

Catholic Discourses and Homosexuality¹

Give these words to the world,
and they will be loved and understood by
those who know their truth. But before we
give them we must name them. And that
will be their death. (150)

Richard Bach *One*

Richard Bach's statement holds true in most societies since there are instances where epistemology transforms cognition into demise; examples of this statement are the Holy Crusades and the St. Bartholomew's Massacre of 1572: two incidents where, in the name of nation and religion, many lives were lost. The hostilities aired during the Crusades, as to the conversion in order to achieve the Muslims' redemption, can be analogous (to a lesser degree) to the hostilities between Catholic dogma and Homosexuality.² Researchers such as Paul Cameron,³ Mark D. Jordan,⁴ Peter Jensen,⁵ David E. Greenberg,⁶ Simon LeVay⁷ and others, have studied same-sex relationships from the psychological, sociological, cultural, anthropological and biological stance (respectively) to the philosophical viewpoint and the question of whether homosexuality is morally proper or a transgression of social mores still is a controversial issue in western thought. Many people consider homosexuality detrimental to society, and this line of thought has been supported by categorizing and/or cataloguing homosexuality as a pathology.⁸ Religious discourses are divided in two major discourses: the traditional and the liberal discourse. Within the Catholic church there are various discourses such as biblical discourse—which is perceived to come from divine inspiration—the body of beliefs—which has been passed on through generation after generation—and what I would call the behavioral discourse—i.e., the discourse which is implied by the church's actions towards certain issues. Although many argue that the discourses within the church are separate from one another, concerning homosexuality, its fundamental base is the same: the biblical discourse. Based on those discourses the Catholic church looks at the scriptures to define what constitutes a sinful act. Catholic traditional discourse, and the attitudes of many other religious groups, disapprove of homo-genital acts on the basis of it being a sinful⁹ act which is *contra natura* and does not meet "God's plan of creation" because of the canonical reproductive bias¹⁰ in western societies.

People, usually, express their discontent with a particular group (in this case Catholic dogma) by not ascribing to the ideologies of the aforementioned group. However, why should a person leave the said group?—that is, why should homosexuals leave the Catholic faith just because the basic church's discourse states that a person who acts on her/his homosexuality is condemned. Catholics (and in this case homosexual Catholics) don't want to leave their religion: thus here lies the incongruity between faith and religion, which many perceive as different systems. The purpose of this essay is to identify aspects

within the biblical discourse of the Catholic church to denote the church's outlook towards homosexuality as diametrically opposed and obsolete, especially in today's western society where the definitions of conventional gender roles and the orthodox family are in constant amendment. Additionally, this text attempts to see homosexuality as another expression of human sexuality which can be included in "God's plan of Creation" since, in Christian dogma, God is an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent closed system.

According to Sartre, in Christian as well as Atheistic existentialism, existence precedes essence.¹¹ In both types of existentialism there is a being which exists before it can be defined: in Christian existentialism this being is God and in Atheistic existentialism this entity is humankind. In Christian existentialism humankind is one of many concepts in God's incomprehensible knowledge; this knowledge, which eludes humankind, puts under suspicion human convictions about existence, biblical scriptures, and their notions of free will¹² since God is an omnipotent and omnipresent deity who defies the space and time continuum by which humankind's knowledge is bound—i.e., since God created all and controls all, are we really *free* to choose? Writers such as Gonzalo Torrente Ballester and Carmen Conde (1907-1996) has alluded to the issues. In *Mujer sin eden* (1947), a long poem in prose, Conde affirms Eve's "sinful responsibility" as indispensable to God's overall plan of creation. Torrente Ballester's Don Juan alludes to a rise of sexual consciousness in Adam and Eve's expulsion from paradise rather than seeing this expulsion as Man's downfall.¹³ In the Book of Psalms, under God, creation is the totality of all existing things—an orderly and systematic whole; and as a totality this deity will not accept opposition or counter power which might negate it. This position represses and/or suppresses any notion of evil since this is precisely God's plan: any force that might oppose this deity is evil and therefore must be dealt with swiftly—hence Lucifer's fall from heaven. Terry Eagleton, in an attempt to deconstruct postmodern discourse, states that:

if [a] system is deemed all-powerful, [. . .] then the sources of opposition [which might oppose the system] can only be found outside [of] it. But if [the system] is really all-powerful then there can by definition be nothing outside of it, anymore than there could be anything outside the infinite curvature of cosmic space. (Eagleton 5)

Eagleton's theory starts from the premise that postmodern discourse considers the canonical social discourse as a closed system which attempts to delete any opposing force to the aforementioned system. The author considers this a contradiction because if the system is closed any opposing force has to come from outside this system not from within it. It is well known that society is a continuously changing body, however biblical scriptures are not. The scriptures are a never-changing closed system because it is divinely inspired, and society is a body in continuous motion which adapts to the needs of the majority or to those who hold the power within a given group. Beginning from the book of Psalms' theological premise, as well as Eagleton's and Sartre's grounds, José Mantero (the first Spanish Catholic priest who recognizes his homosexuality and has been suspended for acknowledging it) statement, "Being gay is not a sin but a blessing from God. The same God who created the heterosexual man also created the gay man or, if it's a woman the

A JOURNAL OF THE CÉFIRO GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

lesbian" holds true.¹⁴ Yet Catholic traditional discourse has rejected homosexuality, thereby rejecting another extension of human existence within God's closed system.

Christianity has rejected homosexuality since its beginnings because of its members' desire to set themselves apart from the predominant religions and practices related to pagan beliefs of the time.¹⁵ When Christianity arrived in the Americas, same-sex relationships were prevalent among the indigenous cultures and considered of religious importance. In *The Conquest of New Spain*, Bernal Díaz del Castillo states, "As they told us, and we afterwards found out for ourselves, these *papas*¹⁶ were the sons of chiefs and had no wives, but indulged in the foul practice of sodomy" (124). Christianity's image of homosexuality as being *contra-natura*—and foul according to Bernal Díaz—has not wavered; the following statement by Cardinal Basil Hume concerning sexuality and homosexuality testifies to the effect:

There are two fundamental principles which determine the Catholic Church's teaching on sexual matters. First, the church has always taught that the sexual (genital) expression of love is *intended by God's plan of creation* to find its place *exclusively* within marriage between a man and a woman. The Church therefore cannot in any way equate a homosexual partnership with a heterosexual marriage. Second, the *sexual (genital) expression of love must be open to the possible transmission of new life*. For these two reasons the church does not approve of homosexual genital acts. When the Church describes such acts as "*intrinsically disordered*," [. . .] it means that these acts are not consistent with the two fundamental principles mentioned above. It is in this sense that the Church teaches that there can be no moral right to homosexual acts, even though they are no longer held to be criminal in many secular legal systems. No individual, bishop, priest or layperson is in a position to change the teachings of the Church, which she considers to be God-given.¹⁷

Through the years, homo-genital acts have remained unacceptable because its intricacies decenters socially established binary oppositions such as natural/unnatural and private/public spaces which endangers binomials such as man/woman—i.e., gender roles—which are so deeply engraved in the hierarchical system of western thought.

The Catholic church has taken a particular stance concerning homosexuality since it contends that same-sex relationships are neither evil nor morally wrong, but that the homo-genital act itself is what constitutes homosexuality incomparable to heterosexuality: the latter being the conduct approved by church and State because of their reproductive bias. In its totalization,¹⁸ the church has created a dichotomous discourse where cognition and behavior are separate entities which have no relation to one another; this assertion is tantamount to declaring: bethink upon God but do not relish in, or receive pleasure from, its presence. From a developmental psychology perspective, the former statement is repressive to homosexuals as the latter is to heterosexual since to repress any group physically is also to repress them mentally and consequently spiritually.¹⁹ The Catholic church's statement assigns homosexuality a space bound by restrictions (different from those assigned to heterosexuals),²⁰ which ignore basic human rights.²¹

Considering that one of a Christian's many responsibilities is to love, to rebuke a relationship of two committed consenting adults of the same sex whose relationship is based on love (and their ultimate expression of this love is the homo-genital act) does not adhere to Christianity's ultimate goal—i.e., salvation by loving God above all and thy brother as thine own self. Many people would point at the church's maxim, "love the sinner and not the sin" rationalizes the church's actions and way of thinking, but this aphorism is analogous to saying, "love Hispanics and not Hispanism": although the former refers to a moral issue and the latter to a racial issue, the bases on both expressions are egocentric and ethnocentric²² since the predominant group believes that it alone holds the "truth". One does not need to approach the Roman Catholic's statement with a careful and critical eye to recognize autocracy and less than impartial judgment in its statement. The church hierarchy's discursive deception lies in categorizing homosexuality as "intrinsically disordered," since it assumes a biological and/or psychological stance which assess heterosexuality as the norm, marginalizes homosexuality, and pretends to know "God's plan of Creation" by assuming that God's knowledge operates binomially.

Andrew M. Greeley states in his book *The Catholic Myth* that, "[. . .] to mess around in the intimate lives of men and women to protect your own power is demonic" (96). Greeley questions whether the church is protecting the spiritual well-being and/or social mores of its members (and consequently society) or protecting its own power by creating a strict code of sexual conduct and ratifying it with the Bible, which hints that the basis for the church's "separate" discourses lies in the scriptures. The author affirms that, "[. . .] the arrogance of power [is what] makes many church leaders insensitive to the problems of ordinary people and heedless of their needs [. . .]" (90). Here is worth noting that, according to most religions, God opposes the proud: the ones who ruthlessly wield whatever power they possess to attain worldly wealth, status and security; who are a law to themselves and exploit others.²³ Nevertheless, according to Greeley, it seems that the church is acting precisely in this fashion when it uses the scriptures to establish in society a set of sexual mores which maintains its traditional position. The following are some biblical excerpts which the Catholic church, and many protestant denominations, use to dismiss homosexuality.

The leading biblical quote used by many religious groups to substantiate their impressions on homosexuality is Leviticus 18:22, "Thou shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination". However, Catholics and Christians in general fail to mention that shortly afterward, Leviticus 19:19 states, "[. . .] Thou shalt not sow thy field with two kinds of seeds: neither shall there come upon thee a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together." The *Jerusalem Bible*'s interpretation of the aforementioned verse refers to the issue of magic, which at the time was something to be feared. However, there can be another interpretation of Leviticus which exposes another reading—i.e. a society's survival. Leviticus is a book which reflects an agenda concerned with the intrinsic²⁴ needs of an Old Testament society where subsistence and survival was the order of the day—hence the law against using too many materials to make a garment, protecting the fields from weeds and forbidding homosexuality due primarily to the need for (re)producing and maintaining a stable work-force: Gayle Rubin hints to this in her now classic article "The Traffic in Women: Notes on a 'political economy' of sex". Leviticus is used as an example of how

A JOURNAL OF THE CÉFIRO GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

the scriptures do not condone homosexuality; however, Catholic dogma basis its teachings on the New Testament, not the Old, it respects the Old Testament teachings as the basis of their dogma. In other words, what constituted "sin" in an Old Testament society does not necessarily constitute "sin" today; Jesus himself attests to the reinterpretation of the law in Matthew 5:17 where he states that he did not come to abolish the law but to reveal its meaning²⁵—hence the New Testament.

Many Christians use other biblical passages such as Leviticus 20:13,²⁶ 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and Judges 22-25 to condemn homosexuality, but a close reading of these passages reveals something else. For example, Judges 22-25²⁷ reveals the wicked men's perversion to be rape (be it homosexual or heterosexual) which falls under the idea of being inhospitable, not homosexuality; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11²⁸ reveals that the word *effeminate*,²⁹ which somehow today's perception of the term has come to solely mean homogenital acts among men, excludes lesbianism as a sinful act since many lesbian women behave in such fashion. Hence, many of today's notions about women being non-sexual beings and that sex between female is not sex because the sexual act requires penile penetration—Ideas which Gender Feminists³⁰ have consistently critiqued in society. According to Byrne Fone in his book *Homophobia: A history*:

The antihomosexual vision of Sodom that would become so familiar to later ages finally emerges in the writing of Philo Judaeus. A Hellenized Jewish scholar who lived in Alexandria and died about 45 C.E., Philo was familiar with Greek classics as he was with the scriptures and scholarship of Judaism, and he was clearly influenced by antisexual ascetics of both traditions. [. . .] In a number of treatises, among them *On Abraham*, *The Special Law*, and *The Contemplative life*, Philo, echoing Plato's *Laws*, asserts that homosexual acts are contrary to nature. (89)

Through biblical passages such as the ones mentioned above, Catholic dogma has marked the sexual, made it subject to the "self" and consequently possessed the "other" by solely concentrating on the homosexual act and not looking at the passages holistically. The church's traditional egocentric discourse has captained today's perception of homosexuality as a deviant behavior which is categorized among behaviors such as pedophilia—i.e., somehow pedophilia has become a synonym of homosexuality. An example of the aforementioned statement would be the answer the Catholic church gave ABC reporters when asked if homosexuality contributes to the pedophile crisis it is facing. The conservative sector of the church answered "yes" and its more liberal sector answered that the problem is not homosexuality but celibacy,³¹ which some believe to be an outdated requirement for priesthood.³² Be that as it may, on looking at other books of the Old Testament one can find narrations where homoerotic friendships are depicted in a positive manner. There are three passages which people mention concerning homosexual relations in the bible: the accounts of Ruth and Naomi, Daniel and Ashpenaz, and the account of David and Jonathan; for brevity, I will concentrate on David's and Jonathan's account.

In the First Book of Samuel there is a narration that can be interpreted as a homoerotic episode; the book describes the relationship David (a soldier who later became king of Israel) had with Jonathan (the Israeli king's son) which began after David killed

Goliath. Despite the fact that Saul (Jonathan's father) was against Jonathan and David's friendship because he was jealous of David's power over his people, he accepted it. Jonathan and David's homoerotic relationship is best described in First of Samuel: chapter 18, verses 1-3, and verses 20-22; verses 1-3 describe the following:

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow and to his girdle.

And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. And Saul said, I will give him her that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law a second time. (v.: 20 to 22)

Many Christians interpret verses 1-3 as solely spiritual; as in love thy brother as thine own self. However, B. A. Robinson states in his article "Same-Sex Relations in the Bible" that:

Most [biblical] translations use the term 'soul' rather than 'spirit' to describe [David and Jonathan's] bond. They speak of an 'immediate bond of love', their souls being 'in unison', their souls being 'knit', etc. Genesis 2:7, as written in the original Hebrew, describes how God blew the spirit into the body of Adam that God has formed from earth, so that Adam became a living soul. This means that 'soul', in the ancient Israelite times, represent a combination of body and Spirit. Thus the two men appear to have loved each other both physically and emotionally.³³

A soulful reading of the scripture allows for sexual interaction between David and Jonathan. David, after talking to King Saul, did not return to his father's house and made a covenant—i.e. a contract—with Jonathan. Jonathan in return, to express his love for David, disrobed before him thus sealing the agreement via his naked body. In a sense, this relationship describes one of the many relationships one finds today between gay and lesbian people: a symbolic contract that instead of being sealed by the law of the land, it is sealed by mutual love, respect and commitment. Jonathan is remembered as David's "friend" and by his faithfulness to David. Also, verses 20-22 mention that Saul accepts David as a son-in-law for the second time—meaning that David already was his son-in-law prior to his relationship with Michal.³⁴

Most of the passages cited above where homosexuality is condemned, generally have a content and this content has been that humankind strayed away from God and negated His presence by either worshiping other deities and/or being unfriendly to others. However, David and Jonathan's relationship attests to a homoerotic commitment which did

A JOURNAL OF THE CÉFIRO GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

not stray away from God and followed His commandments accordingly. If the church is to condemn today a relationship similar to that of David and Jonathan, one has to question the purpose of Jesus' death which, according to Catholic dogma, is to reconcile us with God, to redeem and anoint us, to purge sins, and to secure forgiveness and salvation.³⁵ To critically analyze the bible solely from a heterosexual perspective is to restrict its significance; these biblical constraints make Christian traditional discourse untrustworthy since to restrict that which comes from divine inspiration—in this case the bible—is to presume one's knowledge to be superior to that of most people and/or to presume that one's knowledge can comprehend the creator's knowledge. One can also make an interpretation of the bible which includes sexuality as a positive element rather than restricting it to reproduction and confirm David's and Jonathan's soulful analysis of their account. For example, one can take the passage in Genesis, which gives a written account about the expulsion of Eve and Adam from paradise, and interpret this incident as the awakening to sexual consciousness rather than the fall of humankind.

Geneses states that Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise because they disobeyed God's command and ate from the tree of knowledge. Rather than viewing their action as their downfall, one can see it as an awakening to a new plane of cognizance or a new way of knowing their "selves" and their bodies, which does not necessarily negate God but incorporates God into their new knowledge. However, it seems that the Catholic church prefers to maintain a conventional discourse rather than to make positive changes in traditional dogma which brings us back to Greeley and his use of the term arrogance. Greeley uses the word *arrogance* to describe the reason why the church does not want to change its traditional views on sexuality. Interestingly enough *arrogance* can be interpreted as a synonym of *pride*, which in turn, is one of the seven capital sins—i.e. Lucifer's sin. Catholic dogma has created two mayor discourses: the traditional discourse, and the liberal or conceptional discourse; and while the former is exclusive the latter is inclusive because of some of their postmodern (re)interpretation of the scriptures. The traditional discourse has named the word and—as Richard Back states—killed it; but in the liberal discourse—as José Mantero states—homosexuality finds its own space within God's plan of creation.

In conclusion, according to the Book of Psalms, God is an all-knowing, all-powerful entity—i.e. a closed system—who will not accept opposition or a counter power which might negate it; and, according to Terry Eagleton, any opposition to an all-powerful system has to come from outside the system in order to work as an equal opposing force. Since humankind was created within God's all-powerful system, any human activity within the system cannot resist God's working unit because it was created as a functioning part of the aforementioned unit; therefore, in a sense, homosexuality is part of God's creation. Finally, God—as an omniscient closed system—has to have had foreknowledge of all conceivable human activities and the power of deleting the undesired activities from His plan.

Notes

¹ In this work I talk solely about Catholicism since it is one of the most recognized organized religions in western society. But what is said here can be similarly applied to all organized western Judeo-Christian religions if the term religion is defined as: a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number

of persons. This definition is chosen with the desire to include groups such as Mormons, Christian Science, Jehovah's Witness and the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society and others, which some people might categorize as cults.

² Christian discourse asserts that homosexuals need redemption from their homosexual "condition"; and once homosexuals are redeemed they will have salvation.

³ Dr. Cameron is the Chariman of the Family Research Institute of Colorado Springs, Colorado USA. He has published various articles on homosexuality some of which can be found at: http://www.familyresearchinst.org/FRI_EduPamphlet6.html.

⁴ In *The Silence of Sodom* Mark D. Jordan teases out the church's complex bureaucratic language about sexual morality and examines the rhetorical devices used by the church throughout its history to actively produce silence around the topic of male homoeroticism. The author looks to the clerical culture to illustrate analogies between clerical institutions and contemporary gay culture.

⁵ Peter Jensen is the Archbishop of Sydney. In his article "Ordination and the Practice of Homosexuality", Jensen states after an extensive traditional examination, which follow the investigation, analysis and argument, that:

I want to observe that holding to the traditional position may be exactly what the church is being called to do in this culture. Whatever we may think of the post-modern world, surely it is sex-obsessed in physically, emotionally and spiritually unhealthy ways. A witness to the value of sex within the conventional bonds of marriage only, may be precisely what is needed for the good health of individuals and society. A move towards endorsing same-sex relationships, even deeply affective relationships, confuses this important witness. It also devalues the quiet but heroic commitment of the many, many Christians, both men and women, who for the sake of Christ and in the midst of overwhelming temptation have remained celibate. This, too, is a powerful witness which must not be compromised.

⁶ Greenberg's book *The Construction of Homosexuality*, tries to understand why some societies are comparatively hostile to homosexuality while others tolerate or even fully accept and institutionalize it. Greenberg explains the occurrence of these acceptance episodes, and why at certain points in history they stopped occurring, by stating that, "as people live in society, they grapple with and try to come to terms with their sexuality[;] [and] in so doing, they develop ideologies that explain, justify, or challenge it" (18).

⁷ Simon LeVay's 1991 report found neuroanatomic differences between homosexual and heterosexual men. LeVay examined hypothalamic tissue from 19 gay men, all of whom died of AIDS; 16 heterosexual men, six of whom had died of AIDS; and six women of unknown sexual orientation. He found that INAH3 was two to three times larger in heterosexual men than in gay men. However, many have challenged his findings because of the difficulty in replicating his experiment.

⁸ Although the American Psychological Association does not classify homosexuality as a mental illness, psychiatrists still engage in experimentation trying to "cure" homosexuality. For example, reporter Erica Goode of *The New York Times* published an article on May 9, 2001 which reports on a study conducted by Columbia University psychiatrist Dr. Robert Spitzer which states that gays can become heterosexual, thereby belying the conception within the mental health profession that sexual orientation cannot be changed. The study has been challenged by gay rights groups, which note that most of the subjects in the study were recruited through groups that condemn homosexuality.

⁹ In this essay the word *sin* is defined as a transgression of a socially establish code of conduct. In the case of religion, the transgression is viewed as a violation not only of social mores but also a violation of God's law. However, the question remains whether these laws are Divine laws or earthly laws-i.e. who is to define sin?

¹⁰ According to the Robert J. Campbell's *Psychiatric Dictionary*, reproduction is "the creative process by which organic life is transmitted from one organism to a succession of new ones. Although the origin of new organisms

A JOURNAL OF THE CÉFIRO GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

takes place in very different ways, the ultimate aim and sense of the reproductive process is always to maintain the preservation of a species and to guarantee the continuity between successive generations" (547). According to the author, asexual or vegetative organisms reproduce by simply dividing the parental body into two or more parts. Campbell affirms, "the typical form of sexual reproduction is biparental and presupposes the differentiation of a species into two sexes capable of producing individual germ cells" (ibid). However, the author also states that in biparental sexual reproduction some "mutations" might occur where the mutant characters arise suddenly and with irregular frequency. In human reproduction, any such mutations might be considered pathology where the mutant character is not considered fit for reproduction and the propagation of the species. Hence the notion that homosexuality is a pathology (a mutation which goes against the natural human reproductive process) and so endangers the procreation of the human species (398).

¹¹ A human being first appears and afterwards s(he) defines him-herself. Sartre states, "[. . .] first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself. If man, as the existentialists conceive him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be" (Sartre 15).

¹² Christian existentialism not only raises the question of whether or not the *Bible* is divinely inspired, but also questions the idea of free will. Many existentialists question the notion of free will by stating that humankind's decision-making process concerning their actions is under duress, and therefore there is no freedom of choice. In other words, there are only two alternatives: either one lives one's life obeying God and goes to heaven in death, or one can live one's life as one pleases but be condemned. How about if one lives one's life as one pleases and goes to heaven? Again, there are only two alternatives, and, out of those two alternatives, one is damnation. Interestingly enough, José Ortega y Gasset defines freedom as the lack of constitutive identity, not to ascribe oneself to a determined entity; being able to be someone else that was, and, at the same time, not being able to instalarse—i.e., to put oneself once and for all—in any particular entity. The Spanish philosopher states that constitutive identity is the only stable and firm thing there is in freedom (39). However, within Catholic framework there is, I would say, "partial" free will which it seems contradictory.

¹³ Dr. Janet Pérez. Texas Tech University: Interview. April 4, 2002.

¹⁴ "Ser gay no es pecado sino un don de Dios [. . .] El mismo Dios que creó al hombre heterosexual también lo creó gay o, si es mujer, lesbiana" My translation. *El País*: Friday, February 8, 2002.

¹⁵ As is well known, certain types of homosexuality were common and accepted in the Roman and Greek empires, as well as among the Canaanites, and were not seen as "sinful". Christians, diverging from the time's predominant beliefs, established a code of conduct, which would differentiate them from other religious groups, hence the banning of homosexual practice.

¹⁶ *Papas* was the name given to the native priests by the Aztec Civilization.

¹⁷ The quotation concerning Catholic's teaching on sexuality and homosexuality has been taken from the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Catholic Handbook at: <http://www.bway.net/~halsall/lgbh/lgbh-humegays.html>. The original text appears in Origins. Basil Hume, George. "A Note on the Teaching of the Catholic Church Concerning Homosexual People." *Origins* 24.45 (1995): 765-169.

¹⁸ The term "totalization" is used here to, "draw the attention to the assertion of control and the apparent will to power evident in any unification process" (*Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory* 646) such as the Catholic views on sexuality.

¹⁹ This refers to Abraham Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs. Maslow posits a theory of human development where the individual has to meet basic physiological and mental functions to achieve full development. Maslow's pyramid is divided in two sections: deficiency needs (Physiological, safety/security, belongingness and love and esteem) and growth needs (cognitive, aesthetics, self-actualization, and transcendence). The first stage of development—i.e., the first four basic needs—need to be met before the developing individual can go onto the second stage of development. Once self gratification and transcendence is achieved the person is satisfied and/or fulfilled with what s(he) has become.

Additionally, from a literary and theological point of view, the last statement belittles poets such as Santa Teresa de Jesús, San Juan de La Cruz, and Fray Luis de León who are considered eminences within the Catholic Church because of their poetry and mysticism. I say theological and literary because if one analyses the poetry from these eminent writers one finds that their poetry reflects how in tune they were with their faith and much of their poetry has a sexual undertone where they are receiving pleasure from God's presence-i.e., symbolically, God being the male and the soul and/or the church-through the poets-is the female.

²⁰ Many religious groups have contributed in many ways to the repression of gays and lesbians by lobbying against civil rights protection. For instance, in the 1970s groups such as the Moral Majority, and later, the Christian Coalition mobilized voters to support conservative social policies such as restrictions on abortion and resistance to homosexual rights, these advocates rest their position and actions based on the credence that it is for the human and social good, thus the government should take action. Thomas C. Berg states in his book, *The State and Religion* that, "When government favors one such position, it treats non-adherents of that position as second-class citizens, and it may allow the favored group a dangerous amount of power" (17-18); he continues by affirming that the organizations mentioned above, "[...] played some role in helping elect President Reagan and Bush" (67). In the legal field, Berg's affirmation is confirmed by Evan Grestmann's book *The Constitutional Underclass*. In this book Grestmann affirms that the Equal Protection clause in the United States Constitution has been used to carve the American people into separate classes and that, "this class-based approach has denied justice to gays and lesbians in particular, whom the courts have always treated as a minimally protected class" (3). The amount of power that the government indirectly gives certain groups, as stated by Berg, has filtered into the education system as well. Books such as *Invisible Life, Just as I am, Daddy's Roommate, Heather has two Mommies*, and *This too shall Pass*, which deal with gay and lesbian issues, have been targets for censorship. According to a report by the American Library Association, out of 6,364 challenges reported to the Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1,607 were challenges due to sexually explicit material, and 515 due to material with a homosexual theme or promoting homosexuality. Among classic books which have been challenged due to their sexual content one recognizes titles such as *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison; this list exemplifies the affect sexual behavior-which the Church attempts to regulate-has in society.

²¹ According to Thomas Buergenthal book's *International Human Rights*, "Civil and political rights are characterized as 'first generation' rights, whereas economic, social and cultural rights are classified as 'second generation' rights. [...] 'Third generation' rights[...] are the right of peoples to self-determination and to full sovereignty over their natural resources. Also on the list are the right to development, the right to peace, and the 'the right to a general satisfactory environment' (Art. 24). The right of development, which has already been mentioned, is formulated as follows: 'All peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind' (Art. 22(1))" (234). Being that homosexuals' civil rights are constantly violated, these falls under the category of First Generation rights on the International Human Rights constitution. However, according to the 2000 Human Rights Report on Hate Crimes, sexual orientation ranks among the top three groups, which are discriminated against with a 16.3% rate of hate crimes. An interesting paradox occurs here because according to the same report Religion ranks second with 18.2%, and Race is at the top of the list with 53.6%.

²² The statement begins from an ethnocentric premise because it indirectly states that only heterosexuals are God's people and homosexuals are not—i.e. anyone who is not heterosexual. In this case it would also include asexuals because asexual people are viewed as heterosexuals who have (for one reason or another) abstained from the sexual act.

²³ Excerpted from *Compton's Interactive Bible NIV*

²⁴ Intimate and essential to a person.

²⁵ Mathew 5:17 states, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill."

A JOURNAL OF THE CÉFIRO GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

²⁶ Leviticus 20:13 states, "And if a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed abomination."

²⁷ As they were making their hearts marry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, beating at the door; and they spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not do this folly. Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not any such folly. But the men would not hearken to him: so the man laid hold on his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go.

²⁸ Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate nor abusers of themselves with men, nor the thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

²⁹ The theologian and author of *What the Bible Really Says about Homosexuality*, Daniel A. Helminiak, affirms about possible mistranslations of the original biblical text, especially referring to the word's meaning. In his article "The Bible on Homosexuality. Ethically Neutral," he uses as an example of mistranslations in the *Bible* a letter from Paul to the Romans and after an extensive linguistic analysis he states that, "the vocabulary of the passage, the structure of the passage, and the overall argument of Romans all indicate that Paul viewed homosexuality as ethically neutral" (81).

³⁰ The term "Gender Feminists" was established by Christina Hoff Sommers in her book *Who Stole Feminism?* in order to distinguish between the feminism with a racial ideology (established at the end of the 60s) and the Equality feminism. Gender Feminists propose to deconstruct language, family relations, reproduction, sexuality, education, religion and the culture among other things.

³¹ Another aspect that one must consider within this liberal discourse is that celibacy is not the problem since many heterosexual married men have also been found guilty of pedophile acts.

³² ABC aired the report titled "The Catholic Church in Crisis" April 3, 2002. The report states that all religions have a moral and legal obligation to their society, however the Catholic Church ignored warnings about pedophile priests for thirty years, and now are trying to do damage control by suspending 75 priest in the last six months. The report also states that in 1985 the Church had spent more than a billion in out of court settlements. Although many Christians say that there is no evidence to prove the occurrences of sexual impropriety among Catholic and other religions, neither is there any exhibits to disprove the evidence presented. While the conservative sector of the Catholic Church is hesitant to change, the more liberal sector believes that there should be male and female priests and the celibacy laws should be abolished, however, liberals are in the minority. When ABC reporters asked for remarks from the cardinals and the Vatican, they refused to comment. On April 16, 2002, Laurie Goodstein writes for the *The New York Times* that church's sources said that any changes concerning the church's stance on issues such as women ordination and the celibacy laws are highly unlikely to be discussed at the meeting in the Vatican since the Cardinals are for the most part theological conservatives who were elevated by the present pope. The same reporter states that, "Although sexual abuse by Catholic priests has come to light in countries like England, Canada, Australia, Germany and Poland, only in places like Ireland and Australia, where the cases were numerous, has the scandal generated the kind of unrelenting outrage and media coverage that is has in the United States" (*The New York Times*: April 16, 2002). I believe that the problem lies in the Church's poor screening process for priesthood, as well as the Church's restrictive sexual discourse where any kind of sexual expression which does not adhere to reproduction is a "sin".

³³ B.A. Robinson, "Same-Sex Relations in the Bible: Conservative and Liberal", 2001. <http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_bmar.html>.

³⁴ In both the *N.I.V.* and *K.J.V.*, it would seem that David's first opportunity to be a son-in-law was with the older daughter Merab, and his second was with the younger daughter Michal. The *K.J.V.* preserves the original text in its clearest form; it implies that David would become Saul's son-in-law through "one of the twain." "Twain" means "two", so the verse seems to refer to one of Saul's two daughters. However this is a mistranslation. The underlined phrase "the one of" does not exist in the Hebrew original. The words are shown in italics in the *K.J.V.*; this is an admission by the translators that they made the words up. Thus, if the *K.J.V.* translators had been truly honest, they would have written, "Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law, in the twain", meaning in modern English, "Today, you are son-in-law with two of my children". That would refer to both his son Jonathan and his daughter Michal. (B.A. Robinson, "Same-Sex Relations in the Bible: Conservative and Liberal views")

³⁵ We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. (Romans 6:3-5)

Works Cited

- Berg, Thomas C. *The State and Religion in a nutshell*. Nutshell Series. Saint Paul: West Publishing, 1998.
- Biblia de Jerusalén*. México, D.F.: Porrúa, 1986.
- Buergerthal, Thomas. *International Human Rights in a nutshell*. Nutshell Series. Saint Paul: West Publishing, 1995.
- Campbell, Robert J. *Psychiatric Dictionary* 5th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 1981.
- Compton's Interactive Bible NIV*. Copyright (c) 1994, 1995, 1996 SoftKey Multimedia Inc.
- Corvino, John. *Same Sex: Debating the Ethics, Science, And Culture of Homosexuality*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997.
- Eagleton, Terry. *The Illusions of Postmodernism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Fone, Byrne R. S. *Homophobia: A history*. Picador: Henry Holt, 2001.
- "Gays, Lesbians and Bisexual Rank Third in Reported Hate Crimes." March 23, 2002. <<http://www.hrc.org/issues/hate%5Fcrimes/background/stats/stats2000.asp>>.
- Gerstmann, Evan. *The Constitutional Underclass: Gays, Lesbians, and the Failure of Class-Based Equal Protection*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1999.
- Goodstein, Laurie. "Catholic Church Feels a Sense of Urgency Over Scandal." *New York Times* on the Web. April 16, 2002.
- Greeley, Andrew M. *The Catholic Myth: The Behavior and Beliefs of American Catholics*. New York: Collier Books, 1991.
- Greenberg, David. *The Construction of Homosexuality*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.
- Helminiak, Daniel A. "The Bible on Homosexuality: Ethically Neutral." On John Corvino's *Same Sex: Debating the Ethics, Science, and Culture of Homosexuality*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. 81-92.
- Jensen, Peter. "Ordination and the Practice of Homosexuality." In *Faithfulness in Fellowship: reflections on homosexuality and the church*. <http://www.anglicanmediasydney.asn.au/cul/jensen_fif.htm>
- McVay, Ted E. Personal Interview. Texas Tech University: April 17, 2002.
- Maslow, Abraham. *Motivation and Personality*. 3rd. Ed. Addison-Wesley Pub Co., 1987.
- Moulton, Richard G., ed. *The Modern Reader's Bible*. The Macmillan Company, 1926.
- Myers, Sharon. Personal Interview. Texas Tech University: May 23, 2002.
- Ojeda, María del Pilar. Personal Interview. Texas Tech University: March 5, 2002.
- Ortega y Gasset, José. "Historia como sistema." *Historia como sistema y otros ensayos de filosofía*. Ed. Paulino Garagorri. Madrid: Alianza, 1999.

A JOURNAL OF THE CÉFIRO GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

- Pérez, Janet. Personal Interview. Texas Tech University: April 8, 2002.
- Robinson, B.A. "Same-Sex Relationships in the Bible." Ontario *Consultants on Religious Tolerance*. Latest update: December 10, 2001 <http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_bmar.htm>.
- Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'political economy' of sex." R. R. Reuter, ed. *Toward an anthropology of women*. New York: Monthly Review P, 1975. 157-210.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism and Human Emotion*. New York: Kensington, 1985.
- "Ser gay no es un pecado, sino un don de Dios." *El País* February 8, 2002. <http://www.elpais.es/articulo.html?xref=20020208elpepusoc_4&type=Tes&anchor=elpepusoc&d_date=20020208>.
- Stein, Susan I. Personal Interview. Texas Tech University: May 7, 2002.
- "The Catholic Church in Crisis" ABC Report, April 3, 2002. The Human Rights Campaign.