

INTRODUCTION

People who belong to the Western Culture are able in the 21st century to look at the world that surrounds them and observe that the sexual landscape has been transformed; groups of individuals both men and women who have a preference for members of their same sex have become visible and vocal in Western countries and they are looking for ways to be accepted by society in general, by pressuring the State to grant them certain rights.¹ Before the 1970s homosexuals were still considered mentally challenged people who were, at best, mental defectives and in the worst cases were looked on as enemies of the State.² This has changed to the extent that homosexuality has been accepted to a certain degree by mainstream culture, but there is still an ongoing discrimination against gays and lesbians by several sectors of the population that belong to, or share the ideals of, the political right in the three North American countries that will be studied here: Mexico, The United States and Canada— particularly in groups that are tied to the religious interests of the Christian and Catholic groups.³ The relationship between homosexuals and the different Christian denominations has been tense for hundreds –if not thousands– of years;⁴ the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations have traditionally based and voiced their rejection of homosexuality in scripture and the concept of natural law. In the Bible the

¹ Charles Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis: The Landmark History of Gay Life in America Since World War II* (San Diego, New York & London: A Harvest Book, 1997), vii. “No other group has ever transformed its status more rapidly or more dramatically than lesbians and gay men. When World War II began, gay people in America had no legal rights, no organizations, a handful of private thinkers, and no public advocates (...) A quarter century later, gay people have completed the first stages of an incredible voyage: a journey from invisibility to ubiquity, from shame to self-respect.”

² Tanya Erzen, *Straight to Jesus: Sexual and Christian Conversions in the Ex-Gay Movement* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 136.

³ It may be an oversimplification on my part to state a dualist proposition, which would divide the secular from the ecclesiastic in to Conservative and Liberal camps. For more information on this type of dualist perspective see Roberto Blancarte, *Historia de la iglesia Católica en México 1929-1982* (México D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica y Colegio Mexiquense, 1992), 14.

⁴ Byrne Fone, *Homophobia: A History* (New York: Picador USA, 2000), 93-224.

following scriptures condemn sex between members of the same sex: The sin of the cities of Sodom in Genesis (19: 1-11), the Abominations in Leviticus (18:22 and 20:13), in Romans (1:18-32), 1 Timothy (1:9-10), 1 Corinthians (6:9-10), Jude (7), 2 Peter (2:6);⁵ but it is the scriptural story of the destruction of the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah that makes it clear to many Conservative Christian groups how God loathes homosexual acts.

The story is worth mentioning briefly to understand why homosexual acts are vilified by various Christian denominations. It describes how two angels with male appearance were sent by God to Sodom where they almost suffered rape by the men of the town. In retaliation for the bad behaviour of the Sodomites,⁶ God destroyed the town of Sodom and its neighbour Gomorrah for their wickedness by making “sulphurous fire”⁷ rain on both cities and effectively destroying them. The word used to describe any type of sexual act that was considered deviant emerged in the Christian imagination and described the practitioner of this vice as a “sodomite” and inhabitant of the city of Sodom.⁸ Though historically Christianity has used the destruction of Sodom to justify its discrimination of same sex acts, there are some authors that analyse how Sodom may not have been destroyed for the homosexual acts its inhabitants meant to perpetrate⁹ against the angels,

⁵ For a gay perspective on these verses from the Bible read Daniel A. Helminiak, *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality: Recent Findings by the top scholars offer a radical new view* (San Francisco, CA: Alamo Square Press, 1995). For the Catholic perspective a commented Bible will suffice to understand the views on homosexuality for example in *La Biblia de Jerusalem*, a standard version of the Bible approved by the Holy See “Homosexuality is condemned by God without any excuses, while he saves those he loves.” Génesis 19ff. *La Biblia *Latinoamérica* (Quito, Ecuador: Editorial verbo divino y San Pablo 2005) [my translation].

⁶ The inhabitants of Sodom. For a detailed account on Sodomites see: Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 7.

⁷ (Gen. 19:24). All quotes from the Bible in this thesis (unless otherwise noted) are taken from *The New American Bible: Official Catholic Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: World Publishing, 1991).

⁸ Jordan *The Invention of Sodomy*, 1-9; Helminiak, *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*, 41.

⁹ (Gen 19: 4-11)

but may have been destroyed due to their lack of hospitality to foreigners or strangers.¹⁰ It is interesting to note that not only were homosexuals destroyed, but the entire community of Sodomites –women and children– even if they were considered just or good¹¹ were punished for the sexual acts that men performed with members of their same sex.¹² It is not uncommon in far-right Christian rhetoric to claim that homosexuals can be responsible for the destruction of society through their actions;¹³ as recently as 2001, Jerry Falwell blamed the September 11 terrorist attacks perpetrated on US soil on the actions of among other groups,¹⁴ homosexuals. Many of the objections that exist towards a “homosexual lifestyle” or homosexual acts are based on a morality inherited from a Christian background and the belief that God created sex for the purpose of procreation only,¹⁵ which is used to explain Christian and Catholic belief that any other type of sexual intercourse is un-natural when it does not have child bearing in mind. Though other Christian beliefs have a bearing on how homosexuality is perceived by its followers, this thesis intends to study the relationship between Catholicism and the gay and lesbian community; this is clarified to avoid confusion with other Christian ideologies and their relationship with homosexuality.¹⁶

¹⁰ Helminiak, *What the Bible Really Says about Homosexuality*, 39-41.

¹¹ (Gen 18:17-32)

¹² As in most everything in this thesis the word “choose” or “chosen” is debatable. Christianity uses a normative discourse which claims that people are naturally born heterosexual and at some point in their lives the individual chose or chooses to leave heterosexuality behind and pursue an “unnatural” lifestyle. This point will be discussed further in the introduction and Chapters 1 and 3.

¹³ For some of the discourses of the Christian Right listen to Pat Robertson’s negative opinions on homosexuals: “Jerry Falwell blames gays and others for 9/11,” *Youtube.com* (May 15, 2007 [cited 7 Feb. 2009]): available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-RGWXMgKq0> or see “700 Club: So called ‘Gay Agenda’ on West Coast,” *Youtube.com* (Dec. 14, 2007 [cited 7 Feb. 2009]): available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvPGZ56LBd8>

¹⁴ Like feminists, for example.

¹⁵ Byrne Fone, *Homophobia: A History* (New York: Picador USA, 2000), 71.

¹⁶ From this point on I will only refer to the Catholic Church; when the term “Church” is used it will refer to Catholicism.

Clearly, one of the founding assumptions underpinning this thesis is that gays and lesbians who want to be accepted by the Catholic Church must find within Catholic theology and tradition ways to justify their acceptance by Catholicism. John Boswell in *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* attempted to demonstrate that Christianity was not originally antagonistic toward same-sex behavior and if the acceptance of homosexuality in the past had occurred, Catholicism and other Christian Churches could once more welcome homosexuals into the fold.¹⁷ His book created heated debate on whether homosexuality was accepted or not and created contestation surrounding his usage of the word ‘gay’ to describe same-sex conduct through the ages.¹⁸ It is still questioned or praised, depending what side one is on.

The Catholic Church’s philosophy is inspired partly by the Platonic and Aristotelian schools¹⁹ represented by two intellectual giants and saints who espoused each philosophy respectively: St. Augustine utilized Plato²⁰ and St. Thomas Aquinas was inspired by Aristotle.²¹ Both tried to interpret the Christian doctrine reflected in the scripture using the Greek philosophical belief system. Both saints believed in the concept of natural law,²²

¹⁷ Mathew Kuefler, *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (The University of Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 2. “There were four main points that form the narrative of the book: First, that Christianity had come into existence in an atmosphere of Greek and Roman tolerance for same sex eroticism. Second, that nothing of the Christian scriptures or early tradition required a hostile assessment of homosexuality; rather, that such assessments represented a misreading of scripture. Third, that early medieval Christians showed no real animosity towards same sex eroticism. Fourth, that it was only in the 12th and 13th centuries that Christian writers formulated a significant hostility towards homosexuality, and then read that hostility back into the scriptures and early tradition.”

¹⁸ Mathew Kuefler, *The Boswell Thesis*, 9.

¹⁹ It is also inspired by scripture as noted before.

²⁰ Kim Power, *Veiled Desire: Augustine on Women* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1996), 37.

²¹ H.D. Gardeil, *Iniciación a la filosofía de Santo Tomas de Aquino: Introducción- Lógica*, trans. Salvador Abascal Carranza (México D.F.: Editorial Tradición, 1973), 15.

²² John Cornwell, *Breaking Faith: The Pope, the People, and the Fate of Catholicism* (New York: Viking Compass, 2001), 129. John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (The University of

which is relevant to homosexuals because it helps explain why certain actions are acceptable or not to the Catholic Church, on grounds other than those inspired by scripture. There are elements which can be inclusive for gays and lesbians in Thomism and Augustinianism,²³ even if both saints believed that sodomy was a sin.²⁴

The problem between Catholicism and homosexuality stems mostly from the early Church father's views of the human body, particularly from the views of St. Augustine of Hippo,²⁵ who used Greek philosophical concepts of "natural" and "unnatural" to describe things that were good or not. The "unnaturalness" argument²⁶ in moral discourses of different kinds²⁷ throughout the ages is usually predicated on the famous distinction made by Aristotle²⁸ between 'nature' and 'convention,' where a higher value is placed on the natural than the artificial, or man-made. It is not difficult to see how this basic idea was adopted and interpreted at the foundations of the Christian faith in how it describes the relationship between Creator (natural), and created (artificial). St Augustine's belief that the original sin and the fall were predicated on the sexual intercourse of Adam and Eve²⁹

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 150. St. Augustine "was ultimately unconcerned about 'nature' itself, and his phrases reflect contemporary linguistic conventions rather than consistent philosophical constructs. It was not, after all, 'nature' which saved anyone or gave value to his actions but grace. 'Nature' was the old dispensation; grace the new."

²³ Both saints teachings are used to understand Catholicism. St. Alphonsus of Liguori, another Doctor of the Church was criticized in the 18th century for not quoting either saint in his work. Frederick M. Jones C.Ss. R., *Alphonsus de Liguori Saint of Bourbon Naples 1696-1787: Founder of the Redemptorists* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1992), 424.

²⁴ John J. McNeill, *The Church and the Homosexual* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 95-96.

²⁵ Kim Power, *Veiled Desire*, 7. "The fourth century was the time when 'orthodoxy' was forged from the polemical debates about Christologies and their concomitant anthropologies and ecclesiologies."

²⁶ Joram Graf Haber *Doing and Being: Selected Readings in Moral Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993), 133-9.

²⁷ Including those moral and policy debates surrounding artificial intelligence and genetic engineering, for example.

²⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V, Chapter 7.

²⁹ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 388. "With the fatal ease of a man who believes that he can explain a complex phenomenon, simply by reducing it to its historical origins, Augustine will remind his congregation of the exact circumstances of the Fall of

justified the denial of the body as something that was pleasing to the Lord. “The theology of St. Augustine on original sin darkened [the view of the body] for the western world”³⁰ what was more important was the interior life, the state of the soul.³¹ In order to live according to God’s plan the individual should liberate him or herself “from the passions of the body and of the soul that had him submerged in vices and ignorance.”³² The denial of pleasure for the body –particularly in a sexual way–³³ will be one of the central arguments Catholicism will utilize to condemn homosexuality,³⁴ but it will not be the only argument used to justify the discrimination of homosexuals, as will be seen throughout the text.

The topic of homosexuality and Catholicism has been dealt with and explored by many academics, historians, theologians and philosophers who have adopted two stances that oppose each other: one group tries to bridge the gap between homosexuals and the Catholic Church to help them become accepted members of the institution, while others want to separate both groups entirely due to mutual incompatibility and antagonism.³⁵ This thesis attempts to insert itself in the range of the former argument; there may be ways to get homosexuals accepted by the Church and, if that is not possible, then it is important to temper down the Church’s discrimination of gays and lesbians through dialogue and

Adam and Eve. When they had disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit, they had been ‘ashamed’; they had covered their genitals with fig leaves. That was enough for Augustine (...) that’s the place from which the fists in is passed on.”

³⁰ Ramón Mujica Pinilla, *Ángeles apócrifos en la América virreinal* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996), 202 [my translation].

³¹ Thomas F. Martin O.S.A., *Our Restless Hearts: The Augustinian Tradition* (New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 86. “Augustine himself never tires of insisting that God draws us by ‘attracting’ us interiorly, working upon our hearts and moving our wills by inner stimulus and interior delights.”

³² Ramón Mujica Pinilla, *Ángeles apócrifos en la América virreinal*, 202 [my translation].

³³ Fernando Savater *Los siete pecados capitales* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2009), 107.

³⁴ Kim Power, “Veiled Desire,” 3. “One cannot desire God too much, but all other desires, especially sexual desire, run the risk of becoming inordinate.”

³⁵ For different points of view on Homosexuality and Catholicism read the essays in Donald L. Boisvert and Robert E. Goss, eds., *Gay Catholic Priests and Clerical Sexual Misconduct: Breaking the Silence* (New York, London and Oxford: Harrington Park Press, 2005).

knowledge. The hypothesis of this work hinges on the paragraph above: *Even though the Catholic Church discriminates homosexual acts, there are several arguments suggesting that Catholicism could accept or tolerate homosexuals not as individuals who commit a sinful act, but as members of a minority community which have been discriminated in the past and which can be tolerated or accepted as a group within the Catholic Church.* I argue that this could be achieved by modifying certain beliefs that in the light of recent scientific, archaeological and historical discoveries are giving us new ways to interpret information the Church once believed to be true, but which is now questionable and which will be explained throughout the thesis. This may seem hard to fathom, particularly if the reader believes that the Church is resistant to change and has remained static in its beliefs through the centuries. However, one of the main arguments of this thesis, begun in chapter one, is that the Church has managed to adjust to change in the past to retain the devotion of its followers. Indeed, the modifications in its belief system have included giving certain groups that were discriminated against before, like the people of Jewish religion, a certain degree of acceptance since the Vatican II Council³⁶ to the extent that the late Pope John Paul II issued an apology for the wrongs the Catholic Church did to the Jewish community.³⁷ A Pope apologizing to Jews is something most people would have thought unthinkable in the 19th century at the height of the public relations scandal of Pope Pius IX due to his involvement in the kidnapping of the Jewish-born boy Edgardo Mortara.³⁸ The recognition

³⁶ The Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews “was instituted by Paul VI, Oct. 22, 1974 to promote and foster relations of a religious nature between Jews and Christians” Mathew E. Bunson, 2006 *Our Sunday Visitors Catholic Almanac* (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 2005), 260.

³⁷ James Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword : The Church and the Jews, A History* (Boston and New York: A Mariner Book, 2002), 553.

³⁸ See David I. Kertzer, *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998). In 1858 a six year old boy Edgardo Mortara was taken away from the home of his Jewish parents in Bologna Italy,

of the damage done to Jews by the Church's discrimination has helped both groups mend relations and stop discriminatory discourses and actions on the part of Catholics towards Jews, and this thesis believes, optimistically, but not without reasoned ground that this could occur with the relations between homosexuals and Catholicism in the future.

One of the central beliefs of this thesis is that the Catholic Church's acceptance of queers, homosexuals, gays and lesbians is an important link to ending their discrimination in the three North American countries because the belief that homosexual sex is a sin which is in part responsible for the discrimination that occurs.³⁹ The Catholic Church is at present the biggest religious institution in the three North American countries that will be studied in this thesis. Mexico is the world's second⁴⁰ most populous Catholic country after Brazil with "89,664,000"⁴¹ Catholics, which represent "92%"⁴² of the Mexican population. In the United States, according to data found in 2008, the Catholic population was estimated as "67,820,833"⁴³ people which represented "23%"⁴⁴ of the American population. In Canada the majority of the population is Catholic (about "12, 987, 637"⁴⁵), making 43% of the Canadian population Catholic. The institution has also traditionally been one of the most important factors in the formation of the identities of Mexican, Mexican-Americans,⁴⁶

because he had been baptized a Christian by a servant of the house when she feared for his life. It was against the law for Christians to live with Jews and in the eyes of the Church the kidnapping was justified.

³⁹ I base this statement on the fact that Science no longer views homosexuality as an illness. This point will be elaborated later on in the thesis, also see Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis*, ix. "Gay people are victims not of the Bible, not of religion, and not of the Church, but of people who use religion as a way to devalue and deform those whom they can neither ignore nor convert."

⁴⁰ Alfonso Torres Robles, *La prodigiosa aventura de los Legionarios de Cristo* (Madrid: Foca Ediciones, 2001), 219.

⁴¹ Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 457.

⁴² Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 456.

⁴³ Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 432.

⁴⁴ Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 432.

⁴⁵ Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 448.

⁴⁶ See Roberto Blancarte, *Historia de la Iglesia Católica en México*.

Irish-American,⁴⁷ Italian-American, some Native-Mexican, Native- American, Native- Canadian tribes and the Quebécoise.⁴⁸ The Catholic cultural heritage of each of these groups is important to understand the cultural heritage of the Catholic Church in the formation of each group identities and how the Church has some influence over the politics of each North American country. A case in point is Mexico where the Catholic hierarchy generally maintains cordial relations with the authorities that it lives amongst,⁴⁹ as can be exemplified with the Bishop of Ecatepec who is a regular fixture at dinners and parties with politicians.⁵⁰ Although the power of the Church can be ascertained because of what the statistics point out, mainly its large following, it is also true that Catholicism is at the present moment going through a period of crisis. One of the main public relations gaffes that it faced in the first decade of the 21st century was the paedophilia scandal⁵¹ which damaged the perception of the institution in each of the three North American countries and which left it with an image problem with the laity and people outside the Church. Other problems that the Church faces is a diminution of priestly vocations⁵² and in Mexico it is

⁴⁷ John Corry, *Golden Clan: The Murrays, The McDonnell's, & the Irish American Aristocracy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977).

⁴⁸ Terrence J. Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics* (Montreal and Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002).

⁴⁹ Roberto Blancarte, *Historia de la Iglesia Católica en México*, 17. "The Catholic Church in Mexico (...) has always sustained that it doesn't intervene in political questions. In reality, in the only events it hasn't intervened has been in the politics of the political parties or the elections, and recently it has intervened even in that. In respect to its intervention in other aspects of social life, like politics, the Church has never stopped voicing its opinion and trying to intervene so that its point of view is taken in to account." [My translation].

⁵⁰ Rodrigo Vera, "Onésimo Cepeda Tras la impunidad divina," *Proceso.com.mx: Semanario de información y análisis*, no.1677([cited 7 Feb. 2009]) : available from http://www.proceso.com.mx/noticias_articulo.php?articulo=64974 Also see Rodolfo Ruiz, "Humo Blanco en la arquidiócesis," *La Corte de los Milagros* ([cited 7 Feb. 2009]): available from <http://e-consulta.com/blogs/corte/> Also see Efraín Núñez Calderón, "Contrae nupcias el Secretario de Finanzas, Gerardo Pérez Salazar," *E-consulta* ([cited 7 Feb. 2009]): available from http://www.e-consulta.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=19033 Also see small sketch of the biography of Onésimo Zepeda in Alfonso Torres Robles, *La prodigiosa aventura de los Legionarios de Cristo*, 251 [my translation].

⁵¹ For an abbreviated version of the sex abuse scandal in the USA see Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 82.

⁵²David Gibson, "The Coming Catholic Church," 154-155.

threatened with the encroachment of evangelical groups,⁵³ which are transforming Mexico from a former exclusively Catholic country in to a country where the Church is very slowly losing more followers.⁵⁴

Of particular interest to homosexuals is the reaction of the Vatican to the paedophilia scandal and the dwindling numbers of priestly vocations. The paedophilia scandal that broke out in the media throughout the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century. On April 23 2002 Pope John Paul II held a meeting at the Vatican with American Bishops and Archbishops to discuss and reflect on the sexual abuse scandal involving Roman Catholic priests on one side and children and teenagers of both sexes on the other— a sexual abuse scandal that was rocking the media and public opinion— in the United States. At the meeting in the Vatican “the Pope demanded ‘Zero Tolerance’ for the paedophiliac priests. Before a reduced number of ecclesiastic representatives from the United States John Paul II qualified the abuses committed against minors as a ‘crime,’ ‘an awful sin committed in the eyes of God’, and he warned that there was no room in priesthood or in religious life for those who harm young people. According to the pontiff, the Church needed a process of purification.”⁵⁵ One of the ways of purifying the Church was to curb or eliminate any homosexual influence within the institution.

‘The fight goes on. It is important that [homosexuality] be combated so that seminaries and novitiates are not dominated by homosexuals’ declared Monsignor Gregory President of the

⁵³ Daniel C. Levy and Kathleen Bruhn *Mexico: The Struggle for Democratic Development* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 200.

⁵⁴ Gibson, *The Coming Catholic Church*, 243.

⁵⁵ Carlos Fazio, *En el nombre del padre: Depredadores sexuales de la iglesia* (México D.F.: Editorial Océano de México, S.A. de CV., 2004), 20.

Episcopal Conference of the United States, who also stated that the sexual abuse of minors was definitely intertwined with homosexuality.⁵⁶

Homosexuals— not paedophiles— were viewed as the instigators and the culprits of the sexual abuse minors suffered at the hands of Catholic clerics in North America. The scandal has entailed the exclusion of priestly vocations from homosexuals because they are considered to be sexual predators.⁵⁷ The stance taken by the Catholic Church was offensive to more than a few members of the Church and it promoted a discourse that discriminated gays and lesbians because they could be viewed as sexual deviants who were also interested in raping children and teenagers. Homosexuals have traditionally been an easy target because of their smallness in numbers compared to the rest of the population, “[t]he Social Sciences indicate that anywhere from two to four percent of the population is exclusively homosexual. That is they experience romantic attraction only toward members of their own sex.”⁵⁸ The discrimination of gays and lesbians by the Catholic Church and the points that have been made in this introduction elicit three questions that this thesis intends to analyse and answer.

- a) Because the Catholic Church promotes discrimination against people who have same sex attractions, how can (or how have) the democratic Governments of each State attempted to deal with the consequent inequality that the discrimination the Catholic Church’s stance does to homosexuals, and if they have done anything, how successful have they been?

⁵⁶ Carlos Fazio, *En el nombre del padre*, 21-22.

⁵⁷ Though there was already a prohibition against homosexual priests. See Jason Berry and Gerald Renner *Vows of Silence: The Abuse of Power in the Papacy of John Paul II* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 29-30. “In 1961 the Sacred Congregation for Religious, in Rome, had issued a dark warning: ‘Advancement toward religious vows and ordination should be barred to those who are afflicted with evil tendencies towards homosexuality or pederasty for whom the common life and the priestly ministry constitute serious dangers.’”

⁵⁸ Helminiak, *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*, 18.

- b) Why has the Catholic Church been unable to deal with the growing gay community when it has adapted so well in the past to changing values and views?
- c) How has the identity clash between the Catholic Church and the Gay Community reaffirmed or affected perceptions of the Gay Community and how its identity has been affected?

Chapter one will deal with the inability of the Catholic Church to adapt to the emergence of the gay and lesbian culture within a globalized world. This will be done by analysing its stance on homosexuality through the analysis of Church documents which deal with the issue and an exploration of the Church's past and its ability to modify central Catholic doctrine to adjust itself to the times of crisis it lived through. Chapter 2 intends to analyse the role of the State in the ongoing debate between gays and lesbians on one side and the Catholic Church on the other. It intends to highlight the legislation which has been approved in favour or against gays and lesbians, and also explore the influence Catholicism has on the passing of said legislation. Chapter three intends to explore the reaction of the gay and lesbian community to the Church's discrimination through the formation of groups that intend to give them a voice within the Church and it attempts to offer a digression on the concept of natural law and how this can be modified to fit gays and lesbians within the Catholic fold.

Methodology

Each chapter intends to use the historical narrative method to explain its conclusions. The use of the historical method is an important component of the current

dialogue between Catholicism and gay and lesbian groups since John Boswell attempted to demonstrate through the use of history how Christianity did not discriminate people who had same sex preferences before the 12th century.⁵⁹ Aside from the use of the Historical method, there are other considerations to take into account for this thesis; it is important to clarify the use of certain terms that will appear throughout the text and which have to do with defining people who have same-sex preferences. There currently is a discussion going on about the usage of certain words by the Catholic Church which discriminate against gays and lesbians in mainstream society, and create tension among both groups. It is the controversial use of the word “homosexual” and the meanings the Catholic hierarchy gives to it. There is a divergence within the homosexual camp in the way it uses certain terms to define itself and what these words mean to people with same-sex preferences.

The Catholic Church generally used the term “sodomite” to describe any action that was sexual in nature but was not meant to procreate; anything from sex with animals to paedophilia was grouped under the heading of “sodomite,”⁶⁰ the term is still used in the legislation of English speaking countries and as will be analysed further on, it is still used in certain contexts of legal discourse. In the mid 1860s a new term was coined to describe an urban movement that had been occurring in big cities for a group of men who were deemed to be mentally ill or defective. The term was “homosexual” which was intended to

⁵⁹ Steve Hogan and Lee Hudson, *Completely Queer: The Gay and Lesbian Encyclopedia* (New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1999), 97. “Boswell published his path breaking *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (1980) arguing against what he called ‘the common idea that religious belief-Christian or other- has been the cause of intolerance in regard to gay people.’ Boswell’s thesis, that the hostility of Christianity toward same sex relations became serious only after the 12th century, was hailed as revolutionary by most reviewers.”

⁶⁰ Hogan and Hudson, *Completely Queer*, 515. Though this is not the case for the word “sodomía” or “sodomita” in Spanish, which meant homosexual intercourse since it was legislated as such by King Alfonso X of Castile (1252-84) Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 289. “Regarding those who commit Sexual Sins against Nature ‘sodomy’ is the sin which men commit by having intercourse with each other, against nature and natural custom.”

be used to describe the conduct of men who engaged in sexual contact with members of their same sex.⁶¹ The Catholic Church still utilises this term to describe gays, lesbians, queers, transvestites and bisexuals. The definition is thus very important to understand the relations between Catholicism and gays and lesbians. When the term “homosexuality” is used in this thesis it will be understood as follows, “[t]he condition of a person whose sexual orientation is towards persons of the same rather than the opposite sex.”⁶²

In the 1940s the term “gay,” which was slang for a “homosexual” began to be used to describe men who engaged in sexual relations with other men.⁶³ This term has been controversial in academic circles. In *Homosexuality, Christianity and Social Tolerance*, Boswell was criticized⁶⁴ for using the term “gay” to describe anybody in history who had a same-sex attraction. It is deemed that it would be incorrect to describe emperor Hadrian of Rome as gay, when the concept is so new and is used to describe a series of attitudes and conducts that explain what a portion of the North American gay population does. The term gay could be seen as exclusively English cultural construct which is being adopted by other countries in the world, but which describes an American way of life for gays and lesbians.⁶⁵ Lesbians will be understood as “a woman (or women) who feel sexual desire exclusively or predominantly for another woman or women,”⁶⁶ and in this thesis they will be described separately from gays, though they will be understood to be part of the Catholic Church’s homosexual category, unless it is specifically explained that they are not. I also must

⁶¹ Hogan and Hudson, *Completely Queer*, 292-293.

⁶² Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 144.

⁶³ Hogan and Hudson, *Completely Queer*, 229.

⁶⁴ Hogan and Hudson, *Completely Queer*, 97. “His usage of the word ‘gay’ for everyone from Plato to Edward II landed him in the thick of the then emerging constructionalism vs. essentialism battle.”

⁶⁵ Alberto Mira, *De Sodoma a Chueca: Una historia cultural de la homosexualidad en España del siglo XX* (Barcelona and Madrid: Editorial Egales, S.L., 2007), 22.

⁶⁶ Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 357.

recognize that the discourse of this thesis is slanted toward gay men instead of speaking equally of both men and women. This is unfair to lesbians who may not like the idea of being lumped with their male counterparts just because they have same sex preferences, when their spiritual, political, economic and social needs and desires may be different from gays.

The underlying argument in this thesis is that both gays and lesbians are united in their desire for members of their same sex, and that consequently their goals are similar in that they want to acquire the right to marry, and to not be discriminated by the State and the Church. I quote Mark D. Jordan who claims “We need to think of Catholic lesbianism and Catholic gayness separately (...) If lesbians and gays must now band together in self defence that does not mean that they can honestly be conceived in a single theological category.”⁶⁷ The defence of their rights unites their interests; when the term lesbian is used in this thesis it will be used in the context of acquiring the rights that gays are fighting for, though some of the arguments that apply to gays will not necessarily be applied to lesbians. One of the major assumptions of this thesis is that there is in fact a gay community, and this belief colours the way the relationship between Catholicism and homosexuals will be explained. It is important to clarify though that the use of the term gay community may be controversial in and of itself, though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to argue whether there is in fact a gay community or not, the underlying assumption is that there is such a community of people.

⁶⁷ Mark D. Jordan *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 9.

The term “queer” will be used sparingly in this thesis. “Queer” can be understood as “[a] word used especially since the late 1980s to describe persons whose sexual desires or gender identity does not conform to socio-culturally constructed norms. It expressed nuances of anti-assimilationism, defiance, and pride in nonconformity,”⁶⁸ and thus this thesis assumes that self described “queers” – even if they share same sex desires like gay and lesbians– are ideologically removed from them because they are not searching to find a solution to mend or improve relations between Catholicism and themselves. This thesis therefore focuses on gays and lesbians who desire to work out a solution to the theological and philosophical blockades currently in place and who want to be accepted by Catholicism. “Bisexuals,” “transgendered people” and, “ephebophiles” will not be taken into account because their relations and conflicts with the Church, though based on similar premises as gays and lesbians, are based on differing theological points of view. Even so, it is important to point out that when certain segments of the Catholic Church use “homosexual” it does group gays, lesbians, transgendered, bisexual, queer individuals and, ephebophiles⁶⁹ so when the term is used it groups different forms of sexuality to describe an action, and thus is used as a term like sodomy which described various sexual actions. This lends itself to confusion. So, for the purposes of this thesis, and even if at the risk of sounding arbitrary, the term homosexual will be understood to mean only gays and lesbians. Finally, it is important to clarify what this thesis refers to when it talks about the Catholic Church. “For the present purposes, church refers to an organization that professes a belief in some transcendental being and codifies behavioural norms that presumably are in accordance with this belief (...) each national Catholic Church (as represented by its

⁶⁸ Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 463-4.

⁶⁹ See the references to child abuse by Catholic priests in this section, Chapters 2 and 3.

Episcopal leaders) will be considered a unitary factor, unless otherwise noted.”⁷⁰ The focus of this thesis tends to emphasize the Catholic Church ideology more than the gay and lesbian discourse on the matter, which may be considered unfair by gays and lesbians who have a valid point in criticizing the author for the emphasis put on the Church’s agenda before queer ideals. This polemic could be the subject of another work, but for now this thesis is more interested in trying to conciliate the Church’s attitudes towards homosexuality than the other way around.

While I certainly agree with the proponents of, for example, queer theory that a major shift in attitude and the language of normal/abnormal would promote acceptance of queer, and problematize heteronormativity, in a way that would bring about more profound social change, I remain unconvinced that this is the best discourse to adopt in conversation with the Catholic Church. Instead, and because there are several arguments suggesting that more and more successful changes can be made using the perspective I have chosen, I adopt a more “piecemeal” approach. In the well known words of Karl Popper, the piecemeal engineer uses “small adjustments and readjustments which can be continually improved upon,”⁷¹ to achieve his ends which, for Popper involved social and political reforms. Since Popper’s method—as with all methods—had its problems,⁷² I do not wish to stress the deeper elements of this method beyond what it can achieve in its usefulness for this thesis, for that would undermine the entire method itself. However, I do think this

⁷⁰ Anthony Gill, *Rendering Unto Caesar : The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 9.

⁷¹ Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957), 66.

⁷² See Gurol Irzik, “Popper’s Piecemeal Engineering: What is Good for Science is Not Always Good for Society,” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 1, no. 36 (1985):1-10. For an exhaustive account of the strengths and weaknesses of this as a method. Also available at http://bjps.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/pdf_extract/36/1/1

method has its advantages if the ends or purposes of a study are to make arguments for decreasing discrimination against, and increasing acceptance of, homosexual behaviour and homosexual individuals. The piecemeal approach can be used, for example, in the arguments that are used against “gay marriage;” throughout the thesis one of the main arguments that will be stressed is the fact that the Church opposes unions between members of the same sex. This thesis does not argue that the Church should in fact marry gays and lesbians within the institution, but would ask that Catholicism not oppose the newly acquired rights of gays and lesbians to be recognized as a couple by the State, wherever the legislation has been approved. This thesis argues that at some point, if the Church reconsidered its stance on unions between members of the same sex, it does not need to elevate it to the status of a sacrament, like the marriage of members of the opposite sex is considered, or perform ceremonies within Church property; it would suffice that the Church authorize its priests to give a blessing to the unions, if it does not go against the belief systems of the priest. It is one of the contentions of this thesis to prove that finding a middle of the road solution might be possible to mend relations between both groups.