liberation from the "hiding away" of homosexual orientation and identity for the individual. In the act of coming out, the gay person challenges fear and denial, and refutes repression.

On the one hand, psychologists witness the phenomenon of coming out as an affirmation of homosexual experience, as the refusal of repression, as a potential means to achieve self-worth and authentic personal identity. These are perhaps the goals of "coming out" -- the affirmation of personal identity including one's sexual orientation, and the hope for the acceptance of this whole personal identity by one's family, friends and peers. Rarely, however, is acceptance universal for the homosexual person among all groups which comprise a social environment in which identity is rooted (Money & Tucker, 1975). People are frequently shocked to discover that a friend is gay, and it is not unusual that friendships are destroyed by this discovery and many families shattered (Altman, 1971; Brown, 1976; Evans, 1969). For the homosexual person this potential rejection is difficult to withstand,

and threats to the development of a positive personal identity for the homosexual person are inevitable (see Hooker, 1956; 1957). The gay person must often face that the struggle for self identity goes hand-in-hand with the loss of family, loved ones and friends (Townes, Ferguson and Gillam, 1976). As Saghir and Robins (1973) have observed, the loss of religion may also occur.

The Gay Liberation Movement

Despite opposition from many sources, the homosexual individual continued to struggle openly with coming out for some type of positive identity in cities like New York, San Francisco and Miami, and in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. In June of 1969, with the Stonewall Riots in New York's Greenwich Village, a group of individuals developed that could be collectively and uniquely identified as "gay" (William, 1984). This group is comprised of a diverse population, including individuals from all walks of life. The struggle for liberation from social and religious oppression which resulted in a growing visibility for the homosexual population was due to three related factors. First, affirmative action on the part of gay communities during the 1960s and the 1970s functioned as a form of support for individuals who required some social reinforcement and encouragement in order to face the challenge of becoming known in public as "homosexual" or gay. This activity could be described as the formation of a "collective gay identity." This collective identity was comprised of individuals who were part of the group by nature of their experienced sexual orientation, and indeed, because of their participation in a collective struggle for acceptance and freedom from stigma and ridicule (Wienberg, 1983). The homosexual could now "come out" with help, acceptance and support from others like him/herself by joining this group which

was largely "ready made" for an increasing membership. Homosexual networks were established to guide individuals into the world and, by this activity, out of the closet. Together these people were known as homosexual or gay, and together they possessed some measure of political strength and psychological esteem in the common activities and identity of the group, but alone, as individuals, much remained to be done to contradict centuries of prejudice and social ostracization.

Second, a climate of social tolerance and liberalism during the 1960s and 1970s throughout North America resulted in some measure of openness where the "otherness" of homosexuality was concerned (Chance, 1975). In theatre and television gay parts and some homosexual activity appeared (Rowse, 1977). Homosexual marches and gay rights activity became commonplace in cities where large populations of homosexuals lived. Yourcenar's Memories of Hadrian (1963) chronicled the passionate love affair between Hadrian and his male lover Antinous. Wright's anthology of homosexual short stories (1974) and Cory's "subjective approach" to homosexuality (1960) were published and sold well, along with a variety of other dramatic and literary works during this period. Masters and Johnson's Human Sexual Response (1966) was responsible for research which led to a new open terminology adopted by sex educators, researchers and the medical profession. Importantly, Masters and Johnson spoke of homosexual experience positively and openly in this work. Later, in 1979 Masters and Johnson's Homosexuality in Perspective reported that homosexuals have no inadequacy in sexual functioning, and in some cases, achieve greater satisfaction for themselves and their sexual partners than do their heterosexual counterparts. For the first time in modern times, homosexuals could read about positive gay experience in many publications, newsletters and books. Within a growing consciousness of human rights, homosexuals gained some pride along with women, blacks and other minority groups

who struggled at the same moment in history for visibility, tolerance and freedom. Rozin (1978) reported that 50% of the American population believe homosexuality should not be a crime, and more than 60% of introductory college students approved of homosexual activity in Rozin's sample.

Psychological Functioning

Third, due to increases in peer support and certain rising levels of social tolerance of homosexual activities during this period, and in part due to the existence of support networks, the psychological mechanisms which previously repressed and denied homosexuality appeared to decline in efficacy for some individuals and under some circumstances. Being "homosexual" was for some individuals, and under some circumstances, an acceptable matter that did not require psychological treatment or behaviour modification or pharmaceuticals to eradicate it. Nor, therefore, was the advent of homosexual fantasy necessarily a cause for trauma or alarm. Instead, "homosexual" could be integrated into a larger, more comprehensive sense of self without necessitating psychotherapy or psychological defenses. Coming out, for the homosexual adolescent, and for many adults, became perhaps a "fortunate" rite of passage where the sexual ambivalence of childhood could be left behind for the positive virtues of self-identity -- being for one's own self without hiding gayness and heterosexual role-playing. Indeed, the period beginning in 1960 and continuing through 1980 was a period of sexual experimentation and also a time where sexual stereotyping was declining. For some individuals, and under some circumstances, homosexuality was "OK" and normal development would not necessarily call psychological repression and denial into action in order to conceal homoerotic urges in the individual from everyday

consciousness. One could "grow" into a mature gay sexual orientation without psychopathology -- a mature sexual orientation might mean that one was attracted to members of one's own sex, and relationships arising from this attraction could be mature, fulfilling and "good".

Volumes of psychological work appeared during this period addressing these developmental processes as they related to the "well-adjusted" homosexual person (Parker, 1971; 1977; Sharma, 1970). Inquiries followed which attempted to develop an understanding of some differential aspects of homosexual experience, and some solid legitimating of this experience became intrinsic to many branches of sexual psychology and the new field of sexology. This in turn influenced many schools of thought within the field of human behaviour, and a new clinical orientation that was open to homosexuality became apparent in a variety of approaches and settings.

The evolution of homosexuality from a behaviour requiring modification (either reduction or eradication) to a behavioral category within a normal range of sexual responses was responsible for another important stepping stone in the stubborn field of medical psychiatry (Bayer, 1981). Medical psychiatry had persisted in claiming that homosexuality was a deviant behavioral presentation, rooted in a developmental fixation during childhood (Socarides, 1970). Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin and Gebhard reported in 1953 that 37% of the men they interviewed had a sexual experience including orgasm with someone of the same sex. Kinsey and his colleagues believed from their research that homosexuality and heterosexuality were by no means absolute: an individual's sexual behaviour could range from 100% homosexual to 100% heterosexual with multiple deviations within a spectrum of human sexuality. This research was replicated by Pomeroy in 1969, who claimed that homosexuality was certainly not an "all or nothing" situation. Twenty years after Kinsey's startling reports, homosexuality, as a category of human sexual response, was de-indexed

from the pathological continuum of the DSM (Diagnosical and Statistical Manual) of the American Psychiatric Association. No longer considered a mental or behavioral aberration on its own (as sexual behaviour), psychiatrists could not locate homosexual experience on indices of psychopathology. No one could "diagnose" homosexuality (Bayer, 1981). Homosexuality still figured in discussions of other clinical behaviour, including paranoia and narcissism (Rosenfeld, 1949) and schizophrenia (Day & Semrad, 1978) as well as in temporal lobe epilepsy (Sherwin & Geschwind, 1978). The DSM continues to classify ego-dystonic homosexuality, or homosexuality in which the sexual preference is unwanted and appears as a form of subjective distress, as a sexual disorder (DSM, 1987). While homosexuality remains an endemic theme of some forms of psychopathology -- indeed central to some (i.e. homosexual panic) -- it should not be confused with its expression in non-clinical milieus (Chuang & Addington, 1988; Nemiah, 1979).

Homosexuality gained validity as an acceptable kind of human sexual experience in many clinical contexts (Rekers, 1978). Differential criteria continued to perplex some studies around this period: Doerr, Kockott, Vogt, Pirke and Dittmar attempted to distinguish between male homosexuals and heterosexuals according to plasma testosterone, estradiol and semen analysis (1973); Brodie, Bartrell, Doering and Rhue also measured plasma testosterone levels between these two populations (1974). Neither group of researchers found significant biological variability between their two study groups (Rose, 1975; Meyer-Bahlburg, 1977). A study by Barlow, Abel, Blanchard & Mavissakalian (1974) found no reportable deviations of plasma testosterone levels between homosexual and non-homosexual men. On psychosocial levels, clinical work revealed that homosexuals did form lasting interpersonal relationships, did not report any particular childhood trauma, founded their lives on solid values and did also contribute much to their communities (Bell & Weinberg,

1978; Brown, 1976; Hooker, 1966). They were, in fact, "real" human beings, and "deviance" gave way to "diversity" in clinical discourse about sexuality in general, and about the homosexual person in particular.

As bibliographic surveys reveal, the period between 1960 and 1980 was a positive evolution in the psychological and medical literature on the topic of homosexuality (Parker, 1971; 1977; 1982). Truly, if early titles reveal some preoccupation with the "problems" or discovery of homosexuality, this theme yields to clearer discourses about homosexuality as one aspect of human experience among many others requiring further understanding instead of "explanation" or theoretical justification.

Homosexuality and AIDS

More recently, homosexuality is gaining considerable notoriety and scholarly significance because of its relationship to AIDS -- Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. As we have discussed, AIDS is a fatal disease directly affecting the body's immune system. AIDS possesses a high homosexual epidemiology. It is also widely suspected that the AIDS epidemic possesses homosexual origins, at least through its manifestation in North America. It is a disease, partly due to these facts, with an extremely high profile. Actor Rock Hudson's death from AIDS several years ago brought AIDS, and through this his own homosexuality, into public consciousness. Perry Ellis, an American fashion designer, and noted entertainer Liberace also died of AIDS recently. While these deaths resulted in some public sympathy, the disease which caused these deaths immediately gained priority as a form of suffering and annihilation unique to homosexual people. Sympathy fell into second place following the identification of these people with homosexuality, and

sympathy easily yielded to disgust. Soon, AIDS became synonymous with homosexuality, each signalling the presence of the other. Homosexuals were perceived, like the ancient leper, as dangerous and potentially contagious human beings. To accuse individuals of having AIDS also accused them of being homosexual, by implication. Their illness came to symbolize if not guarantee their marginality -- indeed, bespeak their homosexual activity.

The gay community, taking public attitudes into consideration, has rapidly realized the risk factors of AIDS that are associated with some homosexual behaviors. They have taken responsibility for themselves and their loved ones through the spread of correct information and through lobbying for the implementation of national and international campaigns about "safe sex (ways of enjoying sexual intimacy with a lower risk for potential transmission of the virus). Their own behaviors have changed, and while once associated with predominantly "promiscuous activity," a new and serious sexual ethic seems to be emerging within the gay population (Williams, 1984).

Since AIDS has a very lengthy period of induction (often measured in years) it has been difficult to assess a decline in the incidence among high risk groups.

Williams, writes, however,

Indirect measures of sexual behaviour have indicated significant progress at achieving risk reduction. From 1982 to 1983, the prevalence of gonorrhea in the Denver gay male population has decreased 32% and the total number of diagnosed cases ... has declined 39%. In Madison, Wisconsin, there has been a 50% decline in the numbers of different sexual partners encountered during a 6 month period. In the Lower Westside Health District of Manhattan ... where a sizeable gay community resides, there has been a 40% reduction in the reported rate of gonorrhea in the 15-44 year old male population over the last two years (Williams, 1984: 283,284).

Moreover, national health campaigns in both Canada and the United States have struggled to disentangle the indelible connection that persists between homosexuality and AIDS which has complicated the treatment of persons with AIDS

(PWA's) and excused the non-gay population from risk. In Canada the formation of the Canadian AIDS Society sought to empower small community groups across Canada by connecting them through networking to one another. The Federal Centre for AIDS was organized out of the Ministry of Health and Welfare with the aim of educating about AIDS among the general public. While the homosexual epidemiology of AIDS may be significantly altered due to the influence of information and publicity about the risks of certain gay sexual activities, there is evidence to suggest that the popular imagination still thinks about AIDS only as it is connected with homosexuals (Blendon & Donelan, 1988).

Information campaigns, by virtue of the urgency of telling the public which behaviors (and not which people) were considered as high risk for transmission of HIV were also obliged to educate the public about a variety of homosexual activities that were consistently reported with the transmission of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Many of these activities were met with repulsion by a frightened public, and the primary connection between "depravity" and death perceived to exist in some homosexual acts endured in the public consciousness. In the prison systems where homosexual activity is reported to occur frequently among inmates, authorities refused to provide condoms, fearing that by doing so they might be perceived as condoning homosexual acts (Berg & Berg, 1988). While all sexual activity in which bodily fluids are exchanged (blood, semen and vaginal secretions) are targeted as potential risks for the transmission of the AIDS virus, and this includes heterosexual activity, the strongest and surest risk was maintained to hover around homosexual activity.

Within this complex of thinking about AIDS homosexuals are responsible for bringing AIDS into the world through their wilful sexual depravity -- they "get" AIDS because they are homosexual, and more specifically, because they "do" the

homosexual things which are implicated in the literature dealing with probable transmission of HIV. This perceptual complex also potentially denies any risk or responsibility for the transmission of AIDS that might exist between heterosexual partners. The homosexual with AIDS is subsequently "blamed" for his terminal condition, and research suggests that both treatment parameters and prognoses are influenced accordingly (Cecchi, 1984). On the other hand, haemophiliacs and blood recipients and heterosexuals are not blamed for HIV+ status, but instead considered innocent (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1988). Conservative William F. Buckley wrote,

Everyone detected with AIDS should be tattooed in the upper forearm, to protect common-needle users, and on the buttocks, to prevent the victimization of homosexuals ... Our society is generally threatened, and in order to fight AIDS we need the civil equivalent of universal military training (New York Times, 18 March, 1986).

Similarly, Shilts (1987) says that the Wall Street Journal did not cover AIDS until it was confirmed in "bona fide" heterosexuals. The Journal headline read, "New, Often-Fatal Illness in Homosexuals Turns Up in Women, Heterosexual Males." According to Shilts, "the gay plague got covered only because it finally had struck people who counted, people who were not homosexual (126).

The difficulty with such a perceptual complex is that it is partially founded in actuality while simultaneously extending into imaginary realms. It is nearly impossible to contradict the homosexual etiology of the disease, since AIDS was first discovered among homosexual patients in its North American manifestation. The highest statistical mortality due to AIDS is clearly among white, homosexual men. Yet, the risk posed by HIV to heterosexual partners is equally high. Despite this fact, however, considerable resistance is mobilized against acknowledging that HIV is also something that threatens heterosexuals. When Masters and Johnson (1988) published their new data confirming an increasing morbidity among their sample of 800 straight individuals in New York, an enormous outcry ensued against

their findings (Ottawa Citizen, 8 March, 1988). The relationship of HIV to IV-drug use (IVDU) is also well known, but this relationship remains only secondary to the homosexual predication of AIDS that occurs in the popular imagination. Rather than acknowledging the universal risks of HIV transmission among behaviours instead of among people, public perception constructs intolerance against gays when assigning responsibility for the epidemic. Godwin reports,

Now it turns out that homosexuals and their practices can threaten our lives, our families, our children, can influence whether or not we have elective surgery, eat in certain restaurants, visit a given city or take up a certain profession or career -- all because a tiny minority flaunts its lifestyle and demands that an entire nation tolerate its diseases and grant it status as a privileged minority (Godwin, 1982: 2, 8).

And further from its locus in populations perceived as marginal or "outsiders,"

AIDS is not seen as presenting any hazards to "normal" or mainstream populations as much as homosexuals present this threat. As Copello writes, "the people of God, i.e., the "good" people, do not become infected with the virus" (1987: 5). This differentiation is dangerously untrue. There is no line between "them" and "us" where AIDS is concerned. Quite simply, when people think about AIDS they also think about "the things homosexuals do" in order to nurture the transmission of HIV. Copello shares this view when he writes that, "prejudice plays on ignorance. ... [society] shares the common belief that the uninfected world is well and healthy and that the infected world is dysfunctional and ill. Through some "evil act" persons become infected with HIV and the presence of the epidemic becomes a sign for the end of the world" (5). Specifically, the perception of homosexuality as an evil or as a perversion in relationship to a fatal disease presents a factor which mystifies AIDS. This idea forms the basis for a strong series of negative associations that occur between the homosexual person and this fatal disease.

Christianity and the Homosexual

Christianity has traditionally repudiated homosexuality as a form of human depravity and sin (McNeill, 1976; Nelson, 1978; Thomas, 1985). Some of the origins and the development of this position are discussed in Chapter One. In introducing the topic here, however, it is important to state without ambiguity that Christianity as a whole holds a dim view of homosexual activity (Cook, 1985; McCracken, 1979; Moberley, 1982/1983). The meaning which is given to homosexuality in Christian discourse is fairly unanimous across the spectrum of North American denominations. Gordon (1987) confirms this view, writing, "there is more that unites us than divides us. Differences in sexual ethics, among Roman Catholicism and most [other] denominations are differences only of degree, not kind (1987: 4)." Harvey (1987) warns that "any attempt to place homosexual relationships on the same level as marriage and family jeopardizes the family and the common good" (19). Quay (1985) writes in a more "symbolic" vein:

Male homosexual activity ... symbolizes at the supernatural level man as in love with one like himself, enamored of the strength of the state, seeking from it the strength to be saviour of himself. It is a refusal of the femininity of the Church, her weakness in human terms. It signifies secular humanism, for which "the only God of man is man himself," refusing to accept the true otherness of God (79).

Smith suggests that Christianity condemns homosexuality because of its ancient association with idolatry (1967), and Kelsey and Kelsey emphatically state, "The Judeo-Christian attitude toward homosexual behaviour during the last six centuries has been one of violent condemnation of any homosexual act" (1986: 194). In commenting on the Sodom story as a basis for this condemnation, McNeill says, "For thousands of years in the Christian West the homosexual has been the victim of inhospitable treatment. Condemned by the Church, he has been the victim of persecution, torture, and even death" (1976: 50). Zion sums up a Roman Catholic

view of homosexuality, writing, "Th[e] teaching has been that all homosexual acts are malum in se, evil in themselves, because of the unnatural character of a sexual act contrary to God's created purpose of procreation within the context of heterosexual marriage" (1987: 26).

Concealed with the theological references to Sodom which are numerous and indeed focal for understanding the religious meanings assigned to AIDS as we shall see, the typical Christian position on homosexuality reflects an understanding of sexuality as somehow divorced from other types of human experience which are at very irreducible levels, diverse. Sexuality in the Christian West has been very distinctly separated from these other forms of experience for some time (Bingham, 1971; Freud, 1907, 1913; Moore, 1980). Within Christian discourse on human sexuality, God is represented as favoring matrimonial models because they produce offspring. The conception of offspring by human sexual activity is considered to be the purpose of sexuality given by God.

By maintaining the importance of progeny for human sexual activity, Christian discourse does not attempt to consider the erotic component of sexual activity, but rather sets the erotic aside as something of little or no concern to religion. The erotic component of human sexuality is inherited, by virtue of its function to produce pleasure for the sake of pleasure, by sexologists, prostitutes, art and eroticism (as a distinct form of reality itself), pornography and perhaps (as also an entirely distinct form of reality) by pathology. Also, the stress on offspring lends a product to human sexual activity, for Christian discourse: sex is never considered valuable in that it is enjoyable (i.e. erotic or "sexy") but valuable only in the sense that it does, when the rules are followed (male + female) produce human offspring. In this way, sexuality might be controlled within Christianity by controlling discourse about it, by defining it in terms of its ultimate end (babies) and by

refusing to consider sexual intimacy, in and of itself, valuable. Foucault (1980) provides an example of this idea when he writes of the nineteenth century:

Sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home. The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction. On the subject of sex, silence became the rule. The legitimate and procreative couple laid down the law ... [and] imposed itself as model, enforced the norm, safeguarded the truth (3).

God is represented throughout Christianity as favoring this model of sexual activity over others even to the point of making this particular version "sanctified" (as long as sexual activity is, in fact, motivated by the possibility to produce offspring) and the others -- in particular homosexuality -- "unholy", illegitimate and disgusting. The faithful, heterosexual relationship which results in the conception of a human baby seems to provide the basis for a sexual ethic for Christianity.

The homosexual experience of love is excluded from this model since homosexuals do not among themselves produce offspring. Nor are homosexual relationships perceived, in too many ways, as resembling their heterosexual, matrimonial counterparts. Since they are considered to exist entirely for the erotic motivation of sexuality, homosexual activities and their side effects (love, intimacy, sharing and communication) are not permitted inclusion in that discourse in which sexuality is controlled and limited as wholly non-erotic (reproductive). Perhaps, the failure to include homosexual intimacy within its discourse on sexuality signals some form of repression within Christianity. This idea is certainly not new. E. Reynaud writes, "Homosexuality is a form of sexuality without the slightest excuse of reproduction, and its systematic repression has always gone hand in hand with other kinds of sexual repression imposed by Christianity" (1983: 53). Inevitably the lives and wellbeing of homosexual persons are affected and influenced by and through these various ideas as they become known and thus a part of human experience.

Very importantly, homosexuality has always been represented as a kind of sexuality that is, differently than heterosexuality, consumed only with pleasure, lust and egoism. It is conceived as a form of sexuality that has not purpose. As Swedenborg has written, "By Sodom is signified the love of dominion grounded in self-love" (Gaskel, 1981: 700). Homosexuality may also be thought of as a form of sexuality that is disobedient. Barth writes that homosexuality constitutes a refusal on the part of the individual to admit the validity of the "divine command" (in Saghir & Robins, 1973). In turning away from the sexual acts that are motivated (at least in discourse) by procreation, homosexuality came to represent death, the outward defiance of life and the inward disobedience of God. To deviate from the model of procreative sexuality means that one also symbolically turns away from God and from life, and toward darkness and death. The symbolic meaning attached to homosexual activity or "being" homosexual is at the root of a conflict for people who share in, either by inheritance or by choice, the meaning attached by Christianity to sexuality: the homosexual person has always been afraid to face God as a whole person (Boswell, 1980); and the homosexual who does face God often experiences a profound and frightening self-alienation.

Religious inquiry deliberates painstakingly over the moral and ethical value of "coming out" as it figures in traditional religious thinking about homosexuality, only to repeatedly arrive at the same conclusion: gays should either stay in the closet or "change." Harvey suggests while a gay person might be conscious of homosexual desires and feelings for intimacy, that abstinence might be a good solution if this person wants to be a Christian (1987). The idea that religious conversion would "cure" homosexuality, is summed up by Don Boys, a Member of the Indiana House of Representatives in advice he offers to gay people:

Are you ready? Simply follow the principles in the Bible. Yes, if every sodomite [sic] would realize that his perversion is a terrible evil that God

calls "vile," "against nature," "unseemly," etc., that always brings the curse of God upon him, it might cause many to repent of their sin ... and return to normalcy. God's plan is for each man to have one woman -- his wife -- for a lifetime and be faithful to her ... it is time we realize, God's plan always works (1987: 55).

"Coming out" for most Christian discourse on sexuality is synonymous with volitional immorality and ethical depravity. In fact, the claim is made by gay people that religion, and Christianity in particular, is largely responsible for putting gay experience in the closet in the first place (Saghir & Robins, 1973). There does not, for Christianity, exist a choice for homosexual activity unless it is a clear choice for sin. Gay people who are bound to this thinking for whatever reasons, must reject their own sexuality, and inevitably, learn self-hate and denial as a means to control their intrinsic choice or tendency for sin. Homosexuality represents immorality and promiscuity to Christian tradition and is thought to vividly oppose to the morality this tradition teaches. A recent move by the United Church of Canada to ordain gay clergy met with vehement opposition all across Canada. Several congregations split from the United Church affiliation to avoid the possibility of admitting homosexual clergy into their churches, while other groups lobbied (and continue to lobby) for the ordination ruling of the United Church to be struck down. Writing for the Ottawa Citizen, Hauser responded to the move of the United Church in the following manner:

[They] refused to accept that homosexual acts were sinful, and refused to look at Biblical quotations on the grounds that "Christians fight with each other about what is the correct interpretation of the Bible." ... Would I accept homosexuals and lesbians into the United church of Canada? I would if they admit to themselves and to God that they have sinned, if they asked for forgiveness, and if they pledge to sin no more. If homosexuals cannot accept the fact that homosexuality constitutes sinning, why can't they establish a church of their own instead of trying to destroy mine" (Ottawa Citizen, 27 April, 1988: A-9).

Homosexuality, for many religious believers in the West, is not a legitimate form of behaviour because it is perceived or defined as a sin (Zion, 1987: 26) -- an

act of wilful misconduct against God, society and human nature (27). Its absence or, at the very worst, its suppression is presumably a unanimous sign of Christian morality. There has been little renovation of this idea in Christian thinking, despite the positive steps taken by homosexual people and their increasing visibility in many walks of life, including the clergy. There is no possibility of minimizing this fact, and Bailey provided a sense of Christianity's attitude toward homosexuality in his extensive treatment that was published in 1955:

The Church taught and people universally believed, on what was held to be excellent authority, that homosexual practices had brought a terrible Divine vengeance upon the city of Sodom, and that the repetition of such "offenses against nature" had from time to time provoked similar visitations in the form of earthquake and famine. It was understandable, therefore, that by means both of ecclesiastical discipline and of the restraints and penalties of the civil law, steps should be taken to ward off the wrath of God which might be displayed against the fili diffidentiae (IX).

Boswell's more recent volume on the topic of Christianity and homosexuality (1980) concludes,

A tendency of humans to dislike or mistrust what is different or unusual adds a certain visceral force to this belief in the rightness of majority sentiment. Especially when difficulties beset a population already inclined to value conformity for its own sake, those who are perceived as wilfully different are apt to be viewed not only as mistaken (or "unnatural") but as potentially dangerous (38).

It is difficult for gay people to gain any positive visibility in "normative" Christian contexts because they are perceived by Christianity as being wilfully different and by this act of will hazardous to moral order as this order is conceived in Christian thinking about sexuality. Secondly, it is conceived in Christian moral tradition that in being gay, one sins against God, and this constitutes disobedience. It is generally apparent in reading many Christian sources that much Christian thinking is ruled by the opinion that homosexual people choose their sexual orientations through some act of free will, and are free, whether for the sake of salvation or for some other reason, to also choose to opt out of this sexual

orientation as easily as changing a shirt. This notion clearly contradicts psychological discourse on the foundations of homosexuality, and this presumption is problematic.

Christianity and AIDS

We now arrive at one of the fundamental questions which this dissertation asks: what does AIDS mean to Christianity? An examination of the Christian response to AIDS over the past eight years relates in many ways to the Christian treatment of homosexuality previously. Many Christian attitudes to AIDS are primarily homophobic attitudes, betraying an implicit fear of homosexuality and homosexuals (McCarthy & Bayer, 1984). This fear seems to be based on an enduring connection that occurs within the Christian tradition: homosexuality = death. Quay writes of homosexuality, "separating the power to give life from those actions intended for the giving of life is a sort of killing, and ultimately symbolizes a putting to death" (82).

Palmer (1989) surveyed seven denominations on questions pertaining to AIDS. Of the five Christian denominations within the sample, three denominations responded that homosexuals deserve AIDS. Palmer writes that in each group, "AIDS is used as a symbol to reinforce its own particular standards of sexual behaviour and ideal of family life" (1). Further, Palmer states,

...[S]ince each religion projects its version of the human order including its sexual program into the totality of being, it is understandable that a fatal, sexually transmitted disease which is contracted through what each church defines as sexually deviant behaviour, should become a symbol of the profane (2).

As Sontag (1978; 1990) has stated, illness as a metaphor may represent the antithesis of the aims of a society. People who have diseases, in particular diseases

which are associated with "deviancy" may be perceived as evil, and arouse anxiety over something perceived to constitute public evil. Sontag writes:

Any disease that is treated as a mystery and acutely enough feared will be felt to be morally, if not literally, contagious ... Contact with someone afflicted with a disease regarded as a mysterious malevolence inevitably feels like a trespass; worse, like the violation of a taboo (1978: 9).

Bakan (1968) amplifies this point by developing the notion that suffering is characterized by a sense of "phenomenal distality" from an otherwise sense of wellbeing. In other words, suffering tends to alienate the individual from a sense of belonging, of "being – well". He writes, "cries of pain lead to ... responses on the part of others" (73). However, the phenomenal distality between AIDS and "others" created by its reputed contagiousness is not potentially reduced by a favorable or helpful response on the part of others. Any suffering proclaimed by someone with AIDS functions as a warning signal of contagion rather than a warranted plea for compassion. According to an Ottawa gay rights group AIDS becomes a justification for social withdrawal and the open expression of hatred against gay people: "Before they could say 'get away, I don't like you.' Now they can say, 'get away, you have AIDS. You can kill me'" (Scanlan, 1986: D-1, D-3). AIDS tends to provoke so much fear that others withdraw and the distance between suffering and compassion is potentially increased.

Does a Christian response to AIDS bring about what Sontag suggests is the development of an anxiety over the evil which surrounds gay people and/or people with AIDS? Does this occur because homosexuality is defined as a sin, and gay people sinners? Does a Christian response to AIDS tend to increase, as Bakan's theory suggests, a distance between gay people who are either at risk or already infected, and straight people who are non-infected and who do not perceive any risk of infection as affecting them? Does this distancing create a boundary that separates social "good" from the "evil" that is perceived in homosexual experience

and AIDS? Does a Christian response to AIDS represent the construction of a taboo around gay people, making them untouchable, the objects of fear, dread and anxiety? Is this the manner in which the homophobia which characterizes the Christian response to AIDS may be approached? For many Christian writers, AIDS is a revelation of the rejection of God of homosexual people and their life style.

Cammenga (1984) writes:

The Christian must view AIDS as the revelation from heaven of the righteous wrath of God against those who have rejected him and his laws. AIDS is, in the language of Romans 1:27 the "recompense of their error" which those who practice the sin of homosexuality receive in themselves. It is, as Romans 1:8 states, the wrath of God which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (208).

The perception that AIDS is a plague, leveled at homosexuality by a punitive god can be seen in many Christian sources. This literature condemns homosexuality (it is an "abomination") on the basis that it seriously offends this God and brings death and disease into the created world. For the Christian imagination, and indeed for the "western" imagination which is historically rooted in Christianity, homosexuality contradicts creation and represents the symbolic "turning away" from the creator. Homosexuality interrupts the creative continuity which much Christian discourse believes flows through the male – female coital relationship. Hence, homosexuals are held directly responsible for AIDS, either their own or someone else's -- for inviting plague and self-extinction into the world -- specifically because they "turn away from God" by "doing" homosexual things. Harvey (1987) writes: "Homosexual activity is not a complementary union, unable to transmit life; and so it thwarts the call to a life of that form of self-giving which the Gospel says is the essence of Christian living" (238). This connection has ancient historical and psychological roots in the story of Christianity, and my thesis will examine several of these roots in detail.

A connection which endures between homosexuality and death is thousands of years old in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and has bases which are mythological and yet fundamental to Christian thinking about the homosexual. Providing an example of this kind of thinking, Quay (1985) writes:

...[T]here is a relation between sexual sin and death that human beings have known for long generations ... frustration of the life-instincts begets the death instinct. Separating the power to give life from those actions intended for the giving of life is a sort of killing, and ultimately symbolizes a putting to death (81,82).

The connection that seems to occur between death and homosexuality may be explored in a careful analysis of Christian attitudes toward homosexuality, and the construction of these attitudes. This connection may also be examined in the case study of AIDS by looking at how death and homosexuality seem to converge in a public perception of the disease. I will argue that this perception is, in fact, a moral reaction to a disease which affects primarily homosexual males -- it is not, purely, a response to disease characterized by wise or simple caution. Zion states, "The theological problem posed by AIDS is exactly that of an allegedly moral community standing against sinners" (23). Our social response to AIDS is also a psychosocial reaction to a disease that is associated with depravity and sin (see AIDS and HIV Infection: Psychosocial Issues). For the construction of this reaction, in order to approach the ways depravity and sin entered into the meaning of homosexuality, we need to look towards the past, and to examine historical influences on the meaning of homosexuality. In morally distancing itself from AIDS and the things and people associated with AIDS, by defining homosexuality in terms of its "alien" nature and otherness, much Christian discourse serves to reinforce the protection of "good" social order from an invasion of evil. By taking both the moral aspects of our responses to AIDS and the historical aspects of our response to AIDS into consideration, we need to finally look at the theological bases which

seem to undergird moral and psychosocial reactions to AIDS. Homophobia on all three levels is evident in an examination of perceptions of AIDS for society. AIDS seems to function as a symbol for Christianity's total rejection of homosexuality: act, orientation and person. This rejection of the gay person becomes apparent in an examination of AIDS and the public perceptions that are evident around the disease.

Homophobia

Despite widespread political and educational efforts, and despite an increase in the culture-wide tolerance of "difference" where homosexuality is concerned, Christian thinking about homosexuality has not changed for several reasons. Some of these reasons become apparent on a day to day basis in the perception that homosexual experience and AIDS (disease, plague and death) are very much the same thing. The perception, for instance, that homosexuals are dangerous, or that homosexual experience is dangerous describes what I am calling a "homophobic" response.

Homophobia is characterized by an intense and exaggerated fear of homosexuality as it is perceived to constitute danger to the individual and to society. When a person who is homophobic confronts homosexuality the reaction is one of fear, disgust, nausea, anxiety, and inevitably, defense and prejudice. Homophobia structures a comprehensive strategy of prohibition and avoidance in order to prevent any confrontation with "homosexual things." Weinberg (1972) offers five reasons for the development of homophobia: a religious motive based on the condemnation of homosexuality in the Biblical book Leviticus; the secret fear of being homosexual oneself (Freudian reaction formation); repressed envy based on the

homosexual's lack of a need for female partners; the threat to western values -- since homosexuality is perceived as "undermining" society; and finally, the notion that homosexuality causes distress for some people because the idea of people without children awakens a fear of death -- reproduction, Weinberg feels, helps some individuals cope with a fear of death.

Homophobic fear around homosexual experience is very much an active ingredient in the social, psychological and theological responses to AIDS. I will show throughout my thesis the idea "homosexual experience results in death" is a theme which is a pervasive part of Christian thinking, and pre-dates and informs the present meaning of AIDS for western society in general. This theme may also be reinforced in the present context since AIDS possesses a significant homosexual epidemiology combined with a 100% fatality prognosis. The simple causal connection existing in much Christian thought between homosexuality and death is the primary target of the inquiry which I follow, and some examination of the historical foundations of this connection are necessary in order to correctly understand homophobia in the context of AIDS.

A developing panic or fear reaction radiates outward from the contagious "viral" reality of AIDS to a kind of mythic "taboo" that surrounds the disease and the entire homosexual population with grave dread and anxiety. Not founded on fact, this response can therefore be classified as "pathological fear". This fear has implications in a variety of psychosocial contexts, and influences attitudes toward AIDS in a manner which is problematic (Blaney & Piccola, 1987; Chodoff, 1987; Faulstich, 1987; Miller, 1987; Nichols, 1983). Inevitably, the perception of this fear by homosexuals and AIDS patients alike contributes to further psychiatric and psychological complications (Gold, Seymour & Sahl, 1986; Miller & Green, 1985; Valdiserri, 1985). Some of these complications are irreparable and ultimately grave

in the context of the AIDS prognosis. While the expression of this fear is accentuated in the context of AIDS, and perhaps descriptive of the Christian response in particular, it is not only because of AIDS that this fear develops. Rather, AIDS provides a metaphorical space in which pre-existing fears organized around homosexuality become potentially "justified" and certainly visible. Far from fostering any conscientious sense of moral responsibility, this reaction permits a denial of responsibility based on the premise that homosexuals reap "the due penalty of their error" in the form of fatal extinction (plague). Conversely, heterosexual people -- "straights" -- are considered generally free from any risk of contracting AIDS through sexual contact.

I am particularly interested in exploring some of the origins of these fears and attitudes in the context of Christianity's historical and theological rejection of homosexuality. I will suggest that a homophobic response to AIDS does not depend on a realistic fear of viral contagion as much as on an internal or "unconscious" maintenance of "taboo" around homosexual experience. This process, in turn, surrounds homosexual people with a kind of "untouchability" which affects their experience and their personal identity in a manner which is psychologically traumatic, yet emblematic of the estrangement of gay persons which occurs in many Christian sources.

Christianity and Homosexuality: Three Approaches

A review of literature on the topic of "Christianity and Homosexuality" reveals that this problem has been approached in three main ways. Historical, theological, and psychological methodologies have attempted to explain the Church's position on homosexuality. Boswell (1980) and Bailey (1955) exemplify an historical approach

which details the evolution of anti-homosexual sentiment in Christian theology and law. In presenting causes for this evolution, these authors rely on antecedents in Jewish moral tradition and follow the development of the anti-homosexual trend in the Church through various stages of Christian history. Bailey concludes, for example, that the chief factors which contributed to the formation of the western Christian attitude to homosexual practices are: "...[T]he post-exilic Jewish reinterpretation of the Sodom story, ... pagan and Christian law, the legislation of Church councils and synods, the penitential system in one phase of its evolution, and the teaching of theologians and pastors" (121).

A theological approach is exemplified by McNeill (1976) who focuses on several contemporary features of the mutual antagonism between the Church and the homosexual. His critique is perhaps interesting due to its apologetic tone, but does not address the topic from an accurately causal perspective. Another approach, this time on the side of Christian moral tradition, is assumed by Fuchs (1983) who attempts to argue for the Church's theological and historical justification for the rejection of homosexuality. Fuchs concludes, "Homosexuality illustrates in a particularly striking way the confusion that follows upon a refusal of the "truth of God." The rejection of God's otherness and the refusal of otherness of others are particularly evident here" (218). In fact, however, homosexual people are acutely aware of their own otherness -- it is a particularly problematic aspect of gay experience in general. Carpenter's 1912 book on homosexuality was entitled The other sex. While largely neglected, Carpenter's work perceived that the unique "otherness" of homosexual experience constituted one of its primary differential features.

Saghir and Robins (1973) provide an example of a psychological approach to the topic of homosexuality and Christianity. One of their studies focuses on the

experience of homosexuals in their relationship with religion. Saghir and Robins write,

[A] majority of the homosexuals who grow up in organized religion reveal negative feelings and emotional and physical withdrawal from their religious convictions ... throughout his contact with organized religion the homosexual has felt ... a sense of alienation and labored under a feeling of prejudice...in the few obvious [biblical] references...the homosexual is repeatedly condemned. Thus the Judeo-Christian tradition is at least partly responsible for the estrangement of the homosexual from religious faith (182).

The historical, theological and psychological literature addressing this topic hesitates when addressing specific "causes" for the trend of homosexual alienation within the context of Christianity. Still, these approaches arrive at a unanimous, empirical conclusion by either stating directly or providing an example that: Christianity has alienated the homosexual throughout its development, and this trend continues in many aspects of Christian thinking about the homosexual. My thesis adds to this that the overall problematic response to AIDS by Christianity is one consequence of a long history of conflict between Christian theology and homosexuality. The problematic response is one of rejection, blame and alienation, and is consistent with all other confrontations Christianity records with homosexuality in its history. This response does contribute some serious consequences for the homosexual and for AIDS patients in general. But, importantly, the connection between AIDS (fatal disease) and homosexuality (sin) reinforces Christianity's fear and condemnation of homosexual experience, and is socially influential.

A Deconstructive Approach

A deconstruction of the problematic aspects of a Christian response to AIDS reveals more particular historical, theological / moral and psychological elements. Thus, these three main methodological approaches provide points of departure for my own investigation.

Historical approaches provide evidence of a longstanding hostility existing in the Church toward homosexual people. As well, historical approaches present some clues for sources, stages and influences of this hostility as it develops within Christianity.

Theological approaches enable us to recognize the way the Church "thinks" about the homosexual person at various stages in this development, and provide a sense of the Church's "rationale" for the rejection of homosexual behaviors in terms of hermeneutical and moral traditions.

Psychological approaches lend empirical proof to the idea that homosexuals experience alienation inside the Church when their sexual orientation becomes a part of their known identity. Psychological approaches provide some explanation of the mechanics which underlay the rejection of homosexuality by the Christian imagination. But psychological approaches also permit some further deconstruction of the development of homosexual alienation in this context. It is my contention that in a Christian response to AIDS, one at least which is problematic for a number of reasons, AIDS is causally connected with homosexuality. Once confined in discourse to its connections with homosexuality, the meaning given to AIDS through this process provides a basis for the hostility, rejection and alienation that comprise a social response to the disease in general, and a religious response to the disease in particular.

Taking this last point into consideration, the question arises: What is the meaning of AIDS for Christianity? And where does the meaning of AIDS, for Christianity, come from? For Christian tradition, the meaning of AIDS develops out of two major sources in which homosexuality is confronted historically. These two sources may be considered as Christianity's motivational basis for the continued alienation of homosexuality. The first source is the Old Testament story of Sodom (Genesis XIX: 4-11). The judgement on homosexuals in this story continues in the laws of Leviticus XVIII, and is sustained in the New Testament writings, prohibiting homosexual activity for different reasons, according to a majority of interpretations within the Christian tradition. Fuchs writes,

All these practices defile the land. All these instances issue from the same far-reaching logic: whatever sows confusion, in this case whatever abolishes sexual difference, is forbidden because it carries a latent deadly threat. Thus, homosexuality is an "abomination," as are sodomy and child sacrifice, and of course, incest, which abolishes the line between the interior and the exterior of the clan (1983:37).

Fuchs clearly suggests that sexuality is ordered according a divine plan in the Old Testament. "God's order is victorious against the threatening forces of chaos (Gen.1:2). This divine plan is supported by the story of Sodom. In the story of Sodom an entire city is destroyed by God because of the sin of homosexuality. Perhaps, as well, in the telling and re-telling of the Sodom story, the divine plan, in its opposition to the homosexual person, becomes a myth for western society about the meaning of homosexuality. Perhaps this myth is also somehow related to the meaning of AIDS for western society. I will suggest throughout my work that the Sodom story represents a critical point of reference for Christianity's most basic response to homosexuality. This representation is descriptive of conflicts between a Christian ethos and homosexual experience throughout history. This confrontation is revealed in any investigation of the Christian moral tradition where

the homosexual is concerned. The Sodom story is retold in centuries of theological discourse on homosexuality. Also, the story of Sodom, in its representation of homosexuality as spiritual and mortal alienation resulting in divine punishment, is psychologically reinforced in Christianity's confrontation with AIDS. What happens to homosexuals as a result of AIDS is perceived to be very similar to what happened at Sodom. This perception is one of the most marked influences on the construction and meaning of homosexual experience. The positions which make this connection are reviewed in Chapter Four.

The second source is a more complicated identification that develops in the Christian imagination between homosexuality and death. Since homosexual relations do not produce offspring (although many gay couples have children), the "religious" aim of sexuality -- procreation -- is fundamentally reversed or opposed. In its opposition to "creation" homosexuality becomes associated with "destruction" and death.

In each source, the displeasure of God for homosexuality is vividly represented, and spoken in the words of Christian theology. Relevant causes for fear of homosexual experience can be demonstrated in relation to the "God who hates homosexuality." Further, homosexuality is conceived as a human activity which challenges divine omnipotence with human power. Fuchs exemplifies this perception of homosexuality in its connection with death when he states:

Sexuality is a creative force...and men and women have always experienced this fact...man is not his own beginning, and his sexuality must not be the opportunity of asserting his lust or his dream of omnipotence; but on the contrary, it is the occasion of consenting to his finiteness and his incompleteness, in which he can rejoice and in which he can perceive the traces of the love that precedes him and is his very foundation ... The difference attested to by our sexuality must signify our humanity, we are not God ...every effort to minimize the difference always ends in death, which is why it is an "abomination"; it is idolatrous because it manifests a fascination with self, a closing in on oneself, a deadly refusal of the other. Because human sexuality can function as an acknowledgment of difference but can just as easily function as an

exaltation of the idolatrous pride of man, it thus always hovers between life and death (40).

Conversely, Ricoeur remarks that a history of religion for humankind is in fact a gradual "dispossession and renunciation" of omnipotence: "In this sense, the history of religion marks the advance of Ananke, necessity, which opposes human narcissism" (1970: 238).

The consequences of both historical and theological "rationale" around the issue of homosexuality can also be explored in a Christian response to AIDS. There is substantial evidence to support that:

- a Christian response to AIDS appears to base itself on the story of Sodom and the identification of homosexuality with death;
- the meaning given to homosexuality in Christian tradition is a relevant and corresponding factor in the construction of the meaning of AIDS for western society in general;
- the meaning given to homosexuality by Christian tradition and the subsequent meaning given to AIDS is a relevant and corresponding factor in the experience of gay people in western society.

Psychodynamic Approaches to History, Theology and Psychology

While accepting the observations of historical, theological and psychological approaches as relevant in their presentation of evidence which support my thesis, it is my intention to address the topic of homosexual alienation in the context of this thesis through another dimension of inquiry. I will address historical, theological and psychological features of the Christian position on homosexuality through a psychodynamic approach. A psychodynamic approach observes that any response to AIDS depends partially on internal elements which are psychological in nature,

although their implications may exist in a social context. These internal elements become clear in a psychological deconstruction of homophobia. Deconstruction also permits the investigation of unconscious influences on the development of homosexual alienation in the context of the Christian discourse on homosexuality that is examined here. A psychodynamic approach, on the other hand, follows a pragmatic line of inquiry, allowing a course of explanation to develop which takes historical, theological and psychological facts into consideration (Moore, 1983). Also, as a pragmatic line of inquiry, a psychodynamic approach juxtaposes both internal and unconscious factors bearing on the meaning of homosexuality alongside the external and objective factors through which the meaning of homosexuality comes to be known in the world. This approach is outlined as a methodology by Zetse & Meissner (1973) and reviewed as it relates to social theory by Solomon (1974) (see also Spence, 1982).

Truly, homophobia is one of the major neuroses of our time, not only increasing levels of prejudice and hatred against homosexual persons, but also rationalizing a form of moral irresponsibility in the face of AIDS -- the "homosexual disease" on the false premise of exaggerated contagion. Homophobia constitutes a basic perceptual and cognitive predisposition in which the homosexual is conceived as antithetical to life, opposing human and divine purpose, inviting plague, peril and finally death because of outrageous and volitional depravity. An abundance of mythic imagery about the homosexual along these lines in the Christian imagination betrays a nearness to the irrational domain of the unconscious. The homosexual too must bear the consequences of this perception in day to day experience, and particularly, in the intimate relationship which now occurs between AIDS and homosexuality.

The psychodynamic approach follows three distinct categories of inquiry which are accessible through deconstruction: first, around the topic of a specific cause or episode upon which subsequent development depends; second, around the topic of reaction to this original cause which directs a course of development and around the ways in which this reaction is expressed or socialized; and finally, around a specific series of results or areas influenced by Christianity's thinking about the homosexual person.

An Overview of the Thesis

In sustaining a psychodynamic and deconstructive approach, I suggest that Christianity has historically failed to acknowledge the reality, universality and validity of homosexual experience and homosexual people. This failure is evident in the conflict, fear and anxiety which Christianity exhibits whenever homosexuality becomes an issue within Christian thinking. This failure results in homophobia of both enduring and precocious dimensions, and this can be adequately demonstrated in examining both a Christian response to AIDS, and in examining the implications of Christianity's historical attitudes about homosexuality upon a social response to AIDS in general.

The first feature I will examine in Christianity's treatment of homosexuality is the origin or starting point of homosexual alienation within the context of western society. My thesis suggests that the development of homophobia in Christian tradition has a beginning upon which all subsequent developments depend. This beginning encompasses the first failure of Christianity to understand homosexual

experience. Substituting for understanding, Christianity nurtures a connection between homosexual experience and death. This symbolically forms the basis of Christianity's rejection of homosexuality -- homosexuality is perceived to contradict life and creation, and through this, Christian moral order. Once this identification has been integrated into Christian consciousness, phobias develop around homosexuality and it develops into a "death-object." Homosexuality is "rejected" because it represents death and non-being. Homosexuality exists somewhere outside the world which is upheld by Christian moral order. This idea becomes so pervasive that later homosexuality is conceived to challenge the very omnipotence of God. Homosexuality is then a contradiction of both life (creation) and God (omnipotence). Contemporary Christian thinking about the homosexual in the context of AIDS refers continually to this original connection. It will be a significant portion of my thesis which investigates the nature of this connection. I will describe this original failure through two examples in which death and homosexuality become bonded in the Christian imagination early in its history: first, through the trauma of Sodom, and second through the identification of homosexuality with evil, disease and death that develops out of discourse on matrimony and procreation. It will be necessary to take some unconscious features of both of these developments into consideration.

Taking unconscious features into consideration in understanding the meaning attributed to homosexuality leads toward a discussion of homophobia which is partially unconsciously situated. It is through the unconscious that the second feature of the thesis becomes evident. The second feature of Christianity's attitude toward homosexual experience which is approached in a psychodynamic deconstruction is the tendency to nurture fear for homosexuality. Fear and guilt, in relation to homosexual desire, are partially unconscious and internalized by

individuals. Fear and guilt carries into the irrational homophobia which develops around AIDS. Zion writes,

Since AIDS not only brings fear of contamination by incidental physical contact (contrary to all scientific evidence) but is linked with perversion ... it is a constant temptation ... to react violently against those who are afflicted with the malady or who are identified as carrying the virus that causes it (23).

The rationalization of fear for homosexuality also accompanies the external development of homophobia. Much Christian discourse concerning homosexuality attempts to rationalize homophobia by plainly stating the dangers of homosexuality as these dangers are seen to oppose procreative sexuality (by connecting gay sex with death, for example, and straight sex with life). Homosexuality remains attached to images of death portrayed in the Sodom story, and these negative images bear eventually on the contemporary meaning of AIDS (another connection between gay sex and death). These ideas solidify and mobilize homophobia within the Christian imagination, and indeed have relevance in approaching the meaning of AIDS for western society.

Another of the ways Christian tradition expresses its fear of homosexuals in the present context is to perceive the AIDS epidemic as a divine plague against homosexuals. Against a plague humans have little or no control. This idea permits some justification around earlier associations made between homosexuality and death, and further, around the references to Sodom as a consequence of homosexual depravity. There is no human control which can contradict either a plague produced by divine will or death.

I will also present correlations between phobic rationalization and the theological rejection of the homosexual. Theological rejection is the way Christian tradition reacts to homosexuals, and this reaction depends upon the historical relationship that can be seen to exist between Christian tradition and homosexuality.

In many ways, and in many sources, Christian theology seems to have fear as a basis for its position on gay sexuality. Among a variety of defenses which homophobia constructs to offer protection from the dangers inherent in gay sexuality, hostility, rejection and denial figure as prominent "symptoms". I will show that Christianity develops similar defenses against the dangers of homosexuality and that these defenses function to protect Christian social order from the object of its fear -- the homosexual who poses a threat to this order. Since homosexual experience is linked with death and then with heresy in much Christian discourse, the rejection of homosexuality would appear to be an appropriate response when taking these consequences into consideration.

In a psychological deconstruction of the Sodom story as a myth which influences the unconscious development of homophobia, my thesis argues that the Sodom story is an equivocal source for the development of masculine ambivalence. This ambivalence is structured in the relationship between the men and the father-god of the Sodom story in the conflicting feelings of love versus hate. A theory of masculine ambivalence in relation to mythic and psychosexual elements of the Sodom story provides the psychological basis for deepening an understanding of how homophobia is unconsciously rooted within western society. Homophobia does not appear to stem from perceptual actuality (such as the medical status of HIV infection) which is external, objective and rational. Yet, the externalized dangers which homophobia constructs around gay sexuality are nevertheless experienced as real and objective dangers. It is not therefore the viral reality of AIDS which threatens Christian morality or social order, but rather the homosexual reality of AIDS -- the things homosexuals "do" to get AIDS in the first place. The rejection of homosexuality is understood to be a requisite for participating in this community.

Finally, I will examine some consequences of Christianity's historical treatment of homosexuality in the context of the AIDS epidemic. I will illustrate the ways the Christian attitudes toward homosexuality are themselves constructed. These attitudes appear to correspond to the development of two predominant reactions related to homosexuality: fear and guilt.

The visions of homosexuality characteristic of fear and guilt can be demonstrated by looking at the meaning of AIDS, the development of this meaning, and indeed, in the construction of this meaning. Specifically, the construction of taboos and defenses against homosexual experience result in a series of problems for the individual and for society. The meanings attributed to AIDS seem to reinforce the meaning attributed to homosexuality within Christian tradition. Similarly, the prevalent social response to AIDS also reveals the manner in which the homosexual is perceived. The results of homosexual alienation and social fragmentation, and a variety of significant psychosocial implications can be drawn from examining prevalent responses to AIDS for Christian tradition, for society and for the homosexual person.

Summary

What does AIDS mean? And where does this meaning come from? Using a psychodynamic model I will argue that the meaning of AIDS reveals an underlying hostility against homosexuals which is originally constructed within Christian discourse. This hostility reacts to the Sodom story which seems to function as a myth in Christian consciousness. The Sodom story, as a myth, appears to unconsciously facilitate the massive prohibition of homosexual desire within the context of the Christian imagination. The nature and aims of Christianity's

global rejection of homosexuality can be explored by paying attention to the origins and development of this hostility. The origins and development of the meaning of AIDS can be deduced from the observations of historical, theological and psychological approaches.

A psychodynamic approach, combined with the tools of deconstruction, is useful for understanding the social response to AIDS in terms of its various components. A Christian response to AIDS in which homosexual alienation, rejection and hostility becomes manifest, is one consequence of centuries of homophobia in Christian tradition and in western society for which Christian tradition is a central reference. And homophobia which appears to be institutionalized within Christian discourse seems also to be influential in the way western society responds both to the homosexual person and to the AIDS epidemic. By taking homophobia apart with the tools of psychological deconstruction, we may approach the meaning of AIDS, and examine the implications of this meaning for society and for the homosexual person.

Postscript: Homosexual Alienation

Throughout the thesis I will use the term "homosexual alienation" in order to convey the sense of ambiguity which exists around the experience of alienation in the context of AIDS. The term refers, on the one hand, to the alienation of homosexual people which is one of the consequences of the way society in general seems to respond to homosexual people and to AIDS. This, of course, is what homosexuals feel and experience as a consequence of the meaning given to homosexuality in Christian tradition in which homosexuality is identified with death, blame and spiritual peril. Homosexual people feel alienated from many traditional religious institutions, indeed, many homosexuals report feeling alienated from God

because of centuries of rejection, persecution and stigma. The term "homosexual alienation" also refers to the fact that homosexuality is a category of human experience actively alienated (in the meaning that homosexuality is "rejected") from Christian community by a direct intention of theology in the moral tradition. Homosexual alienation therefore also expresses something that happens to the homosexual person throughout history and moral tradition. Homosexual alienation is, then, both a feeling (on the part of homosexual people) and an action (on the part of society, Christian tradition or homophobia). Homosexual alienation has occurred in both ways throughout history, and my thesis explores several facets of this idea in its development in specific religious contexts and more general social contexts.

This is the end of tears:
No more lament.
Through all the years
Immutable stands this event.

-- Sophocles (Oedipus at Colonus)

Chapter One

The Sodom Story and its Influence on Christian Tradition

Perhaps the most pervasive influence upon a Christian understanding of homosexuality has been the story of Sodom, written in the Old Testament Book of Genesis XIX. The words "sodomy" and "sodomite" which pervade much Christian discourse on homosexuality from early times well into twentieth century originate in this story. The word "sodomy" which is used today to refer to homosexual activity in general and to anal intercourse between males in particular finds its origins in the meaning given to homosexuality in the Sodom story. "Sodomite" is a word that is sometimes used interchangeably with the word "homosexual" (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1988).

Bailey writes,

The Church taught and people universally believed, on what was held to be excellent authority, that homosexual practices had brought a terrible vengeance upon the city of Sodom, and that the repetition of such 'offenses against nature' had from time to time provoked similar visitations in the form of earthquake and famine (Bailey, 1955: ix).

In order to develop an understanding of the ways in which Christian discourse interprets homosexuality, it is important to look at the Sodom story. By looking carefully at the Sodom story, it is possible to understand some of the meanings which are attached to homosexuality throughout history, and especially, meanings which relate to the term "sodomite" which begin in our understanding of the Sodom story. This story, a tragic narrative about a city of homosexuals (Sodomites) which is destroyed by God, appears to provide a central point of reference for much Christian discussion on homosexuality (Nelson, 1975). And the importance given by Christian sources to the Sodom story in discussions of homosexuality appears to influence the social construction of homosexuality in general (Greenberg, 1988). But the Sodom story appears to also provide a point of reference for many of the opinions and attitudes expressed socially about AIDS, as AIDS is related to homosexuals. This chapter will:

- examine the Sodom story;
- examine biblical references to the Sodom story;
- look at some of the ways the Sodom story comes to influence the meaning given to homosexuality in Christian tradition.

The Sodom Story

In Chapter XIV of the Book of Genesis, Abraham returns from battle, having reclaimed his family members among the other inhabitants of Sodom who had been taken hostage by the warriors of the Chedor-laomer (1-16): "He [Abraham] recaptured all the goods, along with his kinsman Lot and his possessions, together with the women and people" (16). Abraham's nephew Lot and presumably his wife and two daughters as well, had been living at Sodom when they were taken, along

with their possessions by the invading conquerors (11,12). The King of Sodom (Bera) and the King of Salem (Melchizedek), grateful to Abraham for saving the people and possessions that had been taken in battle, come to visit Abraham in the Valley Shaveh (the Valley of the Kings). Melchizedek, who we are told is "a priest of God Most High" (19), brought bread and wine to Abraham and recited this blessing: "Blessed be Abraham by God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High for handing over your enemies to you" (20). After the blessing, and apparently pleased, Abraham gives Melchizedek a tenth of the possessions he has captured in his vindication of the Kings.

The King of Sodom, who was not a priest, however, offers no such blessings, but rather asks of Abraham, "Give me the people and take the possessions for yourself" (21,22). But, we are told, Abraham refuses this proposition and replies to King Bera of Sodom, "I raise my hand in the presence of Yahweh, God Most High, creator of heaven and earth: not one thread, not one sandal strap, nothing will I take of what is yours; you shall not say 'I enrich Abraham.' For myself, nothing. There is only what my men have eaten, and the share belonging to the men who came with me ... let them take their share" (21-24).

Certainly Abraham had some knowledge of Sodom's reputation as well, and this may have influenced his treatment of King Bera. Chapter XIII: 13 states, "Now the people of Sodom were vicious men, great sinners against God." We may wonder, perhaps in light of this fact, why Abraham's nephew had chosen to live at Sodom. We are told that Abraham and Lot were forced to separate earlier, since the land they were sharing was crowded and their servants were fighting with each other (6-8): "Thus they parted company: Abraham settled in the land of Canaan; Lot settled among the towns of the plain, pitching his tents on the outskirts of Sodom" (12, 13). Later, Lot has moved into a house within the city of Sodom (XIX: 2).

Still, Chapter XV opens with a divine promise made to Abraham when Yahweh speaks in a dream: "Have no fear, Abraham, I am your shield; your reward will be very great" (1). Sodom is not mentioned again until Chapter XVIII. We can follow the story as it resumes in verse 16.

We are told here that "From there [?] the men set out and arrived within sight of Sodom with Abraham accompanying them to show them the way" (17). Here, Yahweh deliberates whether he will disclose to Abraham what he intends to do, "seeing that Abraham will become a great nation with all the nations of the earth blessing themselves by him ... for [Yahweh] has singled him out to command his sons ... after him to maintain the way of Yahweh by just and upright living..."(18,19). Yahweh declares, perhaps reflecting upon his anticipation of the destruction of Sodom, "How great an outcry there is against Sodom and Gomorrah! How grievous is their sin! I propose to go down and see whether or not they have done all that is alleged in the outcry against them that has come up to me. I am determined to know" (20-21). We may conclude from this passage that Yahweh was sufficiently upset by the rumors of Sodom's sinfulness that he planned to visit Sodom personally.

Now, we are told, "The men left there and went to Sodom while Abraham remained standing before Yahweh" (22). We are not told why, but Abraham shares some foreknowledge of God's plans for Sodom, and approaches Yahweh to ask: "Are you really going to destroy the just man with the sinner? Perhaps there are fifty just men in the town. Will you really overwhelm them, will you not spare the place for the fifty just men in it" (25,25)? Abraham, on the basis that fifty good men might dwell in Sodom and might be wrongly killed by God's destruction of an otherwise corrupt city, then strongly implores God to restrain from killing the entire population of Sodom. He begs, "Do not think of it! Will the judge of the

whole earth not administer justice" (25,26)? Yahweh, unperturbed by Abraham's impudent questions, calmly says, "If at Sodom I find fifty just men in the town, I will spare the whole place because of them" (26). Abraham reflects on his boldness to Yahweh, and reflects on the possibility that perhaps only forty or forty-five just men might dwell in Sodom. He maintains the same argument against the destruction of Sodom -- will the forty good men die with the wicked? Yahweh promises he will spare the town for the forty. Abraham continues, now humbled even further by his own reflections, "I trust my Lord will not be angry ... perhaps there will only be thirty there" (30,31). Yahweh promises he will spare Sodom on the behalf of the thirty good men. They continue their discussion until Abraham has Yahweh promising in the final verses of the dialogue, "I will not destroy [Sodom] for the sake of the ten" (32). At last, Yahweh vanishes and Abraham goes home. In verse 21 of Chapter XVIII God proposes to go and visit Sodom himself, in order that he can "determine to know" whether the alleged crimes are actually true. It is with this verse in mind that we must read the narrative of Chapter XIX. Two angels, perhaps representing Yahweh, reach Sodom in the evening. Abraham's nephew Lot, who had been returned to Sodom previously in the story, greets the two angels at the gates of the city. He rises to his feet, and bows to the ground: "I beg you, my lords, please come down to your servant's house to stay the night and wash your feet" (2). Evidently unaware of either their mission or their identity, Lot continues, "Then in the morning you can continue your journey" (2). But they are reluctant to stay at Lot's house, replying to him, "No, we can spend the night in the open street" (3). Lot is so surprised at their response, that he insists, "pressing them so much that they went home with him and entered his house" (3). After they have arrived, Lot makes them a meal along with unleavened bread, and they eat it.

After dinner, and before the two visitors have retired for the night, "the house was surrounded by the men of the town, the men of Sodom both young and old, all the people without exception. Calling to Lot they said, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Send them out to us that we may abuse them"" (4,5). The editors of the Jerusalem Bible translate the Hebrew verb "yadah" ("to know") as it refers to a "sexual type" of knowing. The editors also comment here that sodomy (anal intercourse between males) was condemned by the Israelites even though its practice was "common among their neighbors ... underlying the story is a horror of the double offense of such behaviour toward angels ... and the breach of the law of hospitality would also be considered serious" (Jerusalem Bible, 1968: 21, Note 19-A).

Lot comes to a place outside his doorway to meet with the intruders who have surrounded his home. He closes the door behind him to prevent his guests from hearing his conversation with the mob. He still does not know the auspicious identity of his visitors when he implores the crowd desperately, "I beg you, my brothers, do no such wicked thing. Listen, I have two daughters who are virgins. I am ready to send them out to you, to treat as it pleases you. But as for the men, do nothing to them, for they have come under the shadow of my roof" (6-9). Undaunted by Lot's generous offer to send out his daughters, the men who have surrounded his house refuse to leave, becoming even more boisterous: "Out of the way! Here is one who came as a foreigner, and would set himself up as a judge" (9). Now threatening Lot himself, they holler, "we will treat you worse than them" (9). Lot is forced backwards by the mob who now press inward to break down the door of his house. "But the men [his angelic visitors] reached out, pulled Lot back into the house, and shut the door" (10, 11). With Lot safely inside, and the men of Sodom still attempting to break into his house, the angelic visitors "struck the men

who were at the door of the house with blindness, from youngest to oldest, and they never found the doorway" (11).

The narrative now reaches a turning point. The two angels speak to Lot, asking him, "Have you anyone else here? Your sons, your daughters and all your people in the town, take them out of the place. We are about to destroy this place, for there is a great outcry against them, and it has reached Yahweh" (12-14). And finally admitting their identity to Lot, the angels proclaim "Yahweh has sent us to destroy [Sodom]" (14). Lot spends the night begging his family to leave Sodom with him: "Lot went to speak with his future sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters. "Come," he said, "leave this place, for Yahweh is about to destroy the town." But his sons-in-law thought he was joking (14).

When morning is breaking, the two angels try to convince Lot to leave Sodom, "Come, take your wife and these two daughters of yours, or you will be overwhelmed in the punishment of the town" (15, 16). But Lot is still reluctant to leave until, because of the pity felt for Lot by Yahweh, the angels insist: "the men took [Lot] by the hand, and his wife and his two daughters ... they led him out and left him outside the town" (15, 16). As they lead Lot out of Sodom by the hand, they warn, "Run for your life. Neither look behind you nor stop anywhere on the plain. Make for the hills if you would not be overwhelmed" (17,18). Realizing his limitations, Lot begs the angels to save a nearby town, Zoar, from being overwhelmed by the destruction of Sodom, since he does not think he can reach the hills in time to avoid harm: "I beg you, my lord [sic], your servant has won your favour and you have shown great kindness to me in saving my life. But I could not reach the hills before this calamity overtook me, and death with it. The town over there is near enough to flee to, and is a little one ... let me make for that and my life will be saved" (19-21). The plea obtains favour. "He [sic] answered, "I grant

you this favour too, and will not destroy the town you speak of. Hurry, escape to it, for I can do nothing until you reach it." That is why the town is named Zoar" (21, 22). "Zoar" comes from the Hebrew word isoar, and means "little". Formerly, the town had been called "Bela" (Genesis XIV: 2) and was saved from immediate destruction with Sodom and Gomorrah in answer to Lots prayer, "is it not a little one" (Genesis XIX: 20,22) (Tenney, 1977: 915).

With the morning sun rising high over the plain, and Lot safely in Zoar, "Yahweh rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Yahweh. He overthrew these towns and the whole plain, with all the inhabitants of the towns, and everything that grew there. But the wife of Lot looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt" (23-26). Abraham rose early that morning, and went to the place he had earlier met with Yahweh. He looked out across the plain and saw "the smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace" (28). We are reminded, as the narrative ends, that in the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Yahweh "kept Abraham in mind and rescued Lot out of disaster when he overwhelmed the towns where Lot lived" (29).

As a postscript to this remarkable tale, we are told another remarkable story by the authors of Genesis. Lot and his daughters did not remain in Zoar for long. Verse 30 says, "[Lot] dared not stay at Zoar." We can assume from this verse that the people of Zoar were upset by the destruction of their neighboring towns and the plain with its vegetation, and perhaps thought Lot was partly to blame for this eventuality. Thus, Lot and his daughters move into the hills where they make their home in a mountain cave. Aware now of Lot's poverty -- he has lost all of his own possessions and his land in the destruction of Sodom -- the daughters together face dim prospects for marriage and child-bearing. Also, we must recall that their husbands-to-be have perished in the destruction of Sodom. The death of the two

husbands-to-be may or may not bear some indication that these two were also "wicked men" as were the other men of Sodom. There are no clues given in this regard. Lot is also old, and the daughters ruminate together, "Our father is an old man, and there is not a man in the land to marry us in the way they do the world over" (32). We are reminded of the custom of the bridal price and gifts in Genesis XXXIV: 10-12, and again in Exodus XXII: 15-17. "The way they do the world over" may refer to this custom, and Lot's daughters are perhaps realizing that no man would be interested in marrying them in their present state of exile, tragedy and poverty. They may no longer feel "desirable." Their thoughts turn to having children, for without marriage they cannot look forward to children.

They devise a plan together: "Come let us ply our father with wine and sleep with him. In this way we shall have children by our father" (32). They follow through with their plan over the course of two consecutive nights, making their father drunk on both occasions. Both daughters sleep with Lot and are impregnated by him although in the narrative he remains unaware of the fact he has had sexual intercourse with them. Verse 37 tells us their plan was successful: "Both Lot's daughters thus became pregnant by their father. The elder gave birth to a son whom she named Moab ... the younger also gave birth to a son whom she named Ben-ammi" (37, 38). The editors of the Jerusalem Bible remind us of the etymological significance of these names: Moab derives from 'me-ab' and means "from my father." Ben-ammi translates "son of my kinsman" (Jerusalem Bible, 1968: 23, note 19-C). The names given to the children refer directly to the act of incest committed between Lot and his daughters.

Biblical References to the Sodom Story

There are several direct references made to the Sodom story within the Bible. According to Smith (1979) there are thirty-nine direct references made throughout the Bible to the Sodom story. In neither the Old or New Testaments, however, does a homosexual meaning for the Sodom narrative appear.

In the Old Testament, Ezekiel XVI, for example, comprises an allegorical history of Israel. In this book the prophet Ezekiel admonishes Israel for unfaithfulness, and for adopting some of the religious practices of foreigners. In scolding Israel for her crimes, the prophet composes an allegory about a family in which Sodom figures as a paradigm of corruption: "Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. Your elder sister is Samaria, who lives on your left with her daughters. Your younger sister is Sodom who lives on your right with her daughters. You have not failed to copy their behaviour; throughout your career you have shown yourself more corrupt than they were" (45-48). And Ezekiel speaks in the name of God to Israel, "...[I]t is the Lord Yahweh who speaks ... the crime of your sister Sodom was pride, gluttony, arrogance, complacency; such were the sins of Sodom and her daughters. They never helped the poor and needy; they were proud and engaged in filthy practices in front of me; that is why I have swept them away as you have seen" (48-51).

The Old Testament prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah also use Sodom as a descriptive term when warning Israel of her own crimes and sins against God. Isaiah warns Babylon in Chapter XIII: 19: "Babylon, that pearl of kingdoms, the jewel and boast of Chaldaeans, like Sodom and Gomorrah shall be overthrown by God." Another prophetic book, Jeremiah refers to Sodom while issuing a warning against Edom: "Edom will become a desolation; every passer-by will be appalled at

it, and whistle in amazement at such calamity. As at the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, no one will live there any more, Yahweh proclaims, no man will make his home there ever again" (XL: 18). The message is repeated in Jeremiah L: 50: "As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, with their neighboring towns -- it is Yahweh who speaks -- no one will live there any more, no man will make his home there ever again."

A story which is very similar and reflects many aspects of the Sodom story of Genesis appears later in the Old Testament, in the book of Judges XIX. While no specific references are made by the authors of Judges XIX to the Genesis Sodom story, the parallels are quite evident.

Judges XIX tells of a man who travels to Gibeah, in the land of Benjamin, with his two donkeys, his concubine and his servant (10). He is tired during his journey, and sits in the town square. He is then approached by an old man who asks, "Where have you come from? Where are you going" (18)? The man responds, "We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a place deep in the highlands of Ephraim ... now I am going home, but no one has offered to take me into his house, although we have straw and provender for our donkeys, and I have bread and wine as well for myself and this maidservant and the young man who is travelling with your [sic] servant; we are short of nothing" (18-20). The old man offers his hospitality to the traveler, "Welcome to you! Let me see to all your needs; you cannot spend the night in the public square. So he took him into his house and gave the donkeys provender. The travelers washed their feet, then ate and drank" (20, 21).

Verse 22 tells us that their pleasant meal is interrupted: "As they were at their cheerful meal, some men from the town, scoundrels, came crowding together around the house; they battered on the door and said to ... the master of the

house, "Send out the man who has come into your house so that we can abuse him" (22, 23). Much like Lot, the old man goes outside, and pleads with the men of Gibeah, "No, my brothers; I implore you, do not commit this crime. This man has become my guest; do not commit such an infamy" (23, 24). In note 19-A the Jerusalem Bible editors comment, "It is the violation of the sacred duty of hospitality which is considered a grave infamy" (285).

Like the Lot in his confrontation with the men of Sodom, the old man offers his virgin daughter as a consolation: "Here is my daughter, she is a virgin; I will give her to you. Possess her, do what you please with her, but do not commit such an infamy against the man [my guest]" (24, 25). Still, the men of Gibeah will not listen to the old man (25). Since the men of Gibeah refuse the old man's virgin daughter, the visitor gives the men of Gibeah his concubine. "They had intercourse with her and outraged her all night till morning; when dawn was breaking they let her go" (25).

We are told that in the morning, after being abused by the men of Gibeah for the entire night, the girl then throws herself on the threshold of the old man's house, staying there until it was full daylight. Her husband discovers her there: "In the morning her husband got up and opened the door of the house; he was coming out to continue his journey when he saw the woman who had been his concubine lying at the door of the house ... He said to her, "Stand up; we must go" (27, 28). The exhausted and battered woman is unable to answer or to move, so the husband places her across the back of his donkey and resumes the journey homeward (28).

After he finally reaches his home, "He picked up his knife, took hold of his concubine, and limb by limb cut her into twelve pieces; then he sent her through all the land of Israel" (29, 30). He instructs the couriers who deliver the pieces of his concubine to say the following: "Has any man seen such a thing from the day

the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt, until this very day? Ponder on this, discuss it, then give your verdict. And all who saw it declared, "Never has such a thing been done or been seen since the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt" (30).

We are told, in retaliation, the Israelites muster a huge army and punish the crime committed at Gibeah (XX): "What is this crime that has been committed among you? Come now, give up these men, these scoundrels from Gibeah, so that we may put them to death and banish wickedness from the midst of Israel" (12, 13). Eventually, after much fighting, and despite the heavy losses sustained by the avengers, the men of Gibeah are all put to death and the town is burned (45– 48). The destruction of Gibeah by fire is similar to the destruction of Sodom, and another parallel is made in the fact that all of the men of Gibeah, like all the men of Sodom, are put to death.

Hebrew laws condemned homosexual practices and explicit prohibitions are spelled out in various passages in the book of Leviticus (at least sodomy -- anal homosexual intercourse). These offenses were punishable by death. Leviticus XVIII: 22, for example, states, "You must not lie with a man as with a woman. This is a hateful thing." Leviticus Chapter XX: 13 is perhaps more severe: "The man who lies with a man in the same way as with a woman: they have done a hateful thing together; they must die, their blood shall be on their own heads." Boswell interprets the prohibitions of homosexual activity in Leviticus as relating to "ritual impurity" (93,98). He argues that homosexual practices were associated by the Israelites with the practices of the pagans, and forbidden because of this association. In Deuteronomy XXIII homosexual prostitutes are called "dogs" and this would seem to indicate a connection between gay sex and bestiality.

There may be evidence that homosexuality was widely tolerated beyond the prohibitions of the Judaic code. Eliade states,

The evidence indicates that homosexuality was broadly accepted and known from the Near East and Mediterranean in biblical times. Homosexual prostitution was known in ritual cults of Mesopotamia and Canaan. Mesopotamian law codes do not mention homosexuality. The Hittite code prohibits only father-son incest, and the Middle Assyrian code forbids only homosexual rape (Eliade, 1988: 447).

But clear opposition to any arguments that the Leviticus prohibitions are merely cultic prohibitions is offered by Montague (1977) who states: "To say that the concern of Leviticus is ... cultic is a gross oversimplification ... The condemnation of homosexual activity in Leviticus is not an ethical judgment" (285).

Historically precedent Hebrew Law, like the prohibitions of Leviticus, had condemned male homosexual practices under the singular heading of "sodomy" and these offenses were punished with death, although the Mishnah and the Talmud went further in determining that stoning would be the method of execution (61).

Goodich writes,

The ancient Hebrews, concerned for their tribal and ritual purity, separated themselves from their neighbors and spurned the human sacrifices, ritual castrations, temple prostitution, and sodomy practiced by the pagans although they adopted circumcision as a means for emphasizing their special calling. There is...evidence for a more naturalistic attitude toward sexuality during certain periods, but the Jews clearly condemned homosexuality and bestiality (x).

Homosexual desires estrange the individual from God in the Sodom story. This theme of estrangement is also sustained in Talmudic law. According to Talmudic law homosexual practices are, "invariably regarded as one of the grounds on which a whole people may be destroyed by God's wrath ... The divine presence of the Lord ... was driven by the sins of Sodom into the ... greatest distance from mankind" (47).

The Influence of the Sodom Story on Christian Tradition

Bailey (1956), deviates from the traditional theological discourse which interprets the Sodom story as a tale of God's vengeance against homosexuals. He has argued that the sin of Sodom is actually one of inhospitality against the stranger and not the threat of the men of Sodom to abuse Lot's angelic visitors. McNeill (1976) has also argued against attributing homosexuality to the Sodom story. McNeill favours with Bailey an interpretation of the Sodom story based on the crime in inhospitality. But it is clear that Christian tradition does not follow this interpretation to any great extent. Thus, in his faithful historical account Bailey writes that the "post-exilic Jewish reinterpretation of the Sodom story" regarded Sodom specifically as it concerned homosexual sins and not purely "sins of the flesh." Bailey writes:

The reinterpretation of the Sodom story at the hands of the Pseudepigraphists, Josephus and Philo was immediately accepted by the Christian Church and has remained authoritative and virtually unchallenged until now --teaching that those who indulge in unnatural vice may bring upon themselves and upon all who tolerate their depravity the fearful vengeance of God (153).

On the question of homosexuality, Bailey suggests that the Biblical references, and in particular the Sodom story have been the most powerful influence on western thinking about the homosexual. Bailey admits that the story has homosexual undercurrents, but claims that these are secondary to the inhospitable treatment shown by the men of Sodom toward Lot's visitors. His interpretation is contradicted by Scroggs (1983) who asks: if the sins of Sodom were not sexual sins, then why would Lot have begged the intruders, "do no such wicked thing" (7), and offered the men his virgin daughters?

St. Paul's first letter to the Church in Rome appears to be targeted against Jews and "pagans" -- and there is not much argument that the references to

"impiety" and "depravity" in verses 18 – 32 are written with the homosexual behaviour typical of first century Rome in mind (Veyne, 1985). Clearly, Paul does not depend upon the Sodom narrative in any of the works attributed to him in the New Testament. Instead, Paul's psychosocial context may have defined treatment of homosexuality. This idea is upheld in Bartlett (1977), and will be examined in the following chapter. As Altman suggests on this theme,

Religion may well have been a particularly important influence on the repression of bisexuality, for the Jewish view of sex came to supplant the Greek in the western world, homosexuality was more and more frowned upon, and Biblical evidence was produced to show its inherent sinfulness...Paul added his condemnation in the Epistle to the Romans (78).

It may be through Philo, a first century Stoic and Alexandrian Jew in which an understanding of teleology as a norm for sexual behavior develops. If the Sodom story can be read through Philo's idea that sexuality needed purpose in order to retain its validity, then the narrative may take on new meaning. Through this understanding the Christian understanding of the Sodom narrative may be filtered. According to Bullough (1979) Philo claimed that married couples who did not have procreation as a motivation for their sexual activities were comparable to pigs and goats. For Philo, men who married infertile women were to be condemned. Philo argued that sexual desire was at the bottom of the sin committed in the Garden of Eden. He wrote that the fall of man was due to man's sexual desire, and equating sex with women and passivity. Philo condemned male homosexuality on the grounds that a man would need to take the passive role (to another man, like a woman). Bullough quotes Philo's main objection to homosexuality as an activity in which "the deep-soiled and fruitful fields lie sterile, by taking steps to keep them from bearing, while he spends his labor night and day on soil from which no growth at all can be expected." Philo writes "in former days the very mention of [homosexuality] was a disgrace, but now it is a matter of boasting not only to the active but to the

passive partners" (see Bullough, 1976: 169). The passive feature of men read into the Sodom story will be examined at length in Chapter Three. According to Boswell, however, it is critical to Christian thinking about the Sodom story to include Philo's understanding of sexuality and homosexuality. Philo's interpretation comes to bear heavily on all subsequent treatments of the Sodom narrative. Philo's influence on the homosexual meaning of the Sodom narrative for Christianity is confirmed by Bailey (1955).

In combination with the writings of the Pseudepigraphists, pagan law also condemned homosexual activities. It was, Bailey tells us, "the opinion of the pagan jurists that sodomy is a capital crime [who] bequeathed to succeeding ages the penalty of the vindices flammae as a means of execution" (154). In AD 342 Christian emperors Constantius and Constans wrote:

When a man marries [and is] about to offer [himself] to men in a womanly fashion, what does he wish, when sex has lost its significance; when the crime is one which is not profitable to know; when Venus is changed into another form; when love is sought and not found? We order the statutes to arise, the laws to be armed with an avenging sword, that those infamous persons who are now, or who hereafter may be, guilty may be subjected to exquisite punishment (McNeill: 76).

Emperor Justinian wrote in AD 538 of the serious dangers of homosexuality: "For we order the most illustrious prefect of the Capital to arrest those who persist in the...lawless and impious acts [of sodomy] after they have been warned by us, and to inflict on them extreme punishments, so that the city and state may not come to harm by reason of such wicked deeds" (McNeill: 77).

The punishments for homosexual activity underwent considerable modification and eventual expansion and secularization throughout the historical expansion of Christianity (Greenberg, 1988). Boswell shows that civil and ecclesiastical records of trials dealing with heresy mention "sodomy" and crimes "against nature" regularly: "It becomes commonplace of official terminology to mention traitors, heretics and

sodomites as if they constituted a single association of some sort. 'Bougre' [bugger] a common French word for heretics even came to refer to a person who practiced sodomy, or, more particularly, a homosexual male" (284). The legal term "to bugger" gradually became synonymous with the term "to sodomize" and included "unnatural intercourse with beast or man ... [a] heretic capable of any crime" (Oxford).

In the example of Carolingian legislation attributed to Regino circa AD 914, it is stated that "those who carry on irrationally and pollute others with the leprosy of this branded crime [sodomy] must be included among those penitents who are endangered by an unclean spirit" (Goodich: 26). The connection is therefore made between irrationality or madness and disease (leprosy) in a single statement in which homosexuality is deduced as a result of an unclean spirit -- possibly demonic possession. Yet, the possession metaphor is not widely visible in historical observations of homosexuality. As Bailey points out, a distinction is instead potential in following the interpretation between the homosexual condition, related to developmental or constitutional factors, and the homosexual practices -- related to volitional and environmental factors (Bailey, 1955). The distinction between homosexual "person" and homosexual "acts" is sustained in contemporary theological discourse about homosexuality as well (Harvey, 1987). The mediaevals may have been aware of this division, and further developed distinctions between different homosexual acts:

Generally speaking, the mediaevals displayed a greater awareness than their predecessors of the complexity of sexual behaviour and the difficulty of assessing the morality of sexual acts [insofar as they rendered detailed analyses of homosexual acts rather than grouping all acts under the general title of 'sodomy']; but this did not affect their final conclusion that all homosexual practices, being peccata contra naturam [sins against nature], are mortally sinful. The English law, on the other hand, ventured upon no such nice distinctions, and until the passing of the Act of 1885 took cognizance only of sodomy, which it treated for over three hundred years as a felony punishable by death (Bailey: 155).

Boswell illustrates the severity of punishments leveled at homosexuals during the early Middle Ages. An early Castilian edict ordered that homosexuals should be castrated publicly, then, after three days, hung upside down until dead, and that their corpses remain in public to remind people of their heinous crimes. Alfonso the Wise (1254–1284) wrote in his laws: "Anyone can accuse a man of having committed a crime against nature before the judge of the district...if it is proved, both of those involved should be put to death" (289). While Boswell doubts that this law was ever actually enforced, he suggests it is nevertheless "eloquent testimony to the shift in attitude on the part of the rising power structure of western Europe during [this] period" (289). The result was a gradual increase of legal intolerance toward homosexuality. Eventually, all deviations from Christianity's formal position on homosexuality were regarded as "invalid". Boswell contributes to this thesis,

In a vibrant Rome of the first century or the bustling Paris of the twelfth, Jewish or gay nonconformists apparently struck their contemporaries as part of the variegated fabric of life, contributing portions to a happy whole; but in the collapsing and insecure Rome of the sixth century or Paris in the later fourteenth, any deviation from the norm took on a sinister and alarming mien and was viewed as part of the constellation of evil forces bringing about the destruction of the familiar world order (23).

Still, there is a considerable contradiction around the issue of the enforcement of strict penalties against homosexual people in the following pages of Boswell's work. He explains how Hugh le Despenser and Edward II (1284–1327) were executed for their homoerotic love affair: "Hugh's genitals were cut off and burned publicly before he was decapitated, and Edward was murdered by the insertion into his anus of a red-hot poker" (300). Further, Goodich writes,

The most notorious political accusation of sodomy was leveled against the entire order of Knights Templars, who were held responsible for the ignominious fall of Acre (1291) and the end of Crusader power in the East. In the resulting persecution, several thousand Templars were executed or imprisoned and the venerable order was disbanded...Among

other offenses, the Templars were accused of requiring new members to take part in a bizarre rite of admission that involved denying Christ, spitting on the Crucifix, and disrobing; various members of the order would then allegedly kiss the initiate on the mouth, lower waist, anus or other area, sometimes including the penis (11,12).

In his De Vitio Sodomitico, twelfth century theologian Peter Cantor wrote about the sinfulness of homosexuality, and interpreted the Apostle Paul's Letters to the Romans I: 26-27 as one of more than a dozen exclusive references to homosexuals. Paul writes: "That is why God has abandoned them to degrading passions: why their women have turned from natural intercourse to unnatural practices and why their menfolks have given up natural intercourse to be consumed with passion for each other, men doing shameless things with men and getting an appropriate reward for their perversion." Cantor utilized "sodomy" as a comprehensive, inclusive reference to homosexual acts, and reflects Augustine's association of these acts with homicide (perhaps an early connection made between homosexuality and death). He argues that homosexuality was "not merely a violation of chastity but on a par with murder as one of two sins that "cry out to heaven for vengeance" (Boswell, 1980: 277). Similarly, Damiani's eleventh century Book of Gomorrah detailed the sinfulness of homosexual acts for the clergy by making comparisons between sodomy and homicide (Payer, 1982).

Whether the laws against homosexual activity were unconditionally enforced in the early Mediaeval world, remains to be shown. There seems to be considerable evidence for arguing in either direction. What does appear to be true, according to Greenberg, is this: There is evidence that homosexuals once enjoyed openness and sexual liberalism in Europe; however this openness and liberalism gave way to a subsequent period of strict sexual prohibition between 1100 and 1300 (Greenberg, 1988). Somewhere, Greenberg states, near the eleventh century strict prohibitions against homosexual activity which originated in the Biblical approach to

homosexuality in Leviticus became fused with European laws. Once this occurred, homosexual acts were outlawed and criminalized (Greenberg & Bystryn, 1982). Sodomy becomes, then, a legal term. Boswell suggests that it was not until the thirteenth century that the Church became so openly antagonistic toward homosexual people. Regardless of the exact moment in history when the meaning given to the Sodom story became fused with the legal systems of Europe, the practice of homosexuality came to present mortal, moral, legal and religious perils to the gay person.

Christianity has tended to define "nature" as it relates to a concept of fixed "createdness" issuing from God in terms of what has developed within history as a rather permanent concept of normativity. Normativity has become synonymous throughout this development with heterosexism -- the complementarity and differentiation of the sexes which God created in the beginning for the purpose of procreation. Within Christian tradition heterosexual differentiation is intrinsic to our nature as created human beings. "Normativity" and "natural" tend thus to blur when it comes to Christian discourse about homosexuality. Homosexuality is repeatedly condemned as being against nature throughout much Christian theology on the matter of homosexuality. Clement of Alexandria denounced homosexual relations, due to the absence of offspring alone as unnatural (Greenberg: 218). "In the early third century Tertullian wrote that those who engaged in "all the other frenzies of passions [other than adultery and fornication] ... beyond the laws of nature should be banished, "not only from the threshold, but from all shelter of the Church, because they are not sins but monstrosities"" (Ibid: 218). Similarly, Augustine called the sin that destroyed Sodom "foul offenses which be against nature ..." (Ibid: 224). St. John Chrysostom condemned homosexual activity as an "insult against nature" (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1988: 195). Greenberg provides a

brief outline of the use of the concept of "nature" in relation with homosexual activity along with other nonprocreative sexual acts (masturbation, oral sex). Indeed, the traditional argument levelled at homosexuality is based on the idea that it is not a form of sexuality which arouses thoughts toward intercourse with a person's marriage partner. In fact, as Keane illustrates, all sexual pleasure outside of marriage is a grave matter, "so that no one can in any way intend non-marital venereal pleasure either as an end in itself or as a means to another end, without this pleasure being an objective, grave, moral evil" (Keane, 1977: 58). These notions seem to find a basis in natural law, that pursuing sexuality outside of marriage is a sin because to do so is against the nature of things, as, of course, nature is defined theologically and philosophically. According to Greenberg (1988), "the philosophers and theologians invoked an idealized or theoretical nature that had little relationship to anything they encountered in the world around them ... not observed patterns of sexual conduct ... but God-given reason that was to decide which animal behaviors were natural for humans and which were not" (276). The definitions of nature did not depend on social reality, nor did definitions of unnatural necessarily mean that a given sexual behavior was aberrant or unusual in order for it to fit into this theoretical category. Thomas Aquinas "distinguished masturbation, sodomy (with a partner of the same sex), improper intercourse with a partner of the opposite sex and bestiality as distinct forms of unnatural vice, each with its own degree of seriousness" (277). Much of this tradition of comprehending homosexuality in relation to natural law's definitions of human behavior appears to culminate in contemporary theological approaches to the homosexual. Some of these approaches will be examined in the following chapter.

The Sodom story functions as a model of the divine rejection of the homosexual. Once homosexuality is read into the narrative, then the meaning of

the story becomes crystallized: God destroys the men of Sodom, en masse due to the permanent, irreparable and persistent nature of their sin. It is the unnatural act of this sin, regardless of how this sin is defined which invites divine rejection. Homosexuality, understood to be unnatural and contrary to sexuality's teleology, is punished by God in an exhibition of divine wrath. But the Christian Church does not condemn homosexuality simply on the divine wrath thesis of the Sodom story alone, but depends on new and compelling grounds for this condemnation which relate to the psychosocial context of the early Christian world and an understanding of the New Testament.

Regardless of all of the ambiguities and inconsistencies which the Sodom story presents to the contemporary mind, the association with homosexuality is perhaps the strongest, clearest and most consistent throughout Christianity. Sodom not only represents a scriptural, historical account of the divine vengeance against a community of homosexual sinners, but seems to function as a paradigm through which the homosexual may sustain anathema in a metaphor of divine retribution. What occurs in the Sodom story is a profound example of what God does to homosexuals when they refuse to either admit their sinful nature, or worse, when they choose to act upon their homosexual desires.

Children, there is much that you will understand
When you are older; you cannot bear it now,
But in your prayers ask this: that you may live
Not more or less than well, and so live better
Than did your father.

-- Sophocles (King Oedipus)

Chapter Two

Beyond The Sodom Story: The Meaning of Homosexuality in Christian Tradition

Any questions that attempt to trace or untangle the origins of the antagonism which exists between Christian tradition and the homosexual seem to be confounded by the simple fact of the common nature of this antagonism within the context of western society. It is rather like asking why people dance, absurd and indeed obscure by nature of its plainness, its longevity and its universality. What we do know is that before Christianity, in civilizations such as those in Greece and Rome, and outside Christianity, in societies such as those of Islam (Churchill, 1978), Melanesia (Herdt, 1984) and the North American Indian (Devereaux, 1937), homosexuality is not treated with contempt but rather integrated into the larger, more comprehensive and complex fabric of human experience (Badcock, 1980; Harry & Singh Das, 1980; Katchadourian, 1985; Malinowsky, 1953; Mead, 1949; Opler, 1965). We need to ask, with Greenberg (1988) the essential questions:

Why have some societies invested homosexuality with ritual significance, while others have thought it to be one of the wickedest of crimes? Why did a medical conception of homosexuality emerge? Why is there resistance to gay liberation today (1)?

Besides the Genesis Sodom story and the prohibitions against homosexuality written in the laws of Leviticus, there are several other sources which appear to influence Christian tradition on the meaning of homosexuality. Some of these influences can be explored by shifting focus from the discourse which develops around the Sodom story to the discourse which is built around models of human sexuality in Christian tradition. The New Testament appears to provide a fundamental cornerstone for Christian tradition on sexuality in general. More specifically, however, the meaning that is given to homosexuality in Christian tradition appears to be related in a direct way to the ways sexuality is viewed throughout much Christian discourse on morality (Allers, 1939; Scroggs, 1983).

This chapter will:

- examine homosexuality in the psychosocial context of early Christianity; and
- provide an overview of the meaning of homosexuality for contemporary Christian tradition.

The Psychosocial Context Confronted by Early Christianity

While the Christian apostle Paul was familiar with all of the Hebrew laws regarding homosexuality, and Judaic writings unconditionally condemned all homosexual practices (Greenberg, 216), and indeed, while his writing carried much of the stern flavour of the ancient admonitions of Leviticus into the early Christian Church, we cannot conclude that homosexuality was considered dangerous by Christianity for the single reason that it violated the ancient Judaic writings. The Christians did not think of themselves as Jews, nor did they choose to closely follow the religious practices or laws of their predecessors. This fact is evident in

the Christian's rapid and deliberate violation of the Judaic dietetic codes. Similarly, Paul dismisses the importance of the Judaic rites of circumcision in I Corinthians chapter 7 for his new Christians. Nor can we conclude that the Sodom story formed the single axis upon which all Christian thinking about homosexuality was structured.

The New Testament passage most frequently quoted as a justification to condemn homosexuality is found in the book of I Corinthians 6: 9–10:

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [malakoi], nor abusers of themselves with mankind [arsenokoitai], nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." The Jerusalem Bible translates the same passage to read: "You know perfectly well that people who do wrong will not inherit the kingdom of God: people of immoral lives, idolators, adulterers, catamites, sodomites ..." Considerable debate centers on the translations of the words arsenokoitai and malakoi. While the Jerusalem Bible's word "catamite" is a rendering of the Latin catamitus phonetically derived from the Greek Ganumedes (the cup-bearer of Zeus) (Oxford), and the word "sodomite" reflects clearly the Christian interpretation of the Sodom story, these translations are thought to be incorrect. Countryman is emphatic that this passage refers to the use of prostitutes by male Christians (1988: 104). Similarly, arsenokoitai should be, for Scroggs (1983: 108) translated as "a client or patron of a malakos." Malakoi, would, for Scroggs, be rendered "an effeminate call-boy." In this consideration of the terminology, Scroggs contends that Paul is condemning male prostitution. For Boswell (1980) the term arsenokoitai may not even refer to homosexuality but rather to male prostitutes who served both men and women. Nevertheless, the tendency in Christian tradition has been to regard Paul's passage

as referring specifically to homosexuality, and more precisely, as a condemnation of homosexuality without paying heed to the ambiguities debated by scholars about this passage.

Nelson lends both reinforcement and caution to interpreting Paul's words on homosexuality as equal to the divine and legalistic rejection described in Leviticus. Rather it is the context of Paul's world which Nelson says is important:

Paul's statement in Romans ... traditionally has been taken as the strongest ... rejection of homosexuality, yet this passage deserves more careful examination than is often accorded to it. The writer is clearly concerned about the influence of paganism on the Roman Christians, and he had good reason to be. The moral climate of Hellenistic Rome was marred by various forms of sexual commerce and exploitation (1978: 186).

McNeill argues similarly along these lines. He suggests that the biblical authors in general condemn homosexual activity because of its association with prostitution and idolatry, and Paul, specifically, because homosexual acts are being performed by heterosexual men (against their "nature") (McNeill, 1976).

Facing the social environment of Greek and Roman culture, Paul saw the vivid danger of immorality existing all around him. As Fuchs writes: "Immorality was almost a Corinthian specialty -- there was a verb korinthiazein, to live in Corinthian style, which evoked promises of libertine delight to the travelers who came to Corinth" (73,74). Certainly, the immorality of Korinth must have contradicted many of Paul's conceptions of what humans ought to be like in their relationships with each other and with God. Paul does not directly or simply conclude with the Judaic tradition that homosexuality is the cause of divine wrath on its own account with the same tone established by the writer of the Genesis account of Sodom, nor does he preach the laws delineated in Leviticus, but instead that homosexuality is a sign of idolatry. Nelson writes, "...while Paul sees homosexual acts as a result of idolatry, he does not claim that they are the cause of divine wrath. Idolatry clearly is the major issue at stake" (186).

Christianity did not only extend as a radical arm of ancient Judaism, inheriting and modifying the Jewish prohibitions against homosexual practices, but also confronted a psychosocial context in which homosexual practices were widely practiced and accepted. Some contradiction must have therefore existed between the psychosocial context which was accepting of homosexual practices and the new and evolving Christian ethos developed by the apostle Paul. Goodich theorizes that

Judaism condemns excesses of passion but voices none of the praise for virginity and celibacy characteristic of Christianity; rather it condemns those who do not marry and populate the earth. The victory of Christian doctrine, representing the most moralistic and puritanical strain of Judaism, may have led, however, to the suppression of the freer sexual attitudes of the Greeks and Romans (x).

If there ever were a golden age of gay history, it would have been in the Greek and Roman world that was confronted by the early Christianity of Paul. In Greece homosexuality existed as a humanistic model of education (Dover, 1978; Greenberg, 1988; Herdt, 1981). The noble qualities and the knowledge of a male teacher were transmitted to a youth through the pedagogical relationship. Xenophon wrote, "By the very fact that we breathe our love into beautiful boys, we keep them away from avarice, increase their enjoyment of work, trouble and dangers, and strengthen their modesty" (translation by Marchant, 1953). In 1883 John Addington Symonds, writing and researching ancient Greece, determined that homosexuality was idealized and considered a noble element of Greek life as a whole (Symonds, 1975). The pederastic relationship also functioned as a model for maturation for students (Licht [pseud. Brandt], 1971). Karlen (1971) interprets pederasty as "literally, love of boys," and further claims that "Greek homosexuality was between men and adolescents, and not [between] adult males" (25). For the adolescent pupil, the manly teacher became an ego ideal to which the boy's developmental goals aimed (Bullough, 1979). And while sex occurred as a mutual act

between the student and the teacher, there is evidence that this activity was idealized rather than stigmatized (Cory, 1956; Dover, 1978). Plato wrote of homosexual youths in his Symposium:

Some say they are shameless creatures, but falsely; for their behaviour is due ... to daring, manliness, and virility, since they are quick to welcome their like. Sure evidence of this is the fact that on reaching maturity these alone prove in a public career to be men (in Greenberg, 1988: 148).

In this context, and this has certainly been confirmed later by Cory (1956) and Dover (1978), homosexuality functions with dignity and pride in societies where it is not forcibly, by law or imposed morality, repressed (Greenberg, 1988). Similarly, according to several studies, in societies where no status of deviance (Becker, 1963; Freedman & Doob, 1968) was assigned to sex between mutually consenting males, no differentiation of homosexuality was determined as distinct from other varieties of human sexuality. Katchadourian (1985) reports in his cross cultural studies, that in 64% of 76 societies studied homosexuality was socially accepted. In the remaining 36% where homosexuality was prohibited, homosexuality was still practiced, but in secrecy. In Greece there was no word for "homosexuality" and we must assume with Greenberg "that people were generally capable of responding erotically to beauty in both sexes" (Greenberg, 1988: 144). Homosexuality was not practiced in secret in Greece.

As Foucault has noted, "In Greece, truth and sex were linked, in the form of pedagogy, by the transmission of a precious knowledge from one body to another; sex served as a medium for initiations into learning" (1980: 61). Similarly, in Rome, the erotic aspects of human life were endowed with knowledge and truth, and sexual activity could achieve knowledge through pleasure itself (ibid).

The human body was also, throughout the history of Greek and Roman art, idealized as a sexual image in which both power and truth were located. Indeed,

the focus of Greek art had been on the creation of "god-like men" in the long artistic tradition of the Kouros figures. The Kouros figure in Greek art was a sculpted replica of a male nude, portrayed in an upright position (see Petrakos, 1981). The idealization of the human physical form is also evident in Roman art. Usually, this artistic idealization uses the male body as a model in which power and truth can be situated. The trend in art toward the artistic idealization of masculinity is evident in the sculpture of Michelangelo, and continues well into Italian fascist art of the late 1940s (de la Croix & Tansey, 1975).

In the Greece and Rome of the early Common Era, homosexuality was not considered deviant, but considered instead as one among a vicissitude of human sexual expressions. Homosexuality could be expressed or experienced within a range of normative, human interactions: it was not culturally or morally abhorrent. It was to be enjoyed in the same way heterosexual relations were enjoyed. Moreover, homosexual relationships were legal in the Rome of early Christianity as they had been in Greece centuries before (Grimal, 1963).

There is further evidence which indicates that homosexual relations between males were not merely legal, but idealized for various reasons (Hamilton, 1942; Rowse, 1977). Plato wrote about love expressed in the pederastic relationship that love

... springs from the heavenly goddess, who firstly has had no share of the female, but only of the male; next, she is the elder, and has no violence in her; consequently, those inspired by this love turn to the male, because they feel affection rather for what is stronger and has more mind (translation by Jowett, 1953).

Homosexuality in Rome had also been legitimated several centuries prior to the introduction of Christianity. Emperor Hadrian's homosexual love for his young male lover Antinous became a paradigm of devotion between males (Yourcenar, 1963). Polybius (circa 205–125 B.C.E.) wrote of the lack of moderation among the young

men of Rome in their sexual lives. Polybius does not make mention of gender in his discussion, but rather criticizes the amount of money spent by the men of Rome acquiring male lovers (Boswell, 1980). There were laws in place concerning some forms of homosexual prostitution, child molestation and the stealing of lovers from other patrons. But homosexual people were both tolerated and legally protected in Rome as they had been in many centuries of Greek civilization. There is archaeological evidence to argue for homosexuality's original status of legitimacy, and beyond this anthropological, psychological and sociological evidence for its geographical and historical universality.

The Contrast Between Christian Ideals and Homosexual Idealization

The Christian sexual ethos expressed by Paul sought to devalue any sexual ideology that was reminiscent of either idolatry (paganism) or the humanistic ideals that were part of the "cult of man founded on himself" (Fuchs: 48). Instead, it appears that the zeal of Paul's ministry was aimed toward the renunciation of the flesh in pursuit of a fulfilling and more important spiritual life. According to Countryman (1988) the word "flesh" used by Paul does not refer to the body but instead to "the whole human being in opposition to God" (106). This meant that the flesh, as a locus for pleasure and idealization, had to be de-emphasized in order to redirect human interest and energies toward spirituality and the fleshless ideals of the Christian religion. Michels (1967) calls the split between the body and the spirit conceived by Paul "the antithesis of flesh and spirit" (8). The New Testament is lucid with the tendencies of the early Christians to deny the flesh in order to pursue the spiritual ideals of the soul living in Christ. However, the denial of flesh often involved the denial of the body since this denial may have also incorporated

the denial of (body-centred) desires. This notion was important to Stoicism which dominated Greek philosophy during the New Testament period. However, desire was not necessarily body-centred. Countryman, for example, suggests that the term epithymia (used in 1 Thessalonians 2: 17) refers not so much to physical desire, in a negative sense, as it does to eagerness -- desire in a positive sense (111).

Countryman suggests a neutral translation of epithymia in Paul's treatment of homosexuality in Romans. What Countryman reads in this passage is that "Paul took the frequency and acceptability of homosexual acts in Gentile culture as evidence that "the desires of their hearts" were different from those of Jews and then went on to conclude that this was the result of an act of God, who had "surrendered" them [left them to be] in this state" (112).

The idealized sexual images in Greek and Roman art may have been considered by Paul as potential usurpers of divine power in that these figures could arouse desire that was body-situated. They were certainly "antithetical" to the spiritual ideals which he conceived to constitute Christian devotion. Perhaps Paul saw these figures in this way and regarded them as idolatrous (body-centered) forms of expression and arousal. The Christianity of Paul was unable to tolerate the idealization of the physical form since its own emphasis was to subjugate the appetite (the desires) of the physical body to the sublime will of the "spiritual" body.

For Paul, the spirit was the ultimate source of life, and its connection with God provided the human with power and authenticity. In making the sharp distinction he does between the flesh and the spirit, Paul relies upon the Old Testament concept of the "Spirit of the Lord" (ruach-adonai). This concept carried the idea that the breath of God descends upon humans, and transforms the heart and spirit resulting in new life for the person (Michels, 1967).

It is evident that a strong connection formed in the early Christian imagination of Paul between homosexual practices and idolatry. This is very clear in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, who had rejected God and turned to idolatry: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections ... the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another..." Still, we must keep Countryman's observation that the term "lust" (epithymia) may mean desire in this passage, and that the term "nature" can have many meanings in this context. It may then be a desire of the flesh for Paul which is at issue here. For Countryman, Paul may be saying "that Gentiles experienced only heterosexual desire before God visited uncleanness on them and have therefore changed their "nature," that is, lost a certain continuity with their remotest past" (114). Countryman writes,

While Paul wrote of such acts as being unclean, dishonorable, improper, and "over against nature," he did not apply the language of sin to them at all. Instead, he treated homosexual behavior as an integral if unpleasingly dirty aspect of Gentile culture. It was not in itself sinful, but had been visited upon the Gentiles as recompense for sins, chiefly the sin of idolatry but also those of social disruption ... [Paul] refrained from identifying physical impurity with sin or demanding that Gentiles adhere to that code" (117).

Since idolatry substitutes a physical "object" of devotion for the ineffable spiritual "subject" of the God (ruach-adonai) of Christianity, some new associations began to develop about the meaning of homosexuality in the context of idolatry. Homosexuality may have come to represent for Paul an activity which potentially impeded the unity of "one flesh" of which he writes in I Corinthians chapter 7.

But before there can be a unity of the sexes, there must be a differentiation of the sexes. Though references to sexual differentiation regarding the possibility of procreation are not utilized, the "one flesh" idea occurs throughout the New Testament (See Matt. 19: 4-6; Mark 10: 6-9): "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female and said, 'For this reason a

man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one?" So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." Fuchs suggests that this text, attributed to Jesus, is what could be called "the evangelical and Christian tradition on sexuality" (42). Fuchs writes that what Jesus first proves is that sexual differentiation, its clear boundaries between male and female, is willed by God from the beginning -- that is from the creation -- as the "fundamental anthropological structure." Fuchs says that Jesus reinforces Genesis 1:8 where sexuality is interpreted as the potential to procreate and populate the earth with progeny and to subdue the earth with the fruits of human sexuality -- children. Fuchs suggests that the history of Israel in particular is marked by this two-fold development: perceiving sexuality as the locus of a theological verification, and having this very theology become the ultimate meaning of the relationship between a man and a woman. For Israel, a "perverted" sexuality, one made sacred and aiming at non-differentiation, is a very clear indication of the rejection of the Israelites of the God of Word and of Promise.

But homosexuality through its connection with idolatry may have also symbolized for Paul a departure from spirit, a closing-off of the "breath of God" that was essential for human salvation. Paul opposed this possibility. Fuchs writes on this topic,

Sexuality is a creative force...and men and women have always experienced this fact...man is not his own beginning, and his sexuality must not be the opportunity of asserting his lust or his dream of omnipotence; but on the contrary, it is the occasion of consenting to his finiteness and his incompleteness, in which he can rejoice and in which he can perceive the traces of the love that precedes him and is his very foundation...The difference attested to by our sexuality must signify our humanity, we are not God. Better yet, the difference is given as the potential for a relationship of persons who can never become the other, as God is to us (41)!

Early Christianity associates the idealistic artistic forms of the Greek and Roman world with implicit evil -- they are (they "become") idols which interrupt

one's attention and one's attraction to God. They become objects to which an ego is attached by way of sexual attraction, symbols of the human self's depraved condition, and impediments to the soul's natural desire for salvation in Christ. Albert the Great later exemplifies this idea when he writes of homosexual attractions that,

First, they proceed from a burning frenzy (ardour) which subverts the order of nature; secondly, they are distinguished by their disgusting foulness -- yet for all that, are found more often among persons of high degree than among those of low estate; thirdly, those who have once become addicted to these vices seldom succeed in shaking them off, so tenaciously do they cling; and lastly, they are as contagious as any disease, and rapidly spread from one to another (Bailey: 119, 120).

In turning away from the flesh, and in the context of homosexual desire in particular, the male nude Kouros, Greek pederasty and its obvious continuation in Hellenistic Rome were gradually replaced by Christianity's ascetic orientation to the spirit and to the soul. The Christianity of Paul sought to complement the flesh with the "pureness of heart" which he saw as a feature of salvation.

Perhaps homosexuality's choice of same-sex partners seems to hint at self-worship (narcissism). It may appear that gay people seek others who are like themselves. The tendency to regard homosexuality as self-worship has persisted in a great amount of discourse about the homosexual within Christian tradition, and in particular, in the writing of Paul where a strong connection appears between homosexuality and idolatry.

The transition from the prohibitions affecting the body to the notion of spiritual purity relates to another dimension of Christian thinking about the homosexual. The prohibitions of Leviticus dealt very strongly with the concept that physical impurity resulted from the defilement of homosexual acts. So too, the story of Sodom interpreted in the Christian perspective pertains fundamentally to the "acts" of homosexuality -- most notably sodomy. Thus, equally physical

measures are sometimes offered for the abolishment of the homosexual, including castration and capital punishment. But in the Christian imagination homosexual desire may come to represent as well a clear system of spiritual alienation for the individual. One might even speculate that it was Christianity which bore the whole of the responsibility for the eradication of homosexuality from Rome for its own interests. Intolerance was gradually constructed in Christian tradition against homosexuals, and the consequences were, for homosexuals, grave.

The past, the homosexuality of Greece, Rome and the alien Arab world in particular, were pushed into systems of antithesis that opposed the Christian moral order. Boswell states that homosexuality and homosexual imagery was and continues to be part of religious traditions other than Christianity: "In Islamic Sufi literature homosexual eroticism was a major metaphorical expression of the spiritual relationship between God and man, and much Persian poetry and fiction providing examples of moral love used gay relationships" (27). But we do know also that where Christianity exists as a point of ethical reference for a society or culture on sexual matters, homosexuality is unconditionally condemned and stigmatized as an evil and a sin, and it becomes a problematic concern in many ways by virtue of its tendency to fall within descriptions or visions of deviance (d'Emilio, 1983; Reynaud, 1981). As Bieber (1976), Davison (1976) and Halleck (1976) show throughout their debates, homosexually-oriented people in our society have been so brainwashed by these negative attitudes toward their behaviors and style of life, that much of their sexual preference is seen and experienced as self-destructive rather than growth-oriented.

Becker notes that, "before an act can be viewed as deviant, and before any class of people can be labeled and treated as outsiders for committing the act, someone must have made the rule which defines the act as deviant" (in Greenberg,

1988: 6). In the history of western morality Christian tradition has had an enormous influence as far as the meaning of human sexuality is concerned. This view is argued by Nelson (1978). As Tripp (1987) notes on the origins of heterosexuality,

One reason most people are heterosexual (as opposed to polysexual) is that their religious and social traditions directly support family living and the kinds of mateships that comprise it ... people in our society are informed by heterosexuality, have their expectations and overt experiences channeled toward it, and are warned against deviating from it (33).

Christian tradition first depends on the Judaic story of Sodom in order to facilitate its condemnation of the homosexual. Then, as it develops in the New Testament world Christianity associates homosexuality with paganism and idolatry, and in doing so contributes to a construction of homosexuality as antithesis standing for "the old way" of things in Rome -- which Christianity would, and did displace. Any positive renovations of these ideas do not seem to be influential in Christian tradition today on the matter of homosexuality.

Homosexuality in the Context of Contemporary Christian Tradition

Contemporary Christian theologians deliberate about the intrinsic moral value of homosexuality from a perspective in which certain presuppositions concerning human sexual behaviour have been formed and sustained, namely the unquestionably immoral nature of same-sex relations (Malloy, 1981). The judgement that homosexual acts are immoral is founded in the two sources I have already addressed: the Sodom story and the responses constructed to homosexuality in the prohibitions of Leviticus; and throughout the New Testament by the apostle Paul. The Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (1986) states that while the human body always retains its "spousal significance"

this significance becomes clouded by the sin of homosexuality (Harvey, 1988: 237). Its treatment of homosexuality is therefore somewhat a pre-determined fait accompli against which arguments coming from "the outside" are futile and purposeless.

Any argument for homosexuality is judged as intolerable and possibly heretical within most denominations of mainstream Christianity. One has only to examine the Vatican's history of its treatment of pro-homosexual theologians Curran, Keane, McNeill and Baum to understand how comprehensive Christianity is in its condemnation of homosexuality. Harvey refers to the arguments of these scholars as "serious departures from the official teaching of the Church" (93). In this regard, homosexuality is seen as the result of a choice, on the part of individuals, for immoral conduct. Any choice for homosexuality is also seen as a choice that is made against Christianity.

One of the most problematic presuppositions in Christianity's view of homosexuality is that homosexuality is a matter of intention or choice for individuals. Indeed, in addressing the most basic issue of where homosexuals come from many Christian writers suggest that people choose to be gay and that this choice is at the root of their depraved condition. Muehl (May, 1975) argues that the acceptance of homosexuality would result in undesirable social consequences. Muehl suggests in this light that if the church were to approve of same-sex orientation, that this would result in a large number of people choosing to be gay. The Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (1986) addresses the choice issue by equating choice with human freedom and by contrasting freedom with compulsion:

It has been argued that the homosexual orientation is not the result of deliberate choice; and so the homosexual person would then have no choice but to behave in a homosexual fashion. Lacking freedom, such a person, even if engaged in homosexual activity, would not be culpable. [Here] the Church's wise moral tradition is necessary since it warns against generalizations in judging individual cases ... What is at all costs to be avoided is the unfounded

and demeaning assumption that the sexual behaviour of homosexual persons is always and totally compulsive and therefore inculpable. What is essential is that the fundamental liberty which characterizes the human person and gives him his dignity be recognized as belonging to the homosexual person as well. As in every conversion from evil, the abandonment of homosexual activity will require a profound collaboration of the individual with God's liberating grace (Harvey, 1988: 239, 240).

Decades of sexological research state that homosexuality does not involve the choice of the sex of sexual partners with any more or less volition than heterosexuals, but instead presents a predisposition which is in part physiological for same-sex partners as a requisite condition of sexual fulfillment (see Plummer, 1981; Tourney, Petrilli & Hatfield, 1975; Wienberg, 1983). The condemnation of homosexuality within Christian tradition seems to depend on the assertion that homosexuality is unconditionally a choice for immorality.

Throughout Christian discourse we repeatedly confront the idea that, if people are tempted by homosexual acts, they should abstain, seek God's grace and ask for forgiveness. The Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (1986) states, "As in every conversion from evil, the abandonment of homosexual activity will require a profound collaboration of the individual with God's liberating grace" (Harvey, 1987: 240). Further the Letter advises,

Just as the cross was central to the expression of God's redemptive love for us in Jesus, so the conformity of the self-denial of homosexual men and women with the sacrifice of the Lord will constitute for them a source of self-giving which will save them from a way of life which constantly threatens to destroy them (ibid).

Guindon wryly addresses the choice issue which is so prevalent in Christian discourse on homosexuality as the "Shakespearean quandary, to be or not to be a gay" (1986: 161). Further, as Guindon points out, the choice to be a gay is perceived as an immoral decision, while the choice not to be a gay is obviously held to be a moral decision (Ibid.). Gordon writes of gay people that "they are

rebellious believers at best, rebelling against unjust suffering, against a theology that justifies it, and against the depiction of a wooden God that such a theology conveys" (1987: 18). If it is our interest in going, as it were, "beyond" Sodom, that is, to examine its hermeneutical construction and its later meanings for Christianity, a new and different thesis would have to be written. Similarly, asking critical questions of Christian moral tradition about its condemnation of homosexuality on moral grounds seems to be confounded and circular -- we are always referred to the notion that, "Plac[ing] homosexual relationships on the same level as marriage and family jeopardizes the family and ultimately the common good" (Harvey, 1987: 19). Indeed, the idea that homosexuality might jeopardize the family seems to provide an important source for the fear of homosexuality.

If we go further to ask what constitutes the common good referred to by Harvey (1987) we are challenged by the commandments and the morality which is upheld in Christian tradition (Jones, 1966; Keane, 1977). When Baum (in Batchelor, 1980) argues for homosexuality's validity in terms of "mutuality", or when McNeill (1976) argues for homosexuality's legitimacy in terms of its potential for genuine love, Christian tradition refers to its own traditional ordinates on love and mutuality -- those which are upheld in heterosexual, marital relations alone. Barth (1961: III/4) argues that men and women can only come into their true identity in their relations with the opposite sex. He suggests that "To seek one's humanity in a person of the same sex is to seek a substitute for the despised partner" (166). From within this context we cannot argue against the moral condemnation of homosexuality: in the terms of traditional theology, love and mutuality cannot apply to same-sex relations (Bailey, 1954; 1955) since same-sex relations are, pre facto immoral choices. Morality, and therefore real love and mutuality are possible only in the differentiated sexual relations between male and female.

Ruether, however, argues against the enforced male-female differentiations within Christian moral traditions as a destructive stereotype that limits human experience to the stereotypes assigned respectively to men and women:

Such a concept of complementarity depends upon a sadomasochistic concept of male and female relations. It covertly demands the continued dependency and underdevelopment of woman in order to validate the thesis that two kinds of personalities exist by nature in males and females and which are each partial expressions of some larger whole. Such a view can allow neither men nor women to be whole persons who can develop both their active [masculine] and affective [feminine] sides (in Bianchi & Ruether, 1976: 82, 83).

Quay (1985) writes that in homosexuality there cannot be true communication: "True intercourse, one with the other, is precluded [by homosexuality]" (70). Fuchs (1983) suggests that it is in Christ's message that the "relationship between man and woman is recognized ... as the locus par excellence for the issuing forth of love" (82). The nearness possible in marriage mirrors the possibility of "experiencing the nearness of God's love" (82). We must assume, then, that in a Christian view, homosexuals do not experience the nearness of God's love, and in the sense that they choose their sexuality, they are viewed as willfully refusing God.

Fuchs argues that any sexuality outside the model of marriage constitutes disorder and violence -- chaos. Thus, Fuchs concludes,

This is why homosexuality, which is a quest for sameness and a refusal of difference, is consent to chaos, according to biblical tradition, a refusal to enter the creative and organizing scheme of God, and of course, a refusal to accept the procreative consequences of sexuality ... Homosexuality illustrates in a particularly striking way the confusion that follows upon a refusal of the "truth of God" (216; 218).

Quay (1985) argues differently that the mystery of human sexuality is mysterious by its likeness to Christ's. He suggests that the structure of homosexual activity is a corrupt structure:

What is ostensibly a symbol of love between two men or two women contains nothing that can truly be received, personally and as an abiding gift, by the other person. It is a shallow symbol: of perceptual juvenility and adolescent ambiguity, of not really knowing which sex one is, and of a sense of sexual inadequacy. Hence those who so act will, typically, try to get closer to those of their own sex in order to discover and find themselves in these in these others rather than in their own selves ...Far more profoundly, there is no gift of one's substance for fruitfulness, no openness to the creation of human life (69, 70).

Homosexuality appears to be prohibited within Christian tradition by utilizing a comprehensive system of sexual ethics (Manson, 1960). All of the rules concerning sexuality within this system of sexual ethics pertain to the regulation of sexuality within the confines of matrimony, for the single purpose of reproduction (Weeks, 1981). Bainton (1957) notes that the regulation of sexuality which developed in Christian tradition depended on the complementary inferiority of the woman versus the superiority of the man in all marital relations. As Foucault (1980) notes,

The sex of husband and wife was beset by rules and recommendations. The marriage relation was the most intense focus of constraints; it was spoken of more than anything else (37).

Reynaud (1981) suggests that the fear of homosexuality is ubiquitous in western society because of the male's inability to think of his sexuality except as it pertains to power and appropriation over women:

Trapped between his fear of letting himself go and his use of the penis as a means of appropriation, man does not see that sexuality could be something other than a struggle for power or a means for comparison. His general attitude has little to do with love or pleasure, but much more with hatred, disgust and jealousy. And its nature is well illustrated in one of the most democratically shared sentiments among men: the fear of homosexuality (53).

Aries (1985) contributes to this idea that the regulation of matrimony by Christianity led to a more scrupulous definition of homosexuality:

...[T]he appearance of a rigorous code of sexual morals based on a world philosophy that Christianity built up and preserved to this day has favored a stricter definition of 'sodomy.' But this term, derived from the habits of the men of Sodom in the Bible, denoted not only a form of copulation that was

against nature, but also men going to bed together which was unnatural. Homosexuality was thus separated from heterosexuality, the only normal and permitted practice, but its rejection was so total that it was lumped in with every form of perversion (65).

Further, as Greenberg and Bystryn (1982) note, early Christianity tended to develop a view that opposed all sexual pleasure since sexual pleasure threatened salvation and spirituality. Without the functional goal of sexuality (reproduction) homosexuality is associated with lust -- with sex for the sake of sex alone. It is, perhaps for this reason that Barth (1961) argues so strongly that homosexuality is a form of idolatry.

The idea that homosexual relationships are really a narcissistic preoccupation with sexual sameness seems to begin in Christian discourse on homosexuality (Scroggs, 1983). This may well relate, as stated previously, to the connection made by Paul between idolatry and homosexuality. But this view of homosexuality creeps cohesively into medicine and psychiatry as well (Klein & Horwitz, 1949).

Many Christian ethicists, as Guindon correctly notes, seem to condemn gay behaviour as a sexual reality and in no other regard (i.e., political views, food patterns, etc.) (1986). For many traditional, conservative moral theologians reproduction must be a function and a primary aim of human sexuality in order to sustain authenticity within a Christian view of sexuality. The basis for this idea is explained by Keane (1977) and Malloy (1981). Since homosexuality is perceived to miss the mark entirely, it must be condemned and avoided as a fraudulent form of human sexuality (Fuchs, 1983). We are told somewhat simply in the Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (1986) that "to choose someone of the same sex for one's sexual activity is to annul the rich symbolism and meaning, not to mention the goals, of the Creator's sexual

design ... [H]omosexual activity ... thwarts the call to a life ... of self-giving" (this document is quoted in full in Harvey, 1987: 238).

Homosexuals Anonymous is an organization of individuals who support each other in the task of "giving up" homosexuality. This organization is comprised of both Protestants and Catholics from a world-wide and multi-lingual population. Within Homosexuals Anonymous, which is founded on the same principles as Alcoholics Anonymous, homosexuality is always immoral, and the singular "way out" for the homosexual, like the deliverance from alcoholism, is a "full acceptance of God's will in his life" (Harvey, 1987: 126, 127). If the gay person is unable to achieve a heterosexual orientation as a result of accepting God's will, then celibacy functions as a satisfactory second-best solution. Harvey suggests that gay people for whom therapy fails at sexual re-orientation, should not be too discouraged, since they can "live a full Christian life as a celibate" (126).

It is no surprise that much gay experience is structured in the dynamics of paranoia. Tripp (1987) notes, in this regard that

highly derogatory interpretations of homosexuality owe their consistency to the mutually reinforcing overlap of moral, legal and psychiatric viewpoints ... the essentially moral assumptions have not changed much; homosexuality is still widely thought of as an aberration and a perversion of nature's intent (8).

We may be forced to suspect that there is something within Christianity, some hidden principle which is intrinsically and unconditionally anti-homosexual for reasons which are equally hidden. According to Bell & Weinberg (1978) the condemnation of homosexuality frequently reflects the repression of positive sexual feelings towards members of one's own sex, and / or the projection of one's own feelings of guilt and accusation. But Narramore (1960) suggests that homosexuality and a commitment to Christ are mutually exclusive: "All that [God] offers [homosexuals] through conversion and dynamic Christian living leads them in normal directions" (220).

Yet, in much Christian mystical literature male writers speak of their love of God in phrases which are highly sexualized, and appear homosexual in orientation (see Happold, 1977). Greenberg (1988) writes that the incompatibility of homosexuality with Christian life forced "priests from giving expression to their homosexual impulses" (288). But homosexuality does not disappear. Instead, as Greenberg theorizes, it is driven into the unconscious as an unacceptable desire (repression).

Maslow suggests that much of Christianity is structured in sexual metaphors of dominance – subordination (1971: 350). He suggests that the surrender experience of salvation presents hazards to the "(unevolved) conception of masculinity" (350) and states that these experiences may be "felt even as a castration, as becoming feminine, as a homosexual reaction, i.e., they are sexualized" (350). And illustrating his point Maslow writes of a case in which

A patient in homosexual panic ran away and hid in a hotel room in another city. He couldn't sleep and felt frightened much of the time. Suddenly during the night, as he lay in bed on his back, he felt the weight of a presence on top of him. He submitted to it lovingly and felt, This is God. Next morning, he awoke refreshed and relaxed and determined to serve God by good works, which he now does. He returned to his wife and is heterosexual with her (350).

In examining the writings of the mystics, in particular those of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries throughout Europe, we may be tempted to conclude that many homosexual themes were subsumed in mystical symbolism, into the metaphor of the saint's desire for God in the language of l'amour passion. Similarly, illustrating the sexualized language of mysticism, Bowker (1973) writes,

With unexpected action of its own
and all initiative:
So rapt the feeling, some will feel it so,
I come like passionate lover to the soul
And rape the mystic on his bed of pain (318).

St. Anselm, writing to two of his male relatives as they were in the process of deciding whether to enter a monastery expressed himself in a very unambiguous prose,

My eyes eagerly long to see your face, most beloved; my arms stretch out to your embraces. My lips long for your kisses; whatever remains of my life desires your company, so that my soul's joy may be full in time to come (Greenberg, 1988: 285)

Homosexual themes are present in Christianity. The Old Testament story of David's profound love of his friend Jonathan is an excellent example of a homosexual story within the Christian tradition. In I Samuel XVIII we read, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1). After Jonathan has been killed, David laments that Jonathan's love had been so deep and meaningful that it surpassed the love of women for him. But as Saghir and Robins (1973) have demonstrated in their research, conventional salvation does not seem to help gay people as much as it provides a source of strong alienation. There are no acceptable outlets for direct homosexual expression within the context of Christian tradition, thus a homosexual person within most Christian denominations is forced into systems of repression, denial and concealment.

Christianity necessarily opposed the old order by its very nature. It shared with the ancient Yahwists a symbolization of what was despised -- idolatry. A convenient symbol into which the negative associations which idolatry contained was homosexual behaviour. This may have occurred because of the idealization of masculinity which was emblematic of much Greek and Roman art at the time of Paul. Homosexual activity came also to represent in the New Testament writing of Paul what was despised in the past. Christian tradition subsequently developed strong sanctions against homosexuality since it was considered, by its deplorable nature, to be anti-Christian and therefore immoral. The reliance of the Greek and

Roman imagination upon paradigms of physical beauty for the revelation of truth was displaced by Christianity's reliance upon a source of truth quite outside the visceral, experiential world. But less specifically directed at homosexuals, Christianity opposed the paganism and idolatry of which homosexual practices were considered to have been a significant part. In the context of contemporary Christianity, the condemnation of homosexual activity remains entrenched in the writing of Paul, and refer as well to the Sodom story.

Christianity sought to purge itself of any vestiges that represented the way things had been before or outside of Christ. LaTourette confirms the thesis of a "new rationale" written in the metaphor of Christianity,

[T]he advancing intelligence and moral sensitivity of the times cast doubt upon the stories about the gods. Many of these were both incredible to an educated mind and offensive to the morally sensitive. The gods were not as good as the best man of the period and could command respect only in the stories about them were treated as myths and allegorized. The age had in it much of moral corruption. Yet it also had consciences which revolted against the excesses of the day. A religion which offered high moral standards and the power to attain them would be welcomed by the more serious" (LaTourette, 1975: 22).

It is, perhaps an unfortunate aspect of this development in Christian tradition that gay people were, by nature of their sexuality, connected with negative images and condemned throughout Christian tradition. Homosexual people were also forced to remain outside the religious community that was defined by Christian tradition if they acted upon their homosexual desires. As we will explore throughout the following chapter, the rejection and alienation of homosexuals from Christian tradition is an extremely important factor in the formation and meaning of homosexual experience for western society. These developments will also come to bear heavily on the meaning of AIDS.

Fear? What has a man to do with fear?

Chance rules our lives, and the future is
all unknown.

Best live as best we can, from day to day.

-- Sophocles (Oedipus Rex)

Chapter Three

Beyond Christianity: The Psychology of Homosexual Experience

In Chapters One and Two I have given some examples of the meaning which is constructed for homosexuality in Christian tradition. I have explored some of the main ways homosexuality is understood in Christian tradition in Biblical sources and in discourse about human sexuality. We have been able to see that an understanding of the Sodom story and the treatment of homosexuality developed in the New Testament writings of Paul are critical ingredients in what homosexuality has come to mean.

Within Christian tradition homosexuality is condemned as a dangerous kind of behaviour on two major bases: first, because homosexuality is a sin against God (the Sodom Story); second, because homosexuality presents a threat to moral, psychological and social order. The reaction to a kind of experience that is perceived and defined as dangerous is predominantly a reaction of fear. Fear seems to intrude on both the meaning and the experience of homosexuality in western society.

When it is defined as a sin against God, homosexual experience may provide a source of guilt and anxiety for gay people (Townes, Ferguson & Gillam, 1976). When it is defined as a threat to the family and society, homosexuality may be experienced by individuals as a kind of sexuality which causes the individual to feel alienated. The subsequent connection of homosexuality with deviance which also occurs in western society leads to problems in the formation of personal identity for gay people (Epstein, 1970; Green, 1974; Willis, 1967; Woodman, 1980; 1985). Further, the negative associations which are attached to homosexual activity in western society may prevent some gay people from forming lasting, loving and committed relationships (Rekers, 1978).

As van den Aardweg (1986) argues, however, homosexuality does not disappear because it is classified as a form of deviance or sin. Nor do gay people refrain from expressing their sexuality because homosexuality is perceived as a form of experience that awakens feelings of fear (Thompson, McCandless & Strickland, 1971). Instead, a conflict between alienation and desire is reported by many homosexual people: alienation from society (through acting on desires that are classified as deviations from what is right); and alienation from the self (through the denial that one has homosexual desire) (d'Emilio, 1983; Henley & Pincus, 1978).

Homosexuality is feared as a kind of activity that is dangerous to the social order (status quo) and dangerous for the individual. Fear in relation with homosexuality seems to be prevalent in the attitudes which are subsequently constructed around AIDS. Fear of homosexuality appears to evolve into forms of hostility (anger) against gay people. Further, as Nemiah (1978) and Chuang and Addington (1988) confirm, homosexual desires may present in heterosexual men in some contexts. The potential for homosexual desires (that they may be acted upon)

is a source of panic for some individuals which may lead to violence against the objects of their desires as a form of defense (ibid).

Kelsey & Kelsey (1986) report that many young males in western society utilize overt aggression as a means for overcompensating for their inner homosexual feelings. They successfully silence their own potential homoeroticism with violence. These men accommodate the social imperatives regarding homosexuality by reprimanding themselves and substituting intimacy with other men with destructive behaviors. And it may be significant that violence is experienced as an erotic force for many men in western society (see Maccoby, 1982; Sagan, 1974; Stein, 1977; Stoller, 1975). Violence seems to be an activity that is linked to the correct expression of masculine power in our society. Chuang and Addington (1988) state that "If society would want to reduce the incidence of outbursts in violent behaviour towards homosexuals, then perhaps one needs to examine [society's] homophobic attitudes" (616).

My treatment of homosexuality in this chapter will focus on the psychology of homosexual experience and, by doing so, provide some understanding of homophobic attitudes. I will take as my point of departure Greenberg's observation that,

If subconscious psychological processes contribute to hostility toward homosexuality in modern times, it is not unreasonable to think that they did so in earlier eras as well. It may be suggested then, that fear and loathing of homosexuality developed in the middle ages as a psychological defense mechanism against the inner conflict created by the imposition of clerical celibacy and the rigid repression of all sexual expression (1988: 289).

By examining the psychology of homosexuality, the bases of Greenberg's "subconscious psychological processes [which] contribute to hostility toward homosexuality" may be approached. In addition, however, a psychology of homosexuality will provide an understanding of how homosexuality is constructed as a form of human experience that causes fear. This chapter will:

- outline the psychology of homosexuality;

- describe some examples of the ways fear is expressed towards homosexuality in western society and how this fear is constructed;
- discuss some of the effects of fear within homosexual experience in the context of western society.

The Psychology of Homosexuality

Contemporary psychiatry is comprised of a system of values. These values have at their bases a history (medicine, psychology) as well as a social context (Ackerknecht, 1959; Alexander & Selesnick, 1966). Psychiatry draws its views of what is right or good for human beings from concepts which are historically and socially defined. The psychiatric concept of what is right or good for human beings needs to be considered in the context in which this concept is defined. In the context of western social order, what is right and good for human beings appears to rest on the definitions of health which are shared by a whole society. These definitions, while upheld in medicine and psychiatry, frequently are comprised of social visions of what humans ought to be like or should be like (Bayer, 1981; Szasz, 1974).

There are seven elements used by psychiatry to classify behaviours as abnormal: Suffering, maladaptiveness, irrationality, unpredictability, unconventionality, observer discomfort and violation of moral and ideal standards (Rosenhan & Seligman, 1984: 5). The last three elements may help to explain why homosexuality is considered abnormal (deviant) in the context of public perception: First, the element of unconventionality applies to behaviours that the majority of people in society are not willing themselves to do. These behaviours are perceived as rare or abnormal. Second, observer discomfort occurs when someone violates

what Scheff (1966) calls unwritten or residual rules of behaviour. These unwritten rules may be unconsciously understood, known intuitively, but nevertheless guide human behaviour and thinking about human behaviour. Third, a violation of moral and ideal standards may also be used to classify behaviours as abnormal. According to Rosenhan & Seligman, "There are times when behaviour is assessed, not against our judgments or what is common and unconventional, but against moral standards and idealized norms that are believed to characterize all right-thinking and right-acting behaviour. This view starts with the notion that people ought to behave in a certain way" (10).

Psychiatry also relativizes the pathological by classifying certain behaviors as abnormal by nature of the uncommon incidence of these behaviors within a spectrum of human activity. By their demographic uncommonness alone certain behaviors may be classified as abnormal (Rosenhan & Seligman, 1984). On their own, some behaviours, while demographically insignificant, do not present difficulties to solitary individuals. However, there appears to be a correlation between behaviors and activities which are forcefully suppressed by a given society, and the appearance of these behaviors within definitions of psychopathology (Hunter & MacAlpine, 1963). This tendency may occur as a result of the conflict which surrounds acting on behaviors which are either socially prohibited or behaviours which are viewed, because of their demographic insignificance, as unusual or rare. Szasz reminds us that the valuing of behaviors as pathological depends upon the rules of classification of behaviours: "Such rules, however, are not God-given, nor do they occur "naturally"" (1974: 38).

Homosexuality is a type of human experience which may be viewed by psychiatry in relation to both concepts of normative or ideal behaviour and in relation to its demographic significance (Hart & Richardson, 1981). We are reminded

by Greenberg (1988) that physicians took homosexuality over from the clergy and became the new "arbiters of sexual morality" (395). Homosexuality was passed from religion (as sin, abomination, disobedience) to medicine (illness, perversion, deviance) (Hoffman, 1968). As Szasz writes, "The physician replaced the priest, and the patient [replaced] the witch in the drama of society's perpetual struggle to destroy ... those human characteristics that ... identify persons as individuals rather than as members of the herd" (259). But, importantly, the stigma which had been attached to homosexuality in Christian tradition seems to have survived the transition from sin to deviance, and stigmatization of the gay person persists in much medical discourse about the homosexual (Bayer, 1981; Bullough, 1976; 1977). Siegal (1971) writes from this perspective that "all homosexuality arises from contempt for the world, not liking it sufficiently" (4). Ellis (1968) writes that it is not true that homosexuality is "incurable" and therefore thinks of sexual orientation as a form of disease that requires "cure". Ellis writes,

Homosexuals are even more difficult to treat than most other psychotherapy patients for several reasons. They frequently do not admit they are basically disturbed ... They often enjoy their homosexual acts immensely and therefore cannot look upon these acts as disabling symptoms, and thus they get trapped by the secondary gains of homosexualism (Ellis; 74).

The medical view of homosexuality, in turn, and by taking Rosenhan & Seligman's observations into consideration, is partially constructed out of dominant social perceptions and valuing of human behaviour.

The medical conceptualization of homosexuality combines a century of psychoanalytic thought with religion and with a variety of organic theories. The first source of the medical conceptualization of homosexuality, psychoanalysis, did not hold a positive view of homosexuality. This position is well summed up in this statement:

All psychoanalytic theories assume that adult homosexuality is psychopathologic and assign differing weights to constitutional and experiential determinants. All agree that the experiential determinants are in the main rooted in childhood and are primarily related to the family. Theories which do not assume psychopathology hold homosexuality to be one type of expression of a polymorphous sexuality which appears pathologic only in cultures holding it to be so (Bieber, Dain & Dince, et.al., 1962: 18)

The second source of the medical conceptualization of homosexuality is religious in orientation. We know already that Christian tradition, in its moral and ethical considerations of homosexuality, condemned homosexuality activity. The nineteenth century french physician Morel theorized that homosexuality was the result of phylogenic degeneracy, and connected it with the Fall of Man in original sin, as postulated in the Old Testament book of Genesis (Ellenberger, 1970). As Menninger (1984) reminds us, sexual behaviour, before Freud and Ellis was regarded romantically, legally and biologically and morally:

Much "sin" was assumed to be sexual in nature -- if not masturbation then the more adult forms of deviance: adultery, homosexual activities and variations in methods of sexual contact. Many people still regard these things as reprehensible if not criminal, despite very marked changes in popular standards which have occurred (Menninger, 1984: 46).

Greenberg (1988) asserts that medicine drew heartily on the religion-based moral definitions of homosexuality in the development of its conceptualization of normalcy. In 1884 a physician wrote to a weekly journal, "The [medical] profession can be trusted to sift the degrading and vicious from what is truly morbid" (403).

The third source of the medical conceptualization of homosexuality is rooted in a variety of organic theories. This source will provide a point of departure for a review of the psychology of homosexuality.

Organic Theories of Homosexuality

The major view that homosexuality is a disease originated in the organic approach characteristic of the nineteenth century. Krafft-Ebing's own organic approach in Psychopathis Sexualis distinguished four classes of sexual pathology. Homosexuality was classified in the fourth category of "perversions, sadism, necrophilia and "contrary sexual feelings"" (Ellenberger, 1970: 298). He later revised his thinking by modifying his systems of classification into two less specific categories. In the revision, homosexuality was grouped, along with other forms of pathology, according to its goal (along with pedophilia, zoophilia, gerontophilia and autoreroticism). Already, in other clinical literature similar arguments occurred for the origins of homosexuality. Homosexuality was classified as pathological (along with other sexual expressions) on the basis that it did not have reproduction as its aim.

Krafft-Ebing's organic or physiopathological approach attributed homosexuality to "hereditary neuropathic degeneration, without demonstratable degenerative pathology in the central nervous system" (Bieber, Dain & Dince, et.al., 1962: 11,12). His theory was clearly concerned with constitutional factors. While it is impossible to trace all of the sources informing nineteenth century approaches to homosexuality, Jean Jacques Rousseau, more than one hundred years previously, had begun to draw correlations between adult sexual perversions and early developmental experience. Krafft-Ebing also postulated that excessive masturbation acted as the stress which uncovered the latent neuropathic taint, and this would indicate some verification of the theoretical association made with autoeroticism.

Other theorists shared the constitutional approach to homosexuality, attributing the neuropathic state to other varieties of somatic disease in the parents. Several

physicians suggested that homosexuality resulted from the presence of a female soul in a masculine body while others conceptualized it as the occurrence of a female brain combined with masculine sex glands. Mantegazza, an Italian professor, wrote textbooks on sexuality which supplemented his income, but which many clinicians, including Freud, felt were blatantly pornographic (Freud, 1905). As recently as 1932, Mantegazza attributed homosexuality to either psychic or organic causes. The latter, he suggested, perhaps anticipating Freud's theory of erotogenic development, consisted of a reversal of nerve supply to the genitals and rectum, so that sexual satisfaction could only be obtained through perversions such as sodomy and fellatio (Bieber, Dain & Dince, et.al., 1962)

Havelock Ellis's The Psychology of Sex in the late nineteenth century and Magnus Hirschfeld's 1899 Jahrbuch fur sexuelle Zwischenstufen mutually regarded homosexuality as a pathology having congenital origins. As Greenberg (1988) tells us, Ellis was unable to shake off the conventional moral attitude of his day. While he did call for the tolerance of people he thought were congenitally homosexual, he believed that society should have the right to prohibit homosexuality from being acquired by other individuals through corruption and seduction. Freud and Glover refined this view, assuming that only certain cases were congenitally determined. Lombroso concluded that homosexuality, like criminality, resulted from the persistence of an atavistic sexual instinct -- it resulted from an arrested sexual development (Ellenberger, 1970).

Carpenter viewed homosexuality as representing another sex, existing as an intermediate gender between the male and female. A novel published in France referred also to a mysterious third gender, calling this "a third sex which has not yet got a name" (in Greenberg, 1988: 406). Carpenter did not regard this intermediate type of sexuality as possessing the specific somatic characteristics of

either male or female physiological sex, but only the mental attributes he considered as indicative of a contrasexual temperament. In the male pervert this expressed itself, he wrote,

in a rather gentle emotional disposition with defects, if such exist, in the direction of subtlety, evasiveness, timidity, vanity, etc; the mind is generally intuitive and instinctive in its perceptions, with more or less artistic feeling ... the homogenic affection ... is a valuable social force and in some cases a necessary element of noble human character (Carpenter, 1912, in Bieber, Dain & Dince, et.al., 1962: 12).

Psychoanalytic Views of Homosexuality

In his influential theory of sexuality, Freud regards the child as reacting to sexual needs without making any conceptualizations or differentiations between masculine or feminine roles. He suggests that only following the infant's awareness of gender is it in a position to identify with the sex-parent who best represents its own internal active or passive tendencies. Freud determines that activity was associated with masculinity, while passivity expressed itself within the parameters of feminine gender-identity.

For Freud, infants possess an innate or biological bisexuality since they are not gender specific in their choice of love objects to begin with. Taking themselves as satisfactory love objects, for example, during the phase of autoeroticism, consists entirely of a same-sex love object infatuation. Later, the identification processes bring the child to confront love objects, usually the parents, who are visibly external and sex-gendered. Thus, the original homosexual object choice is not originally regarded by Freud as biologically abhorrent, but rather as a fully natural vicissitude of infantile erotic life.

During later development, specifically through the channelizing of sexual impulses into heterosexual or homosexual object choices, the child becomes

associated with his/her choice of gender identification. Still, however, this choice is a highly symbolic one which represents volition which is entirely pre-sexual or non-erotically motivated. Sometimes, the early homosexual component persists so strongly as to present dangers of hypertrophied intensity. In Freudian terms of libidinal development (the channelizing energy of object choice of the infant), the existence of original homosexual tendencies is theoretically permanent since a portion of the child's libido is assigned to this portion of the sexual instinct. The strength of the numerous developmental features of childhood sexuality is seen by Freud as the possible origin of some other determinants of homosexuality and homosexual object-choice (Freud, 1905).

Freud determines that sexuality proceeded developmentally throughout the biography of the child through erogenous zones -- parts of the physical body in which sexuality was temporarily concentrated as a source of gratification. He suggests that these zones continued making libidinal demands on the individual, and that these demands were either gratified, repressed or sublimated. The evolution of childhood sexuality proceeds, for Freud, from autoerotic and narcissistic phases -- preoccupied with the surfaces of the visceral self -- to actual object love -- the concentration or "cathecting" of libido on a physically differentiated other. Freud regards adult homosexuality as a result of the fixation of some of these developmental contingencies, and most particularly as an object-choice which recapitulated a brief but intense childhood fixation on a woman, who is usually the child's mother (Freud, 1905).

For Freud, the two most elemental characteristics of adult male homosexuality are the recapitulation of the narcissistic object choice (the "like-self" love object) and a "retention of the erotic significance of the anal zone" (57). For

psychoanalysis, homosexuality occurring in adulthood repeated these two aspects of developmental experience.

First, if gratification of the autoerotic phase persists throughout later development but on a narcissistic level, then the individual seeks to become sexually involved with himself and his own genitalia. The narcissistic individual succeeds at this by taking another male as a love object who symbolizes himself. Second, if gratification of the phallic phase persists throughout development, that is upon the penis itself as a principal organ for pleasure, then the penis is greatly exaggerated in its significance and becomes a love object which may be found only on other males. While the significance of the penis is overvalued, it becomes an important possession of males who begin to associate women's lack of the penis with their own unconscious fears of castration. The existence of unconscious fears that the penis may be removed or lost is associated with two ideas in Freud: the idea that women may perform the castration of the penis; and the related idea that the male might become like the woman -- having no penis at all. The subsequent perception of female genitalia as potential dentura (teeth) is too great a threat to males whose penises are greatly treasured. Hence, they seek out relationships only with males whose sexual intactness on these terms does not present any threat (fear of loss) to the phallic fixation, and women are avoided because of the castration dangers they present and represent.

Another type of castration anxiety hypothetically fostering homosexuality is associated with the Oedipus phase of psychosexual development. Boys experience some unconscious incestuous desires for their mothers (this comes to mean that they wish to possess her entirely for themselves), and this possessive desire comes to extend generally to all women in later life. Castration functions as a threat against this desire: a threat of retaliation by the father for challenging his own

authoritative masculine prerogatives and privileges concerning the mother. The child will subsequently avoid all situations where the possession of a woman comes to present peril to his genitals as a result of potential rivalry or competition from other males for a single desired female.

Freud shows that homosexual practices regress to developmental fixation points which reiterate the three phases of development illustrated here. Further, however, each phase of development contains some elements of identification with one of the parents which is also a portion of the regressive scenario of adult pathology. Pathology then adapts the adult world according to the prototype of development to which pathology regresses (recapitulates an earlier stage of psychosexual development). This means that neurosis repeats infancy in a number of ways, and the infant scenario is acted upon through the symbols and symptoms which comprise neurosis.

In the example of adult homosexuality, an individual with an anal fixation may attempt to identify with his mother by equating his anus with her vagina. He may, through substituting his anus for a vagina, in some ways ameliorate his fears of losing his own genitals by performing the "denturic" seduction himself on other males ("consume" their penises). These males represent a potentially rival father whom he may castrate repeatedly whenever he is able to seduce them. Still, the aims of the neurosis are continually frustrated -- he never succeeds at guaranteeing the permanence of his own phallus and the act must be constantly (neurotically) repeated.

If, on the other hand, there is an identification with the father at the developmental level to which he neurotically recapitulates, the homosexual might force other males into passive roles through performing anal intercourse on them --

symbolically transforming them into females while at the same time expressing hostility and contempt toward them as "passive" male victims.

In its pathological status, homosexuality may function as one mode for coping with an originally precipitating paternal conflict while also gratifying sexual wishes which follow the early patterns around a conflict whose roots are developmentally and therefore intrinsically structured. The processes of repression have failed to obliterate or transform homosexuality from among a range of erotic gratifications which are potential to the self.

Still, in following theories of psychoanalysis, there are other processes at work in homosexuality that is pathologically oriented, including a series of reparative and defensive needs for the individual in relation to some episode of childhood (Bieber, Dain & Dince, et.al. 1962). In the cases of a group of young male patients at New York Bellevue Hospital it was discovered that in 10 cases [out of 30] the fathers were described as brutal...frequently beat[ing] the boy and sometimes the mother as well...these boys expressed the fear that their father would kill them ... in 10 instances fear and hatred could be understood on the basis of the father's brutal behaviour ... the alienation of these boys from the father generally began at a very young age (214).

The pathogenic forms of homosexuality adopted by these patients aim repeatedly toward reparative or defensive needs, toward "fixing" something that happened in childhood, and pathological forms of homosexuality service this reparative aim. Ovesey writes, in summarizing Freud's approach,

Freud postulated a homosexual stage in the ontogenetic development of the sexual instinct. This stage lay between autoeroticism and a heterosexual object-choice. The theory of instincts and its energetic equivalent, the libido theory, held that neurotic symptoms represented repression of perverse infantile sexual impulses. If no repression occurred, the perverse impulses remained conscious and found direct expression without displacement. This led to one of Freud's earliest conclusions, that "neurosis is the negative of a perversion," a dictum

which of necessity excluded homosexuality from the neuroses and also...from the realm of psychoanalytic therapy, since only neuroses were believed susceptible to psychoanalysis (17).

Ovesey suggests that it is precisely this corollary which led Freud to his theoretical concept of an inherent, developmentally rooted bisexuality which stated that, "each individual was constitutionally endowed with both male and female psychosexual attributes that eventually sought instinctual gratification in terms of object choice" (17).

Sandor Ferenczi (1958) recapitulates standard Freudian theory on homosexuality, writing that the most significant advance toward understanding homosexuality is to acknowledge the inherent, bisexual aims of the infantile libido. He agreed that every human being passed over a psychologically bisexual stage in childhood. "The 'homosexual component' falls later a victim to repression; only a minor part of this component gets rescued in a sublimated form in the cultivated life of adults, in playing, in readiness for social help, in friendship" (227).

Ferenczi added that insufficiently repressed infantile homosexuality can later, through a variety of situations, reappear as adult homosexual object choice or, if the gratification of this libidinal aim is denied, express itself through neurotic symptoms. He wrote that this is especially true with paranoia, "concerning which the more recent investigations have been able to establish that it is really to be conceived as a disguised manifestation of the inclination towards the person's own sex" (228). But then, and this view is more focussed in later theorists, Ferenczi abbreviates a theory which concerns homosexuality as potentially motivated by reparation of an infantile episode:

A new point of view...[that] we owe to Sadger and Freud [says] that intense heterosexual inclinations have been displayed in their childhood; indeed that their 'Oedipus complex'... had come to expression in a specially pronounced manner...[T]he homosexuality which later develops ...is really only an attempt to restore the original relation to the mother.

In the homosexual pleasure—objects of his desires the homosexual is unconsciously loving himself, while he himself...is representing the feminine and effeminate part of the mother (228).

Ferenczi attributes this loving of oneself in another person, called secondary narcissism (repeating the narcissism of early development in infancy except that the self—love is replaced by loving someone else as if this other person is the self) to Sadger, and writes,

After the stage of 'polymorphous—perverse' autoeroticism, and before the real choice of an external love—object takes place, every human being adopts himself as an object of love, in that he collects the previously autistic eroticisms together into a unity, the 'darling ego'. Homosexuals are only more strongly fixed than other people in this narcissistic stage; the genital organ similar to their own remains throughout life an essential condition for their love (228).

Ovesey (1955; 1959) theorizes that the individual who, due to failures in developmental adaptation never achieves independence, aspires on the most primitive and pre—rational levels to recapture the maternal breast which originally provided the infant with sustained fantasies of dependency. The infantile desire clearly has its needs gratified by an all powerful parent, in particular, the life—supporting mother—breast object. Therefore, the breast—fantasy is theorized to be the most direct reparation to the problem of dependency. There is, however, an alternative route based on the equation, penis = breast:

The root factors behind this...appear to originate in the concurrent development of multiple inhibitions in several ... areas, each of which reinforces the others. In such ... the inhibition of sexual behaviour is central. The person who cannot perform sexually, unconsciously attributes his failure to genital mutilation (castration), the anticipated parental punishment for his sexual transgressions, real or imagined. He then generalizes this castration—fantasy to include all failures of performance, non—sexual as well as sexual (22).

Ovesey postulates that a homosexual preoccupation with the size and strength of the penis becomes the symbol not only of successful sexual performance, but also

of mastery in all other areas of behaviour which potentially contradict and subsequently satisfy a variety of dependency needs: "The penis becomes the symbol of total adaptive capacity" (22). This idea is symbolically reiterated through the neurotic associations and demands made regarding the size of the phallus. Success is associated with a large penis, failure with a small one. Ovesey continues,

[This] unconscious ideation...forms the basis for a magical reparative fantasy in which the penis is ultimately equated with the breast. The dependent person, instead of relying on the breast, may achieve the same effect by invoking a compensatory fantasy of oral or anal incorporation of a stronger man's penis, thus undoing his castration and making the donor's strength available to him (24).

Thus, as Ovesey suggests, dependency and power strivings can thus be considered opposite sides of the same coin: "The power-driven dependent male is overcompetitive and structures relationships with other men in terms of dominance-submission ... a failure in competitive performance may suddenly find paranoid expression as a fear of homosexual assault" (26).

In sustaining his theory of homosexuality, Ovesey suggests that all behaviour, including homosexuality needs to be classified in terms of its motivational goals. For Ovesey, this is particularly true of the adult homosexual conflict over dependency and power arising out of developmental failures. He sees homosexuality, then, as falling into one of three discrete categories or "components": sexual, dependency, and power.

Only the first category can be classified as a truly sexual motivation – authentic, libidinally-rooted sexual gratification for its own sake – sexual orgasm. Ovesey suggests that neither dependency nor its relational counterpart of power, as components of the expression of homosexuality in the male adult context, are sexual although they make use of the sexual apparatus to achieve or attempt to achieve their reparative ends. They are in reality pseudohomosexual components of the homosexual conflict. Ovesey writes,

All three components exist in varying strengths in different persons, and which component is in the ascendancy at any given time can be inferred only from the motivational context in which the ... behaviour becomes manifest. Variable combinations of these ingredients provide an adaptational formula by means of which the behaviour of ... a homosexual conflict ... can be understood (29).

Only in overt homosexuality is the first sexual component primary, and the primary motivational goal is therefore purely orgiastic satisfaction. The dependency and power components are nevertheless secondary, but remain important, because their function determines the psychosexual structure of the homosexual relationship as well as the physical mechanics of the homosexual act. For example, if dependency is secondary (meaning that the power component is latent or hidden), the "dependent" homosexual makes his partner into parent-figure and sets up a parent-child relationship in which he acts out the dependent role of a child. For this individual, the major advantage of the homosexual act is its gratification of dependency needs. Obviously, his sexual activity and its means for gratification follow the theoretical aims of dependency. In this manner, the dependent homosexual "magically, through the incorporation of his partner's penis ... repairs his own adaptive deficiencies" (29). If, on the other hand the power component is strong, and secondary to homosexual gratification, the individual will attempt to express his masculine failure-fantasies through a compensatory domination of a preferably weaker partner. He denies his own dependency at the expense of the weaker man. In this way he not only satisfies himself sexually, but also enhances his deflated masculinity by making his partner into a submissive receptacle for his compensatory "power". Even though the homosexual act itself, as a compensation and expression of developmental failure is therefore an embodied adaptation to masculine failure, this type of individual paradoxically uses it to affirm and reinforce his masculinity through the domination of his phallus.

Abraham (1927) also improvised on the Freudian theory of an Oedipal aim of the male of possession of the mother. He described homosexuality as a pathological attempt to mitigate the failure to achieve the Oedipal goal by simply substituting the father as the love object. Subsequently, in relating to father substitutes in later life as love objects, the male's compensatory homosexuality functions to recall the original loss and failures while still fixating upon a paternal representative substitute as a desired and satisfactory love-object (Abraham, 1927). This theory is elegantly illustrated in a case history by M. Wulff (1958).

Wulff (1958) relates the case of a Russian emigre patient, living in Tel Aviv, whose marriage begins to fail because of his impotence. He is, rather, in love with the Arab policemen he sees on the streets. The history of this patient reveals an interesting development around the period of his Oedipal stage. His mother died, while stroking the patient's hair in her bed. After this occurred, his father began to take the boy to his own bed, and the boy would frequently see his father's erect penis, and take advantage of the closeness to stroke and touch his father's erection while he was asleep. He was continually able to feel his father's genitals, even in casual contact, pressing up against his trousers, for example. He was greatly fixated on his father's organ. Wulff writes, "it is important to emphasize that precisely during the phallic phase the boy's chief and ardently loved object was his father, and in particular his father's penis. This apparently led to a quite special overvaluation of the male genital" (402, 403). Later, Wulff quotes Freud toward formalizing his theory: "Behind this factor [narcissistic object-choice] there is concealed another of quite exceptional strength, or perhaps it coincides with it: the high value set upon the male organ and the inability to tolerate its absence in a love-object" (403). Wulff suggests that an adult attitude of aversion or horror toward women is generally derived from the childhood discovery that women do not

possess the male sexual organ. He subsequently discovered, as another powerful motive urging towards the homosexual object – choice, extreme regard for the father or extreme fear of him; for the renunciation of women means that all rivalry with him (or, as this generalizes, with all men who may take his place) is avoided. The last two motives, the clinging to the condition of a penis in the object as well as the retiring in favour of the father, “refer[s] to rivalry situations in which the competitive hatred was held in check by transformation into homosexual love” (in Ovesey, 1969: 18).

Melanie Klein (1957) sustains the breast = penis equation when she focusses her theories of homosexuality most predominantly around the oral phase of development -- the time the infant's gratification is centered around its mouth in relation to the larger object of a breast/mother. She determined that oral fixation influenced all subsequent post-oral phases of development, including the determination of genital organization. For Klein, oral frustrations in the infant resulted in cannibalistic fantasies toward the breast/mother object. In their projection of feelings and fantasies, the child also came to view the world as potentially cannibalistic and the child experiences fears of being devoured by other external objects. Once more, in its association with the mouth, the vagina presents this threat to the individual who fears it as a potentially castrating and devouring organ. Even masturbation fantasies having females as their fantasied object reiterate the fears of penis captivus (that the penis may be captured by women), thus masturbation does not successfully resolve through physical avoidance of the vagina the actual psychological crises which heterosexual intercourse anxiously precipitates. Even fantasizing about intercourse with women presents fear and anxiety. Rather, it is only an exclusive turning away from real and imagined heterosexual objects which facilitates liberation from fear. The following avoidance

of the dangerous heterosexual object is a logical course of adaptational development. Males, then associating the male phallus with the breast – providing nurturance and oral gratification, and wholly disassociated from any castrating fears – become adequate sexual objects (Klein, 1957).

Sullivan too associates homosexual development around the oral phase of development, showing the breast as it pertains to the gratification processes of sucking and swallowing (Sullivan, 1953). However, his attention to homosexuality is focussed mostly around adolescent “chumship” relationships. His work demonstrates that adolescents and preadolescents who participate in homosexual group activities are less likely to develop overt homosexuality in later life since this experience provides an outlet for the male’s innate homosexual libido (256). Still, however, Sullivan describes homosexuality in metaphors of cannibalism, similar to Klein, relating the entire phenomena to its earlier prototype at the breast–nipple of infancy. Group masturbation activities mutually collaborate in recalling the original thing and substituting the “nutritive” phallus for the breast. Masturbation activities which symbolically recollect the nipple, however, succeed at regression – the original thing is not devalued of its original potential for gratification, but rather symbolized or transformed in the excited genital. Later, in adulthood homosexuality may instead recall the pleasures of mutual masturbation with other males, thus secondarily removing itself from the original locus of gratification and the associated cannibalistic fears around the breast/ nipple/ mother or heterosexual object.

Karen Horney (1950) suggested that the homosexual has such a profound fear of injury to his “neurotic pride” that he withdraws from competition with his equals and refrains from pursuing heterosexual object choices. This concept is similar to Freud’s hypothesis that the homosexuals will avoid situations where the possession

of a woman presents a threat of castration as a result of rivalry and competition with other males. In Horney's view, homosexuality is rooted in the neurotic fear of losing out to competition from other males in attaining a female partner. Still, Horney does not address the psychodynamics of this process in terms of its origins, but rather regards its phenomenology as a neurotic adaptation to masculine fear of competitive loss in strictly social contexts.

Clara Thompson is another important psychoanalytic theorist who regarded homosexual as a "wastebasket" term to which all "hostile and friendly feelings towards members of one's own sex are applied" (Bieber, Dain & Dince, et.al., 1962: 9). She described homosexuality as a symptom of a larger, overarching character difficulty. Thompson suggested that during childhood sexual gratification and stimulation may be derived from either sex. She suggests further that in a permissive society this basic biological predisposition could result in recourse to homosexuality whenever heterosexual objects were unavailable. Agreeing to a large extent with the classic Freudian position, Thompson writes that since unconscious or latent homosexuality is to be found in everyone, it logically follows that it is a part of the original libidinal endowment. Homosexuality may exist throughout development as latent, successfully repressed, or, due to continual gratification into adulthood, as entirely overt.

In reviewing the psychoanalytic position, Thompson suggests that a part of the original libido is dedicated to homosexuality. This libido, in its original, developmental form, cannot be converted into heterosexual libido. The two remain distinctly separate in terms of their functions and aims, and constitute the original childhood bisexuality. In the course of development, one of the two succeeds at domination, and the other becomes either sublimated or the potential grounds for the development of neurosis.

The inverted Oedipus complex is presented as the starting point of homosexual development. In some situations also a regression to narcissism is thought to favour the development of homosexuality, since loving a member of one's own sex may be thought of as an extension of love of oneself (in Bieber, Dain & Dince, et.al, 1962: 9).

Thompson suggests that the most important distinction between the repression of homosexuality and its overt expression could be determined through considerations of the patient's superego. Repression of homosexuality is successful when the superego is strong and dominant, while through the overt expression of homosexuality a weak or fallible superego could be inferred. Thompson sums up the attitudes in Western society toward the overt expression of homosexuality:

In most circles it is looked upon as an unacceptable form of sexual activity. When external circumstances make the attainment of a heterosexual choice temporarily or permanently impossible, as with women or with men in isolated situations, society is more tolerant of the homosexual situation. Also character traits usually associated with the homosexual affect the degree of disapproval of the individual...the tomboy receives less contempt than the [male] sissy. People who for reasons external to their own personality find their choice of love objects limited to their own sex may be said to be 'normal' homosexuals, in the sense that they utilize the best type of interpersonal relationship available to them. These people are not the problem of psychopathology (307). Thompson seems to suggest that a process of self-idealization might make

perfect sense because if a child feels that his sex is a disappointment to the parents, he may take neurotic compensatory steps toward parental reparation in this area. The disappointing boy, for instance, might attempt to become better and better, eventually realizing that this ideal is potentially unavailable to him, and seek to accommodate this ideal in the form of someone who approximates or possibly replicates his idealization.

Thompson also advances an adult-oriented adaptational approach to homosexuality. On a biological level, humans will utilize the best type of interpersonal sexual relationship that is available at a given time. This means that when heterosexual objects are accessible there is a natural biological tendency

toward these objects since it is naturally the most satisfactory. However, she suggests, when heterosexual objects are inaccessible individuals will engage in homosexual activity as a satisfactory substitute. Thompson maintained, similar to Ovesey and others, that homosexual tendencies result from conflicts of dependency, hostility, and other attitudes toward familial or authority figures, in particular toward parents. In her clinical work, Thompson found that homosexuality disappears as a tendency toward same-sex object choice alongside the reduction of character problems in individuals.

Kolb and Johnson (in Bieber, Dain & Dince, et.al, 1962) generally accept the Freudian hypotheses as far as etiological considerations are concerned, but suggest that the impetus for the transformations of latent or repressed homosexuality to an overt form frequently results from subtle, even unconscious parental suggestion. This may occur when parents unconsciously reinforce the acting-out behaviour of the child of previously forbidden impulses, or through the child's perception of the parents' conscious or unconscious image of the child. Parental fears, hopes, wishes, frustrations and interests may be perceived by the child in their gestures, intonations, body movements, provocative smiles and maneuvers. This attitudinal network may encourage the child toward homosexual behaviour, because the unconscious or latent tendencies are now reinforced by suggestions derived from the parents. Litton, Griffin and Johnson support this view thoroughly:

Perversions and antisocial sexual behaviour in children and adolescents result from adaptation of the child's ego to subtle attitudes of its parents which distort the instinctual development of the child. The parental influences operate reciprocally with the needs of the child so that eventually each participant stimulates the other. Many patients have strong latent homosexual, exhibitionistic, and transvestite trends, but do not act-out these impulses until there is unconscious permission and subtle coercion by the parents (Bieber, Dain & Dince, et.al., 1962: 8).

There are, in taking the theories of psychoanalysis into consideration, five major reasons for the attachment of negative clinical values to homosexuality, despite its universality within the developmental context of childhood sexuality. First, as Freud and Abraham suggest, homosexual adaptation occurs as a result of an early developmental failure: adult homosexuals react to the earlier developmental failure to possess the maternal object and the individual compensates throughout adulthood therefore for the sense of loss of this valued object. Second, as suggested mainly by Ovesey and Klein, homosexual adaptation occurs as a reparation of an early developmental episode: the threat the infant experiences in relation to his own cannibalistic fantasies concerning the breast/mother (Klein), and conflicts motivationally determined the conflict between dependency and assertiveness around the father (Ovesey). Third, and this is demonstrated in Sullivan's work, homosexual adaptation results from a regression to something which is no longer possible -- the oral fantasy of the sucking and swallowing of the maternal breast. Hence homosexuality is repeatedly frustrated in its developmental aim. Fourth, as Horney suggests, homosexual adaptation occurs in relation with fears of corporeal injury to the self in socialized contexts. Finally, as Clara Thompson demonstrates, homosexual adaptation occurs symptomatically as a result of complex conflicts of dependency, hostility and ambivalent parental approval within the early developmental context.

Prevalent Attitudes Toward Homosexuality in Western Society

The attitudes of prejudice and hostility expressed toward homosexuality and homosexuals within western society seem to have been influenced by the

condemnation of homosexuality which occurs throughout Christian tradition. Nelson (1978) states emphatically,

While antihomosexual bias has long existed in western culture generally, the church must take responsibility for its significant share in shaping, supporting, and transmitting negative (and often hostile) attitudes toward gay people (180).

American Chief Justice Warren Burger wrote,

Decisions of individuals relating to homosexual conduct have been subject to State intervention throughout the history of Western Civilization. Condemnation of those practices is firmly rooted in Judaeo-Christian moral and ethical standards. Homosexual sodomy was a capital crime under Roman law ... To hold that the act of homosexual sodomy is somehow protected as a fundamental right would be to cast aside millennia of moral teaching (quoted in Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1989: 234).

Cameron (1978) calls homosexuality a "biologically absurd" form of experience, and suggests that the expression of homosexuality is "intrinsically immoral" (17-49).

As anthropological and sociological evidence reveals, a reduction of visible homosexuality may be possible by condemning homosexuality for moral, legal and social reasons (Opler, 1965; Plummer, 1981). But while the social visibility of homosexuality may decrease, homosexuality itself is not diminished and persists, even if minimally or entirely in secret, in all world cultures (Storr, 1968; Vanggaard, 1972).

Through the systems of moral, legal and social condemnation which seem to diminish the visibility of homosexuals, a gay minority is created. The marginalization of gays in western society occurs partially through the stigmatization of homosexuality as a form of experience (sin, deviance), and partially through the marginalization of homosexuals as persons (faggots, fairies, poofs, queers, monsters).

The term "the closet" is used when referring to the place in which homosexuals hide to avoid stigmatization and marginalization. The closet is as much a psychological hiding place as it is a physical one for gay people in western

society. The closet is socially constructed for gays out of the bad words and negative images which occur in prevalent social perceptions of homosexuality. The closet is socially constructed by a process whereby a value for homosexuality is attributed which is demeaning and antithetical to western social values (Plummer, 1981). And the social processes which negate the values of homosexuality and homosexuals leads to an increase in levels of social intolerance against homosexuality and homosexuals (Boswell, 1980).

Evidence for high levels of social hostility against homosexuals can be shown to exist in various strata of society. Gallup reported in 1977 that slightly more than half the American population (51%) expressed their feelings that homosexuals should not have equal access to employment (Lichtenstein, 1977). In a similar survey conducted in 1983, Newsweek magazine reported that 66% of the American population rejected homosexuality on the basis that it is an unacceptable lifestyle (reported in Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1989). Coles & Stokes reported, in their survey of 1000 teenagers in the United States that 75% considered sex between two females and over 80% considered sex between two males "disgusting" (ibid). Simmons in his book entitled Deviants states that "homosexuals are considerably more disliked by the American public than ex-convicts, ex-mental patients, gamblers and alcoholics" (ibid: 243).

Despite the apparent prevalence of negative attitudes socially expressed toward homosexuality, Kinsey reported that nearly 37% of the adult male population had at least one homosexual episode, while another 6% of this sample were exclusively homosexual or bisexual (Kinsey, 1948). Less than 50% of the men in Kinsey's sample could claim no homosexual experience, while between 9% and 36% reported having as much homosexual as heterosexual experience (ibid).

McCary suggests that one strong feature of a social prejudice against homosexuals is the manner in which they are stereotyped as "faggots" or "queers" or with strong associations with overt femininity when only 15% of homosexual males are identifiable according to the effeminate stereotype (1971). Nelson (1978) agrees that western social attitudes toward homosexuality are rooted in the familiar stereotypes created for gay people: "All male gays are effeminate; homosexuals are compulsive and sex hungry; they are by nature promiscuous; male gays have an inherent tendency to molest children" (189). Still, as Baldwin (1989) writes,

Macho men ... need faggots. They've created faggots in order to act out a sexual fantasy on the body of another man and not take any responsibility for it ... the male homosexual ... is a sexual target for other men and that is why he is despised and why he is called a faggot (in Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1989: 245).

While religious people may refer to various Biblical references with regularity when discussing homosexuality (Bullough, 1977; 1982), secular public attitudes in general may comprise ardent opposition to homosexuality on different grounds without referring directly to sources which are located within Christian tradition. Homosexual activity may be rejected in prevalent social opinion for humanistic, legal, developmental or moral reasons by some individuals. While the negative valuing of homosexuality appears to begin in Christian tradition, this process seems to continue to occur in medicine and psychiatry, law, in education systems and in other social institutions including prisons, the police force and the military ((Bayer, 1981; Propper, 1981; Simon & Simon, 1970; Socarides, 1970; Tripp, 1987).

For other individuals, no reasons appear to exist for the condemnation of homosexuality. Instead these reactions to homosexuality seem to be couched in affect -- in feelings of disgust, fear and disapproval for homosexuality and homosexuals (Scanlan, 1986; Schofield, 1953; 1960; Weinberg, 1973). But, as Altman (in Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1988) writes, "Most intelligent heterosexuals reject,

intellectually, their hostility to homosexuality, while unable to conquer their emotional repugnance. The outward result is tolerance" (261).

While tolerance may exist among the attitudes of those Altman calls "intelligent heterosexuals" (ibid) it does not seem to exist as a dominant trend within the social attitudes expressed toward homosexuality, in general. In a survey taken during 1974, Weinberg & Williams reported: 70% of Americans believe homosexuals are sexually abnormal; 50% believe homosexuals are perverted; and another 40% believe homosexuals are mentally ill (Weinberg & Williams, 1974). These attitudes have been re-indexed by Gallup (1977). The prevalence of negative attitudes toward homosexuality have also been confirmed in more recent Canadian studies by Optima (1987). Moral reasons seem to usually accompany social attitudes expressed in the context of homosexuality. An enormous social uproar followed the publication of Kinsey's research on homosexuality in 1948. Tripp (1987) remarks that many people feared, "by talking about it you encourage it. But the most virulent resentments arose from the fact that sex, particularly homosexual sex, was dealt with without a word of moralizing ..." (225).

A similar moral response to the topic of homosexuality is visible more recently. Educators worry, in discussing several of the risk factors some homosexual activities involve in the context of the AIDS epidemic that they might in actuality be encouraging young men to become homosexual. This opinion is frequently expressed (see Hoy, 2 July, 1989: C-1). Moral reasons seem to accompany other discussions about AIDS and homosexuality as well. Since the Roman Catholic Church considers the use of condoms to be sinful (as a form of birth control), their 223 schools in metropolitan Toronto have refrained from teaching their students how to use condoms to protect themselves from AIDS. Instead, these students are warned to abstain from sexual activity altogether if they want to avoid transmission of the

AIDS virus (Canada Youth and AIDS). Cardinal Hume writing in The Times said, "No campaign against AIDS can ignore or trivialize the moral question. Refusing to address the moral issues is itself a moral statement" (Canada Youth and AIDS Study). Mabey (1987) remarks that "suddenly we are prey to opportunistic infections of prejudice, fear and anxiety which overwhelm our normal defenses of moral valuation and judgment" (1). Petite (1987) suggests that the person with AIDS is likely to be at risk for not receiving pastoral care "out of judgment or out of fear" (1).

The social tolerance of homosexuality contradicts the modus vivendi in western society since gay relationships are not consistent with concepts of normalcy. Further, homosexual behaviours are perceived as abnormal when at least three of the elements used for defining abnormality by Rosenhan & Seligman are taken into consideration: Homosexuality is unconventional (most people are not willing to perform homosexual acts); homosexuality causes observer discomfort (homosexuals violate residual rules of conduct); homosexuality violates moral and ideal standards (homosexuals do not behave as the ought to behave) (Rosenhan & Seligman, 1984). Nor is the homosexual population in western society considered to be demographically significant. And as Freud has wisely remarked, people who are unable to repress their abnormal appetites are perceived in civilized societies as "criminals" and "outlaws" (Freud, 1985 [1908]).

An interesting psychological phenomenon appears repeatedly in any research on homosexuality in western social contexts. We may observe that western views of the sexuality of the person that are founded in Christian tradition follow a trend to devalue homosexuality (Bullough, 1977; 1982). Part of the process of devaluing homosexuality involves, either consciously or unconsciously, the construction and utilization of metaphors of fear and danger upon which the meaning given to

homosexuality rest. When homosexuality is perceived as something that causes an individual to be afraid in the absence of objective dangers, the reaction may be called homophobic. Homophobia is defined as an irrational fear of homosexuality. When differentiated from other forms of experience homosexuality directly or indirectly causes fear and anxiety for a person who is homophobic (Swanson, Bohnert & Smith, 1970; Watson, 1965; Wolowitz, 1965). Homophobia establishes a metaphor (a meaning, a representation) of homosexuality which is prominent in the western imagination.

The concept of homophobia was introduced, based upon the psychoanalytic concept of homosexuality by Weinberg in 1973, and is considered by him to constitute a disease on its own. Homophobia, for Weinberg, could describe a fear of or anger towards homosexuality and homosexuals (Weinberg, 1973; Weinberg & Bell, 1981). Meeks and Heit (1982) describe homophobia differently:

Despite the mass of evidence that indicates homosexuals have personalities as varied as any one else's, many individuals use misconceptions to validate their discriminating practices: homosexuals seduce young children; close contact with a homosexual can turn you into one; male homosexuals hate females. These fears ... cause many to refrain from behaviour that would [otherwise] be considered natural (232,233).

While homophobia does appear as a social phenomenon because of its high prevalence in society, homophobia is in reality as individually-centered as other less prevalent phobias. Phobias are classified by their objects and not by their anxiety levels (Lefrancois, 1982), thus homophobia is classified as a phobia of homosexuals or homosexuality. Freud writes that,

[P]hobias have the character of a projection in that they replace an internal, instinctual danger by an external, perceptual one. The advantage of this is that the subject can protect himself against an external danger by fleeing from it and avoiding the perception of it, whereas it is useless to flee from dangers that arise from within (1926: 281).

Nemiah confirms the existence of internal factors in phobia, and relates phobia to the existence of internal impulses which attempt to become conscious:

In the phobic patient, after the initial process of repression, there is no ... disguised modifying avenue for the discharge of the impulse [fantasies and related memories]. Its continued push for direct conscious discharge arouses anxiety that necessitates the ego's calling up auxiliary defenses to control the drive -- defenses that result in the phobic symptom (1978: 187).

As Nemiah suggests, it is homosexual desire's continued push toward consciousness which results in phobia. Phobia does, according to this view, attempt to prevent the unconscious (repressed) impulse from becoming real. Homophobia appears as a social phenomenon because the phobic object (homosexuals) is shared by many individuals within society who are themselves homophobic (Meissner, 1984). According to Marks (1969) acquiring certain phobias may be a part of the regular processes of socialization throughout individual development.

Homophobia does not result in any obvious forms of maladaptation for individuals within the social group, nor does it stand out as abnormal if everyone or nearly everyone within the group has the same reaction to homosexuality. Homophobia serves as a psychological mechanism whereby homosexuality and its dangers can be differentiated, projected and then prohibited. Homophobia becomes a socialized and regulative mechanism to which rationality is subordinated to affective reactions. It functions to prohibit homosexuality from the context in which the homophobia has been formed.

The homophobic individual learns to identify the object of phobia and then learns to develop a regime of prohibitive psychological defenses that offer protection from this object. These defenses include projection and denial. Phobic prohibitions are learned and practiced during the course of a lifetime (Agras, Sylvester & Oliveau, 1969; Marks, 1969). Phobic defenses may also involve that the individual sets up certain rules of conduct which aim to prevent anything from happening that would compromise the prohibitions and render the individual vulnerable to the phobic object.

Reconstructing a Myth of Homophobia

Two observations need to be made about homophobia given the material available on homophobia. First, since it is not entirely based on external phenomena, homophobia must involve some internal, psychological factors which contribute to the formation of negative perceptions of and feelings toward homosexuality. Secondly, the potential for homosexual desire must exist in the contexts in which the prohibitions are established. If a danger of acting upon homosexual did not exist, then there would not exist a need for prohibitions. The prohibitions against homosexual desire therefore depend upon the existence of homosexual desire within an individual who is homophobic. What the homophobic prohibitions prohibit is acting upon homosexual desire. And if prohibitions against homosexuality did not exist neither would fear arise when one is tempted to violate homophobic prohibitions by acting upon homosexual desire.

According to Freud, "even the most normal person is capable of making a homosexual object-choice, and has done so at some time in his life, and either still adheres to it in his unconscious or else protects himself against it by vigorous attitudes" (in Rochlin, 1980: 89). And Rochlin adds to the Freudian theory that the achievement of masculinity is a precarious achievement for men in western society. Rochlin writes that "there are not only special difficulties in becoming masculine but also in maintaining it throughout life" (91). Indeed, the presence of homophobia is consistent with the Freudian theory and with Rochlin's observations. Homophobia prevents the individual from acting upon homosexual desire by placing "vigorous attitudes" in opposition to homosexual desire. This process may both prove and identify the precariousness of masculinity. A failure of homophobia (the acting upon internal homosexual desire) puts masculinity at jeopardy for individuals.

The homophobic fear expressed in western society around homosexuality seems to have, as a psychological basis, a myth which is rooted in the western imagination. I am calling this phenomenon a myth because the metaphorical meaning attributed to homosexuality in western society appears to be both universal and partially unconscious. Myth is a force which informs the unconscious (Bowers, 1984). I am also using the term "myth" in the sense that it describes some essential truth or reality in a symbolic or allegorical sense. "Myth" is a concept that may be used to explain something. In its repetition, myth tells a story, and truth is revealed. The myth is universal because it is shared as a social construct — it exists as a common point of reference for the social meaning attributed to homosexuality in western society. The myth is partially unconscious because the reasons for the existence of homophobia involve repressed internal homosexual desire which is a requisite for homophobia to exist in the first place. Homosexual desire undergoes the two processes of denial and projection in the expression of homophobic attitudes. I am also calling the construction of homophobic metaphors myth because they are, in the most literal sense, allegorical representations of homosexuality and not factual or objective representations of homosexual experience. Homophobia is structured on the individual's feelings for homosexuality, and these feelings may be unconsciously rooted and inaccessible to consciousness.

In taking the universal, partially unconscious, explanatory and allegorical features of the homophobic metaphors of homosexuality into consideration, a myth of homophobia may be reconstructed in the following way, based on observations already made, by returning briefly to re-examine the Sodom story:

The formation of the masculine ego-ideal in the pederastic relationship in Greek life and the idealization of masculine physicality in Roman art were displaced in Christian tradition. This displacement involved two fundamental processes for

men: the denigration and devaluing of physical masculinity (the "god-like" men of Greek and Roman iconography became idols); and the formation of a passive – aggressive relationship between a human male and a transcendent and invisible father. This displacement involved as well as the withdrawal of masculine attraction for other males, and a passive homosexual relationship with the aggressive father–god formed instead (see Gonen, 1971).

This invisible father–god, however, is also a figure who demands absolute obedience from his sons (see Benson & Spilka, 1973). Obedience to a paternal god and striving to uphold his many commandments constitutes one of the most important and most difficult aspects of Christian life. Yet, this father's demands for subordination, obedience, devotion and love, in combination with his actions of supreme power and rage, presents the male imagination with an elemental form of ambivalence toward this father: love versus hate.

Tendencies toward homosexual idealization (the idealization of the visible, physical reality of another male) are historically displaced by the needfulness of faithful men to form a subordinate relationship with this dominant father that is passive and receptive. On the one side of this relationship the human male is needful, passive and insignificant. On the other side of this relationship the transcendent father god is powerful, omnipotent and a source of awe. "You must love me," proclaims this father god, "with all your soul, with all your heart. And no other father will come before me. I am the one god, your god, and the god of all time and history" (see Deuteronomy VI: 4,5; Mark 12: 29,30; Luke 10: 27,28). This god may not be deserving of man's love. But he demands love as a form of subservience and a form of devotion from men just the same.

In a sense that is not entirely without basis, the juxtaposition of submissive and passive masculinity on the one hand and dominant and aggressive masculinity on

the other forms the psychological basis for a homosexually-oriented relationship between men and God in the Christian tradition. Many aspects of this homosexually-oriented relationship are played out within the context of Christian tradition. French author Genet (1963) writes of the mingling of religiousness with homosexuality in his soul:

Word by word he grows attached. But more and more neglects her [the soul]. She stays in the garret alone; she offers up to God her love and sorrow. For God, as the Jesuits have said -- chooses a myriad of ways to enter into souls: the golden powder, a swan, a bull, a dove and countless others ... (125, 126).

Maslow, as we saw previously (p. 114) reported a patient in homosexual panic experienced "the weight of a presence on top of him. He submitted to it lovingly and felt, This is God" (1971: 350). Bernard de Clairvaux writes, "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth ... God demands to be feared, as Lord; to be honored, as Father; as Bridegroom to be loved" (Happold, 1970: 239). St. Augustine reflects on his desire for God, "Thou breathdest odours and I drew in breath and pant for Thee. I tasted, and hunger and thirst. Thou touchedst me, and I burned for Thy peace" (Happold, 234).

God's violence against the men of Sodom who did not, as we have already discussed, commit any actual crime (they were victims of their homosexual desire) seems to present a psychological myth which may underwrite the unconscious bases for homophobic attitudes which exist today in western society (an irrational and indeed internal fear of homosexuality). God knows everything. Men cannot hide their desires from God, as the Sodom story tells us. Men must prohibit the expression of their homosexual desires or else face the consequences. One of the ways homosexual desires may be successfully prohibited occurs in the psychodynamics of homophobia: substitute homosexual desire with fear. But the substitution of fear for desire does not mean that the homosexual objects are lost.

Rather, the desire for the objects is displaced, and the connection, although a fearful one, with the desired objects remains intact.

Fear of the father-god may form the basis for man to assume the passive role in his relationship with the father-god. When, within the walls of Sodom the homosexuals' desires are known by the masculine, paternal God, the consequences are grave.

This masculine God (IA-U = Yahweh = the essence of masculine power) is so outraged that these men have desires for one another instead of for him that he visits them personally. Indeed, the father-god is not disappointed. The men of Sodom are so enamoured at the sight of the father-god that they threaten to break down the doors of Lot's house in order to seduce him. But in doing so, they have attempted to reverse their position from one of passivity to one of aggression. To sodomize the father-god would, as Freud's theories infer, both reduce the father-god to a position of subordination and passivity, and in a sense, treat him either like a woman or like the enemies who were raped in the act of aggressive conquest by the Persians (Reynaud, 1981). It is, however, too late for the men of Sodom once their desires become known. The father-god, entirely conscious that the sons of Sodom desire to know him sexually (yadah), blinds (castrates) the men of Sodom and, early in the morning, burns them to death. Only Lot survives with his two daughters. Lot's passivity in relation to the father-god's rage and aggression is carried into the postscript of the Sodom story. Lot is so passive, so entirely without masculine aggression, that he is seduced (raped, since this act occurs outside his will) by his daughters in the shameful act of incest while he is drunk and asleep.

Homophobic elements that refer to the Sodom story as a myth may be built into the strict regulation of masculine sexuality which is, throughout Christianity,

specially preserved for procreation. The use of sexuality for procreation follows two divine directives: first, that the father-god's commandment is followed (be fruitful and multiply), and in a sense, the father-god's own progeny is extended by his own aggressive domination over passive men; and second, that men's sexuality is controlled by confining it to the power men may exert in their own sexual relations with women, not unlike the relationship of dominance – submissiveness which the father-god exerts over men. The denial of homosexuality may really be a denial of masculine sexuality. Only by recreating the relationship they have with the all powerful father in their relationships with women may men adequately resolve their masculine ambivalence. The hatred men feel toward the tyrannical father-god is transferred toward women whom men may humiliate and dominate, in the same manner as they are humiliated and dominated by the father-god. The love men feel toward the father-god remains a source for receiving the favours which the father-god promises. As well, the love men feel for the father-god is characterized by their passivity: they submit to the father god, are filled with his essence and are inhabited by him (god dwells in human hearts). God is internalized. However, this love is actually constructed out of fear because for a man not to love god constitutes disobedience and promises both punishment and a loss of privilege (unless they act as little children, they will not inherit the kingdom of god. See Luke 18: 15, f.).

The New Testament writings of Paul do, in fact, suggest that a woman's relationship to her husband is also analogous to the relationship between god and the community of believers. She must submit to her husband in the same manner as men submit to the father-god. And we are taught to fear God while at the same moment he proclaims he is a god of love.

The contradiction men experience between God's love on the one hand and his tyranny on the other is repeated in the control men assert over women. Challenges to masculine authority are experienced by men as violations of their power or as accusations of weakness and vulnerability. These challenges to masculine authority may come from women or from an awakening of internal homosexual desire. Challenged by women, masculinity is threatened with a sense of emasculation. Challenged by homosexual desire, masculinity may be threatened with compromise -- with the threat of "giving in" to homosexual desire and thereby "giving-up" masculine power. Ovesey (1969) theorizes that men are driven by their attachment to power, and that this attachment is evident in their competition with other men: "[Man] tries to dissipate his weakness in a compensatory fashion through a show of strength, and to this end he is continuously engaged in competition with other men. This competition is ... about anything and everything" (57, 58). Reynaud (1981) writes,

Man clearly expresses, through his revulsion for passive homosexuality, his loathing for woman, as he would not like to take her place. He also reveals that he is aware of the oppressiveness of his own sexual attitude by making it clear that he would not want a sexual relationship with someone like himself (56)

And, as Reynaud suggests, man's revulsion for homosexuality may also be constructed out of his fear of losing control, of losing power:

Homosexuality directly threatens man's power, as it excludes him when it is between women, and when it is between men it represents the risk for him of being sexually appropriated ... the possibility of being used as a sexual object by a man usually causes him great anxiety (54).

In both ways, the threat to masculinity is mainly one of castration, with a loss of the masculine power to dominate and to sexually appropriate.

The penis is, as Reynaud suggests, a weapon used by men to express their power in the world. However, as Reynaud theorizes, it is not dominant, aggressive homosexuality which causes men anxiety, but rather homosexuality in which men are

forced into a passive role. That the penis may also be used as a weapon against men may form one of the internal basis for homophobia. That the penis may be used against them constitutes, according to Reynaud, a symbol of humiliation for men: "The image [man] has of passive homosexuality symbolizes the loss of his powers. To get stuffed is to be had, to no longer be a man ... not to dominate the situation but to submit to it" (55). Bieber, Dain & Dince, et. al. (1962) write that one patient reported that his homosexual acts permitted the expression of "feelings of power, contempt, triumph; he exulted in the idea that he was humiliating his partner whom he usually identified with his father" (244). And the symbolic power of the penis is reported by Ovesey (1962) who suggests it can become a magical instrument of empowerment for some men. Ovesey writes that one patient used fantasies of anal incorporation of his father's penis "in order to increase his power and reduce his weakness" (64). But this was not an activity, according to Ovesey, which was motivated by sexual pleasure: "It was not primarily a sexual act; rather it was a magical attempt to achieve strength through dependency on the father" (65).

And if the rules governing masculine sexuality are violated -- if men do use their masculinity in passive sexual relations with other men -- they face the rage of the father-god in the form of castration (loss of masculine power), rejection (loss of masculine identification) and death (loss of control over women): the absolute humiliation of masculine aggressiveness.

Projection is a form of denial. Through the historical projection of homosexual desire into sinners, madmen, devils and foreigners, Christian tradition attempts to deny the homosexual themes which exist within its own construction. Throughout centuries of moral discourse, homosexuality becomes something that is differentiated as a threat to morality, a danger to social order and a contradiction

of nature. In each case, homosexuality contravenes some command given by God. And defending against threat, danger, contradiction and disobedience, the hatred and fear of homosexuality within Christian tradition attempt to protect Christianity from an invasion of the objects of fear (phobic objects = homosexuals). Anxiety and hatred prevent people from acting upon any expression of homosexuality -- it is to be avoided. Fear displaced any love that might have sought to express itself in homosexual relationships within Christian tradition. Perhaps, in reconstructing a myth for homophobia, some unconscious aspects of homophobia may be understood through the explanation that the male ambivalence expressed toward the father-god of Christian tradition is also a central theme in homophobia.

Psychological Aspects of Homosexual Experience

Many gay people in western society are afraid of socially rooted prejudice and hostility (Brown, 1976). According to Davison (1976; 1978) the stresses experienced by many homosexuals are direct products of the oppression of homosexuals in society. For Davison, the suffering which homosexuals experience is rooted in social disapproval and rejection. Many gay people attempt to avoid suffering, oppression and rejection by consciously avoiding confrontations in which their identity may become known (Schur, 1965). This section will concentrate on an examination of some aspects of homosexual experience as this experience relates to homophobic social attitudes.

Many homosexual people are well-adjusted and, like their heterosexual counterparts, are active contributors to their communities and lead good, satisfying lives (Hooker, 1957; 1966). Some homosexuals, however, in confrontations with the

norms and mores established by religious and social systems have profound difficulties in living their lives. For these individuals homosexual desires seem to present a significant problem (Hatterer, 1970). These people are troubled by the fact that an intrinsic portion of their self-identity is perceived as being antithetical to the social order in which they live. Some homosexual people are psychologically troubled by the steady consciousness of their perceived otherness (Hoffman, 1968). They feel that they exist outside morality, and as Kleinberg writes, it may be that gay people, known for a high propensity for artistic activity, substitute aesthetic values for their loss of moral values which offered nothing but condemnation to begin with (1981).

As Tripp (1987) has detailed, there are several ways gay people attempt to protect themselves from sources of fear and guilt which are socially-rooted and predominant in society. Some of the sources of fear and guilt for gay people include socially-expressed discrimination, condemnation, intolerance and hostility toward homosexuals.

Denial is one of the defenses used by gay people to conceal their sexual orientation from the community in which this orientation is condemned or denigrated (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Saghir & Robins, 1973). According to Epstein (1970) gay people experience a psychological conflict as a result of realizing their sense of sexuality, while at the same time realizing that acting on this sexuality will have a tendency to alienate social contacts. Minton & McDonald (1984) write,

The decision to conceal the homosexual identity from significant others may be detrimental to psychological well-being ...[H]id[ing] an essential part of the self, individuals are left with a growing feeling that they are really valued for what other expect them to be rather than for who they really are (102).

By denying that they are homosexual, and by consciously suppressing their homosexual desires, gay people may be able to retain their regular social contacts

(friends, family members and work colleagues) (ibid). Anxiety is frequently reported by gay individuals whose sexual orientation becomes a visible issue within a family or a social group (Altman, 1971; 1982; Cory, 1960). This issue may present conflict in more general contexts as well. In his work Stayton (1975) ascertained that people are forced by our culture and mores to assume either a totally heterosexual identity or a totally homosexual identity -- there is no middle ground. A person accused of homosexuality may still lose his job, his family and face economic and social ostracism, forced into despair (Altman, 1982; Levine, 1980).

Much gay sex is short-termed because relationships are difficult to form, given the taboos existing against homosexuality in our society (Marout, Mattison & McWhirter, 1984; Woodman, 1985). Many gay people in western society do adapt to existing social perceptions of them, and adapt to the hostility which accompanies these perceptions. The adaptation gay people learn to social perceptions of them leads inevitably, besides to a conscious concealment of their sexual orientation, to a process of internalizing the hostility which is expressed against them. And this process guarantees one's homosexuality, as a source of alarm or stigmatization, from dangerous exposure to others (Hatterer, 1970). It is for this reason that much homosexual experience is constructed, in both developmental and social contexts, as "secret."

By consciously concealing homosexuality from society, gay people agree that the need for secrecy exists. The need to conceal sexual identity in combination with a prevalent trend of social intolerance of homosexuality is fundamental to the concept of "the closet" for gay people (Schofield, 1953; 1960). Many gay people in our society must compensate in different ways for the social barriers that seem to prevent the formation of lasting and committed relationships (see Masters, 1979).

One of the major ways gay people compensate is to form systems of adaptation in which self-identity is compromised for social acceptance (Ross, 1983).

By concealing their homosexual identity from exposure in a social milieu, many gay individuals accept some of the conditions established by western notions of morality. Indeed, homosexuals whose sexual orientation is secret agree to some extent to the notion that what they do (or who they are) in some way is contrary to what Rosenhan & Seligman call moral and ideal behaviour (1984). When the hostility expressed against homosexuals is internalized, many gay people feel guilty about themselves because they are blamed for their contrary sexual orientation as though this orientation results from a conscious choice (Bullough, 1977). They are themselves held responsible for being gay (see Allers, 1939; Barnhouse, 1977), and may blame themselves for their feelings of alienation.

Paradoxically, gay prowess and attractiveness seem to be related to the degree that gayness is concealed under layers of masculinity (Churchill, 1978). The male who successfully conceals his homosexuality and whose internalised hostility is transformed into aggressiveness (machismo) is perceived as attractive by other men. As Reynaud (1981) suggests, images of aggression are viewed positively by gay men and by straight men. In gay pornography, for example, uniformed policemen, military officers, muscles, chains and "threatening members" (55) are dominant sources of sexual arousal. Conversely, the overtly feminine gay male is generally disliked and ridiculed, even within the separate gay community itself (Bell & Weinberg, 1978). But, in concealing their gayness from exposure to society and family while at the same time preserving their maleness for gay sex, many homosexual men lead double lives. Social conformity on the one side and gay prowess on the other present a powerful source of conflict for homosexual men on the meaning

of their masculinity (Rosen, 1974). The opportunity for identity confusion is also prevalent in this situation (Wienberg, 1983).

Gay sex in western society is a clear trigger for social rejection (ibid). A compromise may be reached for gay people, but the compromise is sometimes a pathological one (causing suffering for the individual). In this compromise homosexual desire becomes a highly valuable but dangerous possession that must be turned into a secret because its revelation jeopardizes the person's sense of social belonging. Yet, homosexual desire does not diminish, but may actually increase under these circumstances (Woodman, 1980; 1985). A correlation between high anxiety and an increase in interpersonal attractiveness under less specific conditions has been demonstrated by Dutton & Aron (1974: 510). Gay people may attempt to possess their homosexual desire while also attempting to retain a social identity which requires community acceptance and belonging. But the compromise reached between homosexual desire and normative sociality is, in fact, a precarious tightrope for gay people. They may either fall out of the social acceptance they have achieved by acting upon their homosexual desire, or, conversely, forfeit their homosexual desire to the forces of conformity.

For some gay people, the demands for social conformity may also force homosexuality into subordination, or possibly into systems of suppression or repression. Or the occasions for gay sex are furtive and dangerous such as those occurring in baths, parks or public restrooms, hidden from the eyes of the general public (Delph, 1978). The secrecy of homosexual desire in western society is testimony to the antisocial or paranoid characteristics it assumes. Many gay bars and bathhouses do not have street numbers, and men who visit these places must often do so cautiously and without revealing their names or identities (Brown, 1976; Cory, 1960). Some homosexual men will marry women and have children in an

effort to consciously prevent the emergence of their homosexual desires (Ross, 1983). By not giving their names some men participate in gay sex without endangering their sense of personal identity.

For others, a gay orientation leads to a well-defined gay identity and open homosexual relations with other men. And the formation of a gay identity leads to an openly gay lifestyle, to a renunciation of all of those forces which condemn homosexuality including anonymity (see Hopkins, 1969). A gay identity also means that the need to appear to be heterosexual vanishes.

Seldom, however, is a compromise between a heterosexual social persona and an homosexual individual orientation acceptable or psychologically feasible for the individual (Plummer, 1981). It is disturbing to read in Narramore (1960) the following ruminations of a young gay person:

I was once tempted to go to my minister, but before I did I heard him lash out against homosexuals saying they should be arrested...Since then I have been in terror of being discovered...I wonder if I am sinful, perverse, perverted; a crime against nature, an abomination in the sight of the Lord ... Will even God cut off His love for me because of what I am, even though I cannot love a woman, no matter how much I try? If I really believed [God] hated me too, like everyone else, life would be pointless (222).

It has been suggested that homosexuality's appeal to some is precisely in its flavour of opposition, of contradiction, of intrigue and disobedience (Tripp, 1987). This theory is difficult to assess. Certainly gay sex contradicts and therefore disobeys the rules of a western sexual ethic by refusing the function of sexuality which is considered in western society to be morally and ideally motivated. But given the levels of alienation, conflict and ostracism which accompany much gay experience, a rebellious motivation existing beneath gay sexuality seems unlikely (Hart & Richardson, 1981). Instead, these negative factors would appear to support the suppression of homosexuality throughout individual development rather than to encourage homosexuality (Epstein, 1970).

The meaning of homosexuality for western society appears to be wedged within traditional religious and several medical views of gay experience, and it is therefore no surprise that gay people will continually look toward perceived religious and psychological faults and discuss their proneness for feeling alienated openly (Rowse, 1977; Saghir & Robins, 1973; Woodman, 1980). Gay experience mirrors society's views of it, and we often see what we expect to see (Haddon, 1966).

Similarly, when homosexuality (deviance) slips into traditional masculinity (normativity) panic is likely to occur. Nemiah (1978) writes that "Homosexual panic is a common and violent form of anxiety seen most frequently in younger men in particular when they have been subjected for the first time to a concentratedly male environment" (176). The danger, as Nemiah sees it, is that heterosexual men are in fear of acting upon (homosexual) impulses which have been prohibited by social pressures or internal prohibitions set in place during development. Individuals learn very early in development that homosexuality is forbidden. Maturation, the accommodation of morality into the personal psyche, means that the individual also accommodates the prohibitions that morality imposes (Piers & Singer, 1971; Sen, 1969). Still, the potential for acting upon homosexual desires exists in many individuals. Ellis (1980) records a case of a young man who experiences homosexual panic:

The client in this case is a twenty-six year old male who is a commercial artist. He has graduated from college, is doing well at his work, and has a steady girl friend with whom he has excellent sex and other relations. Nonetheless, he is terribly afraid of becoming homosexual and is obsessed with the idea that he may turn into one. He is somewhat typical of many males who have little or no real homosexual urges but are so afraid that they may become exclusive or real homosexuals and that they might thereby lose all their masculinity that they become seriously disturbed and think incessantly about the great danger that faces them ... [these men] are hardly able to function in any other aspect of their lives (375).

Homosexual components seem to pervade many aspects of male bonding throughout personal development in western society. This bonding may include physical and emotional ties which differ only in degree from homosexual bonding activities and not necessarily in kind or content (Tripp, 1987). Heterosexual males may masturbate together during late adolescence under the cloak of heterosexuality (by sharing a fantasy of sex with a woman), yet mutual masturbation among men is also practiced as homosexual activity (Sullivan, 1953). Bieber, Dain & Dince, et. al. (1962) report that mutual masturbation between heterosexually-identified males is not unusual. They write of one case in particular where two men, "cooperated in a mutual fantasy. each one imagined that he was the other and that at the same time each was a mature woman performing on this image of himself" (210). Sullivan also writes that this activity among adolescents is an essential rite de passage, and that the avoidance of homosexual activity in adolescence will result in "full-blown adult homosexuality" (256). Within the context of heterosexual male bonding, the erotic (sexual or homosexual) component is consciously and ardently denied. Vanggaard (1972) suggests that homosexual activity beyond adolescence occurs among heterosexual men frequently in situations where these men are isolated for lengthy periods of time. But Meeks and Heit (1982) report,

Men, being more fearful of homosexuality than women, show restraint in many ways. They are not as likely to hug another man, much less kiss him. Many men will not look another in the eye when carrying on a conversation. In the locker room, most men will avoid looking at another man's body... (232, 233).

A heterosexual man who is afraid to kiss another man or to look at another man's penis may experience danger of being aroused by these activities. His arousal might expose his own homosexual desire, and he may feel forced by the awareness of this desire into action. Group masturbation, among a variety of other male bonding activities, however, permits mutual arousal among men and conceals homo-erotic arousal under the cloak of machismo while permitting an acceptable outlet for

residual homosexual desire to be expressed in an acceptable situation (Tripp, 1987). As Tripp suggests, many forms of male bonding activity "use up" some homosexual desire which exists within heterosexual men, and the remainder is sublimated or repressed. Nevertheless, the observation made by Humphreys (1970) needs to be taken into consideration: Humphreys reported in his study that 54% of anonymous sex in public restrooms ("tearooms") involved heterosexual men who are married.

According to Freud, normal levels of heterosexuality depend on the ability of the individual to repress and sublimate the homosexual component of the sexual instinct (in Chuang & Addington, 1988: 614). We must recall, in the section discussing Freud's theories of homosexuality, that a sexual ambivalence exists in early individual development which is characterized by Freud as bisexual. At this time, the homosexual component is not a source of abhorrence or repulsion. The incidence of homosexual episodes which are reported to occur among many heterosexual men in our society refutes the idea that the homosexual component under normal circumstances in individual development ever entirely repressed.

As Rank (1971) explains, the love objects of homosexuality are frequently continuous with the formation of the ego-ideal. This process can be demonstrated to exist in the pederastic relationship known in ancient Greece and in the young male's taking older males as ideal role models (see Vanggaard, 1972). Sometimes, the object of the ego ideal and its positive masculine attributes may be sexualized. As the Kinsey Report (1948) states, the attributes of adult men, including their physical size and strength, as well as the penis and its size become objects of great admiration for young men who see these attributes as ideals they would like to attain. Vanggaard (1972) writes that the penis is a symbol of "greatness, strength, independence, courage, wisdom, knowledge, mastery of other men and possession of desirable women, potency, and everything else a boy may ... desire for himself" (56).

Bieber, Dain & Dince, et. al. (1962) report, for example, that many young men form homosexual relationships as a result of idealization: "I try to seduce males the way Mother does, and to possess them, absorb them. I try to take from the handsome males what I do not have" (237). Another, they write, "sought someone whom he admired for those qualities he believe to be lacking in himself" (238). Bieber, Daine & Dince, et. al. theorize that when their patients identified the homosexual partner with the father, masculine characteristics would be sought in the partner. The actual distance between the self and the desired object is often a source of pathological guilt, nourished by a "powerful fear of death and creates strong tendencies toward self-punishment, which also imply suicide" (71). The ubiquitous presence of guilt over homosexual desire coupled with the tendency toward self-punishment leads some gay people toward a psychiatric vision of themselves.

Paranoia is frequently connected with homosexuality as a precipitating feature of psychopathology within the personality (Cameron, 1967; Berg & Krich, 1958; Klein, 1949; Knight, 1940; Ovesey, 1955, 1969; Rank, 1964, 1979; Rosenfeld, 1949; Wolowitz, 1965, 1971). The first, and indeed the most famous association of paranoia with homosexuality is discussed in Freud's elegant treatment of the Schreber Case (Freud, 1911; see also Schreber, 1955; Sass, 1987). Schreber's paranoia was structured out of his experience of being gradually transformed from a man into a woman.

One case which illustrates the paradoxical preoccupation with homosexual fantasy alongside an overt repulsion with homosexual activity that occurs in a paranoid manner involves a young man from Canada. As a stockbroker John D. discovered that men were "coming on to him" all the time during his work day, and that this caused an enormous amount of anxiety. John perceived the various hand signals used on the floor of the stock exchange as homosexual advances. He denied

any interest in having a homosexual liaison, and denied passionately having any homosexual desires himself. In fact, he was so repulsed by the homosexual advances of his colleagues that he resigned from this position and left Canada for England where he took up studies at a British university.

During his tenure in England, John found once again that the teaching priests were constantly threatening him with homosexual propositions and gestures. During lectures, for example, he perceived subtle words and gestures used by the priests as attempts to coerce and seduce him. John succeeded in avoiding any close contact with the priests whom, he greatly feared, would seduce him if they had the chance. He ate alone, and was able to move into a single room in the dormitory. It was not long, however, before John was sexually overtaken by the priests.

The final episode which led to John's return to Canada and eventual hospitalization consisted of a night panic in which he awoke to find that the priests had hidden under his sheets and eaten off his penis during the night while he was asleep. He had, in actuality, mutilated his penis with a sharp knife. By castrating himself, John prevented the possibility of acting upon his unconscious homosexual desire. He was diagnosed by his psychiatrist as paranoid (John D. case).

The fear and anxiety of paranoia are rooted in the individual's own unrepressed homosexual and desires (Wolowitz, 1971). Ferenczi wrote that insufficiently repressed homosexuality can appear throughout adulthood through various neurotic symptoms, and that this was especially the case for paranoia, "concerning which the more recent investigations have been able to establish that it is really to be conceived as a disguised manifestation of the inclination toward the person's own sex" (1958: 228). The external and potential discoverers of secret homosexual desire are sometimes perceived as persecutors, inquisitors or, in psychotic states, as monsters and demons. Vergote (1988) notes, for example, the

connection that may be sustained between demonopathy and homosexuality. Confronted by his terrific homosexual obsessions, Vergote's patient cries to his wife, "This time the devil is with me; I'm possessed" (222). In paranoia which involves a preoccupation with homosexuality the developmental and socialized prohibitions against homosexual objects are challenged by the internal potential for powerful homosexual desires. Indeed, the foundations of masculine identity for the individual are challenged by the fear of discovery.

There appears to be a conflict existing between homosexual desire and the fear of acting on this desire for many men in western society. As a result of this conflict, gay sex in western society seems to hover between guilt and fear (Stayton, 1975). Stayton remarks that the presence of a fear of homosexual desire may threaten people into denying that they have attractions toward members of their same sex. Stayton suggests that "The result is that when a person does feel some physical attraction for a person of the same sex s/he is understandably uptight about expressing any type of affection ... for fear of being put down ... or being caught in a socially unacceptable pattern" (Stayton, 1975).

The potential for arousing homosexual desire remains, even if in a latent state, within the personality structure of many adult males. But these latent desires and fears may also become, as Ellis warns, rigid obsessions, leading to fixations and panic reactions among heterosexual men (1980). The denial and avoidance of intimacy among men seems to signify that some latent homosexual desire exists (ibid). When the presence of homosexual desire leads to a fixation, the individual may react to the consciousness of this desire in a paranoid way. Winter (1973) and Wolowitz (1965; 1971) observe that paranoia often includes a preoccupation with homosexual fantasy, while at the same time an overt repulsion toward homosexual

behaviour. Paranoia does, in fact, describe the experience of many men in relation with their own homosexual desire in this society.

As I have outlined, fear seems to dominate the social perception of homosexuality. But fear also appears to intrude into the personal and interpersonal dimension of homosexual experience. Homosexual desire, as one element of masculine sexuality in general, seems to provide a source of panic and fear for many men in western society which is problematic in many ways (Schofield, 1953; 1960; 1965). The fear which many men experience as a result of homosexual desire has been connected to various forms of psychopathology (Feldman & MacCullough, 1971; Green, 1974). These include, but are certainly not limited to, homosexual panic, paranoia and homophobia.

For many people, the closet is a creation of socialized fear of homosexuality in society. When it is constructed in this way, the closet is a product of homophobia: it is a socialized fear of homosexuality. For others, the closet is constructed out of fear that is internalized, a fear which develops against homosexual desire within the self. When it is constructed in this second way, the closet is a product of the individual whose own homosexual desire causes dread and anxiety or through paranoia.

The closet, in either of these two circumstances, may provide a secure place in which homosexuals and homosexuality may be contained. Some individuals may be contented with the marginalization which the closet provides because by hiding they avoid violence, oppression or ridicule. But living in the closet does not imply that homosexuals disappears from society, nor indeed that anxiety disappears from gay experience. Instead, the closet provides a place where gay sex and gay people may be hidden away from society, while also identified and controlled to some extent.

Both the danger of exposure to external forces and the danger of acting upon internal homosexual desires exist in the context of the closet.

On leaving the closet a gay person may attempt to refute suppression and marginalization, and try to establish an identity which includes a homosexual orientation. But, while an openness may develop regarding individual homosexual desire, the gay person who is out of the closet must frequently face a variety of sources of oppression and prohibition that are homophobic in nature. Upon facing these threats, the gay person may become paranoid — afraid of the world that threatens to persecute him. In either situation, homosexuality is entrenched in metaphors of fear and danger. Indeed, the myth which underwrites the fear of homosexuality for western society may require some revision before fear itself can be transformed into tolerance.

Time, Time, my friend,
Makes havoc everywhere; he is invincible.
Only the gods have ageless and deathless life;
All else must perish ...

-- Sophocles (Oedipus at Colonus)

Chapter Four

Beyond Psychology:

The Construction of AIDS as a Symbol of Retribution

Throughout human history disease has classically represented physical and psychological estrangement -- from God, from others and from the self (Cartwright & Bidiss, 1972). Bakan writes,

The authors of the Bible considered being "cut off" as the ultimate disaster, source of grief, or punishment that anyone might suffer. Thus, for example, in the story of Job ... they hardly saw fit completely to separate psychological and physical suffering, the losses of children and property that he suffered and the boils on his body, separation-estrangement and conspicuous physical affliction (Bakan, 1968: 4).

Disease, for Job, is a sign of retribution. He perceives he is being punished with diseases and afflictions for his faults. This is, for Job, the only way his suffering can have meaning. Indeed, Job's own lament is confused between innocence and culpability. So enormous is his suffering he will admit guilt, even if he is uncertain about its origin: "... let no fault of mine go uncensured. Woe to me

if I am guilty; if I am innocent, I dare not lift my head, so wholly abject, so drunk with pain am I ... The days of my life are few enough: turn your eyes away, leave me a little joy, before I go to the place of no return ..."(Job III: 14,15; 20,21).

Like the afflictions of Job, AIDS constitutes such extremes of suffering that it appears to be a disease of retribution. Indeed, many individuals perceive AIDS, as Job perceived his diseases and infections, as punishment for sins, and this may be, as it was for Job, the solitary way to provide meaning for the psychological and physical suffering caused by AIDS. In his comprehensive study, Brandt (1987) suggests that society tends to view AIDS as a punishment for sexual misconduct and also as an index of levels of social decay. He suggests that this predisposing notion has undermined responsible social action in the context of AIDS as a disease. Petite (1988) writes that "Disease is always an infestation of the spirit as well as the body, and because AIDS is so tainted with pejorative attitudes from society, this disease is especially a disease of the soul" (L-1). Mabey (1987) writes that AIDS casts a theological shadow which consists of "a vague, yet pervasive sense ... that the afflicted are suffering a just punishment for their misdeeds" (2).

In looking at AIDS as a disease that is related to the soul and yet somehow also related to physical retribution, it becomes apparent that AIDS is a disease that is assigned certain meanings and values. The meanings and values assigned to AIDS seem to have two, predominant functions. The first function of assigning meanings to AIDS is perhaps the most obvious: disease, suffering, must have meaning, otherwise suffering is absurd, without purpose (Guttmacher & Elinson, 1971: 117). The second function of assigning meaning to AIDS is related to the way AIDS is perceived, like Job's afflictions, as having a particular purpose. The particular purpose of AIDS, while lifting AIDS out of absurdity, appears to be rooted in a

perception that this disease and the suffering it involves has something to do with retribution: AIDS is a punishment for misdeeds, for faults and for sins.

In taking the meanings assigned to AIDS into consideration, it is necessary to trace the processes which do, throughout much of history, come to bear equally on the meanings and values attributed to homosexuality. The contemporary attitudes toward AIDS seem to divulge a deeper connection with historical realities, with the "raw materials" that are used to condemn homosexuality in the history of Christian tradition specifically and in the history of western society more generally. The modern imagination seems to be informed by the idea that homosexuality is, as it is originally conceived in much Christian discourse, a sin against God and nature with severe consequences for the homosexual on both accounts. It is within the historical conception of homosexuality in which the meanings and the values assigned to AIDS are situated.

Law, medicine and indeed sexual ethics have inherited homosexuality as a sin from Christian tradition, and few meaningful transformations of this inheritance can be shown to have occurred in favour of the homosexual. These opinions have inevitably come to suffuse the consciousness of western society regarding homosexuality, and this may be adequately demonstrated in indexing a western social response to AIDS, as a whole.

Perhaps, contemporary attitudes toward the AIDS epidemic may be viewed as symptomatic of a more comprehensive social attitude toward homosexuality. A social attitude toward AIDS seems to be constructed partially out of the meaning given to homosexuality in the history of Christian tradition, and partially out of the fear caused by a disease which is predominantly sexually contagious. Perhaps the social meaning attributed to AIDS also depends partially on the two processes of the internalization and projection of homosexual desire which are requisites for the

correct socialization of persons in western society. The western, social perception of AIDS seems to reveal aspects of homophobia that are constructed in the historical and theological predication of homosexuality, in the original meanings and values assigned to this order of human experience.

An understanding of the attitudes expressed in the context of the AIDS epidemic can only be developed alongside these broader characterizations of homosexuality within western society. These characterizations have already been given consideration in the preceding discussions. Within the development of western cultural attitudes toward homosexuality, a concise connection may be formulated between homosexuality and at least three symbols of estrangement. These include sin (estrangement from God), mental disease (estrangement from reason) and physical disease (estrangement from society). It is through these three major symbols of estrangement in which the meanings and values assigned to AIDS may be understood.

The symbols of estrangement attached to homosexuality are also the raw materials out of which a theme of retribution both begins and develops against homosexual people in the meanings and values attributed to AIDS. As Job is estranged from his community and from his god in the meanings he perceives for his diseases and afflictions, the homosexual appears to experience a similar form of estrangement in the meanings and values attributed to AIDS. The predominant meaning assigned to AIDS is that the disease is a form of retribution. While indeed reducing absurdity and lending a particular meaning to disease, retribution as a metaphor for AIDS is a meaning that estranges the individual who is diseased, infected or afflicted.

The individual with AIDS lives the meaning of retribution (see Cannon, 1939). He is estranged from all that is around him by having AIDS within him. He is also

estranged from himself, in the sense that disease creates a psychological boundary between the self and the suffering which the self experiences. Pain is, according to Bakan, "ego-alien", perceived as "not-me" or "other than me". It is perceived as affecting the body but not the real inner self (1968: 64; 73). The estrangement from the self which disease causes does, according to Bakan, rely on another factor as well. The disease has its own goal and purpose which are at odds with the goal and purpose of the self. Arguing from Selye's point of view (from the doctrine of specific etiology) Bakan suggests that disease mechanisms possess a telic interest of their own which contradicts the telic interests of the patient (32, 33). It is the purpose of disease to conquer the human organism and kill it. AIDS, however, presents a second purpose which intrudes upon the consciousness of the individual who has the disease. The individual infected with AIDS may consciously perceive that the purpose of his disease (to conquer the body and kill it) is one of retribution against the real self.

The AIDS patient is, in his own person like Job, wholly estranged in that his disease and his infection and his person are one entity. The suffering is so comprehensive that a separation between the self and the sense of suffering may not be made. Retribution refers to "recompense for evil," or "vengeance" or requital" (Oxford). In this, its most literal meaning, retribution seems to provide the basis for developing an understanding of what AIDS means for western society. The why of this meaning is another issue: retribution is related to a fear of punishment for homosexual desire within the unconscious construction of homophobia.

The connection that is made between disease and punishment in many social perceptions of AIDS is a critical factor that relates to the meaning that is given to homosexuality in the absence of AIDS. These I have already examined. But the

meaning that is given to homosexuality in the absence of AIDS is quite consistent with the meanings attributed to homosexuality in the presence of AIDS. Many of the attitudes expressed toward AIDS often appear to be expressed more directly toward homosexual men. Perceptions and attitudes that develop around the AIDS epidemic seem to relate to an idea that homosexuals as a group or the homosexual person as an individual, are themselves accountable for bringing AIDS into the world (Nelson, 1986). In their "victim derogation" hypothesis, Triplet & Sugarman (1987) found that homosexuals were held to be accountable for AIDS, and blamed for their illness.

Attributing accountability to people for diseases has a historical precedent which I will outline in this chapter by using the example of leprosy. Leprosy was a disease for which individuals were held responsible by their own actions. Leprosy resulted from an individual's conscious deviation from nature.

A second feature of attributing accountability to people for diseases needs to be explored as well. A connection appears to be made historically between homosexuality and the forces of chaos (in that homosexuality was perceived to oppose nature and the way things ought to be). This association can be theorized to exist between homosexuality and insanity (un-reason = deraison). Homosexuality is perceived to involve the choice of individuals for wrong behaviour. This choice is not considered a rational one, but instead one of misappropriation (abuse) of the individual's free will. As such, the choice for homosexuality is perceived as a conscious deviation from reason.

Disease and the Opposition of Nature: Leprosy

Homosexuality has been associated historically with two types of anathema, in particular, leprosy and madness. Leprosy conveys a sense of physical estrangement (a separation from or opposition to nature), while madness pertains to a fundamental division from the reason with which God communicates his will to human beings. The choice of individuals to act upon homosexual desire could be affiliated with a lack or loss of reason; the actual homoerotic behaviour itself might be viewed as a wilful sin that resulted in a disease or a plague which serves to punish contrary or unnatural sexual desires, once these desires had been acted upon.

There are several parallels between AIDS and leprosy. A connection between disease and homosexuality seems to be significant today in light of the connection that occurs between AIDS and the acts of homosexuality. Smith (1985) calls AIDS "the leprosy of the eighties" (16). Owen (1985) writes,

We might recall that history records a somewhat similar situation [to AIDS] when the disease to be feared was leprosy. We are now told that leprosy is not infectious, but in Biblical times it was feared even as AIDS is feared today. But the victim was not allowed to mingle with others, was ordered to stay 'without the camp.' Contact with other persons was strictly forbidden. And there were no exceptions. Miriam, sister of Moses, who had watched over the ark that contained her infant brother, committed an act of insubordination, was made a leper and was cast 'without the camp' until she was healed in answer to the prayers of Moses. The difference: Lepers were often healed. But with AIDS there is no healing ... (6).

Blaes (1986) attributes AIDS directly to the increase in homosexual activity. Zion writes in this theme, "Later Roman Catholic theologians find a multitude of causes to lie behind leprosy, sins varying from greed and avarice to simony and lust. However, as the tradition develops it is carnal sin which becomes the chief occasion for the punishment which is called leprosy" (1987: 21).

Neaman (1978) reinforces the connection between carnal sin and leprosy in her brief history of psychiatry: "In mediaeval literature leprosy is generally caused by pride of spirit, often associated with the sin of lust" (50).

Certain homoerotic behaviour was, by virtue of its highly sexualized reputation and its refusal to accommodate the divine command (procreation) — sexuality for its own sake — conceived as a sin of lust. Goodich writes in this connection,

The precedents laid down by Augustine and the Church Fathers classified same-sex relations as an illicit form of lust (luxuria), contrary to nature, likely to consign its perpetrators to the fires of Hell. All forms of homoerotic relations were ... labelled as sodomy (sodomia) and were regarded in canon law as the most heinous of sins, comparable to homicide (Goodich, 1979: ix).

Homosexuality, conceived as a sin of lust, resulted in the disease of leprosy. Any act of willful disobedience against God might result in this disease. Without knowing the precise sin that had taken place, wilful acts of disobedience to God and moral order could be determined by the simple presence of disease. Homosexual acts, in particular sodomy (and all homosexual behaviour was labelled as sodomy), constituted the ultimate act of disobedience: a blatant violation of the ancient prohibitions against homosexual desire.

In the case of Arnold the Catalan of Verniolle who was accused of sodomy in 1323, indulgence in both heterosexual and homosexual relations resulted in some sort of skin lesions which he immediately associated with leprosy. King Philip Vth sought out the lepers of France with the interest of persecuting them for the variety of sodomitic crimes that were evident in their diseased condition (Goodich, 1979). The fact that someone suffered from leprosy was a clear signal that they had committed the act of sodomy.

Neaman (1978) writes, however, that disease was also regarded by the Christian mind of the Middle Ages as a test of faith or as a purgation of sin coming directly from God. But a disease that tested faith or purged sin could not be mediated with

medical attention, because no medical treatment could possibly work contrary to the will of God. One would, in this case, wait out the disease, suffer, or die rather than risk contradicting God. However, the predominant view of disease was that it was a punishment for sin. In this case, some treatment to mediate the disease might be attempted (50). If leprosy was seen as a direct punishment for sin, some attempts for redemption and forgiveness could be attempted to help rid the individual of the disease. Once forgiveness from God had been attained, perhaps the disease and its identifying stigma might go away. If forgiveness could not be attained, the individual would continue to suffer until either the penalty for sin was sufficient and the individual returned to health, or, in some cases, the penalty for sin was insufficient or the sin so heinous that the individual would die.

Similarly, homosexuality itself seems to have been an activity that was surrounded with images of disease, of contagion and of plague. Albert the Great wrote that sodomy was as "contagious as any disease and rapidly spread[s] from one to another" (Bailey, 1955: 120). Boswell (1980) reminds us of the association between leprosy and homosexuality that was strong during the Middle Ages: "Gregory IX sent the Dominicans to root out homosexuality in Germany, which he heard was 'so ridden with unnatural vice...that some parts, especially Austria, are thought of as if infected with the foulness of leprosy'" (294). And, in the example of Carolingian legislation attributed to Regino circa AD 914, it is stated that "those who carry on irrationally and pollute others with the leprosy of this branded crime [sodomy] must be included among those penitents who are endangered by an unclean spirit" (Goodich, 1979: 26).

The meaning attributed to AIDS like the meaning attributed to leprosy seems to exist in close proximity with perceived sins of disobedience. This meaning seems to reinforce the moral position of Christian tradition which regards homosexuality

plainly as a morally disordered condition which promises serious consequences. Johnson (1987) states that "AIDS is a suitable recompense for those who give themselves over to immorality" (18). As Sontag (1988) again reminds us, AIDS shares with leprosy the stigma of origin: sodomy. Drickamer, Marquardt, Oehlert, et. al. (1988) write that "Leprosy, a loathsome disease with sufferers treated as outcasts, was a kind of AIDS threat in Jesus' time" (24). Boys (1987) calls the gay bathhouse a "leper colony" (47).

Once the meaning attributed to AIDS becomes fused with the meaning attributed to leprosy, new metaphors begin to develop to accommodate this connection.

The acts of lust, sodomy and depravity are conceived primarily as physical acts, and are considered to be as physically contagious as communicable diseases such as tuberculosis. Thus, the perceived contagion of AIDS becomes similar to the perceived contagion of leprosy. AIDS becomes "highly contagious" like leprosy was "highly contagious" in the human imagination (neither disease is factually highly contagious). Following the exaggeration of contagion, other associations follow that are consistent with the fear which contagion carries. Boys suggests that AIDS carriers should be quarantined on Penikese Island (near Cape Cod) "which was used as a leper colony until the early 20th century" (53). The CDC AIDS Weekly (8 December, 1986) states that "A Gallup poll conducted for Newsweek has found that 54% of those surveyed believe that those with an active form of AIDS should be quarantined and treated" (5). Crowther, the publisher of the Fredericton Gleaner called for AIDS to be treated like the plague. He suggests that people with AIDS should be isolated from the public and quarantined. Crowther writes in his editorial,

A strong body of opinion believes that homosexual AIDS victims got exactly what they deserved; that if they had conducted themselves

properly, according to the norms of society, they would probably be unaffected today (Ottawa Citizen, 5 July, 1990: A-4).

Homosexuality and homosexual acts are evils which have consequences that reflect or signify the origins of the evil. Like leprosy, it is with AIDS (the diseased condition) through which the sins (sodomy) may be determined. Pyle (1985) calls AIDS "the pestilence" and defines it, with the black death of the 14th century, as "A calamity or evil, especially one regarded as a visitation from God" (3). And AIDS is a contagious disease which is transmitted through various sexual acts (the highest risk through anal intercourse).

AIDS functions as a sign of guilt, like leprosy signified guilt. Like people convicted of a crime and experiencing punishment, AIDS patients also experience profound guilt over their diagnoses. Valdiserri (1985) has concluded that for many AIDS patients, the diagnosis is perceived as retribution for a gay lifestyle. This fact is reported by Goldmeier (1987) who situated guilt, anger and fear reactions to AIDS among other feelings expressed by patients. Profound guilt is reported by gay men on hearing the AIDS diagnosis (Perry & Markowitz, 1986). Some AIDS patients are so disturbed by feelings of guilt, that they contemplate suicide and experience a complete diminishing of self-esteem (see Miller, 1987). Kaisch (1986) supports this view, stating that 12 out of 30 seropositive men in his study had suicidal ideation after receiving their antibody test results. One attempted suicide. Moulton (1985) suggests that seventy-eight per cent of the gay men with AIDS in his sample attributed the cause of disease to themselves. He reports that self-attribution was associated with greater psychological distress than was attribution to external factors (viral contagion, for example). Hirsch (1985) reported similar results. Miller (1987) concluded that gay men experienced a high proportion of guilt around the AIDS diagnosis in which they connected their perceived past sexual misdemeanors resulting in illness as punishment. Similarly, Dilley, Ochitill, Pearl &

Volberding (1985) found that many AIDS patients blamed themselves for their disease and interpreted their condition as retribution for a promiscuous gay lifestyle. A study by Dilley, Shelp & Batki (1986) replicates these findings. In their research, Dilley, Shelp & Batki found that some homosexuals with AIDS tended to internalize societal homophobia and believe that homosexuality itself caused AIDS to occur. Taking the expression of guilt into consideration, we may assume that the accountability for disease expressed in leprosy is either identical or similar to the accountability for disease expressed in AIDS. In both leprosy and AIDS people are held to be accountable for the disease because they have committed a crime of homosexuality (against God, against nature). And since homosexuality is perceived to constitute a sinful act which contradicts nature, these sins are perceived to assume consequences for the physical body.

Plague and contagion become words which are emblematic of how AIDS is perceived in the same manner as plague and contagion were issues which complicated understanding leprosy. Like the ancient leper, many AIDS patients worry how people will react to their physical disfigurement with AIDS (Frierson & Lippmann, 1987). One of the major concerns of AIDS patients included with their feelings of alienation is a concern with the physical disfigurement which AIDS involves. Hoffman (1986) suggests that punitive or avoidance attitudes are expressed generally toward AIDS patients in relation to their disease condition. Katz, Hass, Parisi, Astone, McEvaddy & Lucido (1987), comparing AIDS with cancer, cardiac disease and diabetes, differentiated AIDS as a highly stigmatizing condition, and because AIDS patients are generally held responsible for their illness.

But homosexuality, besides being viewed as a mortal sin that resulted in a physical disease, also became associated with a form of chaos that is prefigured in the imagination of the Middle Ages regarding insanity.

Disease and the Opposition of Reason: Insanity

In its connection with disorder (chaos) homosexuality (sodomy) forms the basis for another connection that was perceived to exist in relation with insanity. This connection too has survived into the twentieth century construction of AIDS as this disease affects homosexuals. Since homosexuality was a crime whose perpetrators contradicted the natural order which was revealed by God through reason, it became associated with insanity (the lack of or absence of reason). Some precipitating condition must first exist in the person which leads him to commit homosexual acts. No longer was the body the solitary locus of the homosexual condition. With its association with insanity, homosexuality became connected with the failures of the head, a misappropriation of the faculties of reason leading either to or from madness.

Madness is another symbol of something which threatens and opposes social order. Boswell (1980) suggests that homosexuality, as a deviation from the norm "took on a sinister and alarming mien and was viewed as part of the constellation of evil forces bringing about the destruction of the familiar world order" (23). Sin is always at the root of insanity, the departure from rational order: "[sin] might cause insanity or it might originate in insanity, but the final result was a deviation from nature and God's pattern" (Neaman, 1978: 53). Perhaps, in this connection, the psychological estrangement reported by many homosexuals can be approached. But besides marking the separation of the homosexual from the world, the connection between homosexuality and insanity also marks the estrangement of the homosexual from God.

The connection between homosexuality and madness might also form the point where discourse on homosexuality moves from religion into psychiatry and medicine,

or where, at least this discourse is shared in both perspectives. The early combination of the principle of reason with religious views of the person became the method which both early psychiatry and the church shared in measuring the condition of the soul: one who was without reason or "beside" reason was, respectively, either insane or possessed. Neaman (1978) writes,

When a man suffered a...serious disturbance of his reason he was considered unhealthy and demented, "insanus". Reason is to be understood as order, stability, and a quality of the soul inherent in that instinctive kind of wisdom which attracts men to goodness and repels them from evil. Loss of reason is loss of the instinct for virtue...it was considered a quality of man's immortal portion, the soul. Thus irrationality was considered a denial of the Creator and a loss of the most natural part of the soul itself ... reason [comes] to be associated with the narrower function of judgement (40).

But perhaps more fundamentally, the connection between homosexuality and the lack of reason forms the foundation for the perception that homosexuals choose their sexual orientation through some function or dysfunction of the rational faculties. This choice is perceived, like madness, as an irrational choice, a decision made "against God." Johnson (1987) writes,

Homosexuality is an unnatural, deviant practice carried on by men who seek gratification of their sexual desires without respect to the laws of God. No one is born a homosexual ... That which was begun by choice becomes a way of life by the compulsion of an acquired habit (17).

An insane person was separated from reason, and therefore separated from God who spoke in the language of reason. Insanity was perceived as a malfunction of the natural link between humans and God, and represented the antitheses of rationality, morality and creation — death and destruction. This opposition to reason, conceived as heresy, presented the most notable disruption of divine creation possible. "Knowing is a property of the soul ... the man who loses the instrument of knowledge has also lost his soul" (Neaman, 1978: 53).

The metaphor of "the storm rising up in the head" became the most pervasive representation of the chaos that occurred when the person was closed off from

divine reason. It consisted of a profound disruption of cerebral reason, then a confusion of the soul, and ultimately a complete turning of the person from God. The image of a storm in the forest persisted as a symbolic recollection of "the time before the golden age of Christianity, the terrifying barbarism of the heathens, even, by implication, the moment before the creation" (Neaman, 1978: 56). Individuals who lost their instrument of knowledge, reason, had also lost their souls and in a sense returned to those conditions that Christianity, and its delineation of moral and rational order had displaced. These individuals were, due to this turning away from reason, estranged from God and from Christianity and its world.

If something disturbed the continuity between reason and divinity, then the logical duration of rationality between humans and a metaphysical source in the creator was ruptured. Homosexuality became then symptomatic of a rupture between the passive human head and the active word of God. Homosexuals did not listen to the voice that was normally apprehended by the physical seat of the cerebral, anatomical soul; and if they did hear this voice, they chose to contradict God through a sheer defiance of their God-given reason; they did, lastly, choose against reason, to oppose creation by turning away from God toward themselves, their own flesh in which pleasure existed for pleasure's sake (*luxuria*).

The term "egoism" described this interruption of divine reason. Egoism resulted in "flesh turning unto itself inward" (Neaman, 1978) rather than outward, away from the self, toward God. Egoism, the preoccupation with the physical form of the self, tended to contradict the paradigm of spiritual receptivity under which all lesser physical activities were naturally subordinate. With the development of anatomical pathology in the Middle Ages, the ultimate value of spiritual virtue, Reason, became situated inside the human head. Reason became a literal, physical virtue that was apprehended by physical organs. One who had reason was one who

was in direct contact with God. This person was in total possession of the faculties necessary to acquire divine favour and through this connection, to maintain health and virtue. Only sin could potentially interrupt this sacred matrix of the human soul with the divine will and thereby admit demons, madness and chaos into the human condition. The identification of the soul with the diencephalon and basal ganglia of the brain was important because spiritual virtue then became a physical attribute. The principle function of the invisible soul, reason, is moved to the visible human head. The association of mind (as in "minding" or paying heed) with reason (the rational order of God) leads reason away from metaphysics and into physiology. The attributes of the soul move into the world of nature.

Rationality, in its associations with health, wholeness and virtue, symbolized the human body in complete obedience to God who was revealed through reason (the head) and flowed downward into the natural realm (the body). The rational mind proceeded normally through its continuous and organic dialogue with the divinity, and culminated in an equally rational and thus wholly moral and healthy world order. Egoism occurred when the body dominated the soul, hence the "head" and its intimacy with God was defeated. A failure of the soul resulted in a loss of reason -- insanus. Egoism was a condition which occurred when the human person refused to submit to the power and domination of God that while located in the head, would, when unimpeded, flow into the body and its guide its activities correctly.

The reverse of egoism -- selflessness -- was considered to be an ideal state for humans in their relationship with God. Neaman writes, "[Flesh] turned toward God was precisely what it was intended to be: a mansion for the rational soul, a receptor of information which could warn the soul to shun sin" (Neaman, 1978: 45). Thus, rationality came to represent the clear, uninterrupted perception of divine

reason, while at the same time egoistic physical gratification became associated with those activities in which the body was indulged for the sake of temporal pleasure.

Homosexuality became associated with egoism, with the substitution of self for the dominion of God. This occurred because homosexual desire was perceived as a selfish kind of sexuality, and because homosexual activity was perceived as a kind of sexuality that existed entirely for pleasure. The use of the word "narcissistic" to describe homosexual activity proves the stamina of this association (Rosenfeld, 1949; Rothstein, 1980). But perhaps the concept of narcissism linked with the vice of homosexuality, is also prefigured in the mediaeval notion of tristitia. Neaman (1978) writes, "The root of all vices is usually pride, but pride ramifies to wrath and wrath to despair ... tristitia ... the same word for the suffering experienced by the humoral melancholic who lost his natural warmth" (54). Vincent de Beauvais defined tristitia as "the ingoing of the natural heat of the body" (54). Vincent's definition seems to parallel the modern conception of homosexuality as an "inversion" of sexuality (Freud's terminology) or as a condition that is rooted in "autoeroticism" -- egoism.

But not only did homosexuality activity, due to its indulgence of the body's desires for pleasure, occlude divine reason. It also, in seeking out others of the same sex, idealized the body, sexualized the masculine attributes, and substituted physical lust for worship. The ideals of the body, the locus dominated by lust, were clearly the wrong ideals in that they substituted sexual attributes for the spiritual ideals of Christian tradition. The images of idolatry that appear in connection with homosexuality can be seen throughout Paul's writings in the New Testament.

Both leprosy and madness were considered to represent opposition to natural laws and divine reason. In these two ways the construction of homosexuality as

antithesis to nature and reason became solidified. The antithesis was made up of the opposites of nature and reason — unnatural (wild) and unreasonable (insane). Pope Gregory IX wrote that sodomites were “more unclean than animals, more vicious than almost anything alive, who have lost their reason and destroyed the kindness of nature” (Boswell, 1980: 294). The Council of Angers circa 1216–1219 portrayed homosexuals as “monsters” (Goodich (1979: 45).

The image which came to represent the opposition of reason was the wild man or the wolf man, the half-animal being whose bestial form was a sign of his moral depravity. The wild man stood beyond the City of God that was constructed around the tenets of reason and rationality. He existed in the darkness of the primeval forest and everything he did contradicted and threatened the continuity of the created world by violating the natural laws and divine reason which held the created world in place and out of the clutches of chaos. Cretien de Troye's Yvain, who lives on the verge of madness outside the town, strips naked and darts about in the dark forest threatening the townsfolk who see him (Neaman, 1978). In Christianity, the devil portrayed in the New Testament book of I Peter 5 is “prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat” (8).

An enormous literature about zoanthropy (the animal man) was built upon Biblical references, in particular, a great literature appeared on the figure of King Nebuchadnezzar of the Old Testament book of Daniel IV. Neaman (1978) writes, “Pierre Bersuine, a fourteenth century commentator, tells us that Nebuchadnezzar lost his human form because he had the ‘wild and impious heart of a beast, full of cruelty and sin” (53). Nebuchadnezzar did, in the Jewish literature at least, end up “being treated as [a] wom[a]n” (Goodich, 1979: 47), and there is little doubt that his “bestial” nature along with his sodomitic inclinations informed the Christian imagination about the consequences of homosexuality. It may be significant as well

that a translation of chapter eleven of the classic reference work by Julius Preuss (1911) on this topic diagnoses Nebuchadnezzar as a paranoid homosexual. After a dream in which he envisions himself being turned into an animal, King Nebuchadnezzar, does in reality, end up being transformed into a terrible beast: "Nebuchadnezzar was driven from human society and fed on grass like oxen, and was drenched by the dew of heaven; his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, his nails became like birds' claws" (Daniel IV: 30).

Subsequently the condition of mania was considered as a descent from reason that occurred because of the sins of bestiality and lust, both symbolic descriptions of a body abandoned by reason, left to the perils of sexual chaos. Similarly, speculation recently developed around the theoretical origins of HIV in African green monkeys, horses and sheep. The mediaeval connection between the homosexual and bestiality reappeared when the original African virus was conceived to have survived the transition from the animal to the human host because of apparent homosexual depravity, including bestiality (Van Impe, 1987: 29). Van Impe (1987) writes,

I believe that AIDS is the final plague mentioned in Revelation 6: 8, in which one fourth of the earth's population is destroyed through the 'beasts of the field.' Since medical experts believe that the AIDS virus passed from monkeys and sheep to humans through biting and BESTIALITY [sic] (sex acts with animals) we see God's prophesy becoming a reality in our generation (5).

The Plains Baptist Challenger reports that bestiality is "at least 300% more frequent among homosexuals" (June, 1985: 38). Gillming (1987) writes, "[AIDS] began in Africa from men introducing the fluids from monkeys into their bodies -- an explanation is too awful to discuss. From that beginning, AIDS [is] being spread by homosexuals" (1).

The thematic associations drawn between homosexuality and bestiality appear to support the notion that the sodomitic act constituted besides madness some aspects similar to the bestiality of Nebuchadnezzar. We are reminded by McNeill (1976) of the connection sustained between nature and reason:

The crime against nature ... [is one which] ... the voice of nature and of reason, and the express law of God, determined to be capital. Of which we have a special instance, long before the Jewish dispensation, by the destruction of two cities by fire from heaven; so that this is a universal, not merely a provincial, precept. In the Old Testament the law condemns sodomists (and possibly other homosexual offenders) to death as perpetrators of an abomination against the Lord, while in the New Testament they are denounced as transgressors of the natural order and are disinherited from the kingdom of God as followers of the vile practices of the heathens (79).

Sodomy became an inclusive category of deviation as time passed, so that it could include anal intercourse with women or with beasts. Greenberg (1988) gives an example of American antisodomy legislation of 1881, stating that "the legislation drew on the older Christian execration of sodomy, but incorporated Victorian fears of masturbation ... " (401):

Whoever commits the abominable and detestable crime against nature by having carnal knowledge with mankind or beast; or who, being male, carnally knows any man or woman through the anus; and whoever entices, allures, instigates or aids any person under the age of twenty one to commit masturbation or self-pollution is guilty of sodomy, and upon conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned in the State prison not more than fourteen nor less than two years (401).

And as Tripp (1987) has remarked, what had been ecclesiastical law eventually became western society's civil law:

With the expansion of the social and political power of the early Church, sex law and custom came to be rigorously enforced by religion. But since the twelfth century, the administration of civil and criminal law has gradually been wrestled from religious hands. Yet the whole area of sex, tinged as it is with moral connotations, has for so long embarrassed law-makers that the legal wording of sex is quite imprecise (7).

Sodomitic acts were already consistently linked with heresy, and the heretic was someone who did not conform to the rules of the social order defined within Christian tradition. Heresy could be thought of as a form of insanity in that it was an act of contradiction on all levels, against norms and values. Heretical ideas were perceived as attempts to sabotage the dominant and acceptable views of the day. Heresies were offenses against both reason and nature, and also offenses against God and the established order of Christian tradition.

The association of homosexuality with heresy was recently evident when the Board of the United Methodist Church in the United States threatened to bring heresy charges against a bishop who had appointed a homosexual pastor to a congregation (The Christian News, 4 July, 1983: 10). The views of pro-gay theologians writing in the context of Catholicism on homosexuality are called "dissenting opinions" by Harvey (1987) and are regarded by several official Church doctrines as heresies against the Church. The Letter to the Bishops (in Harvey) states, "While [these] members may claim a desire to conform their lives to the teachings of Jesus, in fact they abandon the teaching of His Church. This contradictory action should not have the support of the bishops in any way" (241).

Foucault has suggested that madness replaces leprosy as the major social stigma against which mediaeval reason defended itself. In the introduction to Madness and Civilization, Barchilon writes,

[Foucault] sees a definite connection between some of the attitudes toward madness and the disappearance, between 1200 and 1400 of leprosy ... As leprosy vanished, in part because of segregation, a void was created and the moral values attached to the leper had to find another scapegoat. Mental illness and unreason attracted that stigma to themselves ... (Foucault, 1973: vi).

AIDS as Retribution: The Reinforcement of Homophobia

There is evidence for arguing that many of the attitudes and perceptions which develop around the meaning attributed to AIDS are structured within the psychodynamics of homophobia. As I theorized in the last chapter, homophobia seems to indicate the existence of an unconscious homosexual desire located within the individual. And AIDS appears to be a disease which awakens many internal feelings about homosexuality, some of which may be unconscious (repressed) or partially unconscious. Mabey remarks,

AIDS has opened the lid on a pandora's box of repressed demons, ones that perhaps will never be laid to rest entirely, but which need only the right combination of circumstances to become as virulent as the AIDS virus itself (1987: 1).

Homosexual desire is prohibited through the defenses which develop in homophobia. But prohibitions also function, to some extent, as a form of threat against homosexual desire. The consequences of acting upon homosexual desire are anticipated as threatening consequences. In a consideration of the Sodom story as a myth informing the unconscious, acting upon homosexual desire results in two forms of punishment: castration and death. The connection that exists unconsciously between fears of castration and fear of death is confirmed in a study by Sarnoff & Corwin (1959).

The reaction of the majority of homosexual men to their own homosexual desire in a detailed clinical study by Saghir and Robins (1973) was one dominated by a consciousness of guilt and fear. When acting upon their homosexual desire gay people became conscious of guilt and indeed conscious of some of the ways this guilt was structured. "The guilt was of a religious and moral nature, involving feelings of "sin" or simply doing something "wrong" and "unnatural"" (61). While the fears were often free-floating and generalized, sometimes these fears could be

related to the possibility that homosexuality would be discovered by either family or friends. The authors write,

[F]or the male growing up to be homosexual, it is not usually easy nor peaceful. Guilt, fear and misunderstanding are part of this growth with little help if any from his peers, his doctor or the significant others in his life. Even during adulthood and maturity many of the homosexual males continue to labour emotionally under the burdens of fear and guilt. A great deal in their immediate and distant environments helps to perpetuate these feelings (65).

The presence of fear and guilt, coupled with an overarching feeling of wrongdoing also pervades the AIDS diagnosis for gay men. Many feel as though they are being punished by AIDS for being gay. Cassens (1985) suggests that AIDS creates a psychological trauma for gay men who contract the disease, complicated by the exposure of their sexual orientation and exacerbated by potential media coverage. AIDS tends to be a very public disease for individuals. Woods (1985) discovered that psychological depression presented in higher levels in healthy homosexual men than in healthy heterosexual men. AIDS is clearly affecting the gay population. Siegal (1986) profiles AIDS according to issues of morality, public perception and the negative prejudice and discrimination which AIDS raises upon disclosure. Deuchar (1984) suggests that AIDS presents a crisis for the homosexual man who has not revealed his sexual orientation to significant others — the disease exposes this fact in a manner which causes profound psychological trauma.

Saghir and Robins suggest that much of the guilt and fear experienced by homosexual men must be considered in reference to religion. According to their study, many gay men also reported strong feelings of alienation. Because of this, at least in part, the involvement of the homosexual in a formal religious affiliation generally diminished following during the 1950s when homosexuality was loudly condemned in the Church. But the bases of the homosexual person's antipathy for religion run perhaps more deeply than the sentiment expressed in homilies from the

pulpit. As Saghir & Robins point out, the Christian church generally and historically dismisses homosexuality as sinful and exhibits little consideration for the homosexual as a person who has homosexual desires. Indeed, the condemnation of homosexuality is not to be considered exceptional when the overall restrictive attitude within Christian tradition toward sexual matters in general are taken into consideration. Moreover, as Saghir and Robins point out,

the problem that the homosexual faced in relation to the church was a prolonged and perpetual one since there was very little the homosexual could do to stop his attachments to other men. His dilemma with his church seemed insoluble. The only alternatives were leaving the church or staying in it with the hope that some day the church would change its attitudes toward him. Until recently, most homosexuals found it easier to leave the church. However, to many of them staying in the church was crucial. Their involvement in it continued while they waited for a "new day" (158; 65).

Saghir and Robins observe that many homosexuals who are raised in organized religions exhibit negative feelings and emotional and physical withdrawal from their religious convictions. Fortunato (1987) confirms the idea that gay people feel a profound sense of loss, estrangement and alienation from their Christian faith -- they feel exiled from religion. Nevertheless, "throughout his contact with organized religion the homosexual has felt ... a sense of alienation and labored under a feeling of prejudice ... [and] is repeatedly condemned. Thus, the Judeo-Christian tradition is at least partly responsible for estrangement of the homosexual from religious faith" (Saghir & Robins, 1973: 182).

The definition of AIDS according to a variety of moral criteria also articulates grave consequences for homosexual people, and indeed, the moral problems expressed within ethical debates on the topic of AIDS have clouded other dimensions of AIDS including suffering, care and treatment. By making AIDS into a moral issue the disease and the suffering and the human elements of AIDS are overruled by the moral issues associated with getting the disease in the first place. Instead, AIDS

becomes indicative of the moral status of homosexuals. This moral status tends to favour depravity as one of the conditions which brings homosexuals into the contact with AIDS. Morton & McManus (1986) discovered that negative attitudes expressed toward AIDS had absolutely no correlation with the disease condition, but instead related directly to general attitudes toward homosexuality. Mabey (1987) writes,

The AIDS complex has evoked symbolic resonances reaching down to the deepest levels of our anxieties and fears --the level identified by Ricoeur ... as the primeval symbiosis between evil, sin, contagion and defilement. I sometimes think that this symbiosis has produced a mutant of physiological AIDS, giving rise to an 'acquired immune deficiency syndrome' of the moral systems as well. Suddenly we are prey to opportunistic infections of prejudice, fear and anxiety which overwhelm our normal defenses of moral valuation and judgment (1).

People suffering from AIDS have certainly been among those individuals affected by moralizing tendencies. Many writers within Christian tradition openly blame AIDS patients for their conditions, and use AIDS to threaten homosexuals. The overall attitude of many Christian churches in our society towards AIDS has been called negative and paralytic (Menz, 1987; Salladay, 1987; Shelp & Sunderland, 1985). Menz (1987) claims that the inaction on the part of Christian denominations in the context of the AIDS crisis precludes any possibility of positive intervention.

Any understanding of negative attitudes constructed around the meaning of AIDS reaches well into the historical and theological construction of homosexuality which we have already explored. And as we have also explored, whether socialized in moral, religious or secular systems, homophobia that is upheld in western society seems to contribute to a profound fear and anxiety that is structured around unconscious homosexual desire, and projected outward toward homosexual people. Indeed, anxiety and fear in the face of the AIDS epidemic may replicate some of the unconscious features of homophobia as well. But homophobic anxiety and fear may also tend to be reinforced in the threatening context of AIDS -- the disease

homosexuals get. AIDS may, when considered as a consequence of homosexual activity, provide substantiation to homophobic fear. AIDS may function as a symbol of what happens to individuals when homosexual desire is acted upon. AIDS is experienced as emasculation (the physical diminishment of virility in the manifestation of wasting syndrome) and physical death. These two features of AIDS connect precisely with the two aspects of retribution of the Sodom story (castration and death). The prohibitions which are formed in homophobia may be reinforced by the threat which AIDS consciously or unconsciously evokes: acting upon homosexual desire (violating the prohibitions) results in emasculation, physical diminishment and physical death.

Blamed for their disease, many homosexual people have retreated into fear in the effort to avoid the identification and stigma which AIDS causes. Dilley, Shelp & Bakti (1986) reported that there is a tendency for society to blame AIDS patients for their disease because the disease is intimately associated with homosexuality. Also, homophobic violence and hostility against gays has risen sharply with AIDS (Gronfors & Stalstrom, 1987). The Letter to the Bishops on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (1986) addresses violence against homosexuals in a rather ambiguous manner:

It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech or in action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church's pastors wherever it occurs ... The intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected ... But the proper reaction to crimes committed against homosexual persons should not be to claim that the homosexual condition is not disordered. When such a claim is made and when homosexual activity is consequently condoned, or when civil legislation is introduced to protect behaviour to which no one has any conceivable right, neither the Church nor society should be surprised when other distorted notions and practices gain ground, and irrational and violent reactions increase (in Harvey, 1987: 239).

Frierson, Lippmann & Johnson (1987) reported that an AIDS diagnosis for a family member was a traumatic event for a family. Among stressors reported, these authors concluded that fears of contagion and homosexuality, notoriety because of AIDS and a general feeling of helplessness in the context of a terminal disease placed the family in jeopardy. Other researchers discovered that the AIDS pandemic resulted in an increase of families reporting serious concern about their sons' sexual orientation (see Robinson, Skeen & Walters, 1987).

The associations between homosexuality and alienation seem to be constructed within many Christian sources as a permanent theme of retribution against homosexuals. Christian Crusade (1987) carried the headline "Scourge of AIDS serves its purpose." The Sword of the Lord (Nov. 15, 1985) asks, "The pestilence of AIDS -- is it the Judgment of God?" "AIDS: A revelation of the righteous wrath of God," announces The Standard Bearer (Feb. 15, 1984). "The homosexual black plague spreads" warns a headline in the Plains Baptist Challenger (June, 1983). Handford (1985) states, "When God's laws are broken then there are serious consequences that come into play. Venereal disease has been one of those that has plagued us for centuries. And AIDS is just another step in that same progression" (14). As Dollar (1987) writes, "We must pray for the salvation of homosexuals. We must not hate them. Their sin disgusts a holy God, but they need Christ" (66). FACS Sheet (#42) explains,

The Old Testament penalty for homosexual activity was death [and] God's word indicates that certain diseases are the result of sin ... Rebellion against God's commands may result in a plague seven times as severe as the sin. He [God] clearly warned Israel that sin brought judgment not only to sinners but also to succeeding generations through their great-grandchildren. Antibiblical human wisdom has decreed that sodomy is a normal alternative life style, but God's spirit observes (Proverbs 16: 25) 'There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death ... when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1: 15)' (1987).

Hill & McKnight (June, 1985) write, "Christians in great love for lost souls should be winning homosexuals to Christ so they will be delivered from their sin, and winning AIDS victims to Christ so they will escape eternal retribution" (6).

For some people, the homosexual person must be avoided because he is viewed as a carrier of contagious disease. This view is expressed by Patton (1985). Watney (1987) concludes that AIDS has reinforced the righteousness of white, heterosexual family life -- the societal ideal in western society. Equally, Watney suggests, AIDS functions as a means for containing and decreasing the incidence of homosexuality which threatens this ideal and moral family structure. For other people, the presence of homosexual desire presents a trigger for the development of an alarming fear of punitive death in the symbols of AIDS. Some of these individuals, as reported by Frolkis (1986) are not considered to be at any significant risk of acquiring AIDS. Rapaport & Braff (1985) connected an alarming fear of AIDS with homosexual panic disorder, while Valdiserri (1986) connected AIDS phobia with ego-dystonic homosexuality.

Tolson (1988) says that AIDS has been ushered into the world by an onslaught of homophobia. Our attitudes toward AIDS seem to be prefabricated and indeed parented by negative images of the gay person which are historically constructed and which precede the discovery of AIDS by decades (Flynn, 1985; Kayal, 1985).

Kelly, St. Lawrence, Smith, Hood & Cook (1987) in their investigation of physicians' attitudes toward AIDS patients, found that the stigmatization of AIDS is a direct result of its connection with homosexuality. Similar findings were reported by Weiss (1983) who discusses, in his early studies, the irrational homophobic biases and prejudices affecting the medical profession when facing the AIDS patient. Whalen (1987) and Wiebe (1986) both confirm the existence of a stigma of origin

surrounding the AIDS prognosis which is problematic in the professional treatment of the disease.

There are strong associations made throughout history between homosexuality and physical estrangement. Because it is conceived to be unnatural and contrary to God's intentions (Narramore, 1960: 216) homosexuality has been viewed as causal of physical disease. AIDS (disease) as an outcome of homosexuality (sin) seems to mirror similar perceptions of homosexuality constructed in the mediaeval Christian imagination around images of leprosy and insanity.

Little compassion seems to be shown for the consequences of sin, especially for an activity that has at its basis what is perceived to be a willful, conscious choice for sin. Gronfors & Stalstrom (1987) suggest that AIDS has stimulated hostility against gays in our society, and that this hostility is observed to accompany a rationale for the punishment of homosexuals with AIDS. Greenberg (1988) writes that "Steady exposure to ... a tendentious framing of the AIDS crisis in the mass media has affected attitudes and stimulated assaults against gay men, and in some parts of the country has reduced support for gay rights" (479).

Today, men with AIDS fear the stigmatization which the AIDS disease presents. Greenberg (1988) summarizes one of the main social responses to AIDS:

AIDS has provided a new focal point for antigay diatribes. Right-wing publicist Patrick J. Buchanan wrote in the New York Post that homosexuals have 'declared war upon nature, and now nature is exacting an awful retribution.' James Anderton, the chief constable of Greater Manchester ... attributed the spread of AIDS to 'degenerate conduct' in the form of 'obnoxious sexual practices' and described gays as 'swirling around in a human cesspit of their own making.' Lady Saltoun, a member of the House of Lords, warned that it was not possible to 'get away from the wrath of God' (479).

Billy Graham, a popular modern evangelist, reiterates in his televised homilies the historical view which connects the appearance of physical disease with the sin of sodomy. Graham claims that the epidemiology of sexual disease demonstrates

"nature itself lashes back when we go against God" (Zion, 1987: 19). And this position is not exclusive to ecclesia. Zion quotes an editorial in the Southern Medical Journal: "Might we be witnessing, in fact, in the form of a modern communicable disorder, a fulfillment of St. Paul's pronouncement: 'the due penalty of their error'" (19,20)? Bynum (1985) writes,

The time may well come when churches will be told by the courts that they cannot refuse to receive practicing homosexuals into their membership. When that day comes ... Bible believing churches will face a terrible trial. No church that believes the Bible can ever take homosexuals into their membership ... We must be prepared to stand, even if it means going to jail. We sincerely pray we will never have to face that day (3).

The Reverend Charles Stanley, head of the Southern Baptist Convention told his San Francisco audience in 1986 that AIDS is, "God indicating his displeasure and his attitude toward that [homosexual] form of life style" (Otto, 1986: 1A). Bob Jones III, the president of Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina extended the view, saying that AIDS is "God's judgment on sin in America" (Ibid.). He suggested that religious leaders ought to call homosexuality the sin that is:

I have to believe that the Lord is serving his judgment upon perversion through the disease of AIDS...and before its all over, it may end up being his judgment on a nation that looks with acceptance on sodomy and perversion...It's not God's fault that [homosexuals] have AIDS. Here we are spending millions...of dollars to cure AIDS. Why? So these perverts can go on and indulge in their sin and defiance of God (Ibid: 14A).

Kevin Gordon (1987), one of the organizers of an international conference on Christianity and AIDS held in Toronto, mirrors and but substantially extends Bailey's view (1955) that Christian attitudes toward homosexuality have not changed since the Middle Ages. This attitude extends directly into the area of human sexuality. Gordon writes,

Anxiety about sexual mores] simply follows from the fact that our Christian sexual traditions are bankrupt. It is an open secret, not only among professional theologians, but among the public at large, that

Roman Catholic sexual morality, as a case in point, is in a crisis of credibility, and has been for some time now (Gordon, 1987: 3).

Gordon reviews a 1987 poll conducted by the Los Angeles Times: "Engaging in homosexual behaviour was considered sinful in the Catholic sample by a ratio of more than 2 to 1; Protestants took the same view by a ratio of 4 to 1. Nearly 70% of all Americans think homosexual behaviour is sinful"(3). These figures interestingly bear a paradoxical positive correlation to research conducted by Saghir and Robins: 27% of their homosexual sample were Roman Catholic, while 68% were Protestant (1973: 157).

Immediately, associations are constructed which join AIDS with Biblical notions of pestilence and plague. American pastor Dr. Hugh F. Pyle (1985) asks,

Is the notorious AIDS epidemic a pestilence? Yes. The dictionary definition of pestilence is "a deadly epidemic disease." Or, "that which tends to produce epidemic disease." One definition of a plague is "a pestilence." God brought plagues upon the Egyptians in order to bring about the release of his people...God brought judgement often upon the Sodomites (now called homosexuals) in Bible times ... the truth is, God is letting His alarm clock of judgement go off to awaken those who will have enough sense to heed the alarm (1;20).

Dr. Dan Boys (1987), a member of the Indiana House of Representatives, writing for The Evangelist Magazine, betrays a homophobic position which predicates homosexuality with metaphors of terror when he writes,

I will use good old English to describe the people and what they do. Pervert is a very acceptable word with an old history. I refuse to give an aura of respectability to sodomy by calling the practitioners of that evil homosexuals or by using a good term (gay) in an incorrect way...God warned mankind about AIDS in Numbers 32:23 when He said, "Be sure your sin will find you out." He also warned us in Galatians that we would reap what we sow. We are seeing that reaping today. Sodomites have sowed contrary to nature, and are now whining about the tragic harvest! What did they expect? ... You will discover that sodomites are the most degraded, filthy, immoral and disease ridden people upon the face of the earth ... Sodomites are the most vicious people in the world. Many of the mass murders have been committed by sodomites ... of 518 deaths in the past 17 years, sodomites killed 350 of them - 68 percent ... our children are their targets (45; 47)!

The "Contemporary Issues" section of the Lutheran Witness suggests that homosexuality is, unconditionally, a sin. R. Mueller, writing for the column states,

Scripture unequivocally calls homosexuality sin and against God's will ... the passage cited most often in light of the current AIDS epidemic is Romans 1:27 ... Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. Is AIDS God's active judgment on brazen homosexuality? Or is AIDS ... simply a natural event that has occurred because of sin already in the world? ... First of all, sickness and disease and tragedy and calamities exist because of sin, says ... the executive secretary of the [Lutheran] Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations ... AIDS is one manifestation of a world at odds with God, a consequence of sin (7).

Popular Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell (1987) writing his commentary column for his Liberty Report says, "AIDS is a lethal judgment of God on the sin of homosexuality and it is also the judgment of God on America for endorsing this vulgar, perverted and reprobate lifestyle" (2). Relating the meaning of homosexuality to the Sodom story, Falwell states further,

God says ... that homosexuality is a perverted and reprobate lifestyle. God also says those engaged in such homosexual acts will receive "in their own persons, due penalty of their error." God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah primarily because of the sin of homosexuality. Today, He is again bringing judgment against this wicked practice through AIDS ... homosexuals are gaining control of towns and communities ... we must preserve America by convicting her of sin and the folly of endorsing a lifestyle that is strangling the very life out of her ... (2;5).

In "Sodomy and the Future of America," evangelist P. J. Leithart (1988) extends the position that homosexuality is a grave danger to Christian American civilization because it trespasses normativity so blatantly: "The homosexual subculture and AIDS threaten, perhaps more profoundly than any other problem, the very survival, both physical and social of the West and of America in particular" (7). Further he writes,

[H]omosexuality is the cultural culmination of rebellion against God. It represents the 'burning out' of man and his culture. This is true because the homosexual strikes at the very cornerstone of human society ... A homosexual culture is opposed at every point to Christianity. It must therefore be

combatted with every available weapon ... Unless the church takes up [its responsibilities against homosexuality] the West will continue its suicidal descent into barbarism (8).

Seizing the fact that HIV has proven resistant to medical intervention, and using this fact as a symbol of some greater mystery than a purely physiological phenomenon, Christian educator Dr. Charles Britt (1987) has suggested that the medical prognosis of AIDS is problematic if not impossibly grim because God "is using the guilt factor to shut down the body's immune system" (3). He asks,

Could this be the reason the scientists cannot find a cure for AIDS? The sodomite is guilty of gross perversion of nature, and the God who made his body is apparently allowing his guilt and all of the ramifications of it to shut down his immune system ... Since God hates this sin of sodomy and has revealed his hatred of it by severe and even fatal consequences, let the Christian witness to the holiness of God's judgment upon it" (3).

Another Christian writer, Kovaciny (1985), like Britt, implies a metaphysical meaning for AIDS:

AIDS isn't really that special a disease. Its only the latest of the various social diseases that the Lord has sent to remind us that He's the one who decides what's right and wrong in this world. Seeking out a medicine for AIDS is almost a waste of time; we can be confident that whenever AIDS gets conquered, the Lord will graciously send another form of VD to protect the family and therefore the Church ... (7).

Kovaciny paraphrases Falwell when he writes that AIDS "is one of the ways God is spanking us for our sins" (8).

Christian author Dr. J. Johnson (1987) calls his article "AIDS – A Suitable Recompense" and strongly reinforces the homophobic position through a manipulation of negative values for homosexuality as he sees homosexuality confronting and threatening social order:

Homosexuality is an unnatural, deviant practice carried on by men who seek gratification of their sexual desires without respect to the laws of God. No one is born a homosexual! Various factors may contribute to a person initially engaged in homosexual acts. Not the least of these is lust! Often an adult or older teenager will persuade a child or younger

teenager to engage in this practice. Having once discovered that sexual desires can be gratified in this unnatural way, the individual continues in it solely because of lust ... While all sin is abhorrent to God, individuals who give themselves up to sexual lust are especially caused by Him to reap terrible consequences in this life. This is evident from the nature and prevalence of venereal disease. Their consequences in the lives of those who become afflicted with them are horrendous. There can be little doubt that the worst of these to ever appear on the scene is AIDS. An afflicter first of homosexuals, God sent it as a recompense suitable to their wrongdoing (17; 18).

One publication states, "We oppose homosexuality because it seeks to convert straight people into such situations which become a habit if practiced for any length of time" (Thunderbolt, Jan. 1983: 9). The Blumenfeld Education Letter (November, 1986) also warns that the AIDS epidemic is spreading into heterosexual, normal America, and suggests that Christians "may have to remove themselves from AIDS infested population centers to protect the physical health of their families. If you live in such an area ... begin planning for such movement now" (4).

And further, combining the meaning of AIDS with apocalyptic symbolism, Christian writer Dr. D. Crowley (1987) says that, "This AIDS plague is a shout from heaven saying, 'you've gone too far.' As the Lord speaks in judgment, the guilty must suffer, and many innocent along with the guilty. AIDS is ... one of the last plagues. The end of our age is near" (Hargis, 1987: 1). Hill & McKnight (1987) write that "It is interesting that AIDS came when bold homosexuals came out of their closets and into the news media with their arrogant promotion of an 'alternative' life style" (6). Bynum (1983) warns that because of homosexuals "Truly America is on the brink of destruction" (7). "We are in mortal danger" (2) Bynum says. The AIDS Plague (February, 1987) states, "Sometime between the years 1993 and 1997 the United States will collapse if the AIDS plague keeps growing as its growing right now, doubling every ten months. By 1993 the economy will be destroyed and by 1997 the population will be destroyed" (3). On page 6, this

publication compares the fall of the United States from AIDS with the decline of Rome which it says, occurred because of homosexual perversion.

Theologian G. T. Sheppard expressed his pessimism about possible reforms in the church in the matter of sexuality when he wrote his address for the 1987 Toronto Symposium on Christianity and AIDS:

Churches have proven better at learning to wink at some previously condemned sexual behaviour rather than finding ways to discuss affirmatively ethical implications of the same. In general, churches have only barely started to seek a fresh understanding of what would constitute a Christian freedom to act in the light of the present possibilities of sexual expression (Sheppard, 1987: 2).

Mary Hunt, writing for the same 1987 Toronto conference sponsored by the United Church of Canada, stated about the church's "silent" position facing AIDS,

Much of this backlash, or at least the scandalous silence which has accompanied it, has been fueled by religious assumptions about just punishments for "unnatural" acts, the wrath of God, and the mysteries of the cosmos. A recent statement by Archbishop John Foley, on the eve of the Pope's visit to the United States, was a classic in this genre. He suggested that AIDS was a "sanction" against so-called sexual immorality (Hunt, 1987: 2).

In confronting the reasons AIDS appears so starkly in theological and religious contexts, Kevin Gordon writes, "AIDS ... is on the ecumenical agenda because of the alarming rate at which the disease is increasing, and also because much of the discrimination against people with AIDS, shockingly claims religious foundation" (Gordon, 1987: 2). Why is there discrimination against people with AIDS? Or, given the historical context where the persecution and discrimination against homosexuals is continuously evident, why should religious foundations for discrimination be considered shocking for Gordon? Indeed, it may be the one point of this thesis to say that the social response to AIDS is not shocking or surprising or sudden, but rather the result of a long historical accumulation of values for homosexual desire that are, throughout the centuries, consistently negative values.

Among the recommendations which emerged from the Toronto meeting on AIDS and Christianity in 1987, the participants suggested that "The Christian churches have failed in their response to the AIDS crisis ..." and, "We [the Christian churches in North America] have also failed to provide an accepting environment in which reflection on AIDS, morality, sexuality, intimacy and other related social issues can take place" (AIDS and HIV Infection, 1987). Similarly, Shelp, Sunderland & Mansell (1986) write, "The near total failure of the Church to fulfill its theologically and biblically mandated role in these crises of illness and death raises questions about the integrity of contemporary American Christendom" (177).

Albert (1985) concluded, after reviewing over eighty articles published between 1982 and 1985 on AIDS, that the general population has been led to view AIDS as a disease confined to a minority of isolated deviants who pose little or no threat to the majority population. Altman's research finds similarly that the social construction of AIDS connects sex and disease and leads to the remedicalization and stigmatization of homosexuality (1986). Hilton (1989) remarks, however, that AIDS has functioned for society as a means whereby homosexuals may be differentiated and estranged from the majority. He suggests that by exiling homosexuals, and by viewing AIDS as their punishment for evil, we "subconsciously hope to purify the community and end the illness" (D-9).

Within Christian systems of morality homosexuality is condemned and suppressed as a dangerous sin and perversion that would, if permitted, lead to the destruction of the person and place the whole created world at risk. AIDS retells the Sodom story for the modern world. Hargis (1987) states,

Some disagree with [the] conclusion that herpes and AIDS is the judgment of God upon unrepentant sinners by saying that many non-homosexuals have also contracted AIDS although they are not guilty of any wrongdoing. The Lord Jesus Christ told us 2,000 years ago that 'it rains upon the just and the unjust alike' ... The sins of a few compared to the whole can cause an epidemic among the masses who become their

innocent victims. This is not the fault of God. Instead, it is the fault of those who sinned, and who inflicted their fellow human beings with this dreadful plague (2).

Otto (1986) reports that Dr. Bob Jones III (president of Bob Jones University in Greenville, North Carolina) said, "I have to believe that the Lord is serving his judgment upon perversion through the disease of AIDS, [a]nd before its all over, it may end up being his judgment on a nation that looks with acceptance on sodomy, perversion" (1-A). Equally, Otto remarks that, in Jones' opinion, AIDS did not happen in America 40 or 50 years ago, because society imposed strict taboos outlawing gay sex. "Nobody blushes on sin anymore," Jones concludes (1-B). Dixon (1983), the national secretary of the Moral Majority organization in the United States writes in USA Today "If homosexuals are not stopped they will in time infect the entire nation, and America will be destroyed -- as entire civilizations have fallen in the past" (10-A). Oser (1988) writes in a letter to the Ottawa Citizen, "The God of the Bible blessed the gay populations of Sodom and Gomorrha [sic] with a rain of fire and brimstone (Genesis 19), with the death penalty (Leviticus 20.13) and with eternal fire (Jude 7). And in (Isaias 5.20) He warns those who call evil good ... [Is] the AIDS epidemic, most prevalent among gays, a blessing too" (A-9)?

Many responses from different Christian denomination to AIDS seems to relate back to the idea that homosexuality = death. Many writers from within these denominations argue that AIDS is a plague levelled at homosexuals by a punitive god. Homosexuality is condemned by these denominations on the basis that it seriously offends God and brings death and disease (AIDS) into the created world.

The absence of homosexuality seems to be perceived by many Christian denominations as a unanimous sign of order and of Christian morality for western society. On the other hand, the presence of homosexuality signals moral and mortal

peril for the individual and for society in this same view. When viewed as a punishment against homosexuality, AIDS reinforces many of the ways homosexuality is constructed in Christian tradition. As a reinforcement of homophobia, the attribution of retribution to AIDS results in a renewed condemnation of homosexual experience by permitting both a justification of condemnation to occur as well as providing an example of what happens to homosexuals. A letter in the Greenville Piedmont states, "We are at a crossroads in which we have a choice of either condoning sodomy or rejecting it. If we shelter it then even the innocent should expect to share in God's judgment upon this sin" (1986: 3).

Synopsis of the Thesis: An Inventory of Guilt and Fear

The guilt and fear expressed by homosexual people within the AIDS epidemic is emblematic of the guilt and fear experienced by homosexual people throughout history. Stress has been shown to cause disease in a number of influential studies (Cassel, 1970; Deutsch, 1939; Dunbar, 1954; Goldberg, 1976; Grinker, 1966; Kowal, 1955). Many homosexual people experience sexual reality in a way that is stressful and because of this problematic. In addition, as this thesis has explored, many homosexual people experience isolation and loneliness because of their sexual orientation and the fear which seems to accompany this experience. Krech, Rosenzweig & Bennett establish a connection between the onset of brain pathology and the social conditions of isolation and loneliness. The depression experienced by gay people may in fact lead to suicide. A firm correlate between depression, suicide and the onset of serious physical illness is given in a study by Fawcett (1972: 1303).

In the guilt and fear expressed by homosexual people about AIDS in particular, there is evidence to suggest that the way gay people experience their sexuality as a source of guilt bears a tragic correlation with the onset of physical disease. Coates, et.al. (1984) and Holland and Tross (1985) present strong evidence that perceived prejudice by gays leads to actual physical disease. Coates (1984) reported in The Washington Post that "men who perceived higher discrimination against gays show lower numbers of T-helper cells. A lower T-helper cell level is an indication of a suppressed immune system" (A-23). Cecchi (1984, quoted in the introduction, page 4) supports this view. Cecchi writes that gay men affected by AIDS may have

been immune-deficient due to the social stress associated with a negative self-image, an inability to express viable anger and a total lack of social support throughout their lives. Denial and repression have been shown to influence the formation of malignant neoplasms (Bahnson & Bahnson, 1966). A replication of the connection between neoplasms and other psychosomatic factors is confirmed by Watson & Schuld (1977: 455). Other psychological factors have been connected with the development of human cancer (Blumberg, West & Ellis, 1954; Grissom, Weiner & Weiner, 1975). In a study of Bantu curse death, it was discovered that psychological factors could cause death by myocardial infarction, in particular when the individual cursed shared in the knowledge that he had been cursed (Burrell, 1963). Indeed, a variety of psychosomatic factors may be seen to bear of the AIDS epidemic (see also Engel & Schmale, 1967; Goldberg & Comstock, 1976; Miller, Green, Farmer, Roger & Gillian, 1985; Miller, Weiden, Sacks, Wozniak, 1986; O'Brien & Hassanyeh, 1985).

Homosexuals, by epidemiological evidence alone, accepted blame for AIDS as a group and tended to claim guilt as a "mass" experience (see Nichols, 1983). Nichols observed guilt with the feelings of denial, fear, sadness, etc., that were intensified among AIDS patients. Guilt and denial were reported as remarkable among gay men diagnosed with AIDS. Nichols suggests that homosexual men usually react to their AIDS diagnosis with feelings of guilt and may frequently search for an explanation of their illness within their own experience.

A diagnosis of AIDS is perceived as a public decree of a person's sexual orientation coupled with a knowledge of the "acts and habits" committed by these individuals. Schmidt (1984) challenges the medical opinion that AIDS is a viral infection. He suggests that AIDS is entirely psychosomatic in origin. Among the psychosomatic origins Schmidt sees for AIDS is an unconscious group delusion among

the gay community. This group delusion, for Schmidt, is a fantasy of scapegoating for gays -- a willingness to accept blame and punishment because they feel so much guilt about their sexuality to begin with.

Perhaps a meaningful symbol for finding a scapegoat to accept all of the blame for AIDS is given by Shilts (1987). Shilts says that the an extensive search attempted to discover the single individual in North America who could be blamed for starting AIDS. In the book And the Band Played On Shilts shows how a Canadian airline steward has been blamed for first spreading the disease in the American gay community through frequent and promiscuous homosexual activity. Gaetan Dugas of Montreal has been called "patient zero" (Shilts, 1987: B-6). Shilts' book provocatively symbolizes the global fixation on finding a scapegoat, some single individual to hold responsible for beginning something as terrible as AIDS.

Instead of nurturing any new fears and prejudices, AIDS seems to provides a space into which the pre-existing fear and anxiety historically constructed around homosexuality may be projected, renewed and localized. AIDS seems to function as a magnet which attracts many negative images and projections about homosexuality. AIDS seems to function as a metaphorical repository for feelings of anxiety, guilt, fear and hatred connected with homosexuality.

The historical equation of homosexuality with definitions of deviance presents the primary grounds from which the meanings attributed to the AIDS epidemic emerge. Homosexuality, within the larger context of human sexuality, is perceived historically as a departure from established social rules and ideals of human conduct. Many of the established social rules and ideals of human conduct can be seen to exist within Christian tradition. As Ellenberger (1970) points out, while the word sin has vanished from contemporary psychiatric discourse, it has been

adequately replaced by the term "guilt feeling". And since guilt is a religious invention, it follows that equally religious solutions may function to alleviate the consequences of guilt, many of which appear in the form of physical diseases (see Ellenberger, 1970: 24,25). It is in this manner in which the retribution metaphor comes to pervade social perceptions of AIDS: AIDS is a physical disease which is one consequence of a human activity that causes guilt.

Related to the meaning of homosexuality within Christian tradition, the appearance of homosexual desire within individual experience also appears as source of guilt and fear for the individual. In the construction of homosexuality as a dangerous form of experience for the reasons that have been given, homosexual desire is accompanied into consciousness by guilt and fear. The presence of guilt and fear around homosexual desire seems to function as a factor influencing or possibly causing homophobia to occur in western society. Further, once a consciousness of homosexual desire becomes known, individuals who act upon this desire may anticipate punishment in various forms. Punishment against homosexual desire is prefigured in Christian discourse on the Sodom story.

Throughout the history of Christian tradition, as we have seen, the homosexual person has been alienated from the cultural and religious context in which he has existed for a variety of reasons, most of which appear to rest within moral discourse on homosexuality. Throughout this moral discourse homosexuals were understood to be consciously different than they are created to be. Homosexuals are perceived as abusing their freedom to choose since they do, in acting upon homosexual desire, make a conscious decision for sin. This decision for sin is perceived to threaten social order as this social order is delineated in Christian systems of morality, including society and the family. The delineation and indeed the differentiation of social and moral order is developed throughout Christian

tradition in a concise relationship with what is held up to be the purpose of human sexuality.

As a form of deviance, homosexuality could be punished with civil laws as a crime; as a form of abnormality homosexuality could be diagnosed as pathology and treated with psychotherapy and medical intervention; and as a form of social and moral antithesis homosexuality could be condemned within religious systems as an order of human experience connected with otherness.

Indeed, the historical condemnation of homosexuality has implications for homosexual experience. Homosexual experience has its own phylogenic heritage. Taken in connection with the historical condemnation of homosexuality, this heritage for homosexual people is a heritage infused with suffering, guilt, fear, pain and intolerance, constructed out of a vision of the world in which all of these forces exist against the self. This heritage is updated in the wake of the AIDS epidemic -- the disease that is perceived as killing homosexuals and perceived as one of the ways homosexuals bring fatal contagion into the world.

Rendered the "love that dares not speak its name" homosexual desire appeared to decline in visible social contexts, and plunged deeply into the unconscious construction of masculinity. With AIDS, however, the repressed homosexuality of western society returns to consciousness with a vengeance in the symbols of retribution: AIDS seems to predicate homosexual acts with danger, and to metaphorically apprehend the homosexual person as a carrier of contagious, sexually-transmitted death who threatens the world.

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