

**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ROLE OF HOMOEROTICISM IN THE SPIRITUAL
GROWTH OF PRIESTS : A STUDY OF INDIVIDUATION PROCESSES
AND HOMOEROTIC SEXUALITIES**

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the psychological role of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth of priests, using Grounded Theory and James Fowler's stages of faith development as the basis for the research methodology. Three Anglican priests were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. The research interview combined Fowler's Faith Development Interview Guide and a semi-structured interview in order to ascertain the priests' level of spiritual development, as well as to explore their experience of the homoerotic component to their sexuality, and its influence on their spiritual growth. The interviews and iterative analysis focussed on four major questions: (1) Are priests who experience and actively work at integrating the homoerotic aspect to themselves assisted thereby in their spiritual growth, and if so, how might this be accounted for?; (2) Following Fowler's model of spiritual development, what processes characterise each priest's approach to meaning-creation in their lives?; (3) Following Fowler's model, can the psychological work of engaging with and accepting homoeroticism be conceived of as serving an initiatory function in the emergence of new processes of meaning-creation?; (4) What role does homoeroticism serve in the spiritual growth of priests? The interpretative phase consisted of three stages. A grounded theory analysis of each interview was undertaken, developing a model for understanding the role of homoeroticism in spiritual growth. In the second stage, the priest's level of spiritual development was ascertained, using Fowler's Faith Development Guide. The third stage linked each participant's level of spiritual development (in Fowler's terms) with their core stories regarding experiences, meanings, and roles of homoeroticism. Finally, an integrative theory of the role of homoeroticism in spiritual growth was developed, using Jungian and post-Jungian theory as a basis for the discussion. The results suggested that homoeroticism did not play any role in spiritual growth and individuation separate to the manner in which it was experienced as having been constructed by society and the Church, and separate to the manner in which each priest in the study expressed, experienced, or engaged with it. In this context the experience of homoeroticism appeared to play a diversity of roles, including representing the collective and personal *shadow*, the archetypal *anima/animus*, the archetypal *puer/senex* constellation, the *transcendent function*, and thereby, as an expression of these roles, contribute to the emergence of new processes of meaning-creation in the spiritual growth and *individuation* of priests.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What is philosophy today if it does not consist *not* in legitimating what one already knows but in undertaking to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently.

Michel Foucault – The Use of Pleasure

To say I love you is to say that you are not mine, but rather your own. To love you is to advocate your rights, your space, your self, and to struggle with you, rather than against you, in our learning to claim our power in the world.

To love you is to make love to you, and with you, whether in an exchange of glances heavy with existence, in the passing of a peace we mean, in our common work or play, in our struggle for social justice, or in the ecstasy and tenderness of intimate embrace that we believe is just and right for us – and for others in the world.

To love you is to be pushed by a power/God both terrifying and comforting, to touch and be touched by you . . . To love you is to sing with you, cry with you, pray with you, and act with you to recreate the world.

To say 'I love you' means *–let the revolution begin!*

Carter Heyward – Our Passion for Justice

1.1. Some Initial Thoughts

This is a study of the psychological role of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth of priests. The expression of homoeroticism within the context of the Christian Church has been a controversial issue for many centuries now. However, with the emergence of the dualistic notions of “heterosexuality” and “homosexuality” at the beginning of the twentieth century, a new dimension entered the debate regarding human sexuality and its place within Christian spirituality. Homoerotic acts came to define the *nature* of an individual. For the first time in Western history, “homosexual” people, rather than homoerotic acts, became the focus of the Church’s attention. Homoeroticism, restricted now to a reified identity, came to represent the “other” in the realm of human sexuality, something against which the “heterosexual” could be compared, and be declared “normal”. Patriarchy found in “heterosexuality” a new cornerstone on which to define human experience.

The duality which now characterises sexual orientation in Western cultures is a paradoxical one. Initially introduced to give a voice to men and women who experienced strong homoerotic feelings, the word “homosexual” was soon colonised by patriarchal culture to define that which is “abnormal” and “unnatural” in society. However, as will become evident in this exploration of homoeroticism, the invention of the word “homosexual” also allowed for a process of increased differentiation of homoerotic experience. Men and women who experience homoerotic sexualities more consciously have begun speaking openly about their experiences, allowing for greater articulation of this strand of human sexuality. In this sense, it is possible that the reification of dualistic notions of human sexuality is part of a process by which sexuality, as a *process* in human individuation, is reinventing itself, challenging collective consciousness to rethink the place sexuality might occupy within human experience.

Homoerotic sexualities and spirituality have been rather controversial bed-fellows through the course of Christian history. Denied the more traditional “procreation-purposive” justification behind which sexuality has been hidden for many centuries within the context of Christianity, the embodiment of homoerotic sexualities within a spiritual context seems to be challenging the Church’s conceptualisation of sexuality and its place within spirituality. As Ruether (1994) reflects, “homosexuality is the stalking horse of all the current social fears concerning the disintegration of moral and social structures” (Ruether, 1994, p.389). Writers in the fields of theology, sexuality and feminism such as Carter Hayward (1994), Elizabeth Stuart (1995), Joan Timmerman (1992), Audre Lorde (1994), James Nelson (1988), and James Empereur (1998), all suggest that human sexuality is probably the most important present-day challenge to the conceptualisation of spirituality, particularly as a challenge to spirit/body duality so prevalent in Christianity and Western thought. Furthermore, many suggest that “homosexuality” itself, precisely because of its taboo nature, holds the key to the integration of sexuality and spirituality, a process they believe is absolutely vital if the modern Church is going to ably deal with people’s psychological and spiritual needs into the twenty-first century (Nelson, 1988; Hayward, 1994).

In recent years, Christian gay men and lesbians have begun speaking out regarding their experiences of spirituality, challenging traditional Christian perspectives which label them “evil”, or “sinful”. The prevalence of “gays” and “lesbians” within the Christian Church is by no means something new. Historians have noted a high incidence of priests, monks and nuns embodying homoerotic sexualities in one way or another, throughout the course of Christian history.

Not only is homosexual eroticism the oldest and most persistent strand in the Christian theology of romantic love, but Christian religious life was the most prominent gay life-style in Western Europe from the Early Middle Ages to the Reformation, about two-thirds of the period since Europe became Christian (ibid., p.366).

As Boswell (ibid.), concludes, “it is poignantly ironic that a group so marginalised and despised as gay people should have exerted such an influence on Christian society”. Many non-Christian observers of clergy in the Catholic church have, throughout history, suggested that it was disproportionately “gay” (Boswell, 1980).

Anthropologists have noticed a similar trend in the world’s shamanic traditions. Widely reported observations that shamans in many cultures seem to be “homosexual” have gained prominence in recent years. The *berdache* tradition in North America has recently become a focus of considerable anthropological study. The roles these shamanic men and women, who frequently took on partners of the same sex, played as spiritual functionaries within their communities have been extensively reported (Williams, 1986). Anthropologist Mircea Eliade (1965, in Hopcke et. al., 1993) writes of a “bisexuality” often embodied by shamans, perceived by their communities as a “sign of spirituality”. Histories written about many of the world’s spiritual traditions similarly report a high incidence of “gay” people within their ranks (Conner, Sparks & Sparks, 1998).

A paradox best summarises a central theme inherent in these introductory remarks. On the one hand, homoerotic sexualities are largely taboo within a traditional Christian context. On the other, men and women who have through the course of history embodied homoeroticism seem

attracted to religion and spirituality as a vocation. Two preliminary questions seem to emerge out of this paradox:

1. Is there a relationship between homoeroticism, particularly in relation to its construction as being taboo or “other” within the Christian tradition, and spirituality?
2. Does the process of engaging with homoeroticism have an influence on spirituality?

At present, few studies have been conducted exploring the relationship between homoeroticism and spirituality. Although in recent years gay men and lesbians, including priests, have begun speaking about their experience of their sexuality in relation to their spirituality (Shallenberger, 1998; Comstock & Henking, 1997), the accounts are largely anecdotal, and relate mainly to homoeroticism as expressed and experienced through gay or lesbian identity. In the present study, the role of homoeroticism will be explored as a *process* in spiritual growth, rather than only as an expression of gay or lesbian identity. By employing qualitative methodology to gain access to the personal experience of priests regarding homoeroticism and the role it has played in their lives, I hope to explore the above questions and begin developing a model by which to begin understanding the relationship between homoeroticism and spirituality.

1.2. Overview Of Thesis Structure

Against the backdrop of Chapter One, Chapter Two will explore how the present study came about. The chapter will conclude with a detailed discussion of definitions, particularly relating to notions of “homosexuality”, homoeroticism, spirituality and spiritual growth. The theoretical parameters of the study will be outlined, with particular reference to the work of Carl Jung, and the post-Jungian theorist Andrew Samuels.

In Chapter Three, spiritual growth and its links with the Jungian concept of individuation will be explored, looking especially at processes by which psychological and spiritual growth take place. James Fowler’s stages of faith development will be introduced as a means by which to further understand processes by which psychological growth occurs.

Chapter Four addresses the relationship between spirituality and homoeroticism. Against a backdrop of Freudian and Jungian psychological theory regarding human sexuality, the relationship between homoeroticism and spirituality will be explored. Shamanic cultures will be examined, looking particularly at the role played by homoeroticism within these so-called traditional cultures. An historical overview of homoeroticism within a Christian context will conclude with an exploration of the roles and meanings of homoeroticism within a spiritual context.

Chapter Five outlines the research process. Grounded Theory and Fowler's Faith Interview Guide will serve as the methodological basis for the research. In Chapter Six the process of data analysis will first be outlined, before presenting a detailed account of the results. Results will be presented in three sections. A Grounded Theory Analysis of the research interview, which included Fowler's Faith Development Interview, aims to explicate themes and processes relating to homoeroticism and its relationship to spirituality. An analysis of Faith Development will then follow, exploring Fowler's processes of meaning creation as they relate to each participant. Based on the previous two sections, a third section will then explore the role played by homoeroticism within the context of spiritual development of three priests.

Chapter Seven will locate the results within a Jungian and Post-Jungian framework. The discussion will focus primarily on developing a teleological model for understanding the role of homoeroticism in spiritual development. Findings will be located within the specific context of the priesthood, looking at the implications of homoeroticism and its expression within the context of the Christian Church. Chapter Eight concludes the study, summarising the major themes developed in the previous chapters.

Finally, it must be noted that this thesis is not based on an *a priori* approach to research, which first constructs hypotheses and then implements the research accordingly. Following grounded theory methodology, the research process was essentially an organic one through which the process gradually emerged. After a brief review of the literature, the research interview was implemented. Data were collected, and then submitted to intensive grounded theory analysis, as well as a faith development analysis. After the completion of this process, a detailed review

of the literature was undertaken, as appears in Chapters Three and Four. Findings were then considered in the light of Jungian and Post-Jungian theory. As Strauss and Corbin reflect, regarding grounded theory processes:

Data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with one another. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant is allowed to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.23).

CHAPTER 2

MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY, AND SOME DEFINITIONS

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, key factors will be identified which motivated this exploration of the role of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth of priests. Thereafter, terms used in the study will be defined and explored in some detail. This discussion will serve as the foundation to the chapters which follow, providing both the parameters of and the context for the research process.

2.2. Motivation for this Study

In my practice as a psychotherapist many priests with whom I work experience what may be termed an *homoerotic* component to their psychological life. For the purposes of this study homoeroticism is defined as the experience of sexual, emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual attraction to someone of the same sex, whether or not the person experiencing these feelings defines himself as “gay”. Some priests I work with define themselves as “gay”, others are comfortably and happily married, but are aware of, and often struggle with, homoerotic feelings. My therapeutic work in this area has suggested that the process of engaging with and accepting homoerotic feelings often serves not only an important psychological role in the development of self-acceptance, but it appears to enhance and enrich spirituality. My clinical observations in this regard suggest that priests grappling with homoeroticism are required to confront two fundamental taboos within the Christian Church, viz., sex *and* “homosexuality”. Therapeutic work in these instances often requires one to move beyond the obvious focus of self-acceptance, assisting priests also in forging a place for themselves within an institution and a cultural or spiritual heritage which officially, and fundamentally, rejects what they are learning to accept. The outcome, if they can tolerate the ensuing tension (some do not, and leave the priesthood), often results in a deepening of their experience of themselves and their spirituality.

A preliminary review of the literature regarding homoeroticism and spirituality revealed a number of factors pertinent to this study. Since the 1970s, books focussing on the links between gays and lesbians and spirituality seem to have proliferated (Conner, 1993). These include Williams' *The Spirit and the Flesh* (1986), Roscoe's *Living the Spirit* (1988) and *The Zuni Man-Woman* (1991), and Thompson's *Gay Spirit* (1995), to name but a few. Many of these texts tend to argue for the *essentialist* nature of "homosexuality" and its *archetypal* relationship to spirituality, focussing on such concepts as the *third gender* (Roscoe, 1993; Thompson, 1995), the *gay soul* (Harvey, 1997), and the *gay spirit* (Thompson, 1995). These authors tend to believe that a person is simply "born that way" (Kulkarni, 1997), and that there is an essential link between homoeroticism and spirituality. Social constructionists on the other hand argue that sexual orientation is constructed and manipulated by social and political factors. In this sense, some argue that sexual orientation exists only because we all agree that it exists. Constructionists in the realm of human sexuality tend to focus on how identity is formed, and what it might mean within a particular historical context (*ibid.*). Not surprisingly, there is little in the literature linking spirituality and homoeroticism from a constructionist perspective. As both Conner (1993) and Boswell (1997) point out, the sacred texts and spiritual experiences of "gender variant" men and women have largely been discounted by social constructionism, often on the basis of a deep scepticism regarding the stability of the concept of "homosexuality" across cultures and across time, as well as deep misgivings about the study of spirituality, especially in relation to its *archetypal* nature.

The dichotomous and conflictual relationship between the extremes of essentialism and constructionism tends to restrict and limit the kinds of research questions asked by either. Constructionists seldom venture anywhere near spirituality or the experiences of spirituality gay and lesbian people might report (Conner, Sparks & Sparks, 1998). If they do, the object is often to deconstruct these experiences, reducing them to "nothing but" phenomena. Essentialists avoid the challenge to look more closely at subjectivity, often holding rather too firmly, and somewhat defensively, onto recently (re)-venerated identities, and thereby missing out on the rich and complex process by which identity and experience is also co-created. A number of theorists (Samuels, 1989; Kulkarni, 1997) argue for a more pluralistic point of view

in which both essentialist and constructionist perspectives are used to create a more complete picture regarding human sexuality.

Possibly as a result of the manner in which homoerotic sexualities are currently conceptualised, a second factor which became evident in the preliminary review of the literature was that few authors seemed to refer to *homoeroticism* per se. Homoerotic sexualities were either referred to in terms of identity, using terms such as “gay”, “queer”, and “lesbian” (Kulkarni, 1997; O’Conner & Ryan, 1993); or they were referred to in somewhat essentialist terms, using terms such as “homosexual”, “gay soul”, “gay gene”, and “gay spirit”. (Harvey, 1997; Conner, 1993; LeVay, 1993). The politics which underlie both these uses is complex (Barsani, 1995; Highwater, 1997; Tacey, 1993). The uses and misuses of the notions of gay identity and biological or spiritual essentialism form a powerful subplot in the drama of “gay liberation”. These issues are very ably discussed by authors such as Urvashi Vaid, in her book *Virtual Equality* (1995), Leo Bersani, in *Homos* (1995), and Andrew Sullivan, in *Virtually Normal* (1995), and cannot be dealt with within the limits of this study.

A third factor arising from the initial review reflected that homoeroticism is seldom explored in relation to its *role* in development or growth. When sexuality is referred to in these terms, it is done so largely in relation to identity (Carpenter, 1919; Kulkarni, 1997; Shallenberger, 1998). Few authors make the distinction between “homosexuality” as identity, and “homoeroticism” as an experience potentially reflecting something more than identity. My experience as a therapist suggests that many people experience a homoerotic component to themselves. They do not all, however, create or establish an identity based on this experience. This process of identity creation, or whatever archetypal processes may lie at the basis of the need to create, establish, or express a particular kind of identity, is another complex and important area of study (Kulkarni, 1997). Much of this is central to the gay and lesbian movement, and vital in the process of reclaiming a largely silenced world of experience.

In addition, little seemed available in the literature exploring the role of homoeroticism in *spiritual growth*, most especially not in the *spiritual growth of priests*. Much of what is written about regarding homoerotic sexuality and its relation to spirituality is anecdotal, often with a

deep investment in essentialist perspectives (Harvey, 1997; Thompson, 1995). These stories are powerful, and need to be heard. It is crucial that “the stories of the silenced” are written (Comstock, 1993, p.49; Germond & de Gruchy, 1997). The danger, however, is that in our attempts to be heard, we easily lose sight of how homoeroticism might short-sightedly be trapped within the construct of identity. By holding too firmly or too defensively onto homoeroticism as identity only (and yet taking into account the warning by Vaid (1995) and Highwater (1997) to be aware of the dominant heterosexist cultural subtext which attempts to “mainstream” the radicalness of the gay and lesbian movement), there is the potential to lose sight of the larger processes *homoeroticism* might provoke. Gay and lesbian identity is a vital, and a most radical aspect of the unfolding of the homoerotic process in the world (Kulkarni, 1997). As gays and lesbians we do not, however, have copyright on homoerotic experience. Assuming such copyright simply silences the stories and experiences of many people who might also experience (albeit more secretly) homoerotic feelings: people who do not define themselves as “gay” or “lesbian”, yet who (often silently) share with these men and women many similarities. It is a difficult tension to hold: to actively locate oneself within a (for instance) gay or lesbian identity, no matter what the basis might be for this identity, (as someone like Highwater, in his powerful book *The Mythology of Transgression* (1997), does), and yet to hold it loosely enough to be receptive and responsive to undercurrent processes going on within the very context one feels marginalised from. Ferguson, in her article “*Is there a Lesbian Culture?*” (quoted in Kulkarni, 1997, p.31), points to these issues when she describes lesbian cultures as “potential cultures of resistance *within* historically specific patriarchal cultures”. Kulkarni concludes: “In other words, we can hold the tension between being inside and outside, without surrendering the power of conceptualising lesbianism as a site of resistance” (ibid., p.31).

It was in the context of what seemed available in the literature, and what still seemed unexplored and undeveloped regarding homoeroticism and its potential role in spirituality, that ideas for this study began to take shape. My work as a therapist is strongly influenced by the thinking of Jung. His teleological approach to psychological experience is one which has had a considerable influence on the manner in which I work. His work also provides a powerful backdrop for the study of spirituality. His theory of *individuation*, a concept central to his work

(Hollis, 1993), makes no distinction between spiritual and psychological development. “The spiritual appears in the psyche also as an instinct, indeed as a real passion, as a ‘consuming fire’” (Jung, 1928, p. 108). For Jung, the strivings of all religions, and of all psychological growth, is to the same end: the realisation of what he termed “the *self*” (Crowley, 1998). “In the last analysis every life is the realisation of a whole, that is, of a *self*, for which reason this realisation can also be called ‘individuation’” (Jung, 1944, p. 222). The “religious principle” is an inherent one in Jung’s concept of psychological growth (Singer, 1973). And for Jung (1963), the real challenges of life are, in the end, challenges regarding spirituality. The Jungian literature seemed to provide a psychological context in which spirituality could be explored, as well as the framework for an alternative approach to homoeroticism, viz. a teleological, rather than a causal one. Jung’s work seemed to provide a framework from within which questions such as “what is the role of homoeroticism in the spirituality of priests?” could be asked. However, despite the usefulness of Jungian psychology, a number of problems existed in locating a study of homoeroticism within a context of Jungian thought. Firstly, Jung wrote very little about homoeroticism (Hopcke, 1989), and secondly, his attitudes towards human sexuality tended to be largely heterosexist (Kulkarni, 1997).

The work of Post-Jungian theorist and writer Andrew Samuels has ushered in a new focus on, and critique of Jung’s work (Kulkarni, 1997; Samuels, 1985; Samuels, 1989; Samuels, 1993; Samuels, 1999). His work lays the foundation for discovering anew, in Jung, *ways of thinking*, without being limited by the content of Jung’s thought. This approach seemed particularly significant for the current study. It was thus on a foundation of Samuels’ pluralistic interpretation of Jungian psychology that the study of homoeroticism and its role in spirituality from a Jungian and post-Jungian perspective now seemed possible.

The use of the concept of *pluralism*, and the related notion of *diversity*, are integral to Samuels’ vision of psychology. Interestingly, he defines pluralism as an adjective, rather than a noun (ibid., p.4).

Pluralism is an attitude that can hold the tension between claims of and tendencies towards unity *and* claims of and tendencies towards diversity:

depth psychology as a cohesive discipline in which there are right and wrong viewpoints – and depth psychology as containing a multiplicity of valid approaches. A place for ultimate reality *and* for a plethora of phenomena.

Samuels' notions of *plurality* and *diversity* as both process and content, metaphor and matter, seemed to have the potential to allow for a reformulation of homoerotic sexualities as adjective (role), and at the same time, not lose sight of its power as noun (identity). He seems to find a way of articulating that space in which essentialism and constructionism can potentially coexist, albeit in tension.

A final factor emerging from the initial review of the literature related to the notion of spiritual *growth*. As many authors have reflected (Samuels, 1989; Samuels, 1993; Wilbur, 1999), the concept of growth, most commonly referred to in the literature as “development”, is one fraught with dangers. At its worst it is used hierarchically to subjugate, judge and oppress, creating camps of those who are “better than” and “stronger than”. At its best, the notion of growth provides insight into structure and process, allowing an appreciation of the richness of processes of movement. A danger inherent in the concept of growth seems to be its potential to be used *prescriptively*, to tell people what is best for them, and how to grow and develop. History seems full of this sort of imperialism, on every level of life. Christianity itself has been used to such ends. Psychology too has done much harm, most especially, in the context of this discussion, to gay and lesbian people (O’Conner & Ryan, 1995). Imperialistic descriptions of “normal” development in psychology are rife.

An alternative, which allows the insight of developmental theory to remain intact, might be to engage with the concept of growth as *description*. It is here that Samuels' (1989) work again bears relevance, particularly in relation to the notion of *plurality*. His vision of pluralism allows for a paradoxical “holding together” of a striving for *unity*, which theories of development attempt to achieve, and an appreciation and deep respect of diversity, which also recognises an inherent tendency towards multiplicity (Samuels, 1989; Samuels, 1993). In the context of his vision, theories of development become metaphors which act as beacons as one navigates through the largely uncharted seas of the human and collective psyche. This vision

challenges one to engage much more provisionally with the conclusions suggested by theories of development. It does not require that all notions of development are discarded. It does, however, challenge one to be much more careful as to how they are used. In Samuels' vision the world is comprised of considerable diversity. Within this vision, theories of development become like microscopes, describing layer upon layer of multiplicity. That there might be principles or patterns to life need not be the issue. That they be applied randomly and prescriptively, however, is. Kulkarni, referring to herself as a "feminist Jungian", articulates this vision most powerfully, drawing on a lecture by Samuels she attended (1997, p.13).

The world "urgently needs a pluralistic, psychological model or vision in which difference is truly valued" and where differences and diversity are seen "as normative and as mutually enriching", rather than as an excuse for division and repression. And, since we do not yet know what our differences are, any exploration of difference must be done "experientially, not in a definitory or essentialist way". (Words in parenthesis are taken from Samuels' lecture).

It was thus within the broad parameters of Jungian theory and post-Jungian pluralism, as articulated in the work of Andrew Samuels, that it seemed possible to conceptualise the current study of the role of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth of priests. The concepts of homoeroticism, spirituality and spiritual growth seem to find resonance within this context. As is already evident, this investigation will not confine its focus to gay priests exclusively (i.e. priests who have established an identity based on their experience of their sexuality), but will look more broadly at *homoeroticism* and its role in psychological and spiritual growth.

2.3. Definitions

In this section, key concepts related to this study will be defined. Concepts will be explored in some detail, providing a contextualised understanding of the broader issue of sexuality as it pertains to this study. Words and concepts to be discussed include "homosexuality", "homoeroticism", "spirituality", and "spiritual development".

2.3.1. Homosexuality

Since the term was introduced into the English language in 1892 (it was first coined in 1869 by a German physician and brought into popular usage in Germany around 1880), “homosexuality” has moved inexorably into the foreground as a reified construct, defining the “other” in the realm of human sexuality (Downing, 1989). Its counterpart “heterosexuality” was, not surprisingly, introduced into the English language some years later, in 1900. It is not recognised that these terms are very recent inventions, and thus very recent ways of constructing human sexuality. Downing makes the observation that the creation of the terms coincides with the rise of depth psychology and with a new tendency to understand sexuality primarily in psychological terms. She concludes “There is a sense, then, in which homosexuality is a myth created by clinical psychology” (1989, p. 3). The process by which the term was appropriated by modern medicine and psychology is described in some detail by David Greenberg in *The Construction of Homosexuality* (1988).

In the Western world, the twentieth century has largely been characterised by the pursuit of reifying, objectifying, and analysing human sexuality. The enterprise has been considerable. Once the terms “homosexual” and “heterosexual” emerged, and particularly since their appropriation by medicine and the human sciences, their place as the cornerstone for human relating and social organisation was soon firmly entrenched. The norms were defined, against which anything “abnormal” could be compared, pathologised and controlled.

The body of scientific research seeking to understand human sexuality is vast (Freud, 1917; Downing, 1989; LeVay, 1996; Greenberg, 1988). Many have endeavoured to explain sexuality in terms of its origins and causes, often taking as given the seemingly binary concepts of “heterosexuality” and “homosexuality”. Personhood became defined primarily in terms of the object of one’s sexual attraction. People thus became defined as *being* either “heterosexual” or “homosexual”; this came to reflect the kind of person you were, and your value in society. As can be anticipated, there is very little written about the aetiology of “heterosexuality”, simply because it came to represent the subjective norm for healthy social functioning and relating.

“Homosexuality”, on the other hand, continues to be the object of much speculation, investigation, and analysis.

The work of the gay intellectual Michel Foucault has done much to expose the hidden processes at work in the construction of sexuality in our society. In *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, Foucault (1978) explores ways in which he believes psychology has reified sexuality, objectifying it, solidifying its foundations in clinical terminology, thereby creating sexual heterogeneities: permanent, visible and particular sexualities. Bersani (1995, p. 81) articulates Foucault’s thesis as follows:

Power in our societies functions primarily not by repressing spontaneous sexual drives but by producing multiple sexualities, and that through the classification, distribution and moral rating of those sexualities, the individuals practicing them can be approved, treated, marginalised, sequestered, disciplined, or normalised.

This, for Foucault, is the essence of the way in which liberal states control people: by getting them to control each other. Definitions for good and bad are created, these are entrenched by dominant cultural institutions, including science and the Church, and the general population follows suit. He exposes the homophobic discourse of dominant Western cultural assumptions, something which he believes finds its essence in the creation of the terms “heterosexual” and “homosexual”. Foucault argues that the very idea of “homosexuality” is an artefact of bourgeois society. Patriarchy, and its chief handmaiden heterosexism, represses all expressions of sexuality that do not serve to perpetuate the family. In psychodynamic theory “homosexuality” is explained in terms of the family, thus ensuring its control. This heterosexist, family-based thesis might be expressed as follows: if the family could only follow the rules of what was appropriate and normal, “homosexuals” would not be created. “Homosexuality” thus comes to constitute that which is *deviant* in Western society, against which that which is *normal* can be compared and stabilised. This explains why the coining of the term “homosexual” antedates the term “heterosexual” by a number of years. It is the imaginary “other”, “that which I am not, against which I can compare myself, and pronounce myself normal” (Downing, p. 4). As Foucault writes: “Homosexuality, once defined, becomes

the centre of everyone's haunting nightmare" (quoted in Downing, 1989, p 5). In this sense then, the "homosexual" in society is assigned the social role of representing the denied aspects of the sexuality of all of us (ibid.). The "homosexual" becomes a projection of everything "normal" society is not. In his essay about Foucault entitled *The Queer Politics of Michel Foucault*, Halperin (1995) concludes: "The 'homosexual', as a heterosexist projection of 'other' is not a natural reality – in short, the 'homosexual' is an identity without an essence".

Foucault, in a 1981 interview (quoted in Halperin, 1995, p. 67), suggests that the notion of "homosexuality" be reframed as a *marginal position*, and a *site of resistance* against dominant cultural trends. In this context he uses the word as an adjective, not a noun, and expresses its role as follows:

Homosexuality is a historic opportunity to open up new relational and affective potentialities, not in virtue of qualities intrinsic to the homosexual, but because the position of the homosexual 'off-centre', somehow, together with the diagonal lines which the homosexual can draw through the social fabric, makes it possible to bring to light these potentialities.

This definition of "homosexuality" as an adjective is reminiscent of the manner in which Samuels (1989, p. 4) defines pluralism: "*Pluralism is an attitude* that can hold the tension between claims of and tendencies towards unity *and* claims of and tendencies towards diversity" (emphasis added). It is within this particular vision that "homosexuality" is defined in the context of this study: as an "historic opportunity to open new relational and affective potentialities" the term embodies notions of *identity* (gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual) as well as *process* (a site of resistance). In this sense it might be more useful to speak of "homosexualities", allowing thus for a plurality of meanings to emerge from the construct. To emphasise the multiplicitous nature of the term's usage, "homosexuality" will appear in parentheses throughout the course of this study. However, in order to further distinguish between the notion of "homosexuality" and the experience of homoerotic feelings or impulses, the term "homoeroticism" will be used to describe the latter. The experience of homoerotic feelings, whether or not a person identifies themselves as being "homosexual", gay, lesbian,

queer, or bisexual, is the focus of this study. The notion of homoeroticism will now be discussed.

2.3.2. Homoeroticism

In this thesis, homoeroticism is defined as the experience of sexual, emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual attraction to someone of the same sex, whether or not the people experiencing these feelings define themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. A distinction is made between the experience of these feelings, and the development of an identity based on these feelings. The self-appropriated terms *gay*, *queer*, and *lesbian*, will be used to refer to people who have chosen to create, develop, and express an identity based on these feelings. These words will appear in parentheses when authors use the terms to describe people who would not themselves have used the terms to describe themselves. Boswell (1994a), for instance, refers to the contribution “gay” and “lesbian” people have made to Christianity over the centuries. Although, prior to the appropriation of these terms by the English speaking modern world, people obviously experienced strong homoerotic feelings towards each other, as is evidenced in poetry, songs, prose, and so forth (Boswell, 1980), their definitions of themselves were not as “gay” or “lesbian”. Too quickly cloaking their experience with modern day constructions risks losing the many layers of meaning homoerotic sexualities have been awarded throughout the history of humankind. It is less cumbersome to use these terms, but it is important to hold on to them more loosely than Boswell (ibid.) seems to do, keeping open the possibility that something might have been misunderstood in the way human sexuality is conceptualised retrospectively.

2.3.3. Spirituality And Spiritual Growth

It is not an easy task to write about spirituality in an academic context. The concept lacks an availability to notions of “rigour” and “precision”, each of which are hallmarks to “sound” academic debate. Samuels (1999, ch.7, p.1¹) suggests that “instead of moaning or making jokes about defining elephants, let’s accept the inevitability of vagueness for a discussion of

¹ Samuels’ book *The Secret Life of Politics : Therapy In/Of/By the World* (1999) has not yet been published. Quotations are thus taken from the draft manuscript. Each chapter begins again at page 1, requiring the referencing to include the chapter as well as the page number.

spirituality, rejecting the spurious precision that dominates the style and content of so many contemporary discourses”.

The late twentieth century has seen a profound escalation of interest in spirituality. Samuels (1993, p.11) refers to a “fragmented, fractured and complex attempt at the resacralisation of the culture”. There are many reasons for this, and Samuels then goes on to discuss some of them. It is not within the scope of this chapter to explore this social process any further. This phenomenon is mentioned because, as a result of this profusion of interest in issues spiritual, the number of meanings the term spirituality has taken on are vast. What most authors share in their attempts to define the term, is a multiplicitous, multivocal vision, and a commitment to generalities. A number of definitions will now be explored.

Nelson and Longfellow (1994) speak of spirituality in two broad senses: Firstly, as a “New Age” word, “which means almost anything a person wants it to mean”, or secondly, as a “religious quest without the constraints, pieties, and baggage of organised religion and religious community” (p.71). They then go on to provide their own definition for the term, one which draws together much of what their book *Sexuality and the Sacred* goes on to explore.

[By spirituality we mean] the ways and patterns by which persons relate to that which is ultimately real and worthful to them; the response of the whole person – mind, body, feelings and relationships – to the presence of whatever is held to be sacred, of ultimate worth.

Daniel Helminiak (1996) in his book *The Human Core of Spirituality* also makes reference to a number of definitions. These include what he refers to as the “spiritual component of the human being”. This seems to equate with Jung’s vision of the human psyche, mentioned earlier, where he argues that, in essence, all of life comprises of a spiritual process and goal. Helminiak goes on to make reference to a definition by Edward Canda (1989, *ibid.*, p.33) which he believes best sums up this first meaning: spirituality is “the basic human drive for meaning, purpose, and moral relatedness among people, with the universe, and with the ground of our being”.

Helminiak's second definition relates to the "concern for transcendence", by which he means that which "goes beyond the here and now". This view of spirituality is one which both believes and engages in something existing beyond everyday life. His third interpretation relates to the particular beliefs and practices of an individual. These would be very situation specific, and often based in some kind of organised religion. Fourthly, he discusses spirituality as theology, incorporating the study and development of the world's faiths. The final two definitions of spirituality he examines relate to "spiritualism" and "parapsychology". (1996, p.33).

Samuels (1999), situating himself firmly within a tradition of *plurality*, discusses spirituality in terms of "a plurality of spiritualities" (ch.7, p.4). He highlights five forms of spirituality. The first he calls *social spirituality*, which, in essence, is a process of meaning creation within a social context, aimed fundamentally at the "restoration and repair of the world" (ch. 7, p. 5). Referring to Jung's notion of the *psychoid* archetype², a realm in which spirit and matter coincide, Samuels suggests the existence of a similar dimension in which the spiritual and the social interrelate, something he describes as *spiritoid*. He goes on to argue that psychology or philosophy does not need a separate strand of study in order to explore the spiritual dimension of life. "In effect, the transpersonal is always there in society already, at the spiritoid level, where spirituality and sociality merge. The problem, if there is one, is that we failed to notice this" (ch.7, p.4).

The second in "this plurality of spiritualities" is *democratic spirituality*. Here Samuels (1999) makes reference to both Jung's (1918) and Hillman's (1991) challenges to the "ever-upward out-of-the-world" proclivities of the Western Spirit. They both locate spirit in matter (as a downward movement into "soul"), rather than escaping upwards into a disembodied, ethereal spirituality (Jung, 1955; Hillman, 1991). This was why the psychoid archetype attained such significance for Jung. The concept allowed him to conceive of spirit and matter being the same thing. Samuel's criticism of both Jung's and Hillman's upwards (spirit) and downwards (soul) concept of spirit is that it is both "romanticised" and "elitist". As Samuels reflects: "It is

² The psychoid archetype will be discussed in some detail in Chapter Three.

already the case that people feel they are supposed to move upwards or downwards, in certain prescribed ways” (Samuel’s, 1999, ch.7, p.5). Instead, Samuels finds in spirituality something much more optimistic, something much more *democratic*. He suggests that spirituality may well be the last arena in which “equality of potential” might exist. “There really is no spiritual equivalent to how many times a night you can do it or how many degrees you have or how much you earn” (ibid.). Each person, Samuels seems to be saying, has a unique potential with regards spirituality. It is not comparable to anything or anyone else.

Samuels’ third dimension of spirituality is what he terms *craft spirituality*. He refers here to “the making of holiness”. Alongside the natural world is the world constructed by humans. We have the ability to create sacred places, Samuels argues. It’s something humans do all the time. Buildings are consecrated, for instance, making them “God Blessed”. Samuels’ point goes further than this though. He reflects that anything we do can be deemed sacred by us. “In modern life, there is a holiness waiting to be released” (ibid.). A decision is made to conceptualise something as being holy, and then it is. Joan Timmerman (1992, p.7) makes a similar point when exploring her ideas about spirituality and sexuality.

A reductionist tendency might be identified with both dogmatism and scepticism. Dogmatism: “Why are you trying to make so much of sex; after all, it’s just fucking”. Skepticism: “Even if you find the spiritual in the sexual, so what? How can I know you didn’t just put it there?” Precisely! These are the kind of realities which you won’t find there if you don’t put them there.

The fourth kind of spirituality Samuels refers to is *profane spirituality*. Here he speaks directly to the role *the spirit of sexuality* plays “in bringing people into relationships where they cannot avoid each other” (ibid., ch.7, p.8). He refers to Jung’s exploration of incestuous sexual fantasy, in which Jung suggests that these fantasies have within them the seeds of what gets people into the kinds of relationships in which they can’t avoid each other. The same would apply for any relationship, Samuels emphasises, including a therapeutic one. “The benign fetishism of human sexual arousal and excitation lies at the heart of what I am calling profane spirituality: when it has to be that one person, the special one, and no other will do” (ibid., p.9).

There is a second dimension to profane spirituality. Referring to Jung's insight that addictions are often an "off-the-rails" search for something spiritual, Samuels suggests that, if we know where to look for it, we will find profane spirituality within any addiction, "maybe also [in] shopping and consumerism" (ibid., p.10). Samuels adds a third dimension, proposing that profane spirituality is, in essence, contemporary spirituality. "It is time to recognise that the spirituality of our world, our manufactured and made spirituality, our craft spirituality, is oozing out of the profane pores of contemporary life. It only needs us to recognise and name it. In Bani Shorter's words, everything is susceptible to the sacred" (ibid.).

The final form of spirituality Samuels (1999) discusses is *spiritual sociality*. Here he refers to what he calls "a latent spirituality" in organisations or systems of relatedness, including psychotherapy. He notes the rituals which form part of any of these processes, which could be anything from meetings, to lying on the couch. All these rituals, he argues, express that latent spirituality (ibid.).

In the spirit of plurality, Samuels (1999., ch.7, p.1) provides a "definition" for spirituality. It is one which probably best holds together the dimensions of spirituality reflected in this exploration.

Spirituality may be rooted in traditional, formal religion. Or it may be a highly idiosyncratic and personal affair. Or both. Spirituality may be located above us, at ground level (even in the body) or below, in an underworld. Or on all three levels. Spirituality may be understood as universal, comprehensive and catholic with a small 'c'. Or it may be experienced and expressed radically differently according to time, place, age, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class and one's physical and psychological health. Or both. Spirituality may be regarded as beyond the transpersonal, transcending the human realms of existence. Or it may exist only in a relational, intersubjective, interactional setting. Or both. Spirituality may be seen as a substance or essence – breath, pneuma, ruach. Or it may be more a perspective on experience. Or both.

As is evident in the manner in which theorists define the concept, definitions of spirituality tend to be multiplicitous in nature. The concept, probably not unlike the nature of spirituality itself, does not lend itself to easy categorisation. As Samuels (1993) suggests, the profusion of interest in spirituality these last decades needs to be taken seriously. And that there are so many definitions for the process is also something important to both observe, and tolerate.

This study is, however, also an exploration of *spiritual growth*. From Samuels' (1999) perspective, and drawing particularly on his notion of *democratic spirituality*, the very idea of "spiritual growth" is a contradiction in terms. As mentioned in Chapter One, the concept of "growth" is both fraught with difficulties and open to considerable misuse. Fowler's (1981) notion of faith development will now be explored, examining first his definition of faith, and then going on to introduce his approach to development. The possibility that his theory might be (re)-located within the context of pluralism will then be examined.

Fowler's (1981) work on faith development has been largely well received within the fields of theology and psychology alike. (Fowler, 1981; Fowler, Nipkow and Schweitzer, 1991; Wulff, 1997; Wilbur, 1999). With a background steeped in theology and developmental psychology, his work in faith development has its foundations both in the theology of Paul Tillich (1957) and Richard Niebuhr, as well as in the psychology of Erikson (1977), Piaget (1977), and Kohlberg (1969). As Wulff (1997) reflects, Fowler's theory manages to create an effective bridge between spirituality and psychology.

For both Tillich and Niebuhr there are vital distinctions between faith, belief, and religion, where faith is equated with what is of "ultimate concern" to the life of an individual or community, something which is not restricted by claimed belief in a creed (belief) or set of doctrinal propositions (religion) (Fowler, 1981, p.4). They, and Fowler after them, argue that faith is a central form of human action and construction (Fowler et al., 1991). It relates to the capacity to invoke meaning to lived experience, and, they assert, is universal to human beings. Similarities with Jung's theory of individuation are evident. Fowler defines faith as "our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up

our lives” (1981, p.4). It is clear then that faith in this sense goes beyond creed or belief, and may not even have any relation to religion at all. It is this quality that lends this study of spiritual faith to psychological scrutiny. Free of doctrine and creed, the process by which people constitute meaning in their lives can be studied using psychological theory, thereby throwing light on the process by which people grow and develop spiritually. All theorists mentioned thus far seem to share one particular definition of spirituality, viz., *spirituality as being a process of personal meaning-creation*. Fowler (1981) uses the term *faith* to describe this process, as is clear from the definition he gives, quoted above.

Fowler’s (1981) theory of faith development is a *continuous, goal-orientated* one, each stage building on and enhancing the previous one, moving ultimately towards individuation. Despite a number of difficulties inherent in this notion of development and growth, it will be argued that, if explored from a pluralistic perspective, Fowler’s model of faith development can be used in order to describe both a number of essential processes which might occur through the course of meaning-creation (*unity*), and also take into account the *diversity* which might exist in the manner in which that meaning is created by individuals.

Samuels, in *The Plural Psyche* (1989), develops a comprehensive vision of development in which the debate between *continuous* and *discontinuous* theories of development finds a space in which to thrive. Samuels presents what he terms a *synchronous* model of development. Reviewing the general thrust of modern developmental theories, (he is referring to personality theory in this instance), he notes their inherent *diachronistic* (“causal, historic, biographical, temporal, chronological, sequential, successive”) quality (p. 18). The challenge of developing a synchronous and pluralistic model, in Samuels’ view, is to “eternalise developmental theory, separating it from its chronological origins” (ibid.). The task, he argues, is to view each element or phase as *personally eternal*. “Each stage or phase is active and interactive in the psyche in its own form or style” (ibid.). Samuels stresses the importance of recognising the discontinuous nature of modes of being. Samuel’s goes on to suggest that, in a pluralistic vision, the synchronous model can indeed coexist with a diachronous model, “thus facilitating a pluralistic competitiveness between them” (ibid., p. 22). “What if”, Samuels asks, “having

established a synchronous-acausal model, we once again give house-room to a thoroughly deterministic [diachronous] and causal model?" (ibid., p 36).

The more comfortable we feel with a synchronous model, the better chance there is of effectively using a causal-deterministic one in tandem.

The fundamental problem with the diachronous model is the "tyrannical supremacy of chronological time", Samuels writes. What we need, he concludes, "is a time-free determinism" (ibid., p. 36).

However, rather than arguing for a "time-free" approach to developmental theory, it might be more useful to think about time differently. The pluralist notion of *metaphor* is one which is most helpful in this regard. It is a concept Samuels explores in some detail. He refers to pluralism itself as both metaphor and an instrument (for monitoring activity or process) (ibid., p. 40). He notes an inherent paradox in the concept of metaphor, viz., that "it cannot be divorced from the roots of its context". Samuels (ibid.) refers to a comment made by Picasso in a letter to a friend, to illustrate this point.

There is no abstract art. You must always start with something. Afterward you can remove all traces of reality. There's not danger then, anyway, because the idea of the object will have left an indelible mark. It is what started the artist off, excited his ideas, and stirred up his emotions. Ideas and emotions will in the end be prisoners in his work. Whatever they do they can't escape from the picture. They form an integral part of it, even when their presence is no longer discernible.

If time is engaged with as *metaphor*, we are invited into what Samuels refers to as "simultaneity of perception" (ibid., p. 47). That chronology and linearity in relation to time is a dominant discourse by which perspective is constructed is evident. Diachronic developmental theory is founded upon this discourse. However, the challenge issued by Samuels' synchronous model is to allow each moment, or phase, or stage, to also locate itself within the "eternal". It

simultaneously exists outside any linear definition of its identity. Samuels (ibid., p. 46) in the end argues for:

A deliteralised developmental psychology in which the zones, phases, stages, and areas are regarded with an imaginative appreciation of the emotions involved so that they do not become strait-jackets. But, *at the same time*, the zones, stages, phases, and areas have also to be taken literally. For there are *some* links between the literal and the metaphorical ways of seeing things in developmental psychology (emphasis in original).

Recognising that chronology has become elevated as the dominant mode of experience by which discourse is currently created, the challenge a pluralistic psychology issues is, not to render it null and void (in Samuels' terms, to create a "time-free determinism"), but to place it (chronology) back into the context of a multiplicitous process by which time constellates itself. Chronology is only one of many ways by which events arrange themselves and interrelate with each other. This vision is the vision of a pluralistic developmental psychology:

A series of interactive models, part-models, and 'modes of experience' (Samuels, 1989. p. 19).

Samuels' (1989) theory becomes in this regard a useful means by which to explore Fowler's (1981) stages of faith development. The challenge seems to be to locate Fowler's theory within a *democratic* (and therefore *non-hierarchical*) spirituality. If one engages with Fowler's stages of faith development as each representing equally valid *processes of meaning-creation*, the potential to reify or create hierarchies is curbed. The strength of Fowler's work seems to lie in the explication of these very processes. Fowler's theory of faith development will be described in some detail in Chapter Three. His theory will also form the basis of the research interview, and will be explored again in Chapter Five.

It is within Samuels' (1989) pluralistic, post-Jungian vision that this study of the role of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth of priests is located. Drawing on definitions and debates

already discussed, spiritual growth is loosely defined as the coming into awareness of processes and patterns through which persons relate to and find meaning in their lives.

2.4. Summary

In this chapter, a motivation for the study was outlined. Factors leading to the development of the study were described, followed by a cursory overview of the literature regarding issues pertaining to the links between “homosexuality” and spirituality, and homoeroticism as a role in the spiritual growth of priests. Spirituality was located within the Jungian construct of individuation. Definitions of “homosexuality”, homoeroticism, spirituality, and spiritual growth were then explored. A distinction was made between “homosexuality” as a description of an identity, and “homosexuality” used as an adjective to describe an “historic opportunity to open up new relational and affective potentialities”. A further distinction was made between “homosexuality” and homoeroticism, the latter describing the experience of sexual, emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual attraction to someone of the same sex, whether or not the people experiencing these feelings define themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Spirituality and spiritual growth were then explored. It was noted that most theorists defined spirituality in a multiplicitous manner. A common theme in many of the definitions provided described spirituality as reflecting *processes of personal meaning-creation* by which an individual engaged with his or her world. Finally, the issue of spiritual growth was discussed, arguing that Fowler’s theory of faith development could be comfortably located within a pluralistic perspective, thereby shifting the focus of his theory from a description of *stages of faith development* to describing *processes of meaning-creation*. Spiritual growth was defined as the coming into awareness of processes and patterns by which persons relate to and give meaning to their lives.

The parameters of this study can be articulated as follows: The role of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth of priests will be explored from the perspective of Jungian, and post-Jungian theory, drawing particularly on the work of Samuels and the vision of pluralism he articulates. In Chapter Three, Jung’s theory of individuation will be explored, reflecting on the links between individuation and spirituality. Fowler’s theory of faith development will be explored

as a description of individuation processes. Chapter Four will examine the relationship between spirituality and homoeroticism. These chapters will serve as the foundation to the current study, which will be described in Chapter Five. Chapter Six and Seven will explore the results of the research process, concluding in Chapter Eight with an overview of the study, together with a final closing commentary.

CHAPTER 3

INDIVIDUATION AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This limbo – which lasted for twelve timeless days – started as torment, but turned into patience, started as hell, but became a purgatorial dark night, humbled me, horribly, took away hope, but then sweetly-gently, returned it to me thousandfold, transformed.

Oliver Sacks

“There is a destination, a possible goal . . . That is the way of individuation”
(Jung, 1928, p. 173).

3.1. Introduction

The idea of movement and growth in psychic life is central to Jungian thought (Jung, 1928; Hillman, 1975; Samuels, 1985). While all Jungians support the concept of psychological growth, there is considerable diversity of opinion as to just how it takes place, and what its goal might be (Kulkarni, 1997; Samuels, 1985; Martin, 1978; Hillman, 1973; Hillman, 1975; Singer, 1973; von Franz, 1964). Jung (1963) spent the bulk of his life documenting the processes he believed to be inherent in the overall movement of life towards individuation. The focus of this dissertation is on these processes, with particular reference to homoeroticism and the part it might play in psychological and spiritual growth.

This chapter will explore the notion of spirituality from a Jungian perspective. It will comprise two sections. Firstly, Jung’s concept of individuation will be explored in relation to spirituality. As Samuels (1985, p. 111) notes, “individuation does imply an acceptance of what lies beyond the individual, of what is simply unknowable but not unfelt. In that sense, individuation is a spiritual calling, but as a realisation of the fullness of a personality, it is a psychological phenomenon”. This dual nature of individuation, that is, as spiritual calling and psychological phenomenon is what lends it to a psychological study of spirituality. Individuation is at once a psychological *and* a spiritual process.

Fowler (1981), in his study of faith development, gives an account of the *processes* by which spiritual growth takes place. An exploration of his work will comprise the second section to this chapter. His focus, like Jung's, is on individuation. This section will serve to contribute to the discussion of processes of spiritual growth. Direct links will be made between Fowler's model and Jung's notion of individuation.

3.2. Jung And Individuation

Jung reflects in his paper *The Stages of Life* (1930, p. 387) that "to discuss the problems connected with the stages of human development is an exacting task, for it means nothing less than unfolding a picture of psychic life in its entirety from the cradle to the grave." Jung does not, however, either in this paper, or in his writing in general, focus on the human life span in its entirety. In this paper he argues that childhood is a stage of life "without conscious problems" (p. 399), thus justifying the focus of his life work, viz., the second half of life, beginning between the thirty-fifth and fortieth year (ibid.). For Jung, the early part of life is characterized largely by personal issues, mostly related to parents and the problems of orientating oneself within the world. He argued that it was only as the person moves out into the second half of life, and begins to "have doubts about and be at variance with himself" (p. 392), that one's real nature comes more fully to the fore. These problems, Jung reflects, are the real problems of life, the problems that initiate the individuation process (ibid.).

Although Jung did not articulate a comprehensive theory for childhood development, he did, however, write intermittently on the subject (Jung, 1913; Jung, 1928; Jung, 1940). This was often done in relation to his theory of individuation, illustrating how aspects characteristic of youth and early adulthood are challenged as the psyche moves into the individuating process. All Jung's descriptions of psychological processes, either in the first or second half of life, take place within a context of a detailed theory of the phylogeny of psychological life (Samuels, 1985). In order to locate the individual within the context of the individuation process, it is necessary to outline some of the cornerstone features of collective psychological life, as described by Jung. His theory of the collective unconscious will now be discussed, including its contents, the archetypes.

3.2.1. A Dawning Consciousness, The Collective Unconscious And The Archetypes

The fundamental quest of human life in Jung's terms, is that of consciousness (Jung, 1930). In his 1930 paper, *The Stages of Life*, Jung reflects on the process by which consciousness emerges. It is an ambivalent process, one in which we as humans only reluctantly give up our deep investment in instinctual life. He defines instinct as being *nature*, that which simply seeks to perpetuate itself (p. 388). Consciousness, he argues, cultivates nature, and harnesses it in the quest towards differentiation. Jung reflects on the Judeo-Christian story of the Garden of Eden, and uses it as an image to represent our instinctual life. It is only at the point that we are banished from the instinctual Garden, when we are beset with problems, that we are cajoled into consciousness.

Problems draw us into an orphaned and isolated state where we are abandoned by nature and driven into consciousness. There is no other way open to us. We are forced to resort to conscious decisions and solutions where formally we trusted ourselves to natural happenings (Jung, 1930, p. 388).

Jung (1930) concludes with the notion that every problem brings with it the possibility of a widening of consciousness, challenging us to further relinquish unconsciousness and unawareness. It seems that it is in the context of a *dialogue* between the individual, struggles he or she might experience, and the manner in which this struggling is engaged with that the unconscious potentially finds expression within consciousness. How this dialogue serves to initiate the emergence of unconscious material will become evident in due course. Before this can be discussed in any detail, the nature of this unconscious world needs to be outlined.

Jung (1936) makes a distinction between the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. Williams (1963, in Samuels, 1989, p. 45) suggests that this split occurred at the time of the Freud-Jung rift. The personal unconscious, comprised of personal memories, aspects of psychic life once in consciousness, and the complexes (Jung, 1936), Jung ceded largely to Freud. The collective unconscious, comprised of aspects never yet experienced by

consciousness, owing their existence to heredity (ibid.), became Jung's domain. Jung did not, however, ignore the personal domain. On the contrary, he viewed it as essential that this aspect of psychological life be made fully conscious. It is through this personal unconscious, as a doorway of sorts, that the collective unconscious is more fully apprehended. His concept of the *complex* was the way in which he linked the personal and the collective (ibid., p. 47). A complex is essentially a blend of archetypal material (and therefore an expression of the collective unconscious) and human experience (linked with the personal unconscious) (ibid., 48). Through personal material, themes and patterns located in the collective unconscious are hinted at, and thereby gradually brought into consciousness.

For Jung (1936), the collective unconscious reflects the totality of our evolutionary history. It resides in each of us as the phylogenetic foundation for the ontogeny of our multiplicitous individuality. The deep layers of this collective psyche are characterized by indifferenciation. Everything, according to Jung, is in the end extinguished in the body's materiality, and "into chemical substance" (Jaffe, 1970, p. 23).

Jung (1918) was ambivalent about his notion of the unconscious mind. On the one hand, he experienced it directly in his own life. Much of his work was a process of detailing his own inner processes (Jung, 1963). And yet, he also maintained that the unconscious remained essentially an hypothesis:

The existence of an unconscious psyche is as likely, shall we say, as the existence of an as yet unknown planet, whose presence is inferred from the deviations of some of the known planetary orbit (Jung, in Jaffe, 1970, p. 15).

One of the means by which Jung observed this "hypothesis" was through its functioning. He observed it to be a self-regulating, autonomous process which functioned in a compensatory and complementary manner.

Whenever life proceeds one-sidedly in any given direction, the self-regulation of the organism produces in the unconscious an accumulation of

all the factors which play too small a part in the individual's conscious existence (ibid.).

Fundamental to this collective unconscious is a dynamic principle of movement: "those creative forces which lead man onwards to new developments" (ibid., p. 18). The essence of this movement is a process Jung called *individuation*. "There is a destination, a possible goal" (Jung, 1953, p. 171). An essential feature of unconscious process is its purposive ("*teleological*") nature. Clearly, for Jung, alongside the undifferentiated nature of this collective unconscious, is its tendency towards differentiation (ibid.).

In his discussion on the nature of the collective unconscious, Jung (1931) reflects on a number of principles inherent to its functioning. He notes its *pre-logical* quality. To illustrate this, he uses the image of a house burning down, having been struck by lightening. To the "civilised" mind, the explanation has its origin in a natural phenomenon. The collective or "archaic" mind, however, places a supernatural meaning onto the experience. It is "caused" by a spirit, or sorcerer, which was commanded to strike that particular house. This also illustrates a second feature, namely that of *animism*. The collective "archaic" world is tightly constructed around the inherent spirituality of everything external and internal. The "archaic man was moved by forces from within as well as by stimuli from without" (Jung, 1964, p.71). In his 1931 paper, *Archaic Man*, Jung writes: "In the archaic world, everything has soul" (p. 52).

It is in this world that the archetypes begin to find differentiation. Archetypes are the psyche's orientating principles (Samuels, 1985). "They arrange the contents of consciousness everywhere in accordance with their own structural form" (Jaffe, 1970, p.15). Jung (1964) often asserted that his concept of the archetype was the one most frequently misunderstood and misinterpreted. He writes: "The term 'archetype' is often misunderstood as meaning certain definite mythological images or motifs. But these are nothing more than conscious representations; it would be absurd to assume that such variable representations could be inherited" (1964, p.58). The archetypes per se are "a priori conditioning factors", representing "the psychological instance of the biological pattern of behaviour" (Jacobi, 1959, p.31). Jung frequently likened archetypes to instincts, in the sense that as humans we have a propensity

towards certain patterns of life. “As marked as the impulse of birds to built nests, or ants to form organised colonies”, so too the human psyche has permeating through it instinctual trends, as evidenced by symbolic images and mythological motifs (Jung, 1964, p. 58). “Only when the archetypes come into contact with the conscious mind, that is, when the light of consciousness falls on them . . . and [they] fill with individual content . . . can consciousness apprehend, understand, elaborate, and assimilate them” (ibid., p. 66).

The characterization of the archetype as instinct, however, alludes only to one aspect of its nature, viz., the biological (Jaffe, 1970, p.20). Another aspect Jung termed the “authentic element of spirit” (ibid.) This spiritual side of the archetype may be best understood as the “immediate experience” of the archetypal representation.

It hints of an unseen presence, a numen to which neither human expectations nor the machinations of the will have given life. It lives of itself, and a shudder runs through the man who thought ‘spirit’ was merely what he believes, what is said in books, of what people talk about. But when it happens spontaneously, it is a spookish thing, and primitive seizes the naïve mind (Jung, in Jaffe, 1970, p. 21).

Jung went on to advance his theory of archetypes being both “of spirit” and “of nature”, with the assertion that archetypes have a nature that “cannot with certainty be designated as being psychic” (ibid.). He then developed the concept of what he called “the psychoid archetype”, by which he meant as much “psychic” as “non-psychic”. These formed part of what he termed “the psychoid unconscious” which Samuels explains as “the primary ordering agency” of the psyche (1985, p. 30). Jaffe (1970) reflects that this formulation drew Jung’s theory out of the realm of human thought and emotion, out of organic, instinctual life, and placed it within a universal perspective. It added the possibility of “an archetypal imprinting of the physical and inorganic world, and of the cosmos itself” (p. 23). This image of the psychoid archetype was, for Jung, the link between spirit and matter. As archetypal material descends further into the unconscious, reaching eventually the autonomous functional systems (the archetypes), the content, in a sense, becomes increasingly refined, and at the same time, paradoxically, more collective. Once the material is completely universalised, it is extinguished in the body’s

materiality. That is, writes Jung, “into chemical substance”. He concludes: “The body’s carbon is simply carbon. Hence ‘at bottom’, the psyche is simply ‘world’” (in Jaffe, 1970, p. 23).

Now that the nature of the collective unconscious has been briefly outlined, the discussion will move on to explore the processes by which the unconscious functions in relation to conscious life. That the collective unconscious engages with consciousness is a fundamental premise of Jung’s (1928) notion of individuation. How this occurs will now be explored.

3.2.2. The Ego, The Persona, And The Shadow

In this section the functioning of the ego will be described. Once the foundation has been laid for an understanding of the ego and its functioning, the discussion will include the influence of the archetypal *persona* and *shadow* on the ego. This discussion will serve as the basis for what follows in the next section, which will be an exploration of the processes by which the ego relates to the archetypal *self*. It is through this latter process that individuation is more fully constellated within the psyche.

Jung (1951) remarks from the outset that describing the ego is a complex and difficult task, not least of all because it is the ego that is doing the describing. These difficulties notwithstanding, he explains that the ego lies at “the centre of the field of consciousness”, and in this sense ‘is the subject of all personal acts of consciousness’ (1951, p. 3). It is responsible for a sense of identity, and of personal continuity over time and space. Resting on both a somatic (bodily perceptions) and a psychic (psychological perceptions) base, Jung goes on to explain that the ego is located on the *total field of consciousness*, and the *sum total of unconscious contents*, and is thus capable of indefinite extension (p. 4). It finds its limit, however, when it comes upon something *unknown*. The manner in which the ego engages in these aspects of the unknown (from either external or internal world) characterises its capacity for continued expansion. As Jung (1930, p. 388) writes elsewhere, “every problem brings the possibility of a widening of consciousness”. The challenge to the ego, if it is going to succeed in broadening the boundaries of consciousness, is in engaging with the unknown, not as a problem to be solved, but as something with which to engage. Jung (1930, p. 394) reflects:

The serious problems of life are never fully solved. If ever they should appear to be so it is a sure sign that something has been lost. The meaning and purpose of a problem seem to lie not in its solution but in our working at it incessantly. This alone preserves us from stultification and petrification.

The ego is thus a “pilot” function of sorts, mediating the individual’s relationship with the conscious world, as well as directing and integrating the flow of contents between the unconscious and consciousness. Its function is to tolerate and mediate this flow, and at the same time to orientate the person within their inner and outer world. Jung stresses that although the ego rests on the total fields of consciousness and unconsciousness, it does not consist of these aspects. As Jung explains, the ego is the conscious mind’s *reference point*, that which orientates it both in the world and within the psyche as a whole (1951, p. 3).

Regarding its development, Jung (ibid.) reflects that the ego, which is acquired during an individual’s lifetime, initially arises out of the clash between the individual’s bodily limitations and the environment. Its growth is then further fostered by continual collisions with both the outer and growing inner world. The ego’s development thus occurs within a dialectic between the individual and their internal and external environments.

The nature of the ego becomes clearer as Jung (1928) goes on to describe three archetypal aspects which relate very directly to the ego’s functioning. These are the *persona*, the *self*, and the *shadow*. The persona and the shadow, and their relation to the ego, will be described first. This discussion will serve as the basis for the next section in which the relationship between the ego and the *self* will be explored. It is within this latter relationship that the process of individuation is more fully constellated.

Jung (1928) borrows the word *persona* from theatre, where it was used to describe the mask actors wore to suggest a role. He uses it to describe an identity which develops, as a compromise between the individual and society, by which the person negotiates their world. It convincingly feigns individuality, but is simply a role the person has learnt to play. It is not real, but a way of being the person either requires of themselves, and/or thinks the world

requires. At first, Jung (ibid.) notes, ego consciousness tends to be identical with the *persona*. That is, the person genuinely believes that this is who they are. Jung does, however, reflect that the *persona*, as an archetypal expression, also has its basis in something much more real, often as an indirect and often very indistinct expression of a *self* making its presence felt. In this sense, within the *persona* lies the seeds of something real.

It is often the archetypal *shadow*, as an expression of the deeper layers of the unconscious, that serves as a catalyst for the separation of *persona* and ego consciousness, paving the way for the *self* to seek expression more fully (Jung, 1951). The *shadow*, as an archetypal expression, is often the initial and more obvious direct expression of the mysteries located within the collective unconscious, elements and aspects of potential not yet apprehended or realised by the conscious mind (Singer, 1973; Martin, 1978). Unlike the *persona*, it is not aligned with ego consciousness. Quite the contrary, its effect is to disturb ego consciousness, thereby hinting at other possibilities and potentials lurking within the psyche. As Jung (1951, p. 8) writes, “the *shadow* is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego personality, for no one can become conscious of the *shadow* without considerable moral effort”. *The shadow signifies that which the person both fears and despises within him or herself* (Samuels, 1985). It is often first experienced in projected form, as that which is either despised or feared in other people or the world. Its expression is dynamic, rather than static, in that it does not have predefined content. The content changes according to the movements within conscious life. As a function of the psyche’s compensatory nature, described earlier, the *shadow* often expresses that which is contrary to what lies in consciousness at any give point. One of the first challenges of ego consciousness is to identify its own *shadow* elements, acknowledge them, and then incorporate them as vital and integral parts of the personality as a whole. The ego tends to struggle immensely with this process, because the contents of the *shadow* are at such odds with conscious identity. As Jung (1951) stresses though, these are not necessarily bad parts of oneself. They are representations of aspects which for whatever reason, rightly or wrongly, are deemed unacceptable, or which are feared. Jung (p. 8) referred to them as “the dark characteristics” of the psyche. It is the recognition of this *shadow* aspect that serves as the catalyst for the dawning realisation that the person is not who he or she thought or hoped they were. It thus comes as a direct challenge to the *persona*. As mentioned earlier, ego

consciousness develops within a dialectical relationship between the individual and their internal and external environments. The *shadow* marks a very direct challenge issued from the internal unconscious world. Through the process of assimilating the *shadow*, the primitive or archaic psyche emerges into consciousness” (Jung, 1945). Jung reminds us that it is a dangerous task, this process of assimilating rather than getting rid of or avoiding the *shadow*. Making contact with the archetypal expression, the ego tendency is to retreat, avoiding the *moral* confrontation with the deeper processes of the psyche.

A further important point regarding the *shadow*, a point which allows relatively ready access to its contents, is that it tends to comprise, at least initially, aspects of the personal unconscious (Jung, 1951). In this sense, it reflects that which the person has learnt or experienced in their lives, about themselves or their social worlds. The archetypal *shadow* thus makes use of personal unconscious contents, as content more readily available to consciousness, in order to make its initial challenges to ego consciousness. If worked with and in some ways assimilated, the result of the *shadow*’s continual challenge is a widening of the boundaries of consciousness. This marks a further constellating of the process of *self*-realisation, or individuation. The *persona* can no longer maintain its grip on ego consciousness, for the *shadow*, as spokesperson for the archetypal *self*, has issued a clear directive : *you are not who you think you are*.

There is another dimension to the functioning of the *shadow* which bears relevance to this study. It is an aspect Jung (1946) wrote about extensively in his commentary on socio-psychological phenomena. He spoke of the dangers of the *collective shadow*, evident within groupings of people, cultures, and nations, serving to express that which is deemed culturally unacceptable. Samuels (1989, p. 66) explains:

Used as a metaphor in relation to culture, the shadow includes those outside the social system (criminals, psychotics, misfits, scapegoats) as well as national enemies. These individuals are people who do not fit in with the prevailing tendency of a culture which, in turn, may be seen as failing to assimilate its shadow. If this failure continues, then the societal shadow may erupt, as in fascism, or in racial hatred, or in a senseless and destructive war.

This aspect of the *shadow* will be explored in some depth through the course of this study, particularly in relation to the manner in which the Western world engages with homoeroticism.

Having described aspects of the unconscious mind, particularly regarding its compensatory nature, having then described aspects of the conscious mind, and its relationship with the unconscious through the functioning of the ego, the discussion will now turn to exploring the deeper processes by which the unconscious mind guides consciousness into greater differentiation. This is the process Jung (1928) calls individuation. There are a number of difficulties in conceptualising Jung's process of individuation. As Samuels (1985, p. 111) notes, the individuation process is spoken about by Jungian theorists (Jung, 1928; von Franz, 1964; Singer, 1973; Martin, 1978; Samuels, 1985; Hillman, 1991) in contradictory ways, requiring what he calls a tripartite classification: 1) individuation as a natural process, occurring throughout life; 2) individuation as a natural process beginning in the second half of life; and 3) individuation worked on and brought about through a process of analysis. In relation to the first definition, everything already described in the discussion so far refers to the process of increased consciousness, and therefore relates to the process of individuation. In traditional Jungian terms (Martin, 1978; Singer, 1973), however, much of what has been described is largely characteristic of the first half of life. It is between the age of thirty-five and forty years that the processes about to be described most commonly come into effect. This relates to the second definition given above, namely individuation as a process beginning in the second half of life. The third definition bears no relevance to the present discussion.

What follows then is an outline of some of the deeper processes characteristic of the individuation process, often described as pertaining to the second half of life.

3.2.3. The Ego And Its Relationship With The Archetypal Self

Jung's notion of the archetypal *self* will now be discussed, exploring both some of its meanings, as well as a number of the processes by which it constellates itself within consciousness. It is the process of the realisation of this *self* that Jung termed individuation. The discussion will include an exploration of the relationship between the ego and the *self*. As is evident in Jung's (1928) discussion regarding the *self*, it cannot be spoken about without reference to the ego. The two do not exist independently of each other, although, as will become evident, the *self* is supraordinate to the ego.

Jung's (1936; 1944; 1951) writings on the nature of the *self* are complex and multifaceted. Samuels (1985), referring to the essential "otherness" and "transpersonal" nature of Jung's concept of the *self*, distinguishes three aspects of this archetypal expression evident in Jung's work. The first is *self as God-image*.

In his description of the archetypal *self*, Jung (1951) refers to Christ as a symbol representing an essential nature of this *self*. Just as Christ might be viewed by Christians as being a person greater than the ordinary person, so it is that the nature of the *self* transcends the ordinary ego. Christ becomes the symbol which, in a psychological sense, reconciles body and spirit, divine and human (Samuels, 1985, p. 98) in a way not easily tolerated by the ego. The relationship between the ego and this archetypal *self* will be discussed in due course. As mentioned at various stages in this study thus far, Jung's (1951) view of the psyche is one in which religion and spirituality are instincts arising as natural expressions of the archetypal collective unconscious. The *self* as archetypal expression represents the connection a person has to the divine. In this sense the *self* is a symbol of wholeness, and thus represents a relatedness to that which is archetypally sacred and transcendent (ibid.).

A second aspect of the *self* in Jung's writing that Samuels (1985) refers to is the *self in relation to others*. A point noted earlier was Mattoon's (1981) criticism that Jung's notion of the *self* is a relatively closed system, not particularly available to interrelatedness with others. Jung's reflection, mentioned earlier, that individuation is "a function of relationship to the world of objects, bringing the individual into absolute, binding and indissoluble communion with the

world at large” (1928, p. 178) bears relevance. As an expression of the collective unconscious, the archetypal *self*’s impact on the conscious life of the individual is that of greater communion and interrelatedness with other people, rather than less. As Jung (1951; 1963) often stressed, the process of individuation or self-realisation is not an individualist endeavour. It is a process which increasingly connects one with the outer world, the latter being simply another manifestation of the collective unconscious.

The third aspect of the *self* Jung (in Jaffe, 1970) writes about, Samuels (1985) refers to as the *unus mundus*. This is an image of the *self* as being something connected to everything else in the world. With his concept of the psychoid unconscious, referred to earlier, Jung (1947) links spirit and matter into a unitary whole. The *self*, as an expression of the psychoid unconscious, is thus not only an expression of this unitary whole, but also part of it. It is this quality of both the *self*, and the unconscious, that allows the process of individuation (as a process of *self-realisation*) to bring the individual “into absolute, binding and indissoluble communion with the world at large (Jung, 1928, p. 178).

At the risk of oversimplification, it would appear that a theme common to all these aspects of the *self* identified by Samuels (1985) is that of the *self* being linked to, and an expression of the *whole*, as symbolised by the uniting of the seemingly disparate aspects of spirit and matter. The image of Christ as uniting divine and human, and therefore spirit and matter, is a central symbol Jung (1951) uses to articulate the nature of this archetypal *self*.

The discussion will include the image of the ego, and discuss the relationship between this ego and the archetypal *self*. This discussion should further serve to clarify aspects of the *self* not yet made evident. Jung (1928, p. 391) differentiates the ego and the *self* in the following way:

The ego stands to the self as the moved to the mover, or as object to subject, because the determining factors which radiate out from the self surround the ego on all sides and are therefore supraordinate to it. The self, like the unconscious, is an *a priori* existent out of which the ego evolves.

Jung (1928) notes that initial psychological development most often results in an alienation of the *self* in favour of the *persona* or role taken on in life by the individual. This process of *self*-alienation is often a social ideal, in that it passes as a social duty, even a virtue (p. 173). Fitting in with what the world, or what one's culture requires, dominates psychological functioning for many years. Between the ages of thirty-five and forty, shifts tend to begin taking place within the psyche. Compensatory prompting from the unconscious no longer are able to tolerate the one-sided worldly (egoic) focus evident in psychological functioning. It is no longer enough to follow the ways or requirements of the world. The challenges already issued by the shadow, suggesting that *you are not who you think you are*, develop impetus, now also being issued from the archetypal *self*. Increasingly, "without noticing it, the conscious personality is pushed about like a figure on a chess board by an invisible player" (1928, p. 160). The collective unconscious begins in earnest to harness the potential of the individual.

The role of the ego throughout this process is to assimilate the contents which are emerging, now not only from the *shadow*, but also from the deeper *self*. Two dangers are evident (Jung, 1951). The first, is that the ego fully assimilates the archetypal *self*, and mistake itself for the *self*. The result of this overidentification, Jung (p. 22) reflects, is that of a dangerous ego inflation. Referring to Jung's notion of Christ as a symbol of the *self*, an example of this overidentification with the archetypal *self* might be when a person assumes Christ-like status. They believe themselves to be the very personification of holiness. They know they are not Christ, but they feel very akin to him. The second danger is the assimilation of the ego by the *self*. Overwhelmed by unconscious impulses, the ego is unable to fulfil its function to orientate the individual within the context of their inner and outer world. The person thinks he is Christ, and succumbs to a psychotic breakdown.

As is very evident from the above discussion, the nature of the ongoing relationship between the ego and the *self* is most critical to the process of individuation or self-realisation (Jung, 1951). The function of the *self* in relation to the ego is to widen consciousness in such a way as to free it from "the petty, oversensitive and personal world of the ego" (Jung, 1928, p. 178). The function of the ego in relation to the *self* is to be receptive to the promptings from the primordial *self*, assimilating its communications, tolerating its paradoxical (of spirit and of

matter) nature, at the same time remaining anchored in the world of consciousness. The result, Jung (1951, p. 22) reflects, is that “the more numerous and the more significant the unconscious contents which are assimilated to the ego, the closer the approximation of the ego to the *self*, even though this approximation must be a never-ending process”. This never-ending process by which the ego increasingly approximates the *self* reflects Jung’s notion of individuation.

In the quotation by Jung (1951, p. 22) just referred to, another clue is evident regarding his understanding of the archetypal *self*. It is a confusing clue, one debated by Jungian theorists (Fordham, 1963; Newton, 1981; Jacoby, 1981 in Samuels, 1985), and eventually rearticulated by Jung himself. In his reflection Jung is suggesting, by saying that “the more significant the unconscious contents which are assimilated to the ego, the closer the approximation of the ego to the *self*”, that the *self*, rather than being an archetype, is the totality of the unconscious contents of the psyche. Elsewhere (1928, p. 179) he writes that the *self* “embraces not only the conscious but also the unconscious psyche”. Fordham (1963) finds in Jung’s theory of the *self* a number of contradictions. He argues that if the *self* is a reflection of the totality of the psyche (“embracing not only conscious but also the unconscious psyche” (Jung, 1928, p. 179)), then it is not possible to experience the *self*, as the ego, being the centre of consciousness, is part of it. Secondly, if the *self* is but one of many archetypes, then it cannot be referred to as representing the totality of the psyche. Fordham’s own formulation suggests that the *self* is something beyond archetypes and the ego, these latter aspects of the psyche therefore arising out of the all-encompassing *self*. Newton (1981) suggests that the *self*, still as archetype, is *transcendental* to other archetypes, reflecting that through which all other archetypes are experienced. Jacoby (1981, in Samuels, 1985) reflects that there need be no contradiction in conceptualising the *self* as simultaneously part of the whole *and* the whole. Ken Wilbur (2000, p. 25), in his discussion of *holons*, reflects that this apparent contradiction is a feature essential to any aspect of life: by definition holons, of which all of life is comprised, are something which are both whole in themselves, and part of another greater whole.

As Samuels (1985) reflects, Jung did go on to reformulate his definition of the *self*, and in so doing, stressed its *transcendent* nature. This notion of transcendence allows the *self* to function

as both a symbol of the totality of the psyche, as well as as the archetype of unity. In this vision, the *self* becomes both the process through which, and the organising principle around which, the psyche and its archetypal contents constellate themselves.

Having discussed something of the nature of the archetypal *self* and its relation to the ego and the psyche as a whole, a number of the processes by which *self*-realisation comes about will now be discussed. Included in this discussion will be an exploration of the archetypal *anima* and *animus*, and the *puer* and *senex* archetypes. A detailed exploration of Jung's notion of the *transcendent function* will follow, looking particularly at the *space* in which change or transformation occurs. The discussion will conclude using Jung's alchemical metaphor to further illustrate both the space in which, and process by which, psychological transformation or development occurs.

3.2.4. Processes Of Individuation

Jung, in the preface to Jacobi's (1962, p. vii) book *The Psychology of C.G. Jung*, articulates his approach to psychological processes.

It is a particular satisfaction to me that the author has been able to avoid furnishing any support to the opinion that my researches constitute a doctrinal system. Such expositions slip all too easily into a dogmatic style which is wholly inappropriate to my views. Since it is my firm conviction that the time for an all-inclusive theory, taking in and describing all the contents, processes, and phenomena of the psyche from one central viewpoint, has not yet arrived, I regard my concepts as suggestions and attempts at the formulation of a new scientific psychology based in the first place upon immediate experience with human beings. This is not a kind of psychopathology, but a general psychology which also takes cognisance of the empirical material of pathology.

It is in this context that the following discussion of some of the processes in individuation takes place.

In Jungian psychology, the processes which constellate in the dynamic and ever-evolving movement towards self-realisation are largely paradoxical in nature. Their aim is a contradictory one. “The aim of individuation is nothing less than to divest the *self* of the false wrappings of the *persona* on the one hand, and of the suggestive power of the primordial images on the other” (Jung, 1928, p. 174). It is a difficult *middle path* (ibid., p. 205) to walk, at once divesting oneself of personal, often socially constructed aspects of oneself, and being available to deeper unconscious processes, yet also differentiating oneself from these unconscious processes. The process is a dialectical one, aiming both towards unity and diversity.

Individuation consists of a two-way movement: on the one hand, a process of separating, of differentiation; on the other, a process of coming together, of integration. In order to ‘get from where you are not’, it is necessary to separate from those things which prevent you from being yourself. In order to ‘arrive where you are’ it is necessary to bring together those things which enable you to become yourself (Martin, 1978, p. 168).

For Jung (1928), the capacity of ego consciousness to tolerate the tension of this dialectical process is key to its growth, and to the broadening of consciousness. To the conscious, rational mind, opposing elements in the psyche do not find easy or comfortable resolution. The ego, as spokesperson for the conscious mind, initially functions according to a principle of *either/or* (Wulff, 1997). The mind/body or spirit/matter dialectic as a symbol of the inherent nature of the archetypal *self* is something the ego finds difficult to assimilate. As Wulff (1997) goes on to explain, to the conscious mind the ever-present “opposites”, including spirit and matter, good and bad, right and wrong, are distinct and irreconcilable (p. 434). However, to the unconscious mind, with the *self* as the organising principle, the nature of the psyche is “without exception paradoxical and antinomial by nature” (Jung, 1948, p. 230). The unification of “opposites” from the perspective of the archetypal *self* is thus a constant possibility (Wulff, 1997).

Jung's (1928; 1930; 1936; 1951) "preoccupation" with opposites has been written about extensively (Hillman, 1975; Samuels, 1985; O'Conner & Ryan, 1993; Kulkarni, 1997). In these writings, he has been criticised for reifying as polarities the differences between phenomena, thus not taking into account either the more subtle gradations of difference, or the supportive interplay evident between seemingly disparate elements of the psyche (Samuels, 1985). Jung argues that only through tension does movement, and therefore differentiation, come about. It was noted earlier that the emergence of the ego occurs within a dialectical relationship between the individual and their internal and external environments (Jung, 1951). Jung (1930) made the point that it is often only when the psyche is presented with seemingly irreconcilable difficulties and in that sense *forced* out the "Garden of Eden" of instinctive nature, that movement towards differentiation and therefore increased consciousness occurs.

Probably the most problematic pair of "opposites" introduced by Jung (1951) are his notions of the archetypal *anima* and *animus*. Because the identities of ego consciousness and the *persona* are based on the life experience of the individual, they are imbued with qualities pertaining to the sex of the person, that is, qualities of being either male or female (Wulff, 1997). In Jung's (1951) view, the expression of "maleness" in the world necessarily means that its counterpart and "opposite", the "feminine", exists in the unconscious. Jung's (1918) notion of the complementary relationship between consciousness and the unconscious bears relevance at this point. The "opposite" sex counterpart in the unconscious for men, Jung (1951) calls the *anima* (or archetypal "feminine"); the women's unconscious counterpart he calls the *animus* (or archetypal "masculine"). These archetypal expressions are fundamental to Jung's (1928) theory of individuation, for they represent for the conscious personality its unconscious counterpart. It is the *anima*, for men, and the *animus*, for women, that become the guiding principles by which the individual reconciles the "opposites" inherent within the psyche. The *anima*, which will often appear in the dreams of men at the onset of the second part of life, both challenges and guides the man into his unconscious nature (von Franz, 1964). For Jung (1951) these archetypes are the archetypes of life itself; they carry the soul. As Sandner (1993) writes, in relation to the *anima* particularly, "it binds the sexual and spiritual interests of the psyche into one entity". Constellating into a relatively unitary image, the *anima* (or *animus*) is often

projected onto another person, and experienced as love (Ulanov & Ulanov, 1994; Sandner, 1993). Actual people in the lives of men and women thus come to represent this function, thereby guiding people into integrating their contrasexual nature, and into wholeness. For Jung (1951), psychological growth and individuation necessarily require a union of the archetypal “masculine” and “feminine”.

Difficulties arise with Jung’s theory from many perspectives (Hopcke, 1989; Wirth, 1993; Sandner, 1993; O’Conner & Ryan, 1993; Kulkarni, 1997). There is not the space to discuss all the issues. A number of key arguments pertaining to the themes of this study will, however, be explored.

Gay writers, or writers reflecting upon gay issues (Hopcke, 1989; Sander, 1993; Wirth, 1993) take issue with Jung’s (1951) notions of *anima* and *animus*, particularly his insistence that healthy psychological development necessarily requires the integration of contrasexual components of the psyche, something Jung (1925) believed “homosexuality” in its acted out form could not fully attain. One of the attitudes Jung held regarding “homosexuality” was as an expression of psychological immaturity (Jung, 1913), often arising from an overidentification with “the feminine” (Jung, 1927). This phenomenon, he believed, is frequently related to an unresolved attachment to the personal mother (Jung, 1938). The very experience of same-sex attraction between men meant, for Jung, that the men were each operating from a “feminine” perspective. Acting on their impulses only served, in Jung’s mind, to reify this “feminine” perspective. Jung (1927, p. 117) writes: “Since masculine and feminine elements are united in our human nature, a man can live in the feminine part of himself and a woman in her masculine. [But] a man should live as a man, and a woman as a woman”.

The “problem” with “homosexual” men, from Jung’s perspective, lies then in an overidentification with the archetypal *anima*. As mentioned earlier in the discussion, individuation requires the conscious mind to integrate the qualities of archetypal material while at the same time differentiating itself from an overidentification with archetypal contents. While acting out on homoerotic impulses, the “homosexual” is expressing undifferentiated archetypal urges, thus preventing the ego from separating from unconscious instinct. In relation

to this particular formulation, “homosexuality” is for Jung (1913) a manifestation of psychological immaturity. The *anima*, in the case of the “homosexual”, rather than guiding him, hampers his development. It prevents him from identifying with his “masculinity” (1927).

Jung’s (1938) formulation of “homosexuality” being the result of an overidentification with the archetypal *anima*, as bearer of the soul, does, however, allow him to reflect more positively on a dimension he suggests is common among “homosexual” men. “Often he is endowed with a wealth of religious feelings, which help to bring the *ecclesia spiritualis* into reality; a spiritual receptivity which makes him responsive to evaluation” (Jung, 1938, p. 86). This aspect will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

As extensively discussed by Hopcke (1989) in his book *Jung, Jungians, and Homosexuality*, Jung held a number of perspectives regarding “homosexuality”. There is not the scope in this exploration to mention them all. One other aspect of Jung’s perspective will, however, be mentioned, as it bears relevance to the discussion regarding the archetypal *anima* and *animus*. It is in this next formulation that Jung suggests that an *anima* identification might not always be pathological or immature. Writing about healthy psychological development in a young man, Jung (1936a, p. 71) reflects:

The growing youth must be able to free himself from the *anima* fascination of his mother. There are exceptions, notably artists where the problem often takes on a different turn; also homosexuality, which is characterised by an identity with the *anima*. In view of the recognised frequency of this phenomenon, its interpretation as a pathological perversion is very dubious. The psychological findings show that it is rather a matter of incomplete detachment from the hermaphrodite archetype, coupled with a distinct resistance to identity with the role of a one-sided sexual being. Such a disposition should not be adjudged negative in all circumstances, in so far as it preserves the archetype of the Original Man, which a one-sided sexual being has, up to a point, lost.

In this formulation, Hopcke (1989) suggests, Jung links “homosexuality” with the archetype of the hermaphrodite, as a symbol of “psychological wholeness” (p. 37). This, Hopcke argues, suggests that Jung is linking “homosexuality” with the archetypal *self* (ibid.).

Based on a thorough review of Jung’s writings about “homosexuality”, of which this discussion has only mentioned two, and taking into account his own concerns regarding Jung’s formulation of “homosexuality” as an expression of psychological immaturity, Hopcke (1989, p. 132) goes on to propose a “Jungian theory of sexual orientation”.

The sexual orientation of an individual or any group of individuals is determined through a complex interaction of the archetypal masculine, the archetypal feminine, and the archetypal Androgyne.

Hopcke (1989) follows this formulation with a discussion of the process of individuation in gay men. He suggests that, rather than give up their attachment to the “feminine”, as Jung suggests, the task which confronts gay men is indeed to deepen and consolidate their relationship to it.

In casting off society’s caricatures of femininity and locating their own passionate nature, the closeness they feel to their own body and its rhythms – in short, in relating to that inner self-based femininity that Jung called the *anima* – perhaps gay men may not go through all that different a process from heterosexual men in coming to know themselves as men through knowing themselves as women as well. For gay men, the point is to bring the feminine and masculine experiences of self together and to know the feminine, not in its outward conventional forms, but rather in its inward power and individuality – a part of “me” (Hopcke, 1989, p. 144).

Despite some of his concerns with Jung’s theories of “homosexuality”, the *anima*, for Hopcke (1989) remains an expression of the archetypal feminine, the only route through which individuation can take place for a man, be he “heterosexual” or “homosexual”.

Sandner (1993) in his paper *The Role of the Anima in Same-Sex Love between Men*, hints at the idea that the *anima* may be something else other than the “feminine”. He suggests that, from his clinical observations as a therapist with gay men, the *anima* figure, as guide and “bearer of the soul . . . often appears in the image of another man” (p. 220). He qualifies himself though, by going on to suggest that, in his experience, the *anima* often presents itself in a split form, as *dominant* and *wounded anima* (p. 220). He gives examples of this phenomenon, and then writes: “As I have mentioned, *it is possible for one side of the anima to be a young man*” (p. 222; emphasis added). This comment comes as a contradiction to his earlier reflection, for he is now suggesting that *only as aspect or “one side”* of the anima might be reflected by the image of another man. Despite his earlier seemingly important suggestion, he does not actually move away from the idea that the *anima* must, at least in part, be “feminine”. Like Hopcke (1989), he locates him firmly within Jung’s vision of the contrasexual nature of the individuation process. Sandner (1993) concludes: “And so the basic role of the *anima* is to bring about a union resolving the paradoxes of androgyny toward a realisation of the Self” (p. 229).

Wirth (1993) in his paper *Not “A One-Sided Sexual Being”*, in which he too discusses the individuation process in gay men, concludes, as Hopcke (1989) does, that the task confronting gay men is to more clearly differentiate both “feminine” and “masculine” aspects, so as “to individuate himself out of the unconscious hermaphroditic blur into which all too many gay men lapse” (p. 215).

For Wirth (1993), as with both Hopcke (1989), and Sandner (1993), the archetypal *anima* remains an expression of the “feminine”. What they all seem to advance on Jung’s theory is to reframe his notion of homosexuality as an expression of psychological immaturity, claiming instead, that gay people can also individuate “normally”, like “heterosexuals”. These reformulations of Jungian theory are important, as they do represent a process by which gay people are actively reclaiming their identities within the larger community. However, as feminist writers (Kulkarni, 1997; O’Conner & Ryan, 1993; Downing, 1989) argue, these theories do not go nearly far enough in reclaiming the position of minority groupings who do not fit into Jung’s heterosexist perspectives on psychological development. These writers argue

that what is needed are not new theories, but a new language and a complete paradigm shift, beyond heterosexist notions of gender.

Kulkarni (1997) criticises Hopcke's (1989) interpretation of Jung in his suggestion that Jung might be linking "homosexuality" with "the *self*". She argues that he has conflated Jung's notion of the hermaphrodite with the androgyne. As Downing (1989) reflects, the image of the hermaphrodite *suggest a connection to the self, but it is not itself an image of wholeness* (p. 115). It is an image of primordial unity of male and female which *precedes* differentiation or individuation. As discussed previously, Jung's (1959, in Jaffe, 1970) understanding of the deeper psychoid layers of the collective unconscious reflects that these layers exist in a state of indifferentiation. The image of the archetypal hermaphrodite is just such an image of indifferentiation. For Jung the *androgyne* symbolises the more conscious and differentiated union of "masculine" and "feminine". That is, the process of differentiation brings both aspects, as separate and contradictory psychological qualities, into union. In Jungian terms, the hermaphrodite is the primordial or archetypal image which, in the end, gives rise to the more conscious and paradoxically differentiated/united androgyne. The androgyne thus becomes an image of the ego's conscious assimilation of the archetypal *self*, while the hermaphrodite is an image of the primordial *self* not yet made conscious.

As Downing (1989) points out, Jung's (1936a) reflection indicates that "homosexuality" is an "incomplete detachment from the *hermaphroditic* archetype" (emphasis added). The implication, contrary to what Hopcke suggests, is that "homosexuality" mistakes indifferentiation (as represented by the hermaphrodite) for wholeness (the androgyne). Downing (*ibid.*, p. 115) concludes that in her view, Jung's notion of "homosexuality" related to a perception that it was "a misguided attempt to actualise psychical androgyny". As Kulkarni (1997) explains, Jung conceptualised androgyny as a symbolic union between the outer person and the "inner" partner (*anima* or *animus*) of the opposite sex. He implies that gay people and lesbians are misguided because they try to live this literally, in their relationships, rather than keeping it on a symbolic level (p. 97). This notion of the symbolic will be discussed in more detail in due course.

These criticisms notwithstanding, Kulkarni (1997) argues that Hopcke's (1989) use of concepts such as androgyny and the hermaphrodite to understand homosexualities locate his theory firmly within a heterosexist, gender-based discourse. As she points out, that Jung used gendered images to describe the *anima* and *animus*, does not mean that we need to. A great many theorists (Samuels, 1985; O'Conner & Ryan, 1993; Kulkarni, 1997) have pointed out that Jung's concepts of the anima and animus are based on stereotypic gender descriptions of "masculinity" and "femininity". His images of the androgyne and hermaphrodite are similarly located within a paradigm of gender stereotypes. Samuels (1989, p. 105) refers to the "illusion of androgyny", and describes it as an attempt to reify two categories of gender. That these historically-specific, language and culturally-bound terms (*anima* and *animus*) are used to describe (archetypal) phenomena which are apparently ahistorical is of great concern. As O'Conner and Ryan (1993) reflect, "retaining the archetypes of 'the masculine' and 'the feminine' and the composite 'androgyne' as foundational sets them up as ideals against which gender conformity and related erotic desires can be measured" (p. 173).

Samuels (1985) argues that the solution is not to dismiss the concepts of *anima* and *animus* entirely. Rather, he suggests that gender terminology be restricted, and used only when absolutely necessary (p. 216). He acknowledges that recognising a division into two sexes is important, both psychologically as well as socially. However, what these sexes mean, how they are expressed, how they choose to express themselves, should not be held hostage by the dualistic heterosexist language of Jungian psychology. As he concludes (ibid., p. 217), even if there is something absolutely "masculine" or absolutely "feminine", it does not necessarily mean that men have more of the former, and women more of the latter. Similarly, not all of what might be called "masculine" is to be found in the consciousness of men, nor all of what might be called "feminine" is characteristic of women. Using a gendered language to describe what Samuels calls "multifarious potentials" (what the *anima* and *animus* might indeed represent) runs the risk of restricting these potentials, imprisoning them within the confines of our dominant heterosexist mythology.

This discussion about the archetypal *anima* and *animus* began in the context of an exploration of processes of individuation. Before exploring the archetypal *anima* and *animus*, brief

mention was made of Jung's preoccupation with the "tension between the opposites", the dialectical space in which psychological growth, in Jung's view, is often constellated. It was considered that these "opposites" might not be as oppositional as Jung might have suggested, especially taking into account the possibility of more subtle gradations of difference, or the possibility of a more supportive interplay between seemingly disparate elements of the psyche. Samuels (1985, p. 214) notes that more recent perspectives of the archetypal *anima* and *animus* have "muted" the oppositional nature of these aspects of psychological functioning. In this sense it might be more useful to refer to them conjointly as *anima/animus*, rather than making a distinction between oppositional "male" and "female" versions. Samuels also reflects that these archetypal images, instead of being perceived only as "opposites", are now viewed as communicating "otherness", or "difference", that which is still unconscious. It is a relatedness which expresses *difference*; it need not be that these differences are "opposite" to one another. "*Animus* and *anima* speak, then, of the unexpected, of that which is 'out of order', which offends the prevailing order" (ibid., p. 214).

The unrelated human being lacks wholeness, for he can achieve wholeness only through the soul, and the soul cannot exist without its other side, which is always found in a "You". Wholeness is a combination of I and You (Jung, 1945, p. 244).

In this ungendered description of the *anima*, Jung's words seem to echo Jacques Lacan's definition of the unconscious as "the discourse of the other", and "the other of myself which sends my own message back to me in an inverted form" (in Lemaire, 1977, p. 124). Jung's exploration of what he termed the *anima* and *animus*, when moved beyond gendered constructs, do seem to have, as "multifarious potentials", the capacity to more specifically articulate aspects of the nature of "You", or "other" whose message we wait to hear. As channels between the ego and the unconscious (Samuels, 1985, p. 213), the tension provoked by these archetypal promptings, not necessarily as polarisations, but simply as that which is "other", seem to constellate vast potentials for shifting the human psyche from indifferenciation into *self*-realisation. And one of the processes by which this happens is guided by what Jung (1957) called the *transcendent function*, a function which brings conscious and unconscious

together and allows for an organic transition into increased consciousness (Wulff, 1997). The process by which this happens will be the next major focus in the discussion of processes of individuation. Before moving on to an exploration of the *transcendent function*, however, two further archetypes will be briefly described. The *puer* and *senex* archetypes are often referred to in the literature as pertaining to the individuation of gay men (Hopcke, 1989). These archetypes, and the relationship between them, will serve as an introduction to the exploration of the *transcendent function*. The discussion of individuation will then conclude with a brief sojourn into Jung's (1953) alchemical metaphor. It is probably only a metaphor, in the end, which can most fully illustrate what it is that Jung drew our attention to when he wrote about his hypothesis of the psyche's impulse towards individuation.

The *puer aeternus*, or eternal child, is an aspect of collective functioning which personifies the transcendent spiritual powers of the collective unconscious (Hillman, 1991, p. 227). It is an aspect of life which is not located in linear time and space, it has no concern for "reality", nor is it scared of dying. It knows it can simply reconstellate itself in another form. As Hillman (ibid.) writes, "*puer* figures can be regarded as avatars of the *self*'s spiritual aspect, and *puer* impulses as messages from the spirit or as calls to the spirit". Because of a direct access to the spiritual dimension, this aspect of psychological life has little patience for worldly responsibilities, for waiting, or for timing. Living life in a linear, methodical manner is tedious, boring, and a waste of time. *Puer* knows little of consistency, or the tedium of work. It sees the whole picture, and grasps it immediately. There is an immediacy about its functioning that demands attention. As Hillman (ibid., p. 229) writes, "the *puer* is not meant to walk but to fly . . . the *puer* captures psyche . . . It is to the *puer* that psyche succumbs". Hillman concludes, "the *puer* is primordially perfect".

The problems evident in psychological life when ego consciousness identifies too much with this dimension of psychic life have been extensively written about, particularly by von Franz (1970) in her book *The Problem of the Puer Aeternus*. Hillman (1991) credits von Franz for much of the work that has been done regarding this dimension of psychic life. An overidentification with *puer* by ego consciousness often results in a narcissistic sense of self-perfection, an aura of knowing everything, and being responsible to nobody. As Hillman notes,

the primordial *puer* reflects a hermaphroditic quality where “masculine” and “feminine” are so perfectly joined that nothing is needed, nor not known. It thinks it is perfect. Jung’s (1936a) interpretation of the hermaphrodite being an image of primordial indifferentiation was discussed previously. In Jung’s view, it is an image of something masquerading as wholeness, but is actually primordially unconscious. *Puer*’s domain is the timeless Garden of Eden. He, or she, jealously guards this domain, and “will not grow up”. It is in this context that von Franz (1970) wrote about *puer* as that dimension of psychological functioning which, if overly invested in, results in an immaturity, a lack of groundedness in the world, and an inability and unwillingness to make commitments. This lack of rootedness may express itself in an “excessive spirituality and a head-in-the-clouds attitude” (Samuels, 1985, p. 204). The spirituality expressed by *puer*, however, tends to be undifferentiated, and superficial. It is a spirituality not born of insight, but present purely as a result of a direct link with spirit. It thus represents a significant *potential* for a deepened spirituality; it is not, as it thinks it is, spirituality personified. In itself, without the help of other aspects of psychological functioning, it remains undifferentiated and undeveloped. “Such people are searching for authentic experience of a spiritual nature, their problem is all too easily satisfied with a bogus and shallow version . . . or to manic overactivity” (Samuels, 1985, p. 205).

Puer is written about by both von Franz (1970) and Hillman (1991) particularly in relation to “homosexuality”. Von Franz (1970) understands *puer* identification by ego consciousness as resulting from an inability to separate from the “feminine”, particularly the mother. She views “homosexuality” as the primary outgrowth of this problem. Hillman (1991, p. 229) writes:

The feeling of distance and coldness, of impermanence, of Don Juan’s ithyphallic sexuality, of homosexuality, can all be seen as derivative of the privileged archetypal connection with the spirit, which may burn with a blue and ideal fire but in a human relationship may show the icy penis and chilling seed of a satanic incubus.

Hopcke (1989) criticises von Franz’s (1970) causal reductionism. He notes that, while *puer* identification may be a feature in the lives of some gay men, it is similarly evident, as “Don Juan’s ithyphallic sexuality”, in “heterosexual” men. He goes on to argue that there is no

evidence which suggests that gay men are more prone to *puer* identification than “heterosexual” men. Hopcke (1989, p. 99) concludes: “If both heterosexual and homosexual men can be *puer* identified, then by von Franz’s own admission identification with this archetype seems to have no determinative effect on sexual orientation. If *puer* is an archetype of the collective unconscious, one can expect its appearance in *everyone’s* psychology” (emphasis in original).

In Jung’s (1940) own writings, he emphasises the importance of the *puer* archetype in psychological life. For him, it is also that aspect of the psyche, and the world, which represents life (as symbolised by the image of the “Christ-child”), potentiality, and that which is new and spontaneous. Its place is thus vital for the processes of individuation.

Hillman (1991) notes that the *puer* archetype is closely linked to another archetypal motif, an aspect of psychological life which he argues is simply the other side of the same archetypal polarity. Here he is referring to the archetypal *senex*, or Wise Old Man archetype.

It is particularly in the processes of maturing, over time, and through many of life’s experiences, that the formative effects of the archetypal *senex* can be witnessed (Hillman, 1991, p. 208). Representations of this aspect of psychic life can be seen in images of kings, wise rulers, priests. Nelson Mandela, for instance, could be viewed as a personification of this archetypal dimension. Features which characterise the *senex*-aspect of psychological life include a yearning for superior knowledge, and wisdom, together with the patient capacity to wait for the right time in which to express itself. It is concerned with principles, rather than interrelatedness and connectedness. As Hillman (ibid.) reflects, “the high god of our [western] culture is a *senex* god; we are created after this image with a consciousness reflecting this structure. One face of our consciousness is inescapably *senex*”. In this sense, Hillman (ibid., p. 209) notes, *senex* consciousness “is outside of things, lonely, wondering, a consciousness set apart and outcast”. The methods by which he attains his wisdom is often via depression (rather than manic inflation), suffering (rather than laughter), and introversion (as a turning away from the world) (ibid.). Its shadow side reflects a capacity to be cold, and calculating, patiently waiting for its moment of revenge.

From the preceding, albeit brief, discussion about *puer* and *senex*, it is evident that their qualities contrast rather exactly. *Puer* is impatient and spontaneous, *senex* is patient and slow to act. *Puer* tends to mania, *senex* to depression. “As *senex* is perfected through time, *puer* is primordially perfect” (Hillman, 1991, p. 228). The compensatory nature of these archetypal forms of expression is such, Hillman argues, that this archetypal constellation represents two polarities of the same whole. They are each other’s half. And as Hillman (*ibid.*, p. 221) reflects, they also come to represent another version of wholeness, alongside that of a union of opposites.

We seek this merger in our own lives. We seek a transformation of the conflict of extremes into a union of sames. Our time and its longing to be healed asks that the two ends be held together, that our other half so near to us, so like us as the shadow we cast, enter the circle of our light. Our other half is not only of another sex. The union of opposites – male with female – is not the only union for which we long and is not the only union which redeems. There is also the union of sames, the re-union of the vertical axis which would heal the split spirit.

In this image Hillman (1991) provides an important alternative to traditional Jungian and contemporary cultural heterosexist imagery. Hopcke (1989) reflects that Hillman’s insight, the perception that the psyche also has a need for a “union of sames”, explains to some extent why “homosexuality” is perceived to be both psychologically and spiritually threatening by society: its outer manifestation, as witnessed in the pairing off of man with man, and woman with woman, reflects, for all to see, an essential and collective psychological need. Hillman is arguing that we all seek this merger. The outward expression of homoerotic sexuality (as an expression of the archetypal “union of sames”) thus comes to represent, not only another image of wholeness, but also our current society’s archetypal *anima* and *animus*; that is, “otherness”, and “difference”, that which is unconscious. As Samuels’ (1985, p. 214) suggested, “*animus* and *anima* speak, then, of the unexpected, of that which is ‘out of order’, which offends the prevailing order”.

Here then is an example of the complex manner in which forms of archetypal expression interact, each having the potential to express the other, each acting as guides for the ego / self constellation, compensating for that which is undeveloped, expressing that which is not yet spoken. *Puer* and *senex* as a single unit hold within them a tension, each challenging the other. *Senex* challenges *puer* out of superficiality and frenzied spiritual flight. *Puer* challenges *senex* out of reclusive, depressive self-reflection, adding ephemeral spirit to earthly soul. And together, at least within our current society, they also serve as handmaidens for *anima/animus*, challenging our dominant heterosexist cultural myths with “otherness”, “the unexpected” and that which is “out of order”. That they should also then be an expression of the collective archetypal *shadow* in contemporary society is self-evident. We witness then, in this example, an *interplay* of archetypal phenomena, expressing the “multiplicity of partial consciousnesses” (Samuels, 1985, p. 107), in which each aspect, according to its own principle, guides psyche into awareness. As Jung (1928, p. 160) reflects, “the conscious personality is pushed about like a figure on a chess board by an invisible player”. Through the course of the above discussion, the *nature* of this “invisible player”, as represented by the complex interplay of archetypal expressions, becomes clearer. And one of the primary means by which the “invisible player” shifts ego consciousness is through a process Jung (1957) called the *transcendent function*. This function will now become the focus of the discussion.

“The ‘transcendent function’”, writes Jung (1957, p. 69), “arises from the union of conscious and unconscious contents”. He continues: “The tendencies of the conscious and the unconscious are the two factors that together make up the transcendent function. It is called ‘transcendent’ because it makes the transition from one attitude to another organically possible, without loss of the unconscious” (ibid.).

The *transcendent function*, Jung (1957) explains, is a process which is constellated when ego consciousness chooses one focus of development at the expense of all others. Samuels (1985, pp. 58 – 59) reflects on an example appropriate to this study to illustrate the process. His example might also be viewed as a description of the relationship between *puer* and *senex*. It will thus serve, not only to illustrate the *transcendent function*, but also to clarify further the manner in which the archetypal *puer* and *senex* relate. Imagine, he suggests, that a person’s ego

consciousness has over-identified with sensuality and “the flesh” (as a possible symbolisation also of *puer*). In response to this one-sided development, the psyche, which is essentially compensatory and complementary in nature, is likely to develop a counter-position in the unconscious, representing a more serious, less worldly aspect of life (as an expression also of *senex*). As *puer* gains momentum, so does *senex*, resulting eventually in an eruption into consciousness of *senex* qualities. For example, the person might move into a deep depressive episode (as an expression of a now insistent archetypal *senex*), thereby making it increasingly difficult for ego consciousness to maintain its *puer*-identified attitude. The ensuing tension results in a “crisis of adaptation” (Jung, 1957, p. 72) between ego consciousness and the unconscious. Each has its own solution: for *puer* it might be an immediate, impulsive, probably sexual one; for *senex*, it is likely to be a less carnal, more spiritual solution gradually developed over time. The task of the ego within the resulting tension is a difficult one: *its challenge is to let go of its identification with puer, though not repress it, and at the same time assimilate senex, but not in turn over-identify with it.* The resulting conflict is a familiar one: spiritual being (priest) or sexual being (sex-worker), representing the two extremes of this polarisation. These apparent opposites are not easy for ego consciousness, nor for our contemporary culture, to assimilate. As Samuels (1985, p. 59) reflects, the ego’s task is to try to maintain *the middle ground*. That this is a difficult undertaking is reflected in something Jung wrote elsewhere:

Unfortunately our Western mind, lacking all culture in this respect, has never yet devised a concept, nor even a name, for the union of opposites through the middle path, that most fundamental item of inward experience, which could respectably be set against the Chinese concept of Tao (1928, p. 205).

The second phase in the process by which the *transcendent function* is constellated (the first being the growing tension between consciousness and the unconscious), is the process of *tolerating* this middle path. This essentially means holding together the seemingly contradictory aspects of archetypal expression.

The best cannot be told, anyhow, and the second best does not strike home. One must be able to let things happen. I have learned from the East what is meant by *wu-wei*: “not-doing”, “letting go”, which is quite different from

doing nothing. Some Occidentals, also, have known what this not-doing means; for instance, Meister Eckhart, who speaks of *sich lassen*, “letting go”. The region of darkness into which one falls is not empty; it is the “lavishing mother” of Lao-tzu, the “images” of the “seed”. When the surface has been cleared, things can grow out of the depths. People always suppose that they have lost their way when they come against these depths of experience. But if they do not know how to go on, the only answer, the only advice that makes any sense is “Wait for what the unconscious has to say about the situation”. A way is only *the* way when one finds it and follows it oneself. There is no general prescription for “how to do it” (Jung, 1939, quoted in Jacobi, 1971; p. 298).

It is this process of “letting go”, and “not doing”, a process of working with the “meaning and purpose” of the tension or problem, rather than fighting it, getting rid of it, or trying to explain it away, that paves the way for the third stage: *the appearance of the transcendent function*. (Jung, 1957, p. 147). At this point, the person moves “out of the suspension between the opposites”, into “a new level of being” (ibid., p. 189). Kulkarni (1997, p. 53) succinctly summarises the overall purpose of this process, as articulated by Jung (1957).

This is a “true labour, a work which involves both action and suffering” (Jung, 1957, p. 121) and which has one overall purpose: “the revelation” of the potentially “whole” personality (ibid., p. 186”).

As Samuels (1985) notes, Jung stressed two features of consciousness. The first is the ego’s capacity to *discriminate* (p. 59). Reflecting on the example used above, the ability to discriminate between sexual expression and spirituality is crucial to ego consciousness. If unable to achieve this, it simply becomes victim to “blind instinctuality” (ibid.). Each polarity, the physical, and the spiritual, hold within themselves distinct qualities not shared by the other. Without an experiencing, discriminating ego, these features are merged, losing their individual richness. It is inevitable that, as these seemingly opposing aspects of life, body and spirit, move further into consciousness, tension will ensue. It is ego consciousness’s second facet, viz., its capacity to tolerate seemingly oppositional aspects of the psyche within one space, which

allows for the process of *transcendence* to occur. A sexuality and a spirituality brought fully into awareness, together, create a new consciousness, an experience of being that was not available before.

Jung (1957) explains that, in the context of analysis, it is often the analyst who mediates the *transcendent function* for the patient. The analyst, as an expression of this function, is required to hold the tensions within him/herself, resisting an impulse to move towards closure. This too involves suffering on the part of the therapist. It is often the therapist or analyst's capacity to withstand this tension that gives the patient hope of its toleration being possible. Therapy or analysis becomes the space in which the tensions are withstood, and meaning worked with.

The ensuing transformation is characterised by the *transcendence* of old ways of being. Sexuality and spirituality, or body and spirit, at first kept apart by the overly rational ego, are assimilated anew, creating a new attitude within ego consciousness in which they are able to function together, each enhancing the other's meaning (Samuels, 1989, p. 23). No longer viewed as "either/or", they move into relationship or dialogue separated only by "and". This union of "opposites" as an expression of the archetypal *self* draws ego and *self* together, the ego strengthened and enhanced by contact with, and the assimilation of, the archetypal material. Jung's (1951, p. 22) reflection mentioned earlier bears relevance: "The more numerous and the more significant the unconscious contents which are assimilated to the ego, the closer the approximation of the ego to the *self*, even though this approximation must be a never ending process".

The plunge into this process becomes unavoidable whenever the possibility arises of overcoming an apparently insuperable difficulty (Jung, 1928, p. 160).

This space in which the *transcendent function* emerges, the space in which tensions are tolerated, giving rise to something new, is something also written about by psychoanalyst and writer Donald Winnicott (1971). The parameters of this study do not allow for an exploration

of his work in any detail. His notion of *potential space* will, however, be briefly alluded to, as it serves to enhance and further clarify Jung's concept of the *transcendent function*.

Winnicott's (1971) notion of *potential space* may be defined as "an intermediate area of experiencing that lies between fantasy and reality" (Ogden, 1992, p. 203). The challenge of this space, Winnicott (1971, p. xii) asserts, is to allow the paradox "to be accepted and tolerated and respected . . . *and not to be resolved*" (emphasis added)). For Winnicott, this space exists in a number of contexts, including play space (i.e. space in which a child might play, either socially, or in therapy), therapeutic space, cultural space, and spaces in which creativity takes place. Ogden (1992) goes on to explore Winnicott's notion of *potential space* as a *dialectical process*. Using Hegel's understanding of dialectic, Ogden (1992, p. 208) defines this process as a space in which "each of two opposing concepts creates, informs, preserves, and negates the other, each standing in a dynamic (ever-changing) relationship with the other". It is a process which always moves towards integration, in the understanding that integration is never complete (ibid.).

Links between Jung's (1957) notion of the *transcendent function* and Winnicott's (1971) notion of *potential space* are evident. Both embody a sense of space in which conflicts are accepted and tolerated, rather than resolved, thereby making space for something new and more integrated to emerge. The idea that this process is on-going, the "goal" never reached, is also shared by Jung and Winnicott.

In summary, Jung (1957) is suggesting, with his notion of the *transcendent function*, that the psyche has within it a natural capacity to initiate change, as constellated in this function. The tension created between conscious and unconscious is such that, with the necessary mediatory function of the ego, which develops through the process of holding the tension rather than foreclosing in either one direction or the other, the "multifarious potentialities" of the personality are made available to consciousness. The purpose of "holding the tension", "waiting", and tolerating "not knowing" is to prevent ego consciousness from forcing its own, limited, perspective on the process, and instead, create the space in which something altogether

new can emerge. These, it seems, are the conditions necessary for the *transcendent function* to constellate.

This discussion about individuation and the *transcendent function* will conclude with reference to one of the important ways in which Jung (1953) described the specific processes of psychological and spiritual transformation. Samuels (1989) refers to it as Jung's "alchemical metaphor" (p. 175). Ending the discussion by referring to this particular area of Jung's work, something he devoted much of the last twenty-five years of his life exploring (ibid., p. 179), serves an important function. It locates much of the preceding discussion within the context of metaphor. As discussed in Chapter Two, metaphor, defined pluralistically, allows for a "simultaneity of perception" (ibid., p. 47). Something is able to be at once "real" and "not-real". For, despite metaphor's essential non-literal nature, Samuels reminds us that "it [also] cannot be divorced from the roots of its context" (ibid., p. 40). It is within this dialectical vision that Jung's notion of individuation and psychological growth is located in this study. That Jung (1953) himself went on to develop an extensive (alchemical) metaphor to describe processes of psychological transformation suggests that he too placed his work within metaphoric space. As mentioned earlier, he made it abundantly clear that it was not possible to formulate general theories from his observations, and that, in the end, his concept of the unconscious mind remained an hypothesis. The opening citation to his paper, *The Psychology of the Transference* (1946a), a paper in which Jung draws extensively from the sixteenth-century alchemical tract *Rosarium philosophorum*, reaffirms his approach.

I enquire, I do not assert; I do not here determine anything with final assurance; I conjecture, try, compare, attempt, ask . . . (Motto to Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, quoted in Jung, 1946, p. 1).

Winnicott's (1971) notion of *potential space* was described as being the area of experiencing that lies between fantasy and reality. Jung's alchemical metaphor places his reflections and hypotheses regarding psychological and spiritual development firmly within such a space.

Jung (1928) found in alchemy an image or metaphor to describe the psyche's inherent capacity for transformation and change. Furthermore, it was through his study of alchemical symbolism that he arrived more fully at the concept of individuation as being a central tenet to his work (1963, p. 235). Alchemy illustrated for him, in metaphor, the psyche's capacity for change.

For the moment I will refrain from discussing the nature of this change of personality, since I only want to emphasize that change does take place. I have called this change . . . the transcendent function. This remarkable capacity of the human psyche for change, expressed in the transcendent function, is the principle object of late medieval alchemical symbolism . . . Alchemy also had a spiritual side which must not be underestimated and whose psychological value has not yet been sufficiently appreciated: there was an "alchemical" philosophy, the groping precursor of the most modern psychology. The secret of alchemy was in fact the transcendent function, the transformation of personality through the blending and fusion of the noble with the base components, of the differentiated with the inferior functions, of the conscious with the unconscious (Jung, 1928, p. 219).

As Samuels (1989, p. 180) reflects, Jung saw in alchemy "something of a precursor of his own analytical psychology and particularly his concept of the individuation process". Jung (1955) made direct links between alchemical imagery and processes of individuation: "We can see today that the entire alchemical procedure . . . can just as well represent the individuation process of a single individual" (p. 555). The work of alchemists is complex, and has been extensively written about by Jung (1928; Jung, 1946a; Jung, 1953). Jung's colleague, Marie-Louise von Franz (1980) has also contributed significantly to the subject. In the context of this discussion, some of the processes will be described, and then linked to the therapeutic process. This will serve to further illustrate, albeit extremely briefly and perhaps in a very oversimplified manner, the processes by which the *transcendent function* guides the psyche into wholeness.

What alchemists were trying to do in their work was constellate a process of transformation in which a new substance (the *lapis*, or philosopher's stone) could evolve out of raw materials

(*prima materia* or *massa confusa*) (Jung, 1953; von Franz, 1980). Although many alchemists might have worked with this literally (trying to transform *prima materia* into gold), Jung (1928) is insistent, as noted in his reflection quoted above, that there was an important spiritual and philosophical aspect to the process, focussing on transforming darkness or confusion (*massa confusa*) into something spiritually pure and enriching. Alchemical writings translated by Jung (1953) reflect processes by which the transformation was believed to take place, together with a commentary on the influence these processes of transformation had on the alchemist. What also interested Jung was that there seemed to be a close relationship between the alchemical process of transformation, and a transformation effected in the alchemist. These struck him as being very similar to his own analytic method of effecting change through analysis, in which both analyst and patient are transformed through the analytic work.

The alchemical *vas*, or container, in which the *prima materia* was mixed corresponded for Jung (1953) with the space in which therapy took place. It was reflected in the relationship between analyst and patient. Within this space a mating or mixing of disparate elements took place, something referred to as the *coniunctio*. It was out to this *coniunctio*, as a process of combining and holding together these disparate elements for a significant period, that transformation was eventually effected. This transformation meant that all elements originally used would no longer hold the same qualities, but be fundamentally changed by the process.

Samuels (1989, p. 181) notes five themes related to the processes of psychotherapy evident in the *coniunctio*. Firstly, it reflects the interaction between analyst and patient, representing disparate elements in the *vas*. Secondly, in the *coniunctio* are reflected the *massa confusa* (conflicting aspects of the psyche) of both analyst and patient. Thirdly, within this constellation an even more dynamic *coniunctio* becomes evident, as reflected between personal relatedness (between analyst and patient) and intrapsychic processes (inter- and intra-relatedness). Fourthly, the *coniunctio* reflects the ego's assimilation of unconscious aspects of the archetypal *self*, in which ego consciousness is fundamentally changed (through the mixing of previously differentiated conscious and unconscious elements). And lastly, as a result of this mixing between conscious and unconscious, there is a *coniunctio* (and *hierosgamos* or sacred

marriage) between spirit (archetypal element) and matter (body), as archetypal *self* is more fully embodied in life.

Jung (1946a) reflects on the way in which alchemists describe the processes of change within the *coniunctio*, and links these to the psychotherapy process. *Nigredo*, (or the darkening of the *prima materia*) often becomes evident some time into the analytic process, reflecting that changes are imminent. This may be reflected in an onset of symptoms: a mild depression, or feelings of restlessness and anxiety, usually very subtle at first. Or it might be evident in dreams which could include images such as fire or death. As heat is applied, these signs, often only hinted at, suggest impending change. *Fermentatio* (literally a fermenting) suggests a brewing of the original elements. This process is often played out in the transference-countertransference relationship between analyst and patient. Strong feelings may arise, either conflictual, or strong attraction. These are worked with directly through the analytic process. *Mortificatio* and *putrefactio* are processes which both refer to the death of elements as they existed in their previous forms. The opening citation to this chapter describes this process of psychological and spiritual dying most succinctly.

This limbo – which lasted for twelve timeless days – started as torment, but turned into patience, started as hell, but became a purgatorial dark night, humbled me, horribly, took away hope . . . (Oliver Sacks, 1984, p. 133).

Finally, a new constellation emerges: the *hierosgamos*, or sacred marriage. There is a merging of elements, and something not there before emerges. “Like mixing two different chemical substances: if there is any combination at all, both are transformed” (Jung, 1945, p. 163). Out of chaos and confusion emerge pattern and integration (Samuels, 1985, p. 180). As Sacks (1984, p. 133) concludes:

This limbo - took away hope, *but then sweetly-gently, returned it to me thousandfold, transformed* (emphasis added).

A fundamental premise upon which alchemy is based is the *transmutability of elements* (Jung, 1928; Jung, 1953; Samuels, 1985; Samuels, 1989). It affirms, as something essential, the

capacity for change inherent within the process. This is the hypothesis upon which Jung's concept of the *transcendent function* rests. The capacity for transformation, as represented by this function, is foundational to Jung's vision of the psyche.

In this discussion about the *transcendent function*, some of the processes by which change within the psyche might be affected have been described. Within the context of the overall discussion about individuation, the exploration of this function serves to illustrate *how* change is thought to come about in the psyche. Jung's alchemical metaphor was introduced and used to illustrate some of these processes, while at the same time locate the discussion of psychological and spiritual growth within the context of metaphor. This discussion of individuation has included an exploration of the structure and dynamics of the collective unconscious, aspects of the nature of ego consciousness, and some of the processes by which consciousness is constellated. Furthermore, processes of individuation were examined, looking at the influence of the archetypal *persona*, *shadow*, *anima*, *animus*, *puer*, *senex* and *self* on these processes, ending with a discussion exploring the manner in which transformation comes about. The discussion will now conclude with a review of Jung's theory of individuation, looking particularly at criticisms and some of the difficulties inherent in his theory. This discussion will also serve as an introduction to the following section in this chapter, viz., James Fowler's (1981) theory of spiritual faith development. Apart from discussing Fowler's theory in some detail, parallels will also be drawn between Jung's theory of psychological and spiritual growth and Fowler's stage theory of individuation. This will come to serve as the foundation for the chapters which follow. Fowler's faith development theory is a reference point for the research interview, and as one means by which the data will be analysed. The application of his theory will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

3.2.5. Commentary And Conclusions

Jung's theory of individuation lies at the heart of analytic psychology (Samuels, 1985). It represents the core around which psychological and spiritual functioning occurs. It also expresses, for Jung, the meaning and purpose of life. "There is a destination, a possible goal . . . That is the way of individuation" (1928, p. 173). That life is inherently meaningful, purposeful, and forward moving was a founding principle upon which Jung built his work.

Much of his life was spent documenting, analysing, differentiating, and then describing the processes by which this movement takes place.

Many of the difficulties evident in Jung's theory of *self*-realisation have been attested to by writers, both Jungian and non-Jungian, since Jung first began articulating his vision (Hillman, 1972; Hillman, 1975; Samuels, 1985; Samuels, 1989; Samuels, 1993; Samuels, 1999; Downing, 1989; Hopcke, 1989; Hermans, Kempen & van Loon, 1992; O'Conner & Ryan, 1993; Kulkarni, 1997; Wilbur, 2000).

As a complete review of Jungian theory is not within the bounds of this study, a number of factors pertaining specifically to this exploration of individuation will be focussed on. Issues pertaining to Jung's heterosexist, gendered language, especially regarding the archetypal *anima* and *animus* have already been alluded to. Attention has also been given to Jung's fascination with "opposites", with the suggestion that notions of "otherness" might be sufficient in describing archetypal processes. Factors which will now be discussed include Jung's notion of archetypal structures, the individuation process itself, and his conceptualisation of the "*self*".

Samuels (1989), in a discussion in which he debates the "deep structure" or "constructed" nature of archetypes, posits a solution to the criticism frequently levelled at Jungian theory regarding its essentialist nature (Downing, 1993; O'Conner & Ryan, 1993; Kulkarni, 1997). Samuels (1989) remains largely loyal to the idea of an archetype, and reaffirms Jung's (1964) insistence on distinguishing between an archetype and its expression, the latter being referred to as *archetypal*. Earlier in this discussion Jung's concern regarding the frequent misunderstanding of his concept of archetypes was described, particularly the assumption that he meant that various representations, such as *senex*, *puer*, *shadow*, as already described, were actually inherited. Jung frequently emphasised the hypothetical nature of the collective unconscious.

The existence of an unconscious psyche is as likely, shall we say, as the existence of an as yet unknown planet, whose presence is inferred from the deviations of some of the known planetary orbit (Jung, in Jaffe, 1970, p. 15).

Implicit in this quote, albeit couched as an hypothesis, is the idea that there *is* in existence this other “planet”, as something *essential* which is guiding us towards greater wholeness. While Jung remains insistent that it is unlikely that we will ever be able to know this “planet” directly, his hypothesis remains that it exists. It is with this fundamental aspect of his work that theorists take issue. (Kulkarni, 1997; O’Conner & Ryan, 1993; Samuels, 1989). Jung is arguing, as an hypothesis, that “deep structures” exist, guiding us towards *self*-realisation. “There is a destination, a possible goal”.

Samuels (1989), drawing from a pluralistic perspective, suggests an alternative, while still holding on to central aspects of Jung’s theory. Taking Jung’s notion of *archetypal*, as the effect of an archetype, i.e. that which we have access to, he proposes another view.

Archetypal may also be seen as a *gradation of affect*, something in the eye of the beholder, not what he or she beholds or experiences . . . An analogy would be a filter that is always in place, colouring or otherwise influencing what is seen or experienced. There is a sense in which the filter *is* the experience, or in which the experience is dead without the filter. The filter *is what we term archetypal*. The implication is that depth lies in the filter. The filter is a kind of disturbance of attention, distortion even. It is a way of introducing imagery to the world and of imposing imagery on the world so that the world becomes an experienced world (Samuels, 1989, p. 26).

His shift, by placing archetypal modes of experience *in the eye of the beholder*, is to understand them, not only as external “deep structures”, but as something created by the individual. Drawing from his synchronous model, as described in Chapter Two, Samuels (ibid.) then goes on to suggest combining a vertical model of archetypal states of mind or experience together with the more usual linear model.

Archetypal states of mind bear relation to phases of development, as in a linear model. But, as they are also conceived of as something present from birth, or before, right up to death, or beyond, archetypal states of mind invite a vertical consideration. The suggestion is that there are identifiable psychologies pertaining to each archetypal state of mind. Not one psychology, though not ruling that out, but multiple psychologies, probably in interaction, but potentially separate (ibid.).

What Samuels (1989) does is leave Jung's idea of *archetypal* intact, suggesting only that we think about it differently. In his model, each mode of apprehending the world (or *archetypal state of mind*) becomes vertically eternal, in the sense that it has a psychology or psychologies of its own, not necessarily *determined* by deep structures. However, that there might *be* a deep structure, suggesting a particular psychology, is also possible. It is, nonetheless, not the only possibility. This model, Samuels believes, makes space for a multiplicity of meanings (as an expression of diversity), while at the same time giving equal weight to the idea of unity. The task of pluralistic psychology, Samuels (ibid., p. 33) concludes, "is to hold [these] modes in some relation to each other, permitting dialogue between them". Samuels believes further that this model frees archetypal states of mind from *telos* or the idea of a goal. Some aspects or states of mind may indeed invest in the idea of goal. Just as valid is the potential other archetypal states of mind might have to not invest in *telos*. In this way Samuels is able to hold on to aspects of Jung's archetypal theory, while allowing himself to think of it in a less elitist, and more democratic way. It means that not moving towards a goal becomes just as valid as moving towards a goal. Each are valid archetypal states, not necessarily even in conflict with one another, although they may be.

Finally, Samuels (1989, p. 31) goes on to suggest that an archetype exists *in the cracks between two archetypal states of mind*, arguing then that archetypal is "a liminal, boundary phenomenon". This notion of liminality will be explored in the next chapter. What remains to be said about this final formulation regarding the archetype, is that it locates the notion of archetype fully within a pluralistic notion of *metaphor*. Archetype at once becomes something "real", but "not-real". The debate is then no longer between "deep structures" and "personal creation". Samuels places them together, allowing the meanings to emerge. What he seems to

do, as analyst, is create a space (*vas*) in which two seemingly disparate elements, no longer “either/or”, can interact and dialogue with each other, each now potentially giving the other meaning (in *coniunctio*). He uses Jung’s idea of the *transcendent function* to rethink archetypal theory. What he does is locate archetypes within *potential space*.

This pluralistic model of Jung’s archetypal theory presents an important way in which the “multifarious potentialities” evident in his work are not lost, while at the same time rescuing his thoughts from a “one-sided” essentialism. Samuels (1989) does seem to succeed in [re]locating Jung’s work within a post-modernist, even post-structuralist context, in which it can potentially thrive.

The difficulties various theorists (Hillman, 1975; Guggenbuhl-Craig, 1980; Fordham, 1963; Samuels, 1985) have expressed regarding Jung’s notion of individuation find some resolution in Samuels’ (1985) synchronous model. Mention will, however, be made of some of the concerns expressed, and how these might link to Samuels’ suggestion. Hillman’s (1975) concern is that Jung speaks of individuation in the singular rather than in the plural. He suggests a multiplicity of individuations, each constellating in relation to the person’s own inner multiplicity. (This latter notion will be discussed in more detail when problems of the concept of *self* are addressed). Hillman views individuation as being the expression of only one archetype, viz., the *self*. Individuation, in Hillman’s view, expresses the archetypal *self*’s vision of the world, and therefore by no means the *only* vision available. He articulates a broader vision for processes of “growth” and “development”. Divesting the archetypal *self* of its seemingly autocratic (monotheistic) hold on the psyche seems to open up a myriad of possibilities of dialogue within a space of dynamic interrelatedness. These possibilities form the basis of Hillman’s vision for psychological growth.

Guggenbuhl-Craig (1980), along similar lines, suggests many, seemingly “crazy” forms of relatedness, either between people, or within an individual person, do not fit with the “standard” criteria for individuation. Yet these patterns of relatedness work well for the people concerned, allowing for a full “realisation” of potentialities.

The point Samuels (1989) develops, that of the vertical, eternal potentialities evident in each form of archetypal expression, bears relevance. It moves the archetypal *self* off centre, allowing other forms of expression to find greater expression. Each aspect of human potential becomes fully realisable as something completely legitimate within itself. That it relates, and how it relates, might, or might not, be influenced by a unifying psychic potential. In this sense individuation also becomes an expression of diversity. It need not fulfil the Jungian fantasy of becoming an individuated self. Quite the contrary, it opens up the possibilities of the realisation of many *selves*, either separately, or in relationship to one another, or both.

This brings the discussion to Jung's notion of the *self*. Criticised as being Eurocentric, ethnocentric, patriarchal and heterosexist in its "monotheistic form" (Hillman, 1971; Hopcke, 1989; O'Conner & Ryan, 1993; Kulkarni, 1997) Jung's idea of *self* has probably, alongside his notions of the gender-based *anima* and *animus*, been the most widely debated. Samuels (1985, p. 106) notes, "most post-Jungians have turned away from an exclusive consideration of integration to examine partial states, representations of parts of the self; they see the self as a barren and overvalued concept when used to deny the multiplicity and polycentricity of the psyche".

Discussing Hillman's (1971) paper "Psychology: monotheistic or polytheistic?", Samuels (1989, p. 107) points to a vision gaining momentum amongst post-Jungian writers and theorists that no longer tolerates a one-sided quest for unity at the expense of diversity, yet dialectically makes space in which each can enhance the other. This is expressed well in Lopez-Pedraza's response to Hillman's paper: "the many *contains* the unity of the one *without losing* the possibilities of the many" (quoted in Samuels, 1989, p. 107). Hillman (1971), like many of the post-Jungians, each from their own perspective, is arguing for a multiplicity of selves, not dominated by monotheist archetypal *self*. Hillman (1991) also argues for a shift in our understanding of *wholeness*, allowing it to mean viewing something *as a whole*, rather than as something that should *become whole*.

Guggenbuhl-Craig (1980) develops this last point made by Hillman, arguing that Jung's notion of the *self* is too sanctified, leaving little room for imperfection. "It is high time we spoke of

deficiency, the invalidism of Self . . . Completeness is fulfilled through incompleteness. Admittedly, it is difficult to sustain the image of completeness and wholeness and, at the same time, to accept invalidism” (p. 25).

This discussion of the *self* will be concluded with reference to the work of Narrative theorists, Hermans, Kempen and van Loon (1992). They articulate a vision similar to that already described by the afore-mentioned post-Jungian writers. However, they introduce a term to describe the processes which seems particularly useful in more clearly articulating the dimensions of the *self*. Challenging the ethnocentric Western view of the individualist *self*, they propose, in a spirit of pluralism, the notion of *a dialogical self as a multiplicity of positions*.

We conceptualise the self in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous *I* positions in an imaginal landscape. In its most concise form this conception can be formulated as follows. The *I* has the possibility to move, as in a space, from one position to the other in accordance with changes in situation and time. The *I* fluctuates among different and even opposed positions. The *I* has the capacity to imaginatively endow each position with a voice so that dialogical relations between positions can be established. The voices function like interacting characters in a story. Once a character is set in motion in a story, the character takes on a life of its own and thus assumes a certain narrative necessity. Each character has a story to tell about experiences from its own stance. As different voices these characters exchange information about their respective *Mes* and their worlds, resulting in a complex, narratively structured self (1992, p. 28 – 29).

The vision they propose is one which seems to take into account both the diversity of psychological phenomenon, as well as the possibility, though not the necessity, of unity. Their vision is not a revolutionary one, as is evident from the preceding discussion. It does however articulate, or differentiate more clearly, the notion of *self* as *dialogical*. Jung (1928) spoke of the ego as being continually constellated through dialogue between “instincts” (as an

expression of the collective unconscious) and the demands of the world (as an expression of consciousness). He wrote of the *transcendent function* as being a process arising out of a constant dialogue between conscious and unconscious, both between these worlds, and within each of them. The processes by which *self*-realisation occurs he also spoke about as a complex interaction between forms of archetypal expression, the requirements of the outer world, and a mediating, ever changing ego. Jung's tendency was, however, to emphasis wholeness at the expense of diversity. A unitary self remained in ascendance. The work of post-Jungian theorists, and the Narrative theorists, as referred to above, does much to democratise our vision of psychological processes.

There are a number of factors common to many of these responses to and developments of Jung's notion of individuation and the *self*. The first is a moving away from one-sided notions of *integration*, *wholeness*, and *cohesion* in relation to the archetypal *self*. As a process, their thinking does, however, remain essentially Jungian in this regard. They seem to be expressing the compensatory nature of the psyche, asking for the expression and development of the unarticulated *shadow* side of *self*: that which does not integrate, is not whole; that which expresses diversity rather than unity. Jung gave expression to the one aspect of psyche's nature. Many of the post-Jungians are arguing for its unconscious counterpart to find expression. The danger, as with any counter-move, as with any pendulum swing, is that the "other" side be again overdeveloped, as the expense of what came before.

Another factor evident in the way in which *self* is being thought of, is the emphasis on the *dialogical* processes by which it/ they constellate/s it/themsel(f)ves. *Self* is being perceived as a dynamic multiplicitous process through which that which we call *self* continually emerges and co-creates itself.

It would appear that Samuels (1989) synchronous model provides an important basis on which to locate the notion of wholeness as reflecting an urge toward unity *and* diversity. It seems to create the "potential space" in which many ideas, theories, hypotheses, as a multiplicity of voices can co-exist, not as "either/ors" but as "ands". As Samuels (1989, p. 36) writes,

The more comfortable we feel with a synchronous model, the better chance there is using a causal-deterministic one in tandem . . . Then an inner dialogue is constellated, allowing movement right across the board.

Viewing the nature of the synchronous model from the perspective of Jung's work, and that of the other theorists mentioned, three features become evident. Firstly, the model seems to become a metaphor in describing the processes of the *self* and of "self-realisation". Secondly, it seems to express Jung's vision of the *transcendent function*. And thirdly, the model seems to embody Jung's alchemical metaphor.

As a metaphor for the *self*, and an embodiment of the *transcendent function*, the synchronous model seems to describe a process of placing disparate elements together, allowing and tolerating the constellation of multiple dialogues within that space, and then patiently waiting on and being receptive to new meanings potentially created, or emergent. It is a space in which meanings need not be forced, or prematurely foreclosed upon in favour of cultural convention or deep structure. Each meaning or line of thought is awarded space in which to express itself.

The synchronous model becomes a useful context in which to explore psychological theory, while at the same time providing a metaphor for understanding the functioning of the psyche. In this sort of space Jung's ideas can develop independently of his personal psychology, each being in dialogue with the other. Rather than having to reject his work on account of its heterosexist and patriarchal foundations, it becomes a space in which these difficulties can be challenged, while holding on to many of his insights. His work can find further differentiation by being placed alongside that of Freud, or together with the Object Relations theories, the feminist writers, even the Cognitive therapies. The remarkable insights expressed by the many divergent theories in psychology can engage, not as an eclectic conglomerate, but as a dialogical multiplicitous process, in which each voice challenges the other to greater differentiation, yet simultaneously to greater diversity. Combining a vertically eternal and a horizontal continuous model, Jung's ideas become more clearly Jung's ideas, as do Freud's, as do those of Object Relations theorists or Cognitive Schools. And yet the dialogue between

them allows for something new to emerge, something neither Jung, nor Freud, nor feminist writers, nor the cognitive schools could articulate on their own. Taking the liberty of rewording Lopez-Pedraza's afore-mentioned insight, this process becomes: *the many express an ever constellating unity of the one without losing the possibilities of the many*. Drawing on Samuels' (1989) insight regarding archetypal expression, and the challenge to allow each form of archetypal mode of experience to exist also vertically, and eternally, with its own psychology or psychologies, seems most applicable to this emerging vision. Each theorist or theory expresses an archetypal mode of experiencing the world, and can be developed fully and legitimately in its own right. The ever-illusive essences (the archetypes) lie in the cracks *between* these archetypal expressions, expressing both diversity (there are many archetypes) and unity (divergent forms of archetypal experience *together* are able to express an archetype). The theorists in this model become, as *liminal* phenomena, sites of resistance, articulating and speaking for that which is not heard, that which is outside, and bringing it back in. A plural vision ensures the continual democratisation of psychological processes, and of psychological theory. It ensures that an autocratic individualist *self*, as a unitary monotheistic phenomenon, is located alongside the multiplicity of dialogical *selves*, this latter as an expression of a polytheistic phenomenon of diversity. Using the concept of *metaphor*, each becomes both subject and object to itself and to the other. Each are "real", and "not-real", simultaneously. Each challenges the other to further differentiate themselves, and at the same time to diversify.

What is being described here is, of course, both a vision for a realisation of psychology in its quest to understand and articulate the human psyche, and a vision of the *self*-realisation of the very subject of psychology's focus. Herein lies both the difficulty and strength of the synchronous model. The model is being created by the very thing (the archetypal *self*) it is being used to understand.

It is with an awareness of this paradox, and within a pluralistic vision of a dynamically unfolding dialogical *self* and body of psychological theory, each as an expression of a multiplicity of positions and processes, and in obvious dialogue with one another, that this study locates itself. Both the content of the preceding discussion, as well as the model in which it has been located, serves as the foundation for the section which now follows. James Fowler's

(1981) model of spiritual faith development is one which develops ideas regarding the processes of self-realisation. There are, as a result, many parallels with Jungian thought. However, as a continuous theory of development it has many problems. What follows now is an exploration of Fowler's work in the context of Jung's psychology of individuation. Fowler's (1981) faith development interview, developed in conjunction with his theory of faith development, will be used as the basis for collecting data for the study. This process will be described in more detail in Chapter Five.

3.3. James Fowler's Theory Of Faith Development

James Fowler's work on faith development (Fowler, 1981; Fowler, Nipkow and Schweitzer, 1991) has its foundations in the theology of Paul Tillich (1957) as well as in the psychology of Erik Erikson (1977), Jean Piaget (1977), and Lawrence Kohlberg (1969). Drawing on Erikson's (1977) *Psychosocial Stages of Development*, Piaget's *Stages of Cognitive Development* (1977), and Kohlberg's *Stages of Moral Development* (1969), and based on extensive in-depth interviews, he presents a stage theory of *faith* development.

In Chapter Two, Fowler's (1981) definition of faith was presented. Using Tillich's (1957) notion of faith being equated with what is of *ultimate concern* to the life of an individual or community, something which is not restricted by claimed belief in a creed or set of doctrinal propositions, Fowler argues that faith is a central form of human action and construction (Fowler, 1981). It relates to the capacity to imbue lived experience with *meaning*, which, Fowler asserts, is universal to human beings. The end goal, in the processes of faith development, is "individuation" (Fowler, 1981, p. 274). Similarities with Jung's psychology are evident. Jung's assertion that "the spiritual appears in the psyche also as an instinct, indeed as a real passion, as a 'consuming fire'" (1928, p. 108) was noted earlier. The "religious principle" is inherent in Jung's concept of psychological growth (Singer, 1973). And for Jung, the real challenges of life were, in the end, challenges regarding spirituality, or "the religious outlook" (1963)

Among all my patient's in the second half of life – that is to say, over thirty-five – there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of

finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost what the living religions of every age have given their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook (Jung, 1932, p. 334).

In Chapter Two it was argued that, in the context of this study, Fowler's (1981) focus on faith, defined as "our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives" (1981, p.4) linked favourably with the manner in which spiritual development was being conceptualised, viz. "the coming into awareness of processes and patterns through which persons relate and give meaning to their lives". What Fowler's understanding of faith and the various definitions of spirituality reflected upon in the literature (Nelson, 1988; Nelson, 1994a; Nelson & Longfellow, 1994; Helminiak, 1996; Samuels, 1999) have in common is the conceptualisation of these notions as being *processes of meaning-creation*.

As mentioned earlier, Fowler draws from the stage theories of Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson, as foundational elements of his theory. A brief outline of their stages of development can be found in Appendix K. Fowler's stages of faith development will now be presented. Elements of Jungian theory will be introduced during this discussion, where links between Fowler's work and that of Jung become evident. The discussion will conclude with a commentary on Fowler's theory in the context of this study.

3.3.1. Stage 0 : Undifferentiated Faith

Fowler (1981; 1991) associates the dynamics of the first stage of faith development with the first eighteen months of an infant's life, and links much of the context of these processes with Piaget's Sensorimotor stage of cognitive development and Erikson's first psychosocial stage. This "stage" in development serves as a foundation for all that is to come. Feelings of trust, merged with fears of abandonment and experiences of inconsistencies, create a complex matrix by which the infant comes to orientate him or herself in the world. The successful resolution of the *trust versus mistrust* conflict becomes central to the establishment of a capacity for faith.

As Erikson (1977, p. 225) reflects: “Trust born of care is, in fact, the touchstone of the *actuality* of a given religion”.

The emergent strength of faith in this stage of its development, in Fowler’s (1981) terms, is “the fund of basic trust and the relational experience of mutuality with the one(s) providing primary love and care” (p. 121). The dangers, if conditions do not allow for a successful development of trust, include “an excessive narcissism” in which the experience and need to be “central” impedes the development of mutuality; or an inability to enter into any form of mutual relatedness with another person (ibid.). Transition to Stage 1 (*Intuitive-Projective Faith*) begins with the emergence of language and its convergence with thought (ibid.).

3.3.2. Stage 1 : Intuitive-Projective Faith

The *intuitive-projective* stage in Fowler’s model of faith development (linked to Piaget’s (1977) preoperational stage of cognitive development) is characterised by processes of engaging with the world in an imitative, magical manner, influenced strongly by examples, moods, actions, and stories of the visible faith or systems of meaning of significant authority figures. People in authority are experienced as having immense power, a power often experienced as “numinous” and “awe-inspiring”. Links between these aspects and the *adherences* (magical beliefs, animism, and artificialism) referred to by Piaget (1977) are evident. Recall too Jung’s (1964) description of the *animistic* (“everything has soul”) nature of the collective unconscious. The world, through these processes of meaning-creation is often experienced as magical, and wondrous, even perfect.

An emergent strength arising from this stage of faith development is that of *imagination*. This strength becomes the source of the capacity to represent experience in powerful and unifying images that also serve to orient one in the world (Fowler, 1981, p.133). Despite their magical, other-worldly qualities, these processes of meaning-creation allow one to make sense of the world, and at the same time develop a sense of autonomy within this world. The danger inherent during this stage is of becoming overwhelmed by destructive images, or of being exploited by images used to induce unquestioned moral or doctrinal conformity (ibid., p.134; Wulff, 1997, p.401).

Fowler (1981, p. 134) notes that the main factor precipitating a transition to the next stage of development is the emergence of concrete operational thinking. The magical world no longer holds up to reality, and forms of disillusionment set in. He therefore locates this form of meaning-creation largely within childhood.

3.3.3. Stage 2 : Mythic Literal

With the onset of *concrete operational thinking* the child's capacity for creating meaning in the world moves into what Fowler calls a *Mythic-Literal* level of faith development. Family and community, including religious traditions are a powerful context in which to both locate oneself and orientate oneself within the world. Roles, and the manner in which one is perceived by significant people or organisations, become most important. Jung's (1930) reflection that much of the first half of life is taken up by roles one fulfils (the *personae*), mostly at the expense of oneself, was discussed earlier. The more magical image-centred way of apprehending the world characteristic of the first stage of spiritual faith development now gives way to a more literal and linear (logical) way of making sense of the world. Stories and myths of family, church and community become an important means by which sense is made of the world (Fowler, 1981). This stage is marked by an increased accuracy in taking the perspective of others. This factor is also noted by Kohlberg (1969). The world is constructed on a notion of reciprocal fairness, and system of justice based upon reciprocity. As Wulff (1997, p.402) concludes: "This stage is limited by its anthropomorphic literalism and a morality narrowly conceived as concrete reciprocity. Together they may lead to self-righteous perfectionism or – if significant others mistreat or reject the child – a feeling of badness and unworthiness".

The factors Fowler (1989) notes which underlie the "transition" to the next stage of faith development include the emergence of formal operational (logical) thought processes, together with an increased capacity for mutual perspective taking. These emerging capacities result in increased clashes with previously, often literally, held meanings. The example he gives is the shift from a literal to an evolutionary perspective regarding the biblical creation story.

3.3.4. Stage 3 : Synthetic-Conventional Faith

This third stage in Fowler's model has as its context the radical changes in cognitive development, perspective taking, and identity during this time. Drawing from Piaget's *concrete operational* stage, Erikson's *identity versus role confusion* crises, and Kohlberg's *conventional* processes, Fowler develops his notion of the *Synthetic-Conventional* stage of faith development. The changes in cognitive functioning allow for a shift from anthropomorphic thinking to much more genuine interpersonal perspectives. Beliefs and values are more deeply felt, though tacitly held. Although the period is marked by what appears to be rebellion (towards authority and parents), it is a time of conforming to the expectations and judgments of significant others, usually the peer group. The ideologies of peer groups or political movements are taken on, often without the awareness of taking on such ideologies, or the ability to reflect in any meaningful way upon the ideology. Authority is located in either traditional authority roles (if experienced as personally meaningful), or in the consensus of a valued peer group. The emergent capacity during this stage is the ability to form a personal myth or story about one's life, incorporating one's past and an anticipated future in an increasingly unified whole. Potentially at risk during this time is the growing sense of autonomy, which might be undermined by internalised negative expectations and evaluations of others. Interpersonal betrayals might also give rise to despair about an ultimate personal reality.

Fowler (1981,p.173) outlines a number of factors which are likely to contribute to a breakdown of synthetic-conventional processes, all of which then serve as a transition to the next stage. These include serious clashes with valued authority sources; marked changes in policy or practice previously deemed sacred and unbreachable (Fowler gives as example the Catholic Church's decision to change the language of the mass from Latin to the vernacular, resulting in clashes with orthodoxy); and encounters with experiences or perspectives that challenge one's beliefs and values, leading to critical reflection on how one's beliefs were originally formed, and to an awareness of how 'relative' they are to one's own group or background (p. 173).

3.3.5. Stage 4 : Individuative-Reflective Faith

Individuative-Reflective Faith, according to Fowler (1981) is characterised by realising the relativity of one's inherited world-view, and abandoning reliance on external authority. The

responsibility increasingly is left to the individual to make his or her own decision as to how to negotiate contradictions. These tensions include individuality versus being defined by group membership; subjectivity and the power of one's feelings versus objectivity and the requirement for critical reflection; self-fulfilment and self-actualisation versus being of service to others; and the question of being committed to the relative versus struggle with the possibility of an absolute or universal. These are some of the struggles characteristic of young adulthood also described by Erikson (1977). Fowler refers to this stage as a "demythologising" stage, reflecting the movement or translation of symbols and stories into conceptual and personalised meanings. An increased capacity for perspective taking allows for a process of "looking at oneself from the outside". Its strengths therefore include the capacity for critical reflection, particularly on the tension between identity and ideology. The dangers lie in an overconfidence in one's capacity for conscious reflection and the temptation to assimilate others' perspectives, including reality, into one's own, still limited world-view (Fowler, 1981, p. 182; Wulff, 1997, p.403). Evident in this stage are links with Jung's (1928) notion of the struggles between the socially constructed *persona*, as reflected in the tension between individual and group membership.

The factors which often initiate movement from this stage into the next include experiences of what Fowler (1981, p. 183) calls "anarchic and disturbing inner voices" (challenges from *shadow* or *anima/animus*, in Jungian terms). These may take the form of images from the past, images from a 'deeper *self*', or a growing sense of sterility and flatness in meanings and belief systems currently held. Stories, symbols, myths, and paradoxes from one's past, or from other as yet unexplored traditions (cultural, religious or otherwise) might also disturb the ordered manner in which meanings in life might have been constructed (p. 183).

3.3.6. Stage 5 : Conjunctive Faith

Unusual before midlife, Fowler (1981) notes, movement into Stage 5 of Faith Development or *Conjunctive Faith* is characterised by the realisation that one's belief systems are unsatisfactory, and unable to take into account a growing awareness of the complexity of self or life. Life experiences and deeper experiences of the self guide the individual into

questioning the structures they have created for themselves. Much of what one's life has been about up to this point is challenged, reworked and reclaimed.

This stage develops what Fowler, (borrowing from Ricoeur), calls a "second naïveté" in which "symbolic power is reunited with conceptual meanings". This marks a return to mythical, even magical experiences within oneself and one's life, now experienced, not as literal, but as simultaneously "real" and "not-real". "Symbol and story, metaphor and myth (from one's own traditions as well as others') are newly appreciated as vehicles for expressing truth" (Fowler, 1991, p. 25). The experience is often one of moving deeper into oneself, particularly of becoming more aware of the social constructs by which one has lived and defined one's life.

The individual is increasingly challenged by paradox and the idea that truth lies in contradictions. Fowler (ibid.) writes: "The embrace of polarities in one's life, an alertness to paradox, and the need for multiple interpretations of reality mark this stage". Developing an awareness that this is a relativistic world, the individual is increasingly able, even while remaining in her own context, to expose herself to that which is "other", that which is not part of his or her own life experience. In this sense the individual is increasingly freed from the confines of class, creed or nation, and is thus able to focus his or her energies on developing that which is more universal in him/herself and those around him or her. The emergent strength of this stage is what Fowler (1981, p. 198) calls *ironic imagination*, which refers to the capacity to become powerfully engaged in symbolic expressions, both one's own, and those of others, while still recognising their relative inadequacy in expressing a more transcendent reality. The danger inherent in this stage is becoming paralysed by irresolvable paradoxes and contradictions, leading to a state of disunity and "cosmic homelessness and loneliness" (Fowler, 1981, p. 198; Wulff, 1997, p. 403).

The links between this stage (which also, in Fowler's terms, begins in midlife) and Jung's (1928) notion of individuation are most evident. Jung's reflection, that the deeper processes of individuation usually begin between the ages of thirty-five and forty, was noted earlier. Evident in this stage is the appearance of "dark murmurings" (in Jung's terms, promptings from the archetypal *shadow*, *anima/animus*) challenging the *persona*. The notion of an availability to

“other” Fowler writes of also suggests a capacity to tolerate increasingly, archetypal expressions from *shadow*, or *anima/animus*.

Furthermore, Fowler’s descriptions of the need to tolerate paradox, as well as to withstand contradictions, point to Jung’s notion of the *transcendent function*, (to Winnicott’s (1974) notion of *potential space*), and to the pluralistic notion of *metaphor* (“ironic imagination”). Moreover, Fowler’s stage suggests a capacity to withstand the paradoxical space (in which things are both “real” and “not-real”. It is this space, according to Jung (1957), Winnicott (1974), and Samuels (1989), which is most conducive to psychological and spiritual change.

Fowler (1981) does not conclude his discussion of this particular stage by pointing to factors which lead to a transition to the next stage. “Transition” to the next stage (as “radical actualisation” (p. 198)), he reflects, is rare.

3.3.7 Universalising Faith

Fowler’s (1981) final stage is one which he struggles to articulate. He uses no interview material in his discussion, but instead draws from the lives of those few whom he feels have reached this stage of development. These include Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mother Theresa. Fowler notes two tendencies, already evident in previous stages, which become fully realised during this stage: firstly, the *decentration from self*, which implies a moving beyond that which is oneself, thus embodying that which is more universal, more transcendent; and secondly, the *emptying of self*, through the radical kind of detachment which follows from the former process. The dangers inherent in this stage is a kind of martyrdom, sometimes resulting in their premature death at the hands of those who seem most threatened by the universalising vision embodied by the individual (Fowler, 1981; Wulff, 1997, p.403).

Having now outlined Fowler’s six stages of faith development, mention will be made of the way he conceptualises the *process* of development, i.e., how the stages might be linked. Thereafter, a commentary will follow, looking at some of the criticisms of Fowler’s model. This section will conclude with a proposal for the use of his model within a much broader conceptual framework than the one embraced by him.

3.3.8. The Process Of Development

Fowler (1981; Fowler, 1991) uses the graphic image of a spiral to describe the processes of *transition*, *regression*, and *conversion* which link each stage with the next. According to Fowler (1981, p.274) each stage marks the rise of a new set of strengths or potentials. These enhance and recontextualise previous strengths without negating or supplanting them. Certain issues will re-emerge at each successive stage, although at different levels of complexity – hence the image of a spiral which moves back on itself. Drawing strongly from traditions of depth psychology, Fowler believes that the movement through the stages is a naturally *forward* moving, purposive one, leading towards “individuation” or greater “wholeness”.

Fowler emphasises that the transitions from one stage to the next are often protracted, painful and dislocating. These times of *transition*, which he argues are age and stage specific (“each stage has its proper time of ascendancy”), often result in *regressions* (or *recapitulations*) to much earlier levels of ego functioning, mostly in order to rework and reconstitute aspects of ego functioning that have not yet been developed fully. The resulting movement often results in structural shifts in the person’s world view, with significant changes in both the content and structures of the life-stories that the individual now tells about his or her life. Fowler uses the religious term *conversion* to describe this process of change (1981, p. 281).

3.3.8 Commentary

James Fowler’s work has been largely well received and extensively reviewed (Wulff, 1997; Wilbur, 2000). He is recognised as having brought theology closer to the realm of contemporary human experience (Parks, 1991). Parks identifies a number of ways in which she believes Fowler has achieved this. She reflects that his theories have provided us with a way of speaking about spirituality and faith development in ways that hold both religious and secular symbols, stories and practice without foreclosing the conversation about “ultimate values and commitments within a pluralistic world” (p.102). Secondly, she notes that his work manifests a conviction that faith and spiritual development can undergo many changes and yet still retain its essential integrity. Finally, she reflects that he situates the whole issue of faith at the interface between the individual and the community. In all these senses, it might be argued that

he situates what could be a potentially conservative developmental theory within a pluralistic paradigm, thus obviating the danger, a danger which many developmental theories do not heed, of foreclosing on himself and rendering his theory obsolete. A further important contribution noted in the literature is that Fowler draws together the realms of psychology and theology in a way which enhances the dimensions of both (Wulff, 1997; Wilbur, 2000). He does not use one to explain the other, but instead allows each to illuminate and augment its counterpart.

A number of criticisms have been levelled at Fowler's work (Conn, 1986; Meisner, 1987). The conceptual subtleties and very broadly conceived empiricism have been of concern to the empiricists. The themes of relativism and universalism are obviously disturbing to many post-structuralist theorists (Wulff, 1997). Conn (1986) and Meisner (1987) express concern about the strong cognitive emphasis and neglect of the role played by affect in faith development. Meisner does, however, conclude by emphasising the importance of Fowler's contribution to the human experience of faith and spirituality (ibid.). Fowler's definition of faith is criticised for being too broad, too over-inclusive. "There is something in this definition of faith to offend everyone" (Cox, 1991, in Parks, 1991). Parks, however, suggests that the challenge is possibly to surrender or modify former meanings to accommodate much broader meanings of the term faith.

The most consistent criticism of Fowler's work is levelled at his notion of *Universalising Faith* (Stage 6) (Parks, 1991; Moran, 1991; Wulff, 1997; Wilbur, 2000). All previous stages are rooted in empirical research methodology, while the last stage is derived exclusively from the biographies of people whom Fowler feels have reached this particular level of development. As Parks (1991) points out, it is possible that by articulating this final stage Fowler has foreclosed on himself. He describes something which he feels intuitively is there, but quite possibly far too prematurely tries to operationalise it. But, as Parks notes further, it is incumbent on a theorist to articulate his or her vision. In this sense it might have been sufficient for Fowler to describe where he thought his theory was leading, without categorising it as *Universalising Faith*. A number of other points of concern are also noted by Parks (1991). The final stage is dominated by Judaeo-Christian language and imagery. With the exception of Mother Theresa all the people used to describe the features of this stage are male and dead before their time,

and, with the exception of Mahatma Ghandi, all come from Western Christian traditions. Hoehn (1983) refers to Stage 6 as “antipluralistic and condescending” and “too highly shaped by the lifeworld of the theorist”.

Fowler, in a more recent publication (1991) does concede to the criticisms regarding Stage 6, and has suggested a far more thorough exploration of this last stage. He suggests an extensive examination of implicit and explicit images of what he calls “most developed faith” in the texts and practices of the world’s great religious traditions. Furthermore, he suggests extensive interview research with persons from a variety of religious, ethnic, cultural, ideological and national backgrounds, nominated by “thoughtful and knowledgeable others” as having an extremely developed and mature faith (p. 36). Difficulties in defining faith would pose a problem in this regard, ensuring that the “thoughtful and knowledgeable others” consulted shared a common meaning for this construct. His suggestions for furthering the exploration into this final stage do, however, seem valid.

As some of the literature suggests (Parks, 1991; Wulff, 1997; Wilbur, 2000), Fowler’s (1981) theory of faith development has potential to serve as an important bridge between theology and psychology, providing a more detailed psychological account of some of the processes by which people relate to their worlds, and constellate meaning. However, many of the criticisms levelled at Jung can similarly be levelled at Fowler’s work. The ethnocentric, monotheistic, singularly hierarchical nature of his vision significantly limits his theory. Hoehn’s (1983) criticism of Fowler’s sixth stage being “antipluralistic and condescending” might well be applied to his entire theory.

Fowler (1981) claims that his theory should not be reduced to that of Piaget (1977), Kohlberg (1969) or Erikson (1977). A number of factors, however, suggests that he himself reduces his work to their theories. It is most evident, that the “transitions” between the first three stages are entirely based on shifts in cognitive development. By implication, the use of meaning-creation processes described in the first three stages (*undifferentiated*, *intuitive-projective*, and *mythic-literal*) are “childish” and “immature”, and based in insufficiently developed cognitive structures.

While using developmental theory to enhance and develop his ideas, Fowler's final descriptions of each faith process do not separate the faith processes from the childhood context, or from psychological developmental theory. He speaks of these processes using phrases such as "the *child* is continually encountering novelties" (p. 133), "the *child's* intuitive understanding" (p. 134) or "this is the faith stage of the school *child*" (p. 149) (emphasis added). If "each stage has the potential for wholeness, grace, and integrity and for strengths sufficient for either life's blows or blessings" (p. 274), it seems condescending to refer to the use of the processes of meaning-creation evident in these first "stages" as pertaining to children. That these processes might, and probably do, describe the development of many Western Christian people from infancy, through childhood, into adulthood is very likely. However, to argue that each process remains stage and age specific seems to detract from its value. Fowler (p. 274) himself makes the point that processes in each stage "are returned" to at later points in life, to be further enhanced and developed. He misses the opportunity to develop this insight. Seemingly blinded by his insistence on the hierarchical, linear, and continuous nature of development, he does not, as he claims, allow each stage to either contain or develop the potential "for wholeness, grace, and integrity". That he should end his description of each stage, excepting the last two, with a commentary on what factors prompt the transition into the next stage clearly reflects this. The implication is that each stage is there simply to be "grown out of".

The way in which Fowler conceptualises his theory seems to detract from much of its obvious value. He locates it firmly within a linear, hierarchical, monotheistic model of development, implying, despite his arguments to the contrary, that "higher is better" and "lower is immature".

The two major difficulties in his theory seem then to relate to its *hierarchical* and *continuous* nature. Each of these factors will now be explored, looking at other ways in which Fowler's theory may be conceptualised which might illuminate its insights.

Samuels (1989) makes the distinction between what he terms *preconceived* hierarchies, and *ad hoc* hierarchies. He does not define the former except in contrast to the latter, where an *ad hoc* hierarchy “is capable of seeing itself as one version among many possible versions” (p.13). Samuels does not dispute the need for, and experience of, structure in the human psyche. His concern is regarding whether the “form of the structure is necessarily the same at all times”. Feminist literary critic, Annette Kolodny, who argues, like Samuels, in favour of pluralism, stresses that it is not necessary to abandon the quest for patterns and structure. “What we give up is simply the arrogance of claiming that our work is either exhaustive or definitive” (quoted in Kulkarni, 1997, p. 35). Kolodny calls for what she terms “a playful pluralism”, in which one is “responsive to the possibilities [of structure] . . . but captive to none” (ibid.).

It is not clear why Samuels makes a distinction between two types of hierarchy. The distinctions seem to be purely semantic, and rather arbitrary. For he gets to the heart of the matter when he then goes on to write: “My intent is to work out an *attitude* to developmental psychology rather than to attempt a new developmental theory” (1989, p. 15). That there are hierarchies, preconceived or otherwise, is clearly not the issue. The inherent problem, with any hierarchy, is the way we think about it, or our attitude towards it.

The concept of metaphor, and its place at the heart of pluralism, seems to provide a means by which hierarchies can be conceptualised. Its capacity to “hold the tension between the one and the many”, between unity (developmental theory, and hierarchy) and diversity (multiplicity of meanings and experiences) is a quality particularly central to its functioning. As Kulkarni (1997, p.34) concludes in her review of pluralism,

To engage in metaphorical work then is to acknowledge that there is no need even to try to get at a unitary “truth” or to “prove” that one meaning is more “true” than another. We simply arrive at differing understandings.

If we think of this process by which we arrive at “different understandings”, it becomes evident that it is indeed Fowler’s intention to describe the very processes by which we arrive at these understandings. He describes *faith* as “ways of knowing and interpreting the world”. His

project then is to document and describe these understandings by which we orientate ourselves in our worlds. He is documenting the *archaeology of metaphor*. In this sense, Fowler's work has considerable potential to help describe diversity. The danger inherent in his work is that this meaning-creation process is reified by hierarchy, prescribing to people their diversity, telling them what the "best" or "more appropriate" ways are to go about creating meaning or engaging with their lives.

The second danger noted in Fowler's work is what appears as an overinvestment in the continuity of development. He insists on a relatively linear, forward moving process of evolution. His concept of continuity is a sophisticated one, drawing on a notion of *spiralling* to describe the integration of the same elements at ever higher levels of meaning. However, that the development should be "going somewhere" is implicit in his theory.

Samuels' (1989) suggestion to look at development "vertically" and "eternally" might be a more useful way to think of Fowler's stages. What Samuels envisages is the idea that each developmental phase is present all the time, *in potentia*. Each has a vast richness, and considerable application for orientating oneself in the world. Furthermore, he suggests that we do indeed make use of all the processes, in some form, all the time. Some are simply more pronounced than others, often as a result of particular circumstances, either external or internal. He is suggesting that particular conditions fuel the development of dormant potentials. They do not have to arise sequentially (although they may). That cognitive development happens largely sequentially does not mean that other forms of development which might have a metaphoric resonance with the processes of cognitive development need follow in the same order. Ontogeny does not have literally to recapitulate phylogeny for the metaphor of ontogenesis to be a useful one in our understanding of the processes by which we orientate ourselves as individuals as the world. Once the biological development is complete, each facility is available, *in potentia*. Other circumstances, rather than innate, archetypal conditions, are able to bring out the potential in each phase or stage in psychological or spiritual growth. In the vision Samuels (1989) asserts, there need be no reason to "move on". Development becomes a process of enhancing potentials, on whatever level, either horizontally, or vertically, either temporarily or eternally, should the person so choose, and/or should conditions (internal

and/or external) so require. It need not happen in any order, nor go in any direction. If Fowler's (1981) model of faith development is located within the realm of Samuels' synchronous model of development, which is a model located at the interface between literal and metaphoric descriptions, a model therefore in which theories of continuity and discontinuity coexist, it becomes less elitist and less elevationist. It also becomes more likely that the various modes and processes by which we orientate ourselves in the world are taken in the context of their full potential, and not in terms of what they ought to be developing into.

As Samuels (1989) emphasises, we each have the capacity to orientate ourselves in the world using processes and modes of considerable diversity. Fowler's (1981) model gives us some important clues regarding what these processes are. His theory of how these processes come about is, however, too reductive and too prescriptive. He organises the processes in such a way as to tell a compelling story. However, in the end he seems to become enchanted by his own story, and takes it too literally.

In this study, Fowler's (1981) model of faith development will be used in the context of the synchronous model proposed by Samuels (1989). Each "stage" is viewed as describing some of the processes of meaning-creation by which we orientate ourselves and engage in the world. People have access to all of these processes, and each can be used, in any combination, as a means by which to engage with and experience the world. Experiences, either internal psychological experiences, or outer socially-based experiences, enhance and challenge the development of these processes. No one process "causes" another, nor does it need to grow out of another. That this may sometimes occur does not prescribe it. Each process of meaning-creation is able to engage with the other, thereby enhancing the other's meaning. "All continue to grow and coexist" (*ibid.*, p. 23).

3.4 Summary And Conclusions

This chapter has explored the notions of spirituality and spiritual growth as they pertain to Jung's concept of individuation. His theory of the collective unconscious was outlined, followed by a discussion of the nature of its contents, the archetypes. The processes by which individuation evolves were then explored. The nature of ego consciousness was discussed,

looking first at the links between the ego and the archetypal *persona*. The influences of the archetypal *shadow*, and the *anima/animus* were explored, particularly in relation to their capacity to challenge and destabilise the ego's relationship with the *persona*. These processes were then discussed in relation to the notion of the archetypal *self*, as an expression of, in Jung's terms, the psyche's inherent tendency to create and express a patterned meaning. The processes by which change is provoked within the psyche were discussed, with particular reference to the *transcendent function*. Links were made with this concept and Winnicott's concept of *potential space*. Criticisms of Jung's theory of individuation were explored, noting particularly his monotheistic notion of the self, and his overall concern with wholeness and integration. A *synchronous* model was proposed in which Jung's particular vision of individuation could become one process among many by which the psyche realises itself.

Fowler's model of faith development, as a theory outlining the processes by which individuation takes place, was then discussed. As for Jung, the goal of Fowler's notion of faith development is individuation. Similarities between Jung's psychology and Fowler's theory were noted. The continuous nature of Fowler's theory was criticised, and an alternative, pluralistic model in which to locate his work was proposed. Within Samuels' (1989) synchronous model, each "stage" was viewed as describing *processes* of meaning-creation. It was emphasised that all individuals have access to these processes, and each can be used, in any combination, as a means by which to engage with and experience the world.

The next chapter will explore the relationship between spirituality, as embodied by the individuation process, and homoerotic sexuality, looking particularly at the role homoeroticism plays in representing a number of the processes by which psychological and spiritual growth takes place.

CHAPTER 4

ASPECTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOMOEROTIC SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY

We live in a relational world that institutions have considerably impoverished. Society and the institutions which frame it have limited the possibility of relationships because a rich relational world would be very complex to manage. . . In effect, we live in a legal, social, and institutional world where the only relations possible are extremely few, extremely simplified, and extremely poor.

Michel Foucault

4.1. Introduction

On a foundation of Jungian and post-Jungian thought regarding spirituality and individuation, the current chapter sees the introduction of homoerotic sexuality, and an exploration of its relationship with spirituality. The focus of the study is on the psychological role of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth of priests. Questions this chapter will attempt to explore relate to the place homoeroticism has had in spirituality through the course of history, and the role it might serve in the context of spirituality.

Much of what has been written about homoerotic sexuality in relation to spirituality and individuation has been written from the perspectives of gay and lesbian identity (Kulkarni, 1997). It is not easy, in the context of constructs such as “homosexual” and “heterosexual”, colonised and reified by science, to return anew to homoerotic sexuality and ask questions about it outside the patriarchal heterosexist discourse which insists on descriptions of gender (two) and sexual orientation (two, possibly three). As Foucault (1978) reflects, our patterns of relating are severely restricted by our current discourse regarding human sexuality.

The expression of homoeroticism through gay and lesbian identity is a recent phenomenon (Downing, 1989). Trapped between a heterosexist society (which defines gender roles and prescribes forms of sexual orientation), essentialism (“being gay is genetic”) (leVay, 1996)

and constructionism (“being gay is a recent construction of sexuality”) (Greenberg, 1988), homoeroticism and forms of expression available to it have been severely limited (Foucault, 1978). There is little space for diversity of expression. Homoerotic feelings, when felt, are quickly reified, either by fear (“I must be gay”), or as a predetermined way of being in the world (together with a sexualised life-style and personality profile) (Boswell, 1980).

In this chapter, homoerotic sexuality will be explored in the context of spirituality. The historical overview, focussing extensively on periods of history prior to the twentieth century, is likely to provide a more diverse overview of homoeroticism and its expression within spirituality than might be evident in the twentieth century. This is by virtue of the fact that it was only in the twentieth century that human sexuality became reified into two (maybe three) distinct orientations (Boswell, 1997). This is not to valorise experiences of human sexuality prior to the twentieth century. Gender roles have restricted the lives of many people throughout the history of civilization (Boswell, 1980). Indeed it will be argued that people embodying homoerotic sexualities have served to challenge the dominant gendered discourse.

The discussion will begin with an introduction to human sexuality, with particular reference to Freud and Jung.

4.2. Some Reflections On Sexuality And Its Foundations

Freud’s ambivalence regarding his own sexuality is evident in correspondence between himself and various men who played influential roles in his life (Masson, 1985). Christine Downing, in her book *Myths and Mysteries of Same-Sex Love* (1989), gives a powerful account of the personal dimension of Freud’s life in relation to his sexuality. There is no scope to explore this aspect in any detail, except to say that Freud’s life was powerfully influenced by the experience of homoerotic feelings. Downing (1989, p. 13) writes: “I have also been struck by how when Freud writes of the importance of homoerotic impulses in human life, he writes of *us* not *them*” (emphasis in original). All his case studies explored a theme of “homosexuality” in one way or another (Tacey, 1994). Freud explored the idea that, as humans, we are all psychically bisexual. He referred to this as “the constitutional bisexuality of all human beings” (Freud, 1959, p. 38). Freud believed that the concepts of “heterosexual” and “homosexual”

were largely social constructions, and that social conditioning set us up to express our dual sexual nature (both homo- and hetero-erotic) in limited, mostly culturally conditioned ways (Downing, 1989). Freud was against the idea that “homosexuals” were a special group of people constituting another gender.

Psychoanalytic research is most decidedly opposed to any attempt at separating off homosexuals from the rest of mankind as a group of a special character. By studying sexual excitations other than those that are manifestly displayed, it has found that all human beings are capable of making a homosexual object-choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious (Freud, 1953, p. 145n).

Jung’s (1936a) view differs significantly from that of Freud’s (1953). He does not believe, as Freud does, that there are two sexual currents inherent in psychical functioning. He assumes “the transformability” or “the mutability” of the sexual impulse, suggesting that the same energy can be directed either towards same-sex or contrasexual other. Jung understood sexual feelings as representing an impulse towards wholeness, a wholeness largely represented by the androgyne, which for Jung was an image of integration of “masculine” and “feminine” ways of being. The distinction between the archetypal hermaphrodite and the image of the androgyne was discussed in Chapter Three. As explored in the chapter, one of Jung’s (1936a) views of “homosexuality” was that it was an expression of the undifferentiated archetypal hermaphrodite as a largely *misguided* attempt to actualise androgyny (an image of archetypal wholeness). He argued that “the homosexual” lives out on a literal level, what is really a symbolic, spiritual attempt to actualise wholeness (*ibid.*). Jung’s belief was that, as long as the “homosexual” literalised his feeling (by having homosexual relationships), he would remain undifferentiated, and therefore largely unconscious. He described “homosexuals” as being “suspended or potential males” (1975, p. 16), who, only by separating more effectively from an overidentification with the “feminine”, thereby identifying with the inner “masculine” aspect, could realise “normal” relationships (with women) in the world, and thereby attain wholeness. It is in this sense, as Downing (1989, p. 115) reflects, that the *real* meaning of “homosexuality” for Jung, was a spiritual “longing to integrate the feminine and masculine in oneself, to escape from the narrow gender definition that cuts us off from half of our psychic potential”.

Robert Hopcke (1989) provides a most comprehensive account of Jungian thought regarding homoerotic sexuality. Although an important and extremely detailed study in itself, he seems, as Jung does, to be blinded by heterosexist assumptions regarding the notion of contrasexuality, particularly in relation to concepts such as “masculine” and “feminine”. Such a detailed study of causation (in gendered terms) as his exploration exhibits also bears witness to an investment in a heterosexist perspective which simultaneously demands explanations of that which is “other” in society. A feminist critique of both Jung’s and Hopcke’s (1989) work by Kulkarni (1997) and O’Conner and Ryan (1993) were discussed in Chapter Three.

Despite the difficulties inherent in Jung’s theories of homoerotic sexuality, his work is important, particularly in relation to this study. Much of Jung’s work was to focus on the spiritual aspect of sexuality, and to understand its “numinous” meaning (Jung, 1963). This dimension of Jung’s work will now be explored, concluding with a discussion of one of the few references to a “union of sames” evident in Jung’s alchemical studies (1955).

At the age of three or four, Jung (1963) had a dream, the earliest in his memory. The dream was of walking down a stone stairway into a dimly lit rectangular chamber, at the centre of which was a golden throne. On the throne (he only realised this much later), stood a large phallus.

Above the head was an aura of brightness. The thing did not move, yet I had the feeling that it might at any moment crawl off the throne like a worm and creep towards me. I was paralysed with terror (Jung, 1963, p. 27).

This dream was to haunt Jung for many years. The interpretation he offers of this phallus in his autobiography (ibid., p. 28)) is as “a subterranean God ‘not to be named’”. As a child, Jung instinctively associated the image with “the dark [aspect of the] Lord Jesus” (ibid., p. 27). “And such it remained throughout my youth, reappearing whenever anyone spoke too emphatically about Lord Jesus”.

This dream, and Jung's (1963) response to it, is mentioned to illustrate an early link Jung made between spirituality and sexuality. The relationship between these aspects of psychological life were to occupy much of his attention throughout much of his life. One of the reasons for Jung's continued emphasis on the spiritual aspect of sexuality is also be found in his relationship with Freud. As Downing (1989, p. 109) notes, "I am persuaded that Jung deliberately emphasises the *psychical* dimension of psychology in order to *balance* what he takes to be Freud's overemphasis on the body" (emphasis in original). It bears comment, although there is not the space to develop this any further, that both Jung and Freud served to complement each other's work. That this expresses the dynamics of the functioning of the psyche, and thus also an expression of an environment in which the *transcendent function* emerges, becomes self-evident. The conflict in their relationship, and the persistent tension between them (Kerr, 1994), reflects a context in which much of their work found expression and differentiation. In this sense they also come to represent, each in his own work, an expression of archetypal states. Samuels (1989) reflects:

We are in the realm of the gods of the mind; just like the ancient gods, each archetypal state of mind struggles for supremacy but cannot completely annihilate the others (Samuels, 1989, p. 29).

The function each served to challenge the other to further differentiation cannot be underestimated. As theorists such as Downing (1989) and Samuels (1989) suggest, it is no longer possible to view Jung's work separately from that of Freud's. This is particularly evident in the manner in which each wrote about sexuality.

Freud (1953) finds sexual meaning in many aspects of psychic life. Important to note in this regard is that his understanding of sexuality was by no means limited to genitality (Downing, 1989; Tacey, 1993). As Downing writes, "when Freud speaks of sexuality he means to include all sensual and affectional currents, all ways we experience bodily pleasure, all our intense emotional attachments (1989, p. 31). Jung, on the other hand, finds spiritual meaning in sexual images and actions. Downing (1989, p. 108) explains: "[Jung's] vector of interpretation is teleological rather than 'archaeological' – what something 'really means' is what it aims at,

what it becomes". The inherent teleological nature of psychic activity lies at the cornerstone of Jungian thought. In Chapter Three, the *purposive* nature of the psyche was described in the discussion regarding the functioning of the collective unconscious. Libidinal energy, from Jung's perspective, was undifferentiated psychic energy (1963). Sexual energy sought to express the psyche's yearnings towards growth and wholeness (Jung, 1963; Downing, 1989; Tacey, 1993).

It is this central aspect of Jung's work that marks an important moment in which sexuality is placed at the centre of our human spirituality. As Downing (1989, p. 110) notes, Jung's psychology is a psychology devoted to the "soul". Any strong feelings, most especially sexual, thus represent an urging towards the realisation and expression of the soul.

Thus for Jung, our sexual feelings are to be understood as really meaning our longing for inner wholeness and integration – as being about our embodied souls, not only our bodies" (ibid.).

Jung (1955) explains the distinction he makes between the soul and the spirit as follows. The soul, he writes, is "an organ of the spirit", and the body, "an instrument of the soul" (p. 471). "The soul stands between good and evil and has the 'option' of both. It animates the body . . . just as it is endowed with life by the spirit" (ibid.). The manner in which soul is linked directly to the body means that, in Jungian terms, sexual energy reflects a yearning for the full embodiment of the soul by the body.

In her exploration of Jung's theory on "homosexuality" Downing (1989) reflects on Jung's (1955) alchemical studies pertaining to the archetypal hermaphrodite. It is in this discussion that she (p. 116) draws our attention to the seldom referred to images of "like-with-like" in Jung's (1955) *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, in which he explores the manner in which the soul and the body more fully consummate their relatedness. In this exploration, Jung (ibid.) includes a sequence of pictures, showing two male figures (priest and king), first joined, then separated, and then again joined. He suggests that the series of pictures represent the dynamics of the relationship between the spiritual and more earthly aspects of "maleness". Jung (1955) offers

the following interpretation. The first illustration (inscribed with “*they make but one*”) represents a “maleness” which is differentiated (the priest wears white, the king, yellow), yet mutually dependent (they are conjoined, each with only one foot). The second illustration (“*what was hid may be revealed*”) represents the beginning of a process of differentiation. They are still joined, yet there is a recognition of a shared complementarity (the king has a blue robe, and a black foot, and the priest has a black robe and an blue foot). The third picture (“*after a very long time, and by putrefaction, calcinations, incineration, fixation, and coagulation the materials become solid*”) reflects the full recognition of their complementary yet separate nature (the figures are separate, each with two feet. The one figure wears a robe whose right half is blue and the left black, the other’s robe is black on the left, and blue on the right). This period in the processes of transformation is characterised by a state of *nigredo*, or “dark night of the soul” (Jung, 1955, p. 508). The fourth illustration (“this man worthily followed the art”) reflects their reunion, now with full consciousness of their complementary nature (the figures are joined again, each with one blue foot). There is a final picture, of a king standing with a queen. He still has only one foot: it is blue, tipped with black. Jung interprets this final picture as suggesting that, while “homosexuality” does reflect the important interconnectedness between spirituality and the body, it is but the basis for the further development into “heterosexual” union in which the contrasexual nature of the psyche finds its full expression and union. As Downing (1989) concludes, Jung, in the end, only imagines wholeness in its heterosexual form.

That post-Jungian theorists (Samuels, 1985; Hillman, 1991) have challenged Jung’s heterosexist imagery has already been explored in Chapter Three. Hillman’s (1991) image of the archetypal *puer* and *senex* as potentially representing a “union of sames” was explored (p. 221). Samuels’ (1985, p. 214) suggested that an ungendered archetypal *anima/animus* can equally speak “of the unexpected, of that which is ‘out of order’, which offends the prevailing order”. Jung’s (1928) own writings on the functioning of the *anima* as it guides the psyche into *self*-realisation draw from this image of “otherness”. As post-Jungian theorists (Samuels, 1989; Hillman, 1991; Kulkarni, 1997) argue, Jung’s gendered approach to psychological *self*-realisation is historically and culturally bound. Freed from its heterosexist context, Jung’s theory can become an important account of the manner in which the psyche, through many

means, strives to unite spirituality and sexuality (Downing, 1989). Homoerotic sexuality is just one such way.

The unrelated human being lacks wholeness, for he can achieve wholeness only through the soul, and the soul cannot exist without its other side, which is always found in a “You”. Wholeness is a combination of I and You (Jung, 1945, p. 244).

This dynamic constellation of “You” and an “I” as an image of wholeness can, as non-gendered terms, allow for another interpretation of the final illustration in the alchemical series. A summary of the process will be presented, concluding with an alternative to Jung’s (1955) “heterosexual” interpretation. The series begins with an undifferentiated merging of two images, priest (spirit) and king (body). The second picture reflects the development of a dichotomy between these aspects. An awareness of the “otherness” they represent for each other becomes evident. The third illustration reflects a further process of differentiation in which the figures part completely. There is also an increased recognition of the complementary nature of each other in this dichotomy. As Jung (1928) notes, elements need to separate in order to be more fully grasped by consciousness. Elsewhere (1955, p. 471) he writes:

In order to bring about their subsequent reunion, the mind (*mens*) must be separated from the body – which is the equivalent to “voluntary death” – for only separated things can unite.

The fourth picture embraces the complementary nature of the relationship fully, and a new level of consciousness arises in which both aspects, now more fully conscious, can be tolerated by ego consciousness. The fifth picture introduces “other” again, beginning another process of separation and return to an even wider consciousness. This image thus need not be the “ideal” (heterosexist) end, but simply an image of the return of “other”, always, after each integration, challenging the psyche to greater awareness of itself.

This first section of the chapter has briefly explored Freud’s and Jung’s reflections on the nature of human sexuality. As Downing (1989) reflects, their theories are complementary.

Freud (1953) recognises the instinctual in sexual, and Jung (1963) the spiritual. That there are links between spirituality and sexuality, and most particularly links between homoerotic sexuality and spirituality, is a theme explored by historians (Boswell, 1981; Eisler, 1995), anthropologists (Williams, 1986; Roscoe, 1993), theologians (Heyward, 1994; Lorde, 1994; Empereur, 1998; Nelson, 1988; Reuther, 1994; Stuart, 1995) and Jungian and post-Jungian theorists alike (Hopcke, 1989; Hopcke et. al., 1993). This theme will now be explored from a historical perspective, tracing the relationship between homoerotic sexuality and spirituality first within so-called traditional or non-Western cultures. After an overview of aspects of this history, a discussion will follow exploring functions homoeroticism may seem to serve within spirituality and individuation. Thereafter the history of the relationship between homoeroticism and the Christian Church will be traced. The chapter will conclude with a detailed discussion of teleological factors evident in the relationship between homoerotic sexuality and spirituality.

4.3. An Historical Overview Of The Relationship Between Sexuality And Spirituality

Paul Ricoeur (1967) notes three major stages in the understanding of sexuality and spirituality in the West. The first stage, at the dawn of history, is one where there appeared to be no separation between sexuality and spirituality. Sexuality was incorporated into the whole view of the cosmos through religious ritual, magic, and myth. With the rise of the world's major religions a split begins to develop, between spirit and body, between sex and spirit. Sacred became something transcendent, while a demythologised sexuality was limited to a specific part of life on earth : procreation within the institution of marriage. This reflects the second stage noted by Ricoeur (*ibid.*). He notes an emerging third period in which attempts at reuniting sexuality with the sacred are evident. He argues that, having learnt to understand the ways in which sexuality can be distorted and misused, and furthermore, now that depth psychology has provided a metaphor for understanding sex as a symbol, history is at a unique point at which the body/spirit duality can be healed.

The link between Ricoeur's (1967) observation, and Jung's (1955) discussion of the alchemical "like with like" image is striking. Through the alchemical images of two men, one a priest (representing spirituality) and the other a king (representing the corporeal realm), Jung describes the processes of undifferentiated wholeness, evolving, through separation and

differentiation, into a more conscious form of differentiated wholeness. The paradoxical nature of this last image is similarly striking. It represents both diversity and unity. Like the *transcendent function*, it represents the capacity to tolerate two seemingly opposing elements. Sex and spirit become two sides of the same coin. As Ricoeur suggests, it is a period representing the unique possibility of healing the body/spirit duality that has dominated Western thinking for centuries.

4.3.1. Traditional Cultures

It is not easy to explore with any certainty the manner in which earlier civilisations constructed their sexuality, most especially in relation to their spirituality (Conner, 1993). The problems inherent in studying previous or other cultures through our dominant modes of knowledge are not insignificant. Eisler, (1995), reflects on the common archaeological practice of writing about Neolithic and Early Bronze Age people as using sex in religious rites to control nature “superstitiously”, and “primitively”, thereby “magically” ensuring the fertility of crops.

As for such contemptuous labels as ‘primitive’ and ‘superstitious’, the fact is that sex *is* magical, not just in a superstitious sense, but in what we might in our time call a scientific sense. As these people observed, sex is necessary if life is to go on. So it was not so irrational of our prehistoric ancestors to view sex and birth as sacred manifestations of the mysterious life-and-pleasure-giving powers of the cosmos (Eisler, 1995, p. 77).

This discussion of sexuality in a spiritual context is introduced with Eisler’s (1995) point, because it reflects two major problems research confronts when dealing with these issues historically. The first is that of *ethnocentrism*, in which the histories and mythologies of others are viewed from the perspective of our own. It seems almost impossible for rationally driven patriarchal Western man to consider that his scientific perspective is but one of many mythologies the world has invented in order to create meaning. The second is that of *elevationism*, in which the rituals or behaviours of other cultures are romanticised, and idealised in such a way as to detract both from the reality of their experience, and the richness of our own.

A further problem that exists in the subtext of the exploration of homoeroticism within a spiritual context in other cultures is that, apart from anything else, it is often also a search for justification, a way of trying to prove that homoerotic sexuality is “good” and that anthropological evidence somehow “proves” this. In this context it simply becomes a defensive endeavour fuelled by heterosexism: a way of trying to tell the world that “being gay is really okay”. This does not mean that these explorations are not important. They often provide significant, non-pathological, models of homoerotic sexuality (Harvey, 1997). The dangers implicit in a defensive, elevationist or reductionist approach to these studies is that the richness of the culture being studied is lost, and at the same time, the complex richness in our own culture is missed. As with the dangers evident in the men’s movement (Wilbur, 2000), the retrospective process of trying to reclaim a past can sometimes prevent the possibility of embracing an entirely new, as yet unexplored future (Samuels, 1993). This being said, one of the struggles many gay men and lesbians have is the liminality or marginality often inherent in their experiences of their sexuality (Cotter, 1993; Empereur, 1998; Shallenberger, 1998). What highlights this tends to be the complete lack of a sense of history. As Boswell (1994, p. 16) reflects,

when the good times return, there is no mechanism to encourage steps to prevent a recurrence of oppression; no gay grandparents who remember the pogroms, no gay exile literature to remind the living of the fate of the dead, no liturgical commemorations of times of crisis and suffering. Relatively few gay people are aware of the great variety of positions in which time has placed their kind, and in previous societies almost none seem to have had such an awareness.

He goes on to point out that the extent and duration of prejudice against “gay” men and “lesbians” has resulted in considerable falsification of historical records, either through censoring of their histories, or in complete deletion of historical records. He concludes:

Accurate analysis of gay people in a historical context is so rare when formidable barriers oppose access to the sources for anyone not proficient in ancient and medieval languages (ibid., p. 21).

Conner et al (1998) reflect furthermore that gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people are without a history. It is for this reason that the recent profusion of research into the role of gay people in various cultural settings is very important. It is a process of reclaiming forgotten and often unknown histories (Duberman, Vicinus, & Chauncey, 1990).

With an awareness of the potential for reductionism, elevationism, or defensiveness, the roles played by men and women who expressed, in whatever form, homoerotic sexualities within their cultures, will now be explored.

Many authors, in the fields of psychology, anthropology, history, theology and archaeology have suggested that men and women who have embodied various forms of homoerotic sexualities have, through the course of history, been viewed by their cultures as embodying sacred qualities (Carpenter, 1914; Williams, 1986; Hopcke, 1989; Conner, 1993; Boswell, 1994; Boswell, 1994a; Some, 1994; Harvey, 1995; Conner et al, 1998; Shallenberger, 1998). Evidence concerning sexual acts, either hetero- or homoerotic amongst early humans is fragmentary, and evidence concerning relationships is even less available (Conner, 1993; Eisler, 1995). Most of what is presumed about these early people is surmised from ethnographic accounts of tribal groups (Eisler, 1995).

Several forms of homoerotic relating have been noted, including *transgenerational*, in which one partner was significantly younger than the other, and *egalitarian*, in which often childhood friends, becoming warriors, are perceived as socially similar. These erotic relationships were often formalised in ritual (Conner, 1993). Conner goes on to note that transgenerational relationships often occurred between a traditionally “masculine” male, and a male perceived as “gender variant, androgynous, effeminate, or of mixed, third, or alternate gender – a ‘not-man’, or ‘man-woman’” (ibid., p. 26).

At some point during the Palaeolithic period, it would seem that certain shamans came to be viewed as being people belonging to a third or alternate gender (Conner, 1993). Joseph Campbell (1983, in Conner, 1993, p. 26) describes these people as representing a “sphere of

spiritual power transcending the male-female polarity”. Conner goes on to note that these “gender-variant” (not fitting into any of the traditional roles prescribed for either men or women) shamans have found a place in many cultures. In Korea, between the period 1000 and 600 B.C.E. a group of shamans, the *paksu mudang*, have been described as gender-variant males who wore female clothing during rituals. Among Polynesians, gender-variant males, called *mahus*, played key roles in sacred dances and rituals (Williams, 1986). In Japan, evidence suggests that gender-variant shamans served as *miko*, or spiritual functionaries (becoming embodied by deities and spirits) (Conner, 1993). Anthropologist William Lebra describes a ceremony in Okinawa known as *winagu nati* (meaning ‘becoming a woman’), in which males dressed in women’s clothing, allowing them to enter into sacred sites and become shamans. These *yuta* are described as being very effeminate. “There are not many male *yuta*, and some of them seem like *wikiga-winagu*” (meaning gender-variant males engaging in homoerotic sexual acts) (in Conner, 1993, p. 27).

In his exploration Conner (ibid.) also notes that gender-variant shamans have often been marginalised by their communities. Referring to research by anthropologist Erik Jensen among the Iban Dayak of Borneo, he notes that these gender-variant shamans tended to be “set apart” from their communities. The relationship between these shamans and their communities was often a paradoxical one, in which they were both ridiculed, for their alleged weaknesses as men, and also admired for their skills as shamans. Anthropologist Hans Scharer also reflects on the ambivalent relationship between the Ngaju Dayak and their shamans, in which the shamans were at once revered and ridiculed (ibid.). Walter Williams (1986), an anthropologist who has conducted extensive studies of Native American cultures, notes, regarding the *berdaches*, that:

Since [they] were seen as possessed of unique ritual instructions secured directly from the spirit world, their conduct was often mysterious. Among the Hidatsas, berdaches surrounded themselves with many individual rules of conduct for people in contact with them. As with any outstanding shamans surrounded by similar kinds of rules, people tended to fear and respect the berdaches, and this fear made for a nervousness that was sometimes alleviated by joking about it. People’s ambivalent reactions were thus a reflection of the unique and special mysterious supernatural powers of the

berdache. Fear and respect is even more a theme in the Lakota culture. A Lakota shaman sums up the ambivalence by saying, “Winktes were both joked about and respected at the same time” (p. 41).

Conner (1993) notes another attribute, in addition to gender-variance, often associated with male shamans, viz., that of visual impairment. Both these qualities were believed to foster prophetic talent (p. 28).

The berdache of North America have been written about extensively, especially in relation to ideas concerning the links between spirituality and homoerotic sexuality (Carpenter, 1914; Williams 1986; Roscoe, 1988; Roscoe, 1991; Roscoe, 1993; Boswell, 1994a; Harvey, 1997). The berdache can be defined as:

a morphological male who does not fill a society's standard male's role, who has a non-masculine character. This type of person is often stereotyped as effeminate, but a more accurate characterisation is androgyny. Such a person has a clearly recognised and accepted social status, often based on a secure place in the tribal mythology. Berdaches have special ceremonial roles in many Native American religions, and important economic roles in their families. They will do at least some women's work, and mix together much of the behaviour, dress, and social roles of women and men. Berdaches gain social prestige by their spiritual, intellectual, or craftwork/artistic contributions, and by their reputation for hard work and generosity (Williams, 1986; p. 2).

As a result of their many skills, both domestic, and spiritual, berdaches were prized by men as spouses. Williams (1986) notes that men who took on berdache wives were viewed as being extremely fortunate.

The French Jesuit missionary Joseph Francois Lafitau, in 1724, wrote of these people, condemning them for acting like women. “They never marry”, he reflects. “They participate in all religious ceremonies, and this profession of an extraordinary life causes them to be regarded as people of a higher order, and above the common man” (in Williams, 1986, p. 17). French

explorer Jacques Marquette writes of his experience during his first voyage to America. “They are summoned to the councils, and nothing can be decided without their advice. Finally, through their profession of leading an Extraordinary life, they pass for Manitous – That is to say, for Spirits – or persons of consequence” (ibid.).

As Williams (1986) goes on to note, the emphasis of Native American religions is on the essential spiritual nature of the world (what Jung and Piaget referred to as *animism*). Furthermore, one of the basic tenets of the religion is a notion that everything in the universe is related. Everything that exists is related to something else, and thus has a counterpart: sky and earth, plant and animal, water and fire, man and woman. The polarity between Man and Woman is viewed, like the polarity between the sky and the earth, as being a fundamental polarity of human life. Each of the polarities has a mediator, the role of this mediator being to hold the polarities together. This is the role of the berdache: to act as mediator, qualified to do so because of an ability to combine elements of both genders. They are viewed, by their communities, as representing a third gender, being neither stereotypically male nor female.

Tragically, berdaches have largely been eradicated from North American culture. As Hopcke (1989) writes,

The response of European Christians, particularly the Spanish conquerors and French missionaries, was a mixture of shock, repulsion, and disgust, which fuelled their intention to wipe out such an “abomination” by means of the imposition of Christian rituals and European customs. For this reason, the tradition of the Native American crossdresser has over the past three hundred years been all but obliterated from the consciousness of Americans (p. 174).

The disgust expressed by missionaries for these “depraved” people is well documented (Conner, 1993; Harvey, 1997). Baptist missionary Isaac McCoy (1840, in Williams, 1986, p. 182) describes a meeting with a berdache:

One of these wretches was pointed out to me. He appeared to be about twenty five years of age, was tall, lean, and of a ghost-like appearance. His appearance was so disgusting, and the circumstances of the case so unpleasant, that I spoke not a word to him, and make few enquiries about him. He was said to be in a declining state of health, and certainly his death would not have been lamented.

Describing the impact of the missionaries on the *winktes* or berdache, a Lakota medicine man reflects:

When the people began to be influenced by the mission and the boarding schools, a lot of them forgot the traditional ways and the traditional medicine. Then they began to look down on the *winkte* and lose respect. The missionaries and the government agents said *winktes* were no good, and tried to get them to change their ways. Some did, and put on men's clothing. But others, rather than change, went out and hanged themselves. I remember that sad stories that were told about this (ibid., p. 182).

A Sioux traditionalist reports:

By the 1940s, after the Indians had been educated in white schools, or had been taken away in the army, they lost the traditions of respect for *winktes*. The missionaries condemned *winktes*, telling families that if something bad happened, it was because of their association with a *winkte*. They would not accept *winktes* into the cemetery, saying "their souls were lost." Missionaries had a lot of power on the reservation, so the *winktes* were ostracised by many of the Christianised Indians (ibid., p. 183).

4.3.1.1. Roles And Meanings within Traditional Cultures

In recent years, theorists have reflected on the meaning and role the berdaches served in their communities (Williams, 1986; Harvey, 1997; Roscoe, 1993; Roscoe, 1991; Hopcke, 1989; Boswell, 1994; Carpenter, 1914). One of the central features evident in Williams' (1986)

exploration is that, as representatives of a “third gender”, the berdaches are uniquely placed to act as mediators.

They serve a mediating function between women and men, precisely because their character is seen as distinct from either sex. They are not seen as men, yet they are not seen as women either. They occupy an alternative gender role that is a mixture of diverse elements (Williams, 1986, p. 2).

Williams (ibid.), however, goes on to explain that their mediatory role goes beyond mediating between the sexes.

Somewhere between the status of women and men, berdaches not only mediate between the sexes, but between the psychic and the physical – between the spirit and the flesh. Since they mix the characteristics of both men and women, they possess the vision of both. They have double vision, with the ability to see more clearly than a single gender perspective can provide. This is why they are often referred to as “seer”, one whose eyes can see beyond the blinders that restrict the average person. Viewing things from outside the usual perspective, they are able to achieve a creative and objective viewpoint that is seldom available to ordinary people. By the Indian view, someone who is different offers advantages to society precisely because she or he is freed from the restrictions of the usual. It is a different window from which to view the world (Williams, 1986, p. 41).

Hopcke (1989), drawing extensively from the research conducted by Williams (1986), suggests that the berdache reflects the image of an identification, not with the “feminine” (as Jung, (1936), suggests) but with the archetypal androgyne (as an image of the *differentiated self* (p. 176). As a result, Hopcke continues, “spiritual transformation goes hand in hand with the adoption of the way of the berdache” (ibid.). He refers to terms used to describe the berdache to substantiate this. Referring to Williams’ (1986) research, he notes that the Navajo word for the berdache is *nadle*, meaning “one who is transformed”. The Zuni word, *ihamana*, means

“mediating spirit”. The Omah word, *mexoga*, is a term meaning “instructed by the moon” (ibid.). Other terms refer to the “mixed-gender status” of the role. The Lakota term *winkte* means “would become woman”, while the Yuki *i-wa-musp* means “man-woman” (ibid.).

Hopcke (1989) reflects, drawing from Jungian theory, that the berdaches, by embodying the archetypal androgyne, carry the function of the archetypal *self* for the tribe. They symbolise and represent both “wholeness” and integration. It is this, he believes, that allows them to function as mediators (between opposites) and spiritual leaders within their communities.

Roscoe (1993) suggests that berdaches serve as “an enabling factor” in their culture, as both mediators, and catalysts for change. He, like Hopcke (1989), suggests that they are the expression of an archetype “whose most prominent characteristic is the ability to bridge cultural and psychological differences that are normally distinct – life/death, male/female, culture/nature” (1993, p. 113).

Edward Carpenter, a theologian, ordained priest, and a “gay” man himself, in his 1914 study *Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk*, reflects on a number of roles he believed the gender-variant shamans served within their communities. A detailed account of his work will be given. As one of the few relatively comprehensive explorations of the role of homoeroticism within a spiritual context, his study will also serve as a foundation for the final section in this chapter, in which a number of the roles homoeroticism seems to serve, as outlined by more recent studies, will be discussed. His is a study of shamans, based on the observations of missionaries, anthropologists, and colonialists in Africa, China, Japan, New Mexico, as well as North America, dating back to the sixteenth century.

The first observation he makes is that gender-variance amongst shamans throughout these continents seemed widespread, according to reports. The first two chapters of his book give a number of accounts in some detail, mentioning many of the factors already discussed above. It is in his third chapter that he begins outlining his own understanding regarding links between spirituality and homoerotic sexuality as embodied by these shamans.

Carpenter (1914) begins by noting that the widespread occurrence of “inverts” or “intermediates”¹ within a shamanic context “must account for something” (p. 56). The focus of his discussion is based on the assumption that there must be a wider *meaning* to the phenomenon. He continues:

All these cases seem to point to some underlying fact, of the fitness or adaptation of the invert for priestly or divinatory functions (Carpenter, 1914, p. 56).

Carpenter (1914) goes on to discuss two major themes he believes are reflected in the roles played by these people within their communities. Firstly, he argues that gender-variant shamans, the world over, have served the function as “the forward force in human evolution” (p. 58). What he means by this will become evident through the course of the discussion. Reflecting on anthropological and sociological research, he begins his argument by reflecting on the stereotypic roles men and women have fulfilled throughout history: men most often hunt and fight; women are involved in domestic work and agriculture. Carpenter then reflects on the men and women, in various cultures, and throughout the ages, who could not, or did not want to fulfil these roles.

When the man no longer wanted to fight, or hunt, but apply his skills to song, herbs, procession of the stars – and similarly women: when she no longer wished to fulfil domestic duties. Therefore they sought different occupations from ordinary men and women, and so became the initiators of new activities . . . They became the students of life, wizards and sorcerers; they became diviners and seers; and so ultimately laid a foundation of the priesthood and of science, literature, and art (Carpenter, 1914, p. 58).

Carpenter (1914) develops his argument further. Not comfortably belonging to either “grouping” (stereotypic male and female roles), he argues that these people were forced to create a sphere of their own. Finding him or herself different from the majority the “[invert] would be forced to *think*” (p. 59) (emphasis in original).

¹ Words used to describe “homosexual” people at the turn of the century.

His mind turned inwards to tackle the problem of his own nature, and then the problem of the world and of outer nature. He would become one of the first thinkers, dreamers, discoverers (ibid.).

Carpenter (1914) concludes: “If it had not been for intermediate types (feminine man and masculine woman), social life might never have advanced beyond . . . primitive phases” (p. 58).

The second theme Carpenter (1914) discusses relates to the spiritual nature of the gender-variant shamans. Living a marginal existence is not enough, he argues, to explain why these people should also exhibit spiritual gifts. He goes on to explain:

I believe the blending of masculine and feminine would, in some cases, produce persons whose perceptions would be so subtle and complex and rapid as to come under the head of genius, persons of intuitive mind who would perceive things without knowing how, and follow far concatenations of causes and events without concerning themselves about the why – diviners and prophets in a very real sense. And these persons, in almost all cases would acquire and did acquire a strange reputation for sanctity and divinity – arising partly out of the homosexual taboo, but also out of their real possession and command of a double-engine psychic power. This “double-engine” psychic power may lead to the development of that third order of perception which has been called cosmic consciousness, and which may also be termed divination. He who knows the masculine and at the same time keeps the feminine, will be the world’s channel (ibid., p. 63).

Carpenter (1914) follows his discussion with an exploration of the image of the hermaphrodite and the androgyne. He reflects on images of the hermaphrodite in mythology and in Hinduism and Christianity. He then explores Plato’s writings, and quotes from the *Symposium*, in which Aristophanes says:

Anciently the nature of mankind was not the same as it is now, but different.

For at first there were three sexes of human beings, not two only, namely male and female, as at present, but a third besides, common to both the others – of which the name remains, though the sex itself has vanished. For the androgynous sex then existed, both male and female; but now it only exists as a name of reproach (ibid., p. 75).

Carpenter (1914) concludes his discussion by venturing forth a psychological explanation for the “double-engine” spiritual power seemingly exhibited by shamans. As an expression of the image of the androgyne, he believes that they represent the whole, essentially undifferentiated nature of life. He bases this on:

The psychological fact that in the depths of human nature the sex-temperament is undifferentiated; and it is only in its later and more external and partial manifestations that it branches decidedly into male and female (ibid., p. 82).

Carpenter’s conclusions are rather extraordinary, even without considering that his book was published in 1914, prior to Jung’s articulation of his theory of the collective unconscious and the archetypes. Carpenter’s theory is remarkably “Jungian” on a number of counts. Firstly, his approach to his study as a whole is teleological in nature. The question he asks from the outset is, “what is the meaning of this phenomenon?” As discussed in the previous chapter, a fundamental concern of Jung’s (1963) was the teleological nature of the unconscious mind and its relation to consciousness. A second link with Jungian theory lies in Carpenter’s (1914) argument which suggests that gender-variant shamans serve the function as catalyst for the collective individuation of society. In this sense Carpenter seems to be arguing that these men and women embody the role of the *transcendent function*. They hold a tension between the norm (ego consciousness as located within a particular cultural context) and “other” (that which is unexpressed or undeveloped). The changes that emerge reflect the workings of the *transcendent function*.

In this sense gender-variant shamans also seem to represent the archetypal *anima/animus*. As Samuels’ (1985) noted: “Animus and anima speak, then, of the unexpected, of that which is ‘out of order’, which offends the prevailing order” (p. 214). And for Jung (1928), the *anima*

was the “bearer of the soul”, and the link between ego consciousness and the unconscious. Sandner (1993) writes, in relation to the *anima* particularly, “it binds the sexual and spiritual interests of the psyche into one entity”. That these shamans at times also embody the archetypal *shadow* seems particularly evident in the ambivalent relationship the communities seemed to have with the shamans. As discussed earlier, they would often be laughed at, despite being simultaneously respected for their gifts. That they also came to reflect the archetypal *shadow* to the missionaries and colonists is tragically evident. Many berdaches were killed, or forced to change their ways (Williams, 1986).

This idea that certain people move into a liminal or marginal (inner or outer) space, and there come upon a new way of life; and returning to the outer world, form “the nucleus of a ‘creative minority’ through which civilisation may find renewal” (Martin, 1978), is one developed by A.J. Toynbee, in his *A Study of History* (ibid., 1978). Kulkarni’s (1997) discussion of Jungian analyst Esther Harding’s book *The Way of All Women* similarly develops the idea that lesbians and gay men might carry the potential for the further development of human consciousness. Feminist writers such as bell hooks (in Kulkarni, 1997), Shane Phelan (1989), and Claudette Kulkarni (1997) develop the notion of marginality and women’s experience as a site of resistance in developing human consciousness beyond the patriarchal limits of our current society. These factors will be discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

Carpenter’s (1914) second insight, that these shamans embodied a “double-engine” power, as reflected in the images of the hermaphrodite and androgyne, also links very directly with Jungian theory. Recall Jung’s (1938, p. 86) reflection that “the homosexual [is] often . . . endowed with a wealth of religious feelings, which help to bring the *ecclesia spiritualis* into reality; and a spiritual receptivity which makes him responsive to evaluation”. Similarly Jung (1938, p. 71) reflected that “homosexuality” arises out of an “incomplete detachment from the hermaphroditic archetype”, and in that sense “preserves the archetype of the Original Man, which a one-sided sexual being has, up to a point, lost”.

The debates between classical Jungian theory (Jung, 1938), which links “homosexuality” to the (undifferentiated) hermaphrodite, and writers such as Hopcke (1989), Wirth (1993), Sandner

(1993) and Carpenter (1914) who link homoerotic sexuality to the archetypal androgyne (as an image of differentiated wholeness) are obviously polarised. One pole argues for the inherent immaturity of homoerotic sexuality, the other for its almost constitutional maturity or giftedness.

As a way of exploring this dichotomy a little further, the discussion will return to Carpenter's (1914) second conclusion. To reiterate, he is suggesting that these gender-variant shamans are imbued with spiritual gifts as a result of a "double-engine" power, as represented or symbolised by the hermaphrodite and the androgyne. It is not easy to understand what it is he is implying by this conclusion. It is not clear whether he is implying that these shamans inherently have these powers, or whether, through ongoing experiences of marginality, these powers are developed.

The question being asked at this point is "is there something inherently spiritual in the experience of homoerotic sexualities?" Authors such as Harvey (1997), Thompson (1995), Conner (1993) argue in favour of this conclusion, supporting also the idea that gay people represent a "third gender", something altogether distinct from male and female.

Referring to the observation that many shamans are "homosexual", Harvey (1997) notes that "far from being rejected, [homosexuals] were seen as being sacred – people who by virtue of a mysterious fusion of feminine and masculine traits, participated with particular intensity in the life of the Source" (p. 3). He goes on to argue that, as representatives of the "sacred androgyne", gay people, by recognising the "holiness of the homosexual choice", would "effect a revolutionary change in existing conditions" (pp. 3 - 4).

Allowing the wisdom of the third and fourth sexes to be fully vocal in our culture would dissolve the false, rigid categorisation of "male" and "female", and the male-centred, male-dominated, competitive, exploitative, war-and-power obsessed mentality that keeps it alive (ibid., p. 4).

Harvey's point is an interesting one. He is, like Carpenter (1914), arguing that gay people have an influence on the collective individuation of our society, guiding society beyond heterosexist ideals. However, he also seems to imply that the reason why gay people are able to do this is because they hold within them an "essential sacredness". The implication inherent within this conclusion is that non-gay people, seemingly not embodying "the sacred androgyne", cannot have the same level of giftedness. He doesn't explain how it is that not all shamans are "homosexual", nor does he account for the many non-gay spiritually gifted men and women evident through the course of history. He conflates spiritual giftedness with sexual identity. That many shamans have tended to express a version of homoerotic sexuality seems most evident (Williams, 1986). However, that their sexuality directly causes their spiritual giftedness is by no means implied. The discussion will now explore some of the inconsistencies evident in these arguments, as reflected in Carpenter's work, and also in more recent literature as alluded to above (Harvey, 1997; Thompson, 1995; Conner, 1993).

There seems to be a movement by many gay writers (Conner et. al., 1998; Harvey, 1997; Thompson, 1995; Conner, 1993) to reclaim, as something honourable, the traditions and histories of men and women who through history have embodied, in one way or another, homoerotic sexualities. That these histories also seem to reflect a link between homoerotic sexualities and spirituality furthermore provides gay and lesbian people with images of wholeness within a spiritual context, images not traditionally offered to them by Christianity. The importance of reclaiming these images from the past cannot be overemphasised (Boswell, 1980; Boswell, 1994a; Boswell, 1997; Hopcke, 1989; Hopcke et. al., 1993; Comstock & Henking, 1997; Conner et. al., 1998). However, the danger is that the process of reclamation becomes a retrospective one in which the past, as both compensation and defence, is elevated and romanticised. In the end the model seems to offer nothing new. The pendulum swings to the other side, and gay people and lesbians become inherently "better than" or "more spiritual than" the rest of the population. The domination ethic of patriarchy is simply reinforced, albeit on a more subtle level.

The second, and contradictory process, evident in these more essentialist conclusions (Harvey, 1997), is that a gendered language is used to describe them. As O'Conner and Ryan (1993)

reflect, “retaining the archetypes of ‘the masculine’ and ‘the feminine’ and the composite ‘androgynous’ as foundational sets them up as ideals against which gender conformity and related desires can be measured” (p. 173). By locating themselves within the language of the dominant heterosexist discourse, gender stereotypes are further reified, creating “either/or” dichotomies that cannot possibly illuminate the processes they are trying to articulate. The archetypal “androgynous” becomes prescribed as an “essential” aspect of gay and lesbian experience, as much as the terms “masculine” and “feminine” have prescribed to “heterosexual” men and women how to behave. What begins as an important attempt to free gay and lesbian people from oppression and prejudice simply reinforces the process, trapping us further within the very discourse from which we are trying to free ourselves.

The tendency, when confronted with these “essentialist” / “constructionist” debates, is to locate oneself in either one camp or the other. The challenge, as the synchronous model (Samuels, 1989) described earlier suggests, seems to be to take the value each position brings to the debate, and somehow situate oneself in the space in between, or along a continuum without any notion of space. The challenge Kulkarni (1997), O’Conner & Ryan (1993) and Samuels (1985) issue is let go of the gendered language by which we describe psychological processes. Is it possible to relocate the notions of the “hermaphrodite” and “androgynous”, and, moving them beyond gendered terms, allow these concepts to move into the realm of metaphor? As Samuels (1989) suggests, this has the potential to allow them to reflect something at once “real” and “not-real”. Samuels reflects: “a metaphor cannot be divorced from the roots of its context”, allowing therefore for a “simultaneity of perception” (p. 47).

A number of factors, all of which have already been described and explored, might provide insight into what the images of the androgynous and hermaphrodite potentially hold, without the need for a gendered language. The discussion will begin with reference to Jung’s understanding of the nature of the archetype, most especially the *psychoid* archetype. This image of the psychoid archetype was, for Jung, the link between spirit and matter (Jaffe, 1979). In essence, the archetype is thus always a simultaneous expression of both these dimensions.

The images of the archetypal *puer* (youth) and *senex* (old age) as a “union of sames” (Hillman, 1991) and the alchemical images of “like with like” (Jung, 1955; Downing, 1989) have been discussed in some detail. What each of these describe, to begin with, are images of indifferentiation. *Puer*, while having a natural tendency towards spirituality, tends towards superficiality and shallowness. He or she is unable to easily “ground” (in matter) the natural or inherent spiritual giftedness, and in that sense remains largely unaware. On the other end of the spectrum, *senex*, naturally wise, tends towards heaviness, often thereby losing his or her inherent wisdom in inactivity and lethargy. It too remains largely unaware of its potential. Hillman (1991) describes the processes by which these archetypal configurations, when placed together, move towards co-creating the strengths inherent in each other. In that sense, Hillman concluded, they represent the two aspects of the same archetype.

The processes by which these seemingly “opposite” constellations move towards co-creating each other’s strengths seem to find reflection in the images of the hermaphrodite and androgyne. Indifferentiation is reflected in the image of the hermaphrodite who holds both aspects, *puer* and *senex*, as potentials within itself, yet has developed neither. Introducing a further dimension or axis, recall now the initial alchemical image of priest and king, joined, but not yet recognising their complementary nature. Spirituality as *potential* is evidenced in the image of the priest, sexuality or corporeality embodied by the king. Each of these are, however, images inherent within both *puer* and *senex*. Neither embody either image, sexuality or spirituality, fully; each express particular *aspects* of sexuality and spirituality.

The image being created is a multi-dimensional one: hermaphrodite as a metaphor, holding both *puer* and *senex* within itself, each form of archetypal expression reflecting only an aspect of further forms of archetypal expression (though as yet undifferentiated within themselves), viz., body and spirit. As *puer* and *senex* become aware of their nature, a process of differentiation begins. They move apart. Reflecting on the image of the hermaphrodite, the sexes move apart, becoming *man* and *woman*. This is a metaphor, rather than something literal. It could be a reference to man and woman, but at the same time, it could refer to any aspects of psychic functioning which complement each other. Furthermore, if the images of the two sexes are used, they are not essentially characterised by “masculine” and “feminine” qualities. As

Samuels stressed, if these qualities are necessary, or if they do indeed describe an important aspect of archetypal experience, then they need to be construed as equally available to either sex (1985).

As the images of man and woman (or complementary aspects) separate, the *puer/senex* constellation expresses itself in both. Neither aspect *represents* either one or the other. Recall the alchemical image of the priest and king (Jung, 1955). As they separate, the king has a blue robe (representing, for instance, *puer*) and a black foot (representing, for instance, *senex*), and priest a black robe (*senex*) and a blue foot (*puer*). The process of differentiation is not a dichotomous one. Each aspect has both elements, *puer* and *senex* within them. And each of these elements, furthermore, have embodied within them, spirit and body (priest and king/priestess and queen). Within itself, each element or aspect therefore expresses a tension. Each is a site for the *transcendent function*. The processes of change and differentiation are thus constellated either inter- or intra-psychically, or both. Within each experience, either within, or between, a complementary tension is evident, challenging “other” into awareness.

The image of man (of whatever aspect might be being described) now has embodied within him a version of *senex*, and a version of *puer*. Each of these aspects, furthermore, have constellated within them, a version of spirituality (spirit), and a version of sexuality (matter). Similarly with the woman (or complementary aspect). These versions complement each other, they are not each other’s opposites. Therefore, once differentiated, the process of moving towards “union” or “integration”, is a multiplicitous one, in which any number of combinations, inter- and/or intra-psychic, become possible. The woman (or aspect) does not have to “return” to her / its “other half”, the man, to find “wholeness” or to “complete” herself. Firstly, she is complete, with aspects of *puer/senex* and spirit/body within her, each able to develop and grow fully. Secondly, she need not “return” to a *man* to find wholeness, because *any* person might embody the *puer/senex* and *body/spirit* complement she may wish to embrace as a challenge to the more unaware or undeveloped aspects within herself. The image or metaphor of the androgyne (as a metaphor for integration) can thus become an image which is able to hold differentiated aspects of the psyche together, within a new constellation. That

this constellation be made up of “male” and “female”, “man” and “woman”, or “masculine” and “feminine” becomes irrelevant.

Within a multidimensional synchronous model, the seemingly revolutionary suggestion that there are not only two genders (man and woman) but maybe even three or four (man, woman, lesbian and gay) (Thompson, 1995; Conner, 1993) appears both restrictive and prescriptive. The multidimensional metaphor presented above suggests that there are numerous gender roles possible, by no means curtailed by heterosexist discourse which suggests only two, or for that matter, three or four. As Foucault (1978) reflects, we live in a world that institutions have significantly impoverished.

A summary of the above argument will be presented, followed by an outline of the critique of the essentialist position regarding an inherent spiritual giftedness of the berdache as a result of a homoerotic sexuality. The archetypal hermaphrodite provides a metaphor for undifferentiated or unconscious psychological experience. As a metaphor, it gives us an image of two sexes expressed within one body. It is both “male” and “female”. It becomes thus an image of *indifferentiation*. Each aspect is merged with the other, neither has developed its own potential fully. As Jung (1930) argues, each person has access to this experience as expressed by a diverse array of undifferentiated archetypal configurations. These archetypal configurations express both spirit and matter. In that sense, we all have available to us, an experience of “natural” (albeit undifferentiated) spirituality (ibid).

When undifferentiated experience begins to separate (by being named, and moving into consciousness), each aspect still has within it both poles, spirit and matter. Just because we are only aware of one pole, does not mean that the other is not there. In terms of Jung’s (1928) understanding of the collective unconscious, the “other” will always be there, in the shadows of the unconscious mind. A tension, either within (intra-psychically) and/or between (inter-psychically), is what brings, through the workings of the *transcendent function*, these aspects into awareness. Withstanding the tension, and learning to consciously hold disparate aspects together, is what allows for the emergence of something new, something not yet expressed or experienced. This image is reflected in the metaphor of the androgyne. The androgyne, unlike

the hermaphrodite, represents *differentiation* into one sex. Its gender, however, is dynamically multiplicitous, in that it can express any array of qualities, none of which need represent “masculinity” or “femininity”.

In Chapter Three, Jung’s (1930) insight, in which he suggests that the *process* by which tension is constellated within the psyche is by way of problems or difficulties to which there seem to be no obvious or predetermined solutions, was discussed.

Problems draw us into an orphaned and isolated state where we are abandoned by nature and driven into consciousness. There is no other way open to us. We are forced to resort to conscious decisions and solutions where formally we trusted ourselves to natural happenings (p. 4).

It now becomes possible to reflect on the conclusions suggested by Carpenter (1914) and others, some of whom suggest that people who embody a homoerotic sexuality represent a “third” and “fourth gender”, and as a result therefore of a direct link with the archetypal androgyne, have access to an inherent spiritual giftedness.

Jung (1930), in the above quote, is arguing that much of our psychological growth happens in the context of problems and conflicts. History is made up of the many men and women who have challenged convention, and transcended dogma, and discovered new regions of inner and outer experience (Martin, 1978). That these people are all “gay” or homoerotically inclined is clearly not accurate. What, if not their sexuality, might these people have in common? An answer, based on the preceding discussion, might be “their otherness”. Herein may lie the key to understanding the metaphors of gender, as well as to understanding the dangers inherent in a purely essentialist perspective.

As Carpenter (1914) articulates in his first explanation, men and women who do not fit into stereotypic gender roles are likely to seek alternative ways in which to express themselves. Moving into shamanic roles provides a useful space in which to ensure a degree of acceptance, together with the freedom to express “difference” (Boswell, 1994). The ensuing marginality of

their experience furthermore serves to challenge them into greater differentiation. As Carpenter (1914) concludes, “finding himself different from the great majority, revered by some, despised by others, he would be forced to *think*” (p. 59). However, there are obviously many people, including men and women who experience a homoerotic dimension to themselves, who do comfortably fit into dominant cultural stereotypes, and therefore might choose to remain within them. Equally, there might be men and women who do not fit into dominant cultural stereotypes, but who do not define or experience themselves in relation to homoerotic sexualities. What these men and women seem to have in common is not their sexuality, but their sense of “otherness” within a dominant discourse. By embracing this “otherness” (which might often be played out as a challenge to gender roles) and giving expression to it (for a gay person, this might take the form of “coming out”), a tension is created both within an individual, and within his or her culture. The “other” unexpressed aspect of a society or culture is thereby being made conscious. In Jungian (1928) terms, he or she is expressing the archetypal *anima/animus* (“the unexpected, . . . that which is ‘out of order’, which offends the prevailing order” (Samuels, 1985, p. 214)), the archetypal *shadow*, and, through the process of holding the tensions inherent in expressing these aspects of the psyche, they ultimately serve as an embodiment of the *transcendent function*: they become catalysts for personal (intra-psyche) and collective (inter-psyche) change. This capacity to express “otherness” is not only the domain of the gay person. It is an inherent aspect of the functioning of the psyche, and therefore available to anybody (Jung, 1928).

The danger of an essentialist perspective regarding homoeroticism and spirituality, is that it encourages (*senex*) complacency and spiritual (*puer*) superficiality. Romanticising the berdache as a role model for “gay spirituality” seldom takes into account the paths these men and women have travelled in reaching the levels of spiritual giftedness they are able to express. It seems irresponsible to suggest that gay people, because of a supposed archetypal link with the androgyne, are somehow more “spiritual”. Linking all gay people to this archetypal androgyne also traps them within confining gender roles, just as heterosexist discourse traps “heterosexual” men and women within gender stereotypes of “masculinity” and “femininity” (O’Conner & Ryan, 1993; Kulkarni, 1997). It seems just as likely that experiences of liminality, which potentially constellates the *transcendent function*, are able to account for the

wisdom and growth evident in many spiritual functionaries throughout history. It is likely that many of them did experience a homoerotic aspect to themselves. These roles afforded them cultural recognition while simultaneously creating space in which their difference could be openly expressed. It allowed many of them to have relationships, something that would not otherwise have been tolerated. This issue will be developed further in the discussion of “gay” and “lesbian” people within the Christian Church throughout its history.

4.3.1.2 Conclusions

In the above section, some themes and patterns regarding homoeroticism within a spiritual context have been explored, particularly within the context of so-called traditional societies. The role of the berdache was explored in some detail, followed by an exploration of the role played by these shamans within their cultures. Functions and meanings of the experience of homoeroticism were explored, looking particularly at the manner in which shamans embodied homoerotic sexuality. Finally, the work of Edward Carpenter (1914) was discussed, looking particularly at his conclusions regarding the functions homoeroticism served for these spiritual functionaries. Carpenter’s own conclusions suggested that homoeroticism, as embodied by these shamans, resulted in them not fitting into prescribed gender roles of their culture. The resultant marginal experience, Carpenter (ibid.) argued, resulted in the expression and development of aspects of human life which would not otherwise have been developed. In this sense he is suggesting that these shamans, by embodying homoeroticism, served to challenge the collective individuation of their cultures.

His second conclusion suggested that the reason for their spiritual giftedness related to their embodiment of both “masculine” and “feminine” energies (a “double-engine” process). This conclusion was discussed in some detail. It was suggested that experiences of *liminality* as a space in which the *transcendent function* could potentially be constellated could reasonably explain the development of their spiritual gifts in non-essentialist terms. This explanation also allowed for an understanding of the capacity people who do not identify with homoerotic sexualities have to develop similarly and grow spiritually. It was argued that the use of gendered terms to explain “homosexuality” and its relationship to spirituality serves to

reinforced heterosexist stereotypes, and reify patriarchal power structures in which some people are better than others.

A number of the issues discussed thus far will find further differentiation in the next section of this chapter. What follows is a discussion of the relationship between homoeroticism and the Christian Church. The chapter will conclude with a detailed exploration of the function homoeroticism may serve within spirituality and psychological growth.

4.3.2. Homoerotic Sexuality, Spirituality, and Christianity

In this exploration of homoerotic sexuality within a Christian context, two major themes will be explored. The first theme links to the emerging duality which characterises, as Ricoeur (1967) notes, the rise of the world's major religions. The second will explore the manner in which homoeroticism has been conceptualised within Christianity. As will become evident, a dualistic interpretation of sexuality (divided into "heterosexual" and "homosexual") is only a recent phenomenon. Despite this seemingly artificial reification (Foucault, 1978), it will be argued that this process of differentiation is an important one if looking at larger processes of collective individuation. These two themes will at first be explored concurrently. This will allow the discussion to flow chronologically. A summary concluding the discussion will separate the issues more clearly. The chapter will conclude with an exploration of the teleological nature of homoerotic sexuality within spirituality as reflected by personal and collective individuation processes.

Boswell (1980; 1994), Nelson (1988), and Rudy (1997) argue that it is not Christianity alone which was responsible for the emerging duality between body and spirit. Other factors, largely related to power and social control, played a dominant role in the creation and institutionalisation of the various dualities which have dominated Western thought for centuries (Rudy, 1997; Heyward, 1994). There is little in the Hebrew texts, or in Christ's teachings which in any way reify a dualistic manner of thinking (Nelson, 1988). Indeed, as Incarnational theologians argue, the image of Christ is a union of body and spirit (man and God) (Nelson, 1988). Furthermore, it is noted that the early Church was able to hold comfortably images of body and spirit without need for dualistic interpretation (Boswell, 1981;

Nelson, 1988; Nelson & Longfellow, 1994; Rudy, 1997). Regarding “homosexuality”, Boswell, in his studies *Same-Sex Unions in Pre-modern Europe* (1994), and *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (1980), argues that there is sufficient liturgical evidence to suggest that the Church sanctioned same-sex marriages, *and did not make any major distinction between same-sex and opposite sex unions*. A detailed study by Boswell, (1980; 1997) regarding the manner in which sexuality was constructed throughout the history of the Western civilisation further highlights the observation that distinctions were not made between forms of sexual orientation until the late nineteenth century.

In his study of Mediterranean city-states of the ancient world (400 B.C. – 400 A.D.), Boswell (1997) notes that the norms for private and public sexual relating were based on codes of public conduct and behaviour which were relatively easy to follow. People were not divided in terms of “sexual orientation” as we know it, but were instead organised along the ideals of social expectation and roles. The aim was to be a “good citizen” and “a responsible family member”. Marriage and parenthood were not aligned with erotic attachment, they were a social duty. Marriage was not meant to fulfil erotic needs, and extramarital affairs were the norm (for men, not for women) (p. 120). Erotic expression and fulfilment was not a public issue, and was organised around class, age, marital status, rather than gender. Fairness, responsibility, and respect were more important than private sexual behaviour. However, as Boswell notes, this was not to say that everyone was at liberty to perform any sexual act with any person of either gender. The sexual code was a simple yet powerful one : *it was only acceptable for a member of a less powerful group (a slave or freedman) to submit to penetration by a member of a more powerful group* (p. 121). Based along these lines, relationships between older men and younger boys held a special place in the lives of men in the ancient world. The qualities of these relationships were valorised and held to have a particular sacred dimension. This aspect of male relating is explored in Plato’s *Symposium* (Hamilton, 1951).

Between 300 and 400 A.D., under the impact of late Hellenistic Greek philosophy (Nelson, 1988), a new sexual code was introduced into Christian philosophy, focussing on *holiness* and *purity* (Boswell, 1997). The historical context of this development was a decaying Roman Empire, and a new Church struggling for power and an identity (Heyward, 1994). As Heyward

(ibid.) argues, in periods of social unrest, theologians historically have idealised aspects of the human condition by spiritualising it. This served to give the Christian Church a particular unique character, and also created the image of a powerful ascetic clerical leadership. Eroticism was now constructed as being the core problem of the “fallen” Roman world, and by identifying with images of *purity* and *holiness*, Christians could be encouraged to control this impulse through its responsible use. Boswell (1997) notes, however, that this new development did not create distinctions based on gender object choice. The focus was on the permanence and fidelity of erotic relationships, which could be present in both “homosexual” and “heterosexual” relationships. Boswell’s research (1997) suggests evidence of long-lasting “homosexual” unions and even official marriages in Greece and Rome. He also suggests that evidence exists of Christian ceremonies of same-sex unions closely resembling marriage in parts of the Christian world throughout the early Middle Ages, involving well known Saints as models of such unions (Boswell, 1994). Thirdly, Boswell notes a strong tradition in Christian thought (through to the end of the 12th Century) that regarded same-sex and opposite-sex sexuality as two expressions of the same thing. Either expression of sexuality could be good or bad, depending on whether it was directed towards “godly” or “ungodly” pursuits (1997, p. 122).

It was a second, opposing, school of thought evident in Christian philosophy, one which has its origins at the Council of Elvira (309 A.D.), which found its way into Catholic orthodoxy, and eventually saw the complete reification of dualistic thought within Christian philosophy (Heyward, 1994; Nelson, 1988; Boswell, 1980; Boswell, 1997). The essence of this philosophy regarding sexuality might be expressed as “*to be sinless, a sexual act must be procreative*” (Boswell, 1997, p. 122). Even non-procreative sex between husband and wife was deemed sinful. Ironically, Boswell (ibid.) notes, another strand of Christian thought during that time deemed sexuality sinful *when it was procreative*. This was because birth trapped *good souls* into *bad matter*. This point is mentioned to illustrate that there was by no means consensus amongst Christians regarding the now thorny issues of sexuality and its “rightful” expression. Boswell (1997) notes two reasons why the procreative-purpose stance regarding sexuality attained such popularity eventually to become the cornerstone of Catholic orthodoxy. Firstly, it limited sexuality to the smallest possible area of human behaviour. And secondly, it appealed

to an easily articulated and understood principle: *all acts in which the discharge of semen was non-procreative were deemed unnatural*. As a form of very effective social control, the philosophy proved very powerful (ibid.).

What emerged, Rudy (1997) reflects, was a dualistic Hellenistic philosophy taken to extremes. Spirit and body were separated, symbolised and entrenched by what were then deemed to be their earthly representatives, viz., men and women. Men were called to spiritually “rise above their bodies” (Heywood, 1994, p.14). Bodies and sex were conceptualised as pertaining to women, who now became the source of all temptation and thus the “devil’s gateway” (ibid.). An hierarchical, ordered world, controlled by men, came to be the central vision of a new religious philosophy which has dominated Western thought for centuries. It became the foundation of a dualism which sought to institutionalise social control on the basis of gender. Sex became synonymous with women, spirit with men. As Heyward (ibid.) concludes, understanding sexuality historically involves making connections between the social control of sexuality, and the social control of women. This became the basis upon which modern capitalistic patriarchal society is based (Rudy, 1997; Heyward, 1994). Heyward (1994) and Rudy (1997) argue then that it is not enough to look at the Christian Church as the primary source for the dualism so prevalent in Western thought. The developments within the Church, which for a significant period of history was not separate from State, must be seen within a much broader social and historical process of social structuring and control (Heyward, 1994). As James Nelson (1982, p.17) reflects, “[Christianity’s] universal perspective is a fiction – it assumed that it was speaking universally, when in fact, it was speaking out for a particular male experience”.

Returning to Boswell’s (1997) exploration, which had just seen the introduction of the “procreative-purpose” stance which was to become the cornerstone of Catholic orthodoxy, he goes on to make an important observation. The code which now deemed all non-procreative sexual acts *unnatural* made no distinction between various sexual acts. Non-procreative same-sex or opposite-sex sexual interaction fell under the same ruling. Both represented sinful states; neither was any better or worse than the other. Furthermore, being sinful was a *temporary state*; through repentance one could be released. In this sense then, and during the entire history

of the Christian Church, the focus regarding sexuality was on the specific sexual act, not on the person concerned (Boswell, 1980). It is only by the early twentieth century that radical changes occurred, thereby redefining the experience of sexuality, both in relation to spirituality, as well as in relation to definitions of psychological health.

With the introduction of the term “homosexual” into the English language in 1892 (it was first coined in 1869 by a German physician and brought into popular usage in Germany around 1880), “homosexuality” has moved inexorably into the foreground as a reified construct, defining the “other” in the realm of human sexuality (Downing, 1989). Its counterpart “heterosexuality” was, not surprisingly, introduced into the English language some years later, in 1900. For the first time in history, human sexuality became constructed as a dualism. What were always conceptualised in terms of sexual acts, now came to describe the nature of person. The “normal heterosexual” and the “abnormal homosexual” were born. As Boswell (1997) concludes, the “heterosexuality” / “homosexuality” dualism is the major dialectic upon which all modern discourse about sexuality is founded.

Boswell (1997) goes on to note that these contemporary ways of understanding sexuality created a particular, and rather cruel, dilemma for Christians. With the shift in conceptualisation of homoerotic sexualities from “homosexual acts” to “homosexual persons”, emerged the fate of people experiencing homoerotic feelings. No longer simply a sin (as an act, and therefore open to confession and forgiveness) “homosexuality” came to represent a *condition* which was sinful. “I *did* something sinful” became “I *am* something sinful”. It was possible to find emotional release, through confession, from the former. The same is not true of the latter. In this way sexuality also came to define the personality and lifestyle of a certain group of people, “homosexual” people viewed as being “more sexual” than “heterosexual” people (Boswell, 1997, p. 125).

A document issued by the Vatican in 1975, entitled “Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics”, made the following statement:

A distinction is drawn, and it seems with some reason, between homosexuals whose tendency comes from a false education, from a lack of normal sexual development, from habit, from bad example, or from other similar causes, and is transitory or at least not incurable; and homosexuals who are definitively such because of some kind of innate instinct or a pathological constitution judged to be incurable” (in Sullivan, 1997, p.241).

Growing sociological and psychological “evidence” suggesting that for a significant group of people homoerotic sexuality as the preferred orientation was not a choice but something unalterable seemed to be having an impact on the Catholic Church (Sullivan, 1997). At this point a seemingly positive stance regarding homoerotic sexuality emerged out of Catholicism. As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger writes in his 1986 letter, “*On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*”:

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. It reveals a kind of disregard for others which endangers the most fundamental principles of a healthy society. The intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected in word, in action and in law” (ibid., p.243).

Sullivan (1997), in his paper, *Alone Again, Naturally : The Catholic Church and the Homosexual*, provides a complex and astute analysis of the Catholic response to “homosexuality”. As he goes on to explain, the apparent liberal concession to recognise “homosexuals” as “persons of dignity” complicated theological arguments somewhat. If “homosexuality” was for some a *natural state*, the “condition” itself must be morally neutral. It was thus that the Catholic Church separated “homosexual acts” from “homosexual people” and doubled its efforts to condemn *homosexual activity* (ibid, p. 243). Ratzinger continues:

The particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin. [Homosexuals are] often generous and giving of themselves. [A] human person, made in the

image and likeness of God, can hardly be adequately described by a reductionist reference to his or her sexual orientation.

Making use of the age-old natural-law argument (which is by now thought of by most as meaning a *scientific* natural law, rather than the “natural law” used since the rise of patriarchy to place men at the helm) (Boswell, 1997), Ratzinger concludes:

It is only in the marital relationship that the use of the sexual faculty can be morally good. A person engaging in homosexual behaviour therefore acts immorally” (ibid., p.244).

As Sullivan (1997) reflects, this theory seemed reasonable enough to many Christians, including many gay and lesbian Christians. To all intents and purposes gay liberation had succeeded in getting the Church to recognise the “goodness” of the “homosexual condition”. Gay men and lesbians were at last recognised as legitimate in the eyes of the Church. However, Sullivan continues, the cruelty inherent in this formulation, more subtle than before, was pervasive. Celibacy became the only authentic and honourable answer to the “problem of the homosexual” (ibid, p. 244).

The command to love oneself as a person of human dignity yet hate the core longings that could make one emotionally whole demanded a sense of detachment or a sense of cynicism that seemed inimical to the Christian life. To deny lust was one thing; to deny love was another. And to deny love in the context of *Christian* doctrine seemed particularly perverse” (1997, p.245).

Sullivan (1997) goes on to point out that the renunciation of such love is not in the context of choosing to serve a greater goal, such as celibacy in the Priesthood might serve to intensify devotion to God.

Rather, the loveless homosexual destiny is precisely toward nothing, a negation of human fulfilment, which is why the Church understands that such persons,

even in the act of obedient self-renunciation, are called ‘to enact the will of God in their life by joining whatever sufferings and difficulties they experience in virtue of their condition to the sacrifice of the Lord’s cross’” (ibid.).

Reflecting on this further, Sullivan (1997) concludes by drawing our attention to the inherent and disturbing homophobia evident in the Catholic formulation: *the active pursuit of one’s own sterility and non-growth as a human being, is being presented as an honourable spiritual pursuit.*

Boswell (1994a) reflects on an irony evident in the Catholic Church’s official response to homoerotic sexualities. As he points out, many non-Christian observers of clergy in the Catholic church have, throughout history, suggested that it was disproportionately “gay” (Boswell, 1980). Boswell (1994a) in his paper *Homosexuality and Religious Life*, suggests that through the course of Western history, people have been relegated to one of three roles within social life. The first he calls a “distinguishable insider”, meaning, in Western culture, a white male. The second category he refers to as an “inferior insider”, referring largely to women. The final category he calls the “outsider”. He suggests that being “outsiders” to the dominant culture is one of the greatest problems gay people encounter in modern society. He goes on to reflect that Christian gays and lesbians find themselves in a unique position in society today, largely because they as a group are doubly marginalised. As Boswell reflects, “They are ‘outsiders’ to other Christians because they are gay, and ‘outsiders’ to most gay people because they are religious” (1994a, p.364).

Reflecting on the high numbers of “gay” and “lesbian” people within the Church throughout the history of Christianity, Boswell (1994a) goes on to note a rather poignant irony:

Not only is homosexual eroticism the oldest and most persistent strand in the Christian theology of romantic love, but Christian religious life was the most prominent gay life-style in Western Europe from the Early Middle Ages to the Reformation, about two thirds of the period since Europe became Christian” (p.354).

He reflects on a number of reasons why “gay” and “lesbian” people might have been attracted to religious life (1994a). Marriage could be avoided, allowing one to become a member of a same-sex community. For men it became an opportunity for exercising nurturing and serving skills otherwise associated with women, as well as avoiding the obligations of military service and warfare. Women could exercise power in religious communities without being subordinate to men, and they could also become literate and learned. Both gay men, lesbians, and women in general could avoid stereotypic gender roles. As with the berdaches in Native American cultures, religious life offered “gay” and “lesbian” people, and women, with a vocation to transform their outsider or inferior insider status into an advantage (*ibid.*).

In recent years, priests and ministers have begun “coming out”, openly revealing their identities as practising gay and lesbian people, while reaffirming their commitment to their roles as priests (Sherwood, 1987; Cotter, 1997; Torr, 1997; Welman, 1997; Shallenberger; 1998). They all write of the struggle between their sexuality and what they experience as their spiritual vocations as priests and ministers. The duality initially experienced between spirit and sexuality is a marked one. For many of them, the point at which they “come out”, to friends, parishioners, the Church hierarchy, is the point at which the dualities shift from being dichotomous to being dialectical. It is a moment in which both sexuality and spirituality are located within the same space. For priests who also identify themselves as being gay or lesbian, the dialectic is particularly striking. *Sex* and *spirit* stand very manifestly together. This unique dynamic will be discussed in some detail in the concluding section of this chapter.

Before further exploring meaning and function of homoerotic sexuality within spirituality, a summary of the preceding discussion will be presented. Thereafter, the chapter will conclude with a detailed account of the function of homoeroticism within processes of spirituality and spiritual/psychological growth.

Searching for power and control over a “decaying” world, the Christian Church found in Hellenistic dualisms an important vehicle for governance. Sexuality and spirituality were separated and reified, and a merged Church and State found within a patriarchal hierarchy considerable power and influence. Men, as representatives of God, came to represent the *spirit*,

and women, as sources of temptation, came to represent the *body*. Sexuality was confined to a limited, and easily controlled and articulated aspect of human behaviour, viz. procreation. Any sexual act not aimed at procreation was deemed sinful. Sexuality was as yet not reified in terms of an orientation. Sexual acts were the focus of the Christian Church. Homoerotic sexual acts were deemed sinful, alongside any other sexual acts, including masturbation and hetero-erotic acts not aimed towards procreation. All were sinful, redeemable through confession. “Gay” and “lesbian” people found within religious settings, as priests, or within religious orders as monks and nuns, a place in which they could turn their outsider status within the dominant patriarchal and gender-stereotyped culture into an advantage.

With a emergence of the “heterosexual” / “homosexual” duality at the beginning of the twentieth century, important shifts took place within the lives of practising gay and lesbian Christians. Defined now in terms of their sexual orientation, and not in terms of sexual acts, these *people* were labelled “sinful”. A further duality became evident, one most reminiscent of the duality which has plagued Christianity for centuries: a choice had to be made between sexuality or spirituality. The theological developments in more recent years in which “homosexual” people were recognised as “worthy”, but their sexual acts “unacceptable” further reified this duality. In the eyes of the Church, one could either be a Christian, or one could be a practicing gay or lesbian person. It was not possible to be both. As a practising gay or lesbian person, one was viewed in the manner in which women have been viewed for much of the history of the Church: as representatives of the body.

In recent years, an increasing number of gay and lesbian priests have refused to be trapped by the duality between body and spirit, and have “come out” as sexually active Christians, while simultaneously remaining within the priesthood. The dialectic created in these actions is an important one. The Church is increasingly forced to deal with sexuality being expressed, not now for procreative reasons, but as an expression of love or even lust (Sullivan, 1997). In this sense, these men and women are actively embodying a reconciliation of spirit and a fully expressed sexuality (not diluted and explained away in terms of procreation). These issues will now be taken up and developed in the final section of this chapter, looking particularly at the role homoeroticism might be playing in challenging dualisms, and thereby initiating changes,

both personal and collective, in the spiritual lives of women and men determined to locate their sexuality (as something sacred) in the context of their spiritual lives.

4.3.3. Meanings And Roles Of Homoeroticism

In a study of gay and lesbian experiences with religion, Shallenberger (1998) suggests that the processes by which many of the men and women in his study grappled with their sexuality within the context of their spirituality resulted in important shifts and changes within their spiritual lives. He highlights a number of features that a significant number of participants shared in the process of coming to terms with their sexuality in a spiritual context. These included periods of distancing from previously held assumptions regarding their spirituality; long periods of deep reflective questioning; searching for spiritual communities in which to find greater fulfilment and acceptance; exploration of “non-mainstream” alternatives to spiritual practice; returning to previous traditions from a new perspective; defining a “ministry” and “sense or purpose” for themselves with regards spirituality and sexuality (p. 13). He emphasises the considerable diversity of experience amongst gay and lesbian people regarding their spirituality.

In his introductory discussion, Shallenberger (1998) notes that one of the central experiences reported by all the participants in his study pertained to the experience of “coming out”. This process of overtly embodying their sexualities proved to be a powerful “turning point” (p. 11) at which many of their lives changed radically. This process of “coming out” will be discussed in due course. Shallenberger (1998) makes no further analysis of the processes by which spiritual changes occurred, but instead lets the participants speak for themselves. Each interview is presented in some detail. What the book communicates is that the process of engaging with homoeroticism in a spiritual context can be a catalyst for spiritual growth. Shallenberger (1998) offers no detailed exploration of these processes. The present study is aimed at investigating some of the implications of Shallenberger’s study, with the intention of outlining some of these processes by which change or growth occurs.

Writers in the fields of theology, sexuality and feminism such as Carter Hayward (1994), Elizabeth Stuart (1995), Joan Timmerman (1992), Audre Lorde (1994), James Nelson (1988),

and James Empereur (1998), suggest that human sexuality is probably the most important present-day challenge to the conceptualisation of spirituality, particularly as a challenge to spirit/body duality so prevalent in Christianity and Western thought. Furthermore, these authors suggest that homoerotic sexualities hold the key to the integration of sexuality and spirituality, and thereby to the future of Christianity as it moves into the 21st Century. What they mean by this will become evident through the course of this discussion.

Nelson (1988) notes that the shift evident in theology and the study of ethics, from looking to tradition and biblical texts for insight into current problems to focussing on current *experience* and *process*, has meant that some theological scholars are taking the experiences of gays and lesbians much more seriously. He reflects, furthermore, that theologians are beginning to ask different kinds of questions. Rather than asking ‘what do the Bible, tradition and the Church say about ‘homosexuality’?’, they are now asking ‘what does our experience of ‘homosexuality’ say about our understanding of faith?’ Many gay men and lesbians have given up waiting for the Church to provide some sort of theological approval for their relationships or their sexual orientations (Sullivan, 1995). As James Empereur writes, “The gay man cannot be content to wait for the tradition to tell him how to think and feel about God but rather he needs to ask himself how he is actually experiencing God and how his experience can contribute to the overall understanding of the God reality today. Most importantly, he needs to *trust* his experience of God” (1998, p.4). Increasingly gays and lesbians are beginning to “come out” spiritually, speaking both of their sexuality and their spiritual lives (Shallenberger, 1998; Comstock & Henking, 1997; Germond & de Gruchy, 1997). This is particularly evident in the number of priests and ministers beginning to write about and reflect openly on their experiences as gay and lesbian people within the context of their spirituality (Bouldrey, 1995; Cotter, 1997; Shallenberger, 1998; Torr, 1997; Welman, 1997).

This discussion will now develop a number of themes pertaining to the role homoeroticism might serve within the context of the spirituality/individuation of men and women. In a recent study by Kulkarni (1997) in which the nature of lesbian identity as one form of homoerotic expression is explored, she reflects on a number of “meanings” lesbianism might embody as an experience located “on the margins” of our dominant culture. As one of the few explorations of

“meanings” with regard to homoeroticism and growth, both collective and personal, her study provides an important structure for the present discussion. A number of themes highlighted by her study included lesbian experience as personal and collective individuation; lesbian experience as a refusal to be possessed by normalcy; lesbian experience as an expression of the transcendent function; and lesbian experience as embodied soul. She locates her study “in the margins”, and begins her exploration by examining both the nature and meaning of marginal experience (pp. 27 – 57). Many of these themes have already been referred to and even explored within the context of the present study. This factor, together with Kulkarni’s (1997) suggestion that these themes play a significant role in the experience of the development of lesbian identity (as one form of homoerotic expression) pointed to the possibility that they might also help further understand the function of homoeroticism as an experience within people’s individual and collective growth. Her findings will serve as the structure in which to locate this discussion. As will become evident, much of what has been written regarding spirituality and homoerotic sexualities will find resonance in all the themes suggested by Kulkarni. Each theme will now be discussed in some detail, linking Kulkarni’s findings to the writings of feminists and theologians in which the relationship between homoerotic experience and spirituality is explored.

4.3.3.1. Homoeroticism And Individual And Collective Individuation.

Reflecting on and providing an extensive critique of Jungian analyst Esther Harding’s book *The Way of All Women*, Kulkarni (1997) develops the idea, hinted at in Harding’s book, that lesbian relationships might represent “an expression of the fulfilment of the *psychological* aims of the species” (p. 50) (emphasis added). Her suggestion is that, not restricted to biological reproduction, the love between women can focus on furthering collective individuation. As Downing (1989, p. xxiv) reflects, this love might represent “a transcendence of reproductive love, a commitment to a different kind of co-creation”.

In her study, Kulkarni notes that the lesbians she interviewed frequently used words such as “core”, “whole”, and “self”, when talking about their struggle with homoerotic feelings. By embodying their homoerotic feelings in the form of a lesbian identity, and acting on these feelings by moving into relationships with other women, Kulkarni (1987) reflects on the

“power that loving another woman has to propel us through life and towards a sense of self that we did not, could not, grasp in any other way” (p. 211). Her suggestion here is that grappling with their homoerotic sexualities as expressed through lesbian identities challenged these women to develop and grow in ways they might not otherwise have done. Kulkarni draws attention to the point that, that while Jung (1928) understood individuation as a natural process, he also stressed that it was a process *against nature*.

It is man's turning away from instinct that creates consciousness. Instinct is nature and seeks only to perpetuate nature, whereas consciousness can only seek culture or its denial. Even when we turn our back on nature, we cultivate nature (Jung, 1930, p. 388).

Individuation, Kulkarni (1997) reflects, “is hard work, work that goes against the grain, work performed from a site of resistance” (p. 211). Embodying homoerotic experience as lesbianism became, for the women in Kulkarni's study, an act of resistance for each of them, both within themselves (as a struggle with personal conflicts) as well as within their communities. Referring to Harding's proposal that lesbian relationships serve a collective purpose by their focus on the psychological aim of individuation, Kulkarni reflects on the “great courage required to follow the call of the unfolding psyche” (p. 211). Not having stereotypical role models on which to base their experience, a number of the lesbians in Kulkarni's study spoke of the need to create or “self-define” their own roles. As Kulkarni notes, “there are no safe cultural containers for these decisions”.

Links between Kulkarni's (1997) conclusions and those suggested by Carpenter (1914) are evident. He too was suggesting that, by not following cultural dictates regarding gender role and expectation, and through the subsequent tension created in the resultant marginal space in the lives of these shamans, many of whom embodied homoerotic sexualities in some form, new insights and discoveries emerged, allowing for the forward movement of the culture as a whole.

Kulkarni's conclusions reflect that, through a process of embodying homoerotic sexualities (as lesbian identity), homoerotic sexualities becomes a *site of resistance* against dominant

heterosexist cultural trends. The suggestion is not that the homoerotic sexualities have anything inherently extraordinary contained in them. Their power comes from their current construction as something “taboo” within the dominant culture. Lesbian identity, as an expression of homoerotic sexualities, becomes, like the archetypal *anima*, spokesperson “of the unexpected, of that which is ‘out of order’, which offends the prevailing order” (Samuels, 1985, p. 214). What gives homoeroticism its power regarding both personal and collective individuation seems to be its expression. A number of other theorists whose views provide support for Kulkarni’s (1997) conclusions will now be referred to.

Foucault’s (1978) vision of the power of homoerotic sexualities within the larger community reflects something similar to that suggested by Kulkarni (1997).² In a 1981 interview (quoted in Halperin, 1995, p. 67) Foucault reflects:

Homosexuality is a historic opportunity to open up new relational and effective potentialities, not in virtue of qualities intrinsic to the homosexual, but because the position of the homosexual ‘off-centre’, somehow, together with the diagonal lines which the homosexual can draw through the social fabric, makes it possible to bring to light these potentialities.

Foucault (*ibid.*, p. 99 – 100) concludes:

The gay movement has a future which goes beyond gays themselves. [It may include the possibility of a] culture in the large sense, a culture which invents ways of relating, types of existence, types of values, types of exchanges between individuals that are really new and are neither the same as, nor superimposed on, existing cultural forms. If that’s possible, then gay culture will be not only a choice of homosexuals for homosexuals. It would create relations that are, at certain points transferable to heterosexuals. We have to

² Foucault’s notion of “individuation” was decidedly opposed to “self”-realisation referring to “the locus of a unique and private psychological depth” (Halperin, 1995, p. 75). As Halperin explains, the self, for Foucault, was “a site of radical alterity; it is the space within each human being where she or he encounters the not-self, the beyond” (*ibid.*). Links are evident between Foucault’s notion of self, and the pluralistic image of a non-unitary dialogical “self” as an *experience* constellated within a space of multiple dialogues.

reverse things a bit. Rather than saying what we said at one time: “Let’s try to re-introduce homosexuality into the general norm of relations,” let’s say the reverse: “No! Let’s escape as much as possible from the type of relations which society proposes for us and try to create in the empty space where we are new relational possibilities”. By proposing a new relational *right*, we will see that non-homosexual people can enrich their lives by changing their own schema of relations”.

Empereur (1998), theologian and priest, argues that gays and lesbians who insist on directly living out their sexuality within the context of their spiritual lives are able to assist society in “overcoming . . . a dualistic understanding and experience of the human person, or society, and of our relationship with God” (p. 8). He notes, as already reflected in the previous exploration of the history of Christianity, that the history of Christian spirituality might be written by examining the presence of dualisms within Christian communities. He reflects:

I believe that when the history of spirituality in the twenty-first century is written it will show the many ways in which the gay experience will have enriched both theology and spirituality (Empereur, 1998, p. 8).

Empereur (1998) concludes that we need to look for new paradigms and examples of the integration of dualisms, many of which can be found, he argues, within the marginalised communities of lesbian and gay people.

Referring to shifts occurring in theology, particularly regarding a challenge to spiritual / sexual dualisms, Nugent and Gramick, (1989, p. 42) reflect:

If a paradigm shift is occurring in the churches and synagogues, then gay men and lesbian women will have an even more important part to play in helping explore, understand, and embrace that shift. If war is too important to leave to the generals, then spirituality and sexuality are too important to leave to theologians and hierarchical leaders.

With a movement in theology towards listening more closely and attentively to the *experiences* of life people report (Nelson, 1988), sexuality is able to move into the forefront of discussions of spiritual experience. The non-procreative nature of sexual experience between gay and lesbian people challenges theologians to engage with other visions of the meaning of sexuality within human experience. Theologians such as Elizabeth Stuart (1995), Audre Lorde (1994), James Nelson (1988) and Gary Comstock (1993), for instance argue, that gay and lesbian sexuality allows *companionship* rather than *procreation* to become a primary purpose of human sexuality. As Nelson (1996, p. 215) writes, “The human hunger for physical and emotional intimacy is of enormous spiritual significance. It ought not to be denigrated as unbecoming to the spiritual life. Thus theology has been giving new attention to the insight that sexuality is crucial to God’s design that creatures do not dwell in isolation and loneliness but in communion and community”.

A vision central to all the theorists mentioned above is the important role they believe gay and lesbian people can play in the collective individuation of our cultural context, paving the way for new ways of relating, beyond the dualisms which seem fundamentally entrenched in the patriarchal heterosexist order currently so powerful. As Kulkarni (1997) concludes, this locates people who chose, somehow, to express homoerotic sexualities, within *sites of resistance*. The processes by which homoerotic sexualities are embodied provide important challenges, both personally and collectively, to our contemporary Western culture.

4.3.3.2. Homoeroticism And The Refusal To Be Possessed By Normalcy

Kulkarni (1997) begins her discussion of the theme of “normalcy” regarding the experience of lesbian identity with a quote by Jung (quoted in Weaver, 1982, p. 93).

What I fear greatly and suspect greatly is normality. That is something people are trained to. It is like a tight lid. That is why I am afraid of the psychologists of today who have the idea of universal validity”.

Kulkarni (1997) goes on to discuss the work of Jungian theorist Charles Ponce (1988), who explores in some detail Jung’s (1928) notion of individuation, particularly Jung’s (1953) sense

that, when the collective dominants of a society begin deteriorating, a compensatory identification occurs with the “opposite” pole of the archetype. People who identify with this “opposite” pole become “the prophets and reformers” of a culture. (Jung, 1953, p. 36), and thus the “conduits for society’s individuation” (Ponce, 1988, p. 154, quoted in Kulkarni, 1997, p. 52). The point Kulkarni (1997) makes regarding the theme of “normalcy”, as something distinct, through obviously related to, the processes of individuation, is the following:

Lesbians, who by our very existence disturb established categories of gender and concepts of sexuality, represent a threat to, and a defining aspect of, collective values because we challenge the prevailing collective fantasy of “normalcy”. I believe this is another way of looking at the role and contribution of lesbians to the development of collective consciousness (p. 52).

Drawing from both Ponce’s and Jung’s work, Kulkarni (1997) reflects on the importance of a challenge to that which is “normal” in a society. It is these challenges, these theorists all argue, that prevent a culture from moving into decay. Identifying with that which is “abnormal” or “deviant” becomes an important way of preventing cultural stagnation. Kulkarni argues that women who express homoeroticism through lesbian identities serve this important function. What Kulkarni (1997) seems to be describing in this instance is one of the processes by which personal and collective individuation comes about.

Reflecting on the interviews she conducted, Kulkarni notes that many of the women in her study described a freedom they felt within their relationships to not subscribe to role stereotypes regarding “feminine” and “masculine” ways of being. Most reflected that this was a primary reason for choosing a lesbian relationship. As Kulkarni (1997, pp. 212 – 213) concludes:

Lesbianism, for [these women], is a “site of resistance” from the margin and against the concept of “normalcy” that rules as the centre of mainstream culture.

Choosing a site of resistance against “normalcy” takes one out of the mainstream, and locates one in the margins of life. *Marginality* as a site of resistance for the gay and lesbian movement has been written about in some detail in recent years (O’Conner & Ryan, 1993; Vaid, 1995; Bersani, 1995; Highwater, 1997; Kulkarni, 1997). Many have reflected that much of what is necessary for a culture’s growth, and what is necessary to prevent its stagnation, is to be found in its margins (Cotter, 1997; Cleaver, 1995; Samuels, 1993; Samuels, 1999). Empereur (1998, p. 9) notes:

We need to look for new paradigms and more examples of . . . integration. As various liberation movements have made plain, we usually find the clearest examples among those we call marginal or liminal, i.e. those people who are at the margins of society, whose lives are at the edges of the dominant culture, those whose identities are tendered ambiguous by the major institutions of the world, including the Church.

The vision a number of theorists articulate is no longer for gay and lesbian people, or women in general, to be offered a place in the dominant culture, but one in which, as expressions of resistance to the norm, an entirely new culture is created. Feminists (Stanley & Wise, 1990; Kulkarni, 1997), theologians (Timmerman, 1992; Ward, 1993; Cleaver, 1995; Stuart, 1995; Empereur, 1998) and writers within the gay and lesbian movement (Downing, 1989; Hopcke et. al. 1993; Vaid, 1995; Bersani, 1995; Highwater, 1997) write of the dangers inherent in the movement towards the acceptance of gays and lesbians. Being taken in fully by the dominant culture dilutes the radical power inherent in both the gay and lesbian experience, as well as in the experience of women. Stanley and Wise (1990, p. 44, quoted in Kulkarni, 1997, p. 28) write:

It is worth considering that revolution is best practised precisely from the margins, rather than from the mainstream where the temptation of assimilation, of keeping one’s head down and “getting on”, are so much greater Feminists should subject even half-desires to join [mainstreams] to careful scrutiny.

A danger which exists within the notion of marginality is its insider/outsider duality (Kulkarni, 1997). The arguments for locating oneself “within the margins” are not about a separatist notion of “us” and “them” (Ward, 1993). The vision is a larger one, in which a new context is sought in which both “us” and “them” can be relocated within an altogether different paradigm (Timmerman, 1992). The power of marginality, as a site of resistance, seems to lie beyond dualities, in which both spaces (inside and outside) are tolerated. As Kulkarni reflects (*ibid.*, p. 31), “we can hold the tension between being inside and outside without surrendering the power of conceptualising lesbianism as a site of resistance”.

Like Kulkarni (1997), Timmerman (1992) speaks of the concept of liminality, or marginality, as a *process* which initiates change.

As an essential middle stage by which one moves from external certainties, it is a situation of being able to live between the possibilities. Alternatives for future interpretations of oneself, not yet discovered, are multiple and undefined.

Ward (1993) writes of “boundary dwellers”, and reflects on the processes by which men and women instigate change and reshape boundaries by a paradoxical “denial of separation”. Rather than separating themselves from the larger culture, she argues that their power comes from their remaining within, yet at the same time expressing ideas which come from “without”.

The capacity to tolerate ambiguity and paradox seems central to the notion of liminality or marginality as a site of resistance. Fowler’s (1981) *conjunctive* process of meaning-creation, described in Chapter Three bears relevance. This is a process by which the world is engaged with by tolerating paradox, holding together seemingly contradictory elements. This also characterises the workings of the *transcendent function* (Jung, 1957) as well as Winnicott’s (1977) notion of *potential space*. The *transcendent function* and its relation to the embodiment of homoerotic experience will be discussed later in this chapter. What all these theorists and theories have in common is the notion that tolerating tensions, and a capacity to express seemingly opposing aspects or ways of being, constellates a psychological site of resistance in

which change, both internal (intrapsychic) and external (interpsychic) is initiated. A resistance to “normalcy”, through a liminality which is able to tolerate paradox, becomes an important site of resistance in which the dominant culture can be continually challenged and renewed.

The bridge between “normalcy” and expressing “other” and “the unexpected, of that which is ‘out of order’, which offends the prevailing order” (Samuels, 1985, p. 214) for many gay, lesbian and bisexual people is reflected or found in the process of “coming out”: openly declaring one’s identity as a gay or lesbian or bisexual person (Shallenberger, 1998). This experience of “coming out” will be discussed in together with the next theme identified by Kulkarni (1997), viz., homoerotic experience as “embodied soul”.

4.3.3.3. Homoeroticism And Embodied Soul

Again beginning her discussion with reference to Jung (1928a, p. 195), Kulkarni (1997) draws attention to the importance of the reciprocal relationship between body and spirit.

If we can reconcile ourselves to the mysterious truth that the spirit is the life of the body seen from within, and the body the outward manifestation of the life of the spirit – the two being really one – then we can understand why the striving to transcend the present level of consciousness through acceptance of the unconscious must give the body its due, and why recognition of the body cannot tolerate a philosophy that denies it in the name of the spirit.

Writing of the dualism so prevalent in our current thinking about sex and spirituality, Kulkarni (1997) reflects on the experiences of some of the women she interviewed.

Eileen, for example, spoke eloquently of the power of her sexual attraction to women, how it serves (whether acted upon or not) as the bonding element in her relationships with women. Sex with men, while physically satisfactory, has had no more impact on her than “a highly pleasurable athletic event.” It never had a spiritual component for her and it never brought the “more fundamental rapport” she has found with women, of the “sort of revelation” she has experienced in the erotic presence of women. (ibid., p. 214).

For many of the women in her study, discovering and exploring another dimension of their sexuality, often referred to as “spiritual”, seemed to have great significance. The experience is of tolerating a double taboo: expressing lesbian sexuality *and* locating spirituality within the experience (as an integration of sex and spirit).

Empereur (1998, p. 9) writes of the fragmenting dualism often so evident in sexuality in the spiritual context.

That we find it unimaginable that sexual intercourse can be a form of prayer comes home to me each time during a marriage preparation session when I ask the couple if sexual union will be part of their prayer. Some few indicate that it will; others seem puzzled by the question; some react with fear and even a kind of horror. Despite all the efforts made by spiritual writers and practitioners as well as feminists to overcome this dualistic approach we still lack the kind of integration of matter and spirit required if spirituality and sexuality are to become partners in our movement toward God.

Rafael, a gay priest whose story is reflected in the book *Reclaiming the Spirit : Gay Men and Lesbians come to terms with Religion* by David Shallenberger (1998), describes his own movement towards a more human and embodied experience of his spirituality. He speaks of needing to become “less spiritual”, and “more human”, and of relocating his spirituality within his humanity, rather than engaging with it as something “transcendent” (p. 36). He explains further:

The first time I encountered this notion was when I was doing a workshop around making some distinctions around spirituality, religion, and faith. And this one very tough-looking punk, in a cultural sense, said, “Well, you know for me, spirituality is about embracing my situation, embracing as fully as possible, the reality of AIDS, the reality of losses, NOT transcending them. Not avoiding them to get to the other side. One way of getting to the other side is

by embracing and passing through them, and that's been a lot more of my model" (in Shallenberger, 1998, p. 37).

As mentioned in the previous discussion about "normalcy", the process of "coming out" for gay, lesbian and bisexual people serves as a bridge between the "normal" and the "other". It at once labels one as "other", and a tension is constellated. It is also the point at which one begins integrating one's sexuality more fully into one's personhood. In a Jungian sense, it is the point at which the persona (the person one feels one ought to be for the world) is challenged by the deeper self/ves. Sexuality and spirituality (in its broadest sense) are placed together at this point, beginning an entirely new process of growth. The experiences and shifts emerging out of the processes of "coming out", particularly within a spiritual or religious context, are well documented in the literature (Shallenberger, 1998; Comstock & Henking, 1997; Bouldrey, 1995). As Kulkarni (1997) notes though,

Coming out is a process that we repeat daily, in every new situation, with every new person who comes into our lives – and this is done in the context of a culture which often seems fuelled by hate (p. 215).

Shallenberger (1998), in his study of the experiences of gays and lesbians in coming to terms of their religion, reflects on three "stages of spiritual experience" often centred on the events of "coming out" for gays and lesbian within a religious context. The first "stage" is often an experience of their religious institution as a place of "refuge" (p. 10). Feeling "different" among their peers, their church often afforded them comfort and a place in which they could feel less isolated.

For many of the men and women interviewed by Shallenberger (1998), the experience of "coming out", as the second "stage" of the process, proved to be dramatic. "Virtually every one of the participants pulled away – slightly or significantly, for a moment or forever – from the churches and synagogues of their childhood" (ibid., p. 10). Shallenberger reflects that for some this movement away from original religious institutions seemed unrelated to being gay or lesbian, but related rather to an "emerging discomfort with institutions they increasingly saw as

hypocritical, irrelevant, or otherwise flawed” (ibid.). Others felt hurt and angered by their experiences.

He goes on to note that the process of “coming out” seemed to be a “spiritual turning point” for many in his study (ibid., p. 11). This turning point is poignantly reflected in the reflection by one of the participants:

I think the first level of coming out to yourself is that level of facing the truth of who I am before myself and before God. And then I think the next piece would be, Now what? If I really live this, if I really live out my own inner truth, what price will I have to pay?” (Shallenberger, 1998, p. 11).

Shallenberger (ibid.) reflects that for each participant in his study, the process of “coming out” proved to be a significant “transitional moment” in their lives. For many it was a “deepening and acceptance of their identities”, and “a movement towards fuller integrity” (ibid). For others it was a difficult, painful, and guilt-ridden experience.

The third “stage” in the process identified by Shallenberger (1998) he refers to as “After Coming Out: The Journey Toward Integration” (p. 12). He reflects:

Virtually all the people who participated in this study reported going through a transition from an earlier inherited (and virtually never gay-affirming) religious tradition to a self-forged, responsible spirituality that incorporates their sexuality in a more positive light. In a sense, many gay men and women are forced to make this move by the judgments of the religious institutions that were a part of their lives” (ibid).

Shallenberger (1998) describes the process of embodying homoerotic sexualities as “a movement towards fuller integrity. He explains this by noting a comment made by one of the participants in his study: “It’s a step toward greater self-integrity to say, ‘This is what I am, and I accept that and embrace that’. In some ways – this has been a later realisation – I can almost see it as connected with the experiences the disciples might have had by becoming disciples of

Christ: that to follow a path that you believe has the most integrity for yourself sometimes puts you very much at odds with the prevailing society” (p. 11). This process of “coming out” as a full embodiment of one’s sexuality within the context of one’s identity, reflects, for Shallenberger, a journey by which a person reclaims his or her sense of integrity.

4.3.3.4. Homoeroticism And The Transcendent Function

Jung’s (1957) notion of the *transcendent function* was discussed in some detail in Chapter Three. To reiterate, it represents a three-stage process beginning with the tendency of the conscious mind to pursue something at the expense of other aspects of the psyche. As this pursuit gathers momentum, so does a compensatory response in the unconscious. A tension begins to emerge between ego consciousness and the unconscious. This tension must be tolerated, the challenge of ego consciousness being to hold both its over-developed attitude, and the unconscious counter-attitude within the same context. What emerges out of the tension is something which transcends present levels of ego consciousness, allowing for the experience of a new level of being. Its function is to facilitate a transition from one attitude to another (Kulkarni, 1997, p. 213).

Kulkarni (1997) suggests that lesbian experience can be understood as expressing aspects of the *transcendent function* in the way it challenges dominant cultural stereotypes (aspects of life which have been overdeveloped and relentlessly pursued) by expressing its unconscious counterpart. She explains further:

Unlike most heterosexuals, most lesbians are forced to face the questions of role and identity without recourse to culturally sanctioned models or norms. This, in turn, conceivably can force the individuation of the collective (as individual individuation does) because it requires an ethical confrontation / decision about whether / how to live one’s life: individually or in keeping with the mores of the collective (ibid., p. 55).

Reflecting on the results of her own study, Kulkarni (1997) notes the manner in which the women spoke of their experience of lesbianism as a “site of resistance” against heterosexist culture, speaking out thus for that which was not articulated or expressed. The processes of

change initiated by the expression of this function seemed ongoing in the lives of many of the women. Concluding her discussion, Kulkarni (1997) notes that no single archetypal image or series of images emerged to represent the processes of identity formation.

Timmerman (1992), in her book *Sexuality and Spiritual Growth*, reflects on the cycles by which change comes about. She notes three such cycles, each of which pertains directly to the manner in which Jung (1957) conceptualises the *transcendent function*. The first process, Timmerman notes, is “shedding taboos” (p. 87). This is a process in which previously held taboos are incorporated into consciousness, allowing them to coexist with “moral” structures.

For society the shedding of taboos along with growth toward interior spiritual awareness and moral responsiveness functions to promote tolerance. As a widespread phenomenon it may signal a shift from an oversimplified dualistic to a pluralistic mode of conceptualising the shoulds and oughts of human life. The shedding of taboos, ironically, is a precondition for unity in a pluralistic and crowded world (Timmerman, 1992, p. 94).

This first process links to the first phase of the *transcendent function*: it is a process by which complementary aspects of the psyche (as archetypal *shadow*, or simply as “other” / archetypal *anima*) come to the fore. The second cycle Timmerman (1992) refers to as “liminality”. Her conceptualisation of this space in which growth occurs was reflected upon earlier.

Without taboos, a person is faced with perhaps the most difficult moment in the dynamic of change : the acceptance of ambiguities. As an essential middle stage by which one moves from external certainties, it is the situation of being able to live between possibilities. Alternatives for future interpretations of oneself, not yet discovered, are multiple and undefined (p. 94).

The link between this second phase and Jung’s process of tolerating the tension between the “opposites” is self evident. The capacity to tolerate this dialectical, “potential” space is what paves the way for the “transition” or “shifts” which occur both personally and collectively

(Jung, 1957; Winnicott, 1977; Fowler, 1981). The final cycle Timmerman (1992) identifies in the process of change is “renaming” (p. 99). Out of a sometimes protracted period of liminality, a new role, or self-image, or conceptualisation of self emerges. In Jung’s terms, it is at this point that the transcendent function emerges fully, ready again to initiate further change.

Much of what both Kulkarni (1997) and Timmerman (1992) suggest seems linked to the entire discussion about meaning and function of homoeroticism within spiritual growth and individuation. It appears that all aspects already described interact as an expression of the *transcendent function*’s movement towards individuation, both personal and collective. At the risk of oversimplifying her argument, the processes may be described as follows. As homoerotic feelings move into consciousness, a struggle emerges between strong inner feelings, and an equally strong sense of the taboo nature of the feelings. This might be viewed as the first phase of the *transcendent function*. The second phase might be experienced as a protracted period of struggle, often resulting in a withdrawal from the dominant space of one’s life. It is a time in which the tension between dualities become increasingly evident. This process of tolerating the experience of permitting both aspects of the duality to express themselves allows, in the end, for the emergence of, in the case of the women in Kulkarni’s study, lesbian identities. As these identities are further embodied, often through the ongoing experience of “coming out”, the first phase of the *transcendent function* is expressed again, only this time also in the world, as a function of collective individuation. This cyclical process continues, each “coming out” experience both strengthening an inner capacity to tolerate paradox, while challenging and expressing that which is “other” (not “normal”) in society. The former serves to create the “potential space” in which individuation processes constellate, at the same time acting as a foundation upon which the latter finds expression. In this way, processes of personal individuation come to serve as catalysts for processes of collective individuation. This collective aspect of individuation was something central to Jung’s thought (1928).

This widened consciousness is no longer that touchy egotistical bundle of personal wishes, fears, hopes, and ambitions which always has to be compensated or corrected by unconscious counter-tendencies; instead, it is a

function of relationship to the world of objects, bringing the individual into absolute, binding and indissoluble communion with the world at large. Problems are now *collective* problems . . . The unconscious produces contents valid not only for the person concerned, but for others as well. The processes of the collective unconscious are concerned not only with the personal relations of an individual, but with his relations to society and to the human community in general (p. 178).

4.4 Summary And Conclusions

In this chapter the history of sexuality and its relationship with spirituality and individuation has been explored. The chapter began with an outline of Freudian and Jungian thought regarding human sexuality. Freud's theory in which he suggested a dual constellation of homoerotic and heteroerotic sexualities was described. Jung's theory in which he suggested a core sexual energy whose aim was essentially spiritual in nature was also outlined. Ricoeur's (1967) observation that the relationship between sexuality and spirituality through Western history has reflected three major stages was noted: the first, in which the two aspects were merged; a second, evident through the rise of the world's major religions, reflected the split; and a third, already evident, in which the two can again be brought together.

So-called traditional societies were explored, looking at the manner in which homoerotic sexualities found a place of legitimate expression, mostly as expressed by shamans and healers. Edward Carpenter's findings regarding the berdache and other shamans in which a high incidence of homoerotic sexuality was noted among these spiritual visionaries were discussed. Each of his conclusions were reflected upon. The first suggested that, rejecting cultural stereotypes, these men and women forged a way forward for the collective individuation of society. Many of the personal shifts they seemed able to make occurred, Carpenter (1914) argued, in the context of a liminal or marginalised space. The second conclusion related to the idea that their inherent spiritual power came from a "dual-engine" capacity to express both "masculine" and "feminine" energies. This latter conclusion was explored in some detail, and an alternative, non-gendered argument was presented by which the phenomenon could be understood. It was argued that the capacity of these shamans to tolerate dialectical space promoted their spiritual growth. Able to express "otherness" for their cultures, while

simultaneously remaining within the community, created vast potentials for growth, both personal, as well as collective.

The history of sexuality within a Christian context was explored. It was noted that dualisms were not evident from the onset, but developed later as a means of social control. These dualisms, particularly between spirit and body, men and women, came to be the cornerstone of a patriarchal heterosexist society. Sexuality was defined purely in terms of procreation. Any other forms of its expression, including masturbation, homoeroticism, sexual intercourse not aimed toward procreation, were deemed taboo. As sins, these were all acts open to confession. The state of sin was temporary. With the introduction and medicalisation of the terms “homosexual” and “heterosexual”, a new duality arose within Western thought. The struggle for many Christians was that, as a condition, rather than an act, homoerotic sexualities were no longer temporary states of sin. The condition was permanent. The only solution, as far as the Church was concerned, was total abstinence. In more recent years, the Catholic Church has reformulated its theology, suggesting now that “homosexuality” in itself is not sinful. Its expression remains an unnatural act.

During the twentieth century gay and lesbian movements emerged, often in the context of considerable contributions made by feminism. Gay and lesbian people started speaking out, demanding acceptance. As the feminist movement gained momentum, a new awareness began to emerge, which increasingly challenged these marginalised people, gays, lesbians, women, to reconceptualise their goals. What they began to ask for was not acceptance into the dominant culture, but for a complete change of the culture. In this context, gay and lesbian people have begun a process of speaking out within a spiritual context, increasingly claiming that their position, rather than being taboo and sinful, might indeed be the key for many spiritual traditions to begin finding renewal. Gay and lesbian people, and the experiences of women, are now being conceptualised as having the potential to assist many spiritual traditions overcoming the body / spirit dualism which has blocked its growth for centuries.

Looking at this very brief overview of the history of spirituality and sexuality, something important seems to emerge. Recall Empereur’s (1998) reflection, that “we can write the history

of Christian spirituality by examining the presence of dualisms in the Christian community” (p. 8). The final dualism which emerged, only this last century, is the one between “heterosexuality” and “homosexuality”. Viewing this event from the perspective of the psychological processes of the *transcendent function* just described, the processes of individuation within the realm of sexuality become all too clear.

Ricoeur’s (1967) observation regarding the three phases of the relationship between sexuality and spirituality has a further application. As has already been discussed in some detail, the *transcendent function* itself has three phases. Adding a further dimension, recall the alchemical images described by Jung (1955), in which the processes of growth were reflected in the images of a king and priest joined, then separated, then further differentiated, and then finally joined together again. These processes all seem to describe the collective individuation of the embodied soul. Sexuality and spirituality are merged, as priest and king, in the first phase of history. They separate with the rise of the world’s major religions, one becoming overdeveloped as a patriarchal, heterosexist ego consciousness, the other pushed into unconsciousness. This separation might be reflected by the second card in the alchemical series. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a further dualism appears, in which sexuality finds further differentiation. The third illustration in Jung’s alchemical series becomes evident. The *shadow*, the “other” (as *anima*) to sexuality is finally named, and the tension begins to move into consciousness. This marks the middle phase of the *transcendent function*. Feminists, and gays and lesbians, as they speak out this *shadow / anima* function, are required to tolerate the tension between an inherited patriarchal heterosexist ego consciousness, and another emerging consciousness, often only experienced through powerful physical erotic feelings towards those of the same sex. As they increasingly embody their sexualities, as often evidenced through the processes of “coming out”, and as they create space for their sexualities within their own or established forms of spirituality, gay and lesbian people increasingly give expression to the fourth illustration in the alchemical series: the coming together of their sexuality and their sense of *self*. As they then express it within their communities, it is likely, as Kulkarni (1997) suggests, that they come to embody the *transcendent function*. This is the vision many feminists, gays and lesbians are beginning to articulate. This is a vision in which marginalised people can finally begin fully articulating “the unexpected, of that which is ‘out

of order', which offends the prevailing order" (Samuels, 1985, p. 214), thereby challenging both society and its spiritual traditions into renewal, and transcendence. It is at this point that the fifth illustration in the alchemical series becomes evident. Challenging Jung's (1955) heterosexist interpretation of this final illustration, it was suggested that the woman's appearance in this illustration, rather than reflecting a "heterosexual" resolution, reflects the emergence of "other", as catalyst for the next process of differentiation, separation, and return, as a reflection of the ongoing way in which the transcendent function initiates change.

This interpretation suggests that the differentiation between "heterosexuality" and "homosexuality" at the turn of the twentieth century is not arbitrary, but part of a collective process of individuation. The manner in which people who are now increasingly *embodying* homoerotic sexualities as a way of speaking for undeveloped aspects of our culture, reflects, as Kulkarni (1997) suggests, a process of giving expression to the *transcendent function*, challenging "normalcy", and thereby creating conditions for the collective individuation of society at large.

This study is an investigation of the role homoeroticism might play in the spiritual growth of three priests. Having explored spiritual growth and individuation processes, as well as the relationship between spirituality and homoeroticism, as evidenced in the literature, an appropriate methodology for the current study will now be presented. Thereafter, a full data analysis will be undertaken, laying the foundation for a detailed discussion of the findings of this study. The final discussion will link Jungian theory with the results of the study, developing a Jungian understanding of the role of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth, and therefore the individuation, of the three priests participating in this study.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The function of any diagnosis concerning the nature of the present . . . does not consist in a simple characterisation of what we are but, instead – by following lines of fragility in the present – in managing to grasp why and how that-which-is might no longer be that-which-is. In this sense, any description must always be made in accordance with these kinds of virtual fractures which open up the space of freedom understood as a space of concrete freedom, i.e. possible transformation.

Michel Foucault

We must be able to let things happen in the psyche. For us, this is an art of which most people know nothing. Consciousness is forever interfering, helping, correcting, and negating, never leaving the psychic processes to grow in peace. It would be simple enough, if only simplicity were not the most difficult of all things.

Carl Jung

5.1. Introduction

As Richardson (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2) reflects, this post-modern era of social science research may be best characterised by the conclusion that no discourse “has a privileged place, any method a universal and general claim to authoritative knowledge”. Ivey (1997) notes that one of the consequences of this is that research questions posed are not predetermined by established research practices. “Rather, research methods are adapted or created to satisfy the demands of the research questions” (p. 230). The aim of this study is to explore the psychological role of homoeroticism as a *process* in the spiritual growth of priests. As noted in the review of literatures, very few theoretical constructions are available regarding this subject. Theories of psychological growth provide a foundation for understanding processes of growth. However, the manner in which the experience of homoeroticism might have an impact on this growth has not received wide-scale attention.

Qualitative research is described by Banister, et al. (1994, p. 4) as “the exploration, elaboration and systematisation of the significance of an identified phenomenon; [and] the illuminative representation of the meaning of a delimited issue or problem”. In the absence of available theoretical models by which homoeroticism might be understood as a process in psychological

and spiritual growth, the flexible nature of qualitative methodology seems most suited to the needs of this study. As the legitimacy of qualitative methods is well established in the literature (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), issues pertaining to qualitative research will be explored in a more specific manner in relation to the study at hand.

In this chapter the purpose of the study will be described. The process by which the research design was developed will be outlined, looking specifically at appropriate methods of data collection and analysis.

5.2. Requirements for this research

Because the study was envisaged as an exploration of the *role* of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth of priests, a research methodology was needed which could allow for an explication of processes and meanings, as well as an exploration of the notion of growth. It became evident that two areas would require exploration, viz., processes of spiritual growth, and the influence of homoeroticism on these processes of growth.

An overview of the literature regarding spiritual growth revealed the extensive research conducted by Fowler (1981) in examining processes by which spiritual growth occurred. He developed a faith development interview which provides a detailed examination of processes in spiritual development. It seemed possible to make use of his interview schedule as a means for collecting data by which processes of spiritual growth could be explored.

An overview of the literature reflected few theoretical constructs by which homoeroticism could be understood as a *process* in spiritual development. A methodology was thus needed which did not rely heavily on a pre-existing body of knowledge, but would instead provide a framework by which the issue could be explored with relatively few theoretical guidelines. In the absence of theoretical constructs, the sense I had that homoeroticism might play a role in spiritual development could not be easily formulated within a predefined set of hypotheses or questions. A research methodology was thus required which could allow for questions to be developed through the course of the research process, rather than requiring clearly formulated questions and hypotheses at the onset.

An overview of grounded theory research methodology (Glaser, 1992; Straus & Corbin, 1990) revealed its potential suitability for the study at hand. Stern (1994) suggests that grounded theory has its strongest application “in investigations of relatively uncharted waters” (p. 116). As she explains, “where no theory regarding a situation exists, it is impossible to test theory”. Charmaz (1994) writes that one of the fundamental aspects of grounded theory is its focus on and exploration of *processes* of social life (p. 98), offering “systematic approaches for discovering significant aspects of human experience (1995, p. 30). She explains further:

Grounded theory methods consist of a set of inductive strategies for analysing data. That means you start with individual cases, incidents or experiences and develop progressively more abstract conceptual categories to synthesize, to explain and to understand your data and to identify patterned relationships within it. You begin with an area of study. Then you build your theoretical analysis on what you discover is relevant in the actual worlds that you study within this area (1995, p. 27-28).

Grounded theory method therefore stresses discovery and theory development rather than reasoning which relies on prior theoretical frameworks. Questions and hypotheses are thus allowed to emerge from the process of research, rather than requiring a pre-existing framework of hypotheses on which to base the research (Charmaz, 1994). Hutchinson (1988, p. 124) notes that grounded theory draws on the philosophy of symbolic interactionism, where reality is viewed as “socially and symbolically constructed, always emerging and relative to other facts of social life”. Like Charmaz (1994; 1995), he conceptualises grounded theory then as a methodology which focuses on exploring the processes by which phenomena are constellated.

Charmaz (1995) goes on to note that a variety of sources of data may be incorporated into analysis using grounded theory methods. Stern (1994) notes that grounded theory analysis can be used for gaining a new perspective on data which is already familiar, allowing fresh insights to emerge out of pre-existing data.

It became evident that grounded theory had the potential to be used concurrently with Fowler's (1981) faith development interview. As a research methodology it seemed to fulfil the requirements for this study: (1) a methodology which did not rely on a pre-existing body of knowledge; (2) a methodology which focused on processes by which experience emerges in relation to the variety of factors in social life; (3) a methodology which allowed for questions and hypotheses to emerge through the ongoing processes of research.

The core principles of grounded theory will now be described, after which links will be made between grounded theory processes and Jungian theory. Fowler's faith development interview will then be outlined.

5.3. Grounded Theory

The notion of *discovery* lies at the heart of grounded theory method. As Hutchinson (1988, p. 124) notes, it is a process of "discovering first the world as seen through the eyes of the participants and then the basic social processes or structures that organise that world". In this sense, grounded theory strives to be interpretative, aiming at the discovery of meanings of phenomena in order to "understand the contextual reality of social behaviour" (ibid., p. 127).

A second feature of grounded theory is its approach to data. A fundamental premise of grounded theory is to let key issues emerge rather than to force them into preconceived categories (Charmaz, 1995). This is in contrast to traditional research design, which "is theory driven from extant theories in the field" (p. 47). In this sense, the research process *evolves*, rather than being completely structured and planned before beginning the data collection. Leads are thus followed which emerge from the data, rather than from an exhaustive review of the literature prior to data collection and analysis. Questions are then generated from the emerging meanings from the data. Charmaz (1995) concludes that the purpose of grounded theory is to develop a theoretical analysis of the data that is as sensitive as possible to the nature of the emerging data (p. 48).

Grounded theorists differ in opinion regarding the appropriate attitude to hold when facilitating the process of emerging meanings. Glaser (1992) suggests that by allowing meanings to "emerge" rather than "forcing" them, they will simply become apparent to the researcher.

Charmaz (1995) challenges Glaser (1992) on this issue, arguing that he does not take enough account of the role of the researcher. She goes on to outline a number of factors playing a role in data collection. In line with hermeneutic enquiry, she argues that meanings do not emerge outside the context of the interaction between the researcher and the researched (Charmaz, 1995, p. 35), but instead emerge out of the interaction between the two.

Your research questions and mode of enquiry will shape your subsequent data and analysis. That is why you must become self-aware about why and how you gather your data (ibid.).

Secondly, Charmaz (1995, p. 36) suggests that the researcher is often required to ask questions which can make meanings *more* explicit. “Glaser (1992) might say I force the data here by asking preconceived questions of it. Instead, I *generate* data by investigating aspects of life that the research participant takes from granted”. Again, she is suggesting that the role the researcher plays is more active than Glaser makes allowance for. Her suggestion is to bring the role played by the researcher more readily into awareness. Thirdly, Charmaz (1995) notes that the most important rule underlying grounded theory analysis is “study your emerging data” (p. 36). This includes transcribing audio-tapes personally rather than having a research assistant do it, thereby allowing one to be closely involved in all stages of the process by which meanings begin to emerge.

What a grounded theory process seems to provide are multiple readings through which questions can be formulated, allowing one to repeatedly return to the data for further readings, and the development of new hypotheses. Glaser (1994) describes a *constant comparative method* by which initial data are collected and analysed, leading on to the next cycle of data collection and analysis. The process ends when *theoretical saturation* is reached, at which stage there is no new knowledge forthcoming. Data are analysed using line-by-line coding procedures, through which categories are allowed to emerge, leading toward the explication of patterns and processes of meaning.

As is evident, grounded theory is not based on an *a priori* approach to research, which first constructs hypotheses and then implements the research accordingly. The research process is an organic one through which the processes of meaning gradually emerge. It is an approach which combines the gathering and analysing of data along with the development of research questions in an iterative process.

Data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with one another. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant is allowed to emerge. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.23).

Glaser (1992) summarises the approach by noting that grounded theory constitutes a theoretical formulation about a “substantive area under study” in which hypotheses are generated (p. 16). “That is all”, he concludes (ibid.). Testing or verification of the results is left to other’s interested in the field of study.

5.4. Grounded Theory processes and Jungian Theory

There are no formal links between Jungian theory and the processes of grounded theory. However, a number of features characteristic of grounded theory seem to reflect a common ground between the two theories. Firstly, the processes by which meanings emerge, from a grounded theory perspective, seems to mirror the dynamics of the *transcendent function*. Glaser (1992) stressed the importance of not forcing meanings, but rather waiting for meanings to emerge. Charmaz (1995) argued that meanings emerge in the interaction between the interviewer and the person being interviewed.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Jung (1939, in Jacobi, 1971, p. 298) described the process by which new ego conscious attitudes arise as requiring one to “wait for what the unconscious has to say about the situation”. As Kulkarni explained, “this is a ‘true labour, a work which involves both action and suffering’ (Jung, 1957, p. 121) and which has one overall purpose: the revelation’ of the potentially ‘whole’ personality” (1997, p. 186). Links between the “Jungian” labour of “waiting” for “revelation”, rather than finding a predetermined conscious solution, and

the grounded theory process of repeatedly returning to the data in order to allow for meanings to “emerge”, rather than forcing meanings, are evident.

In Chapter Three, similarities between the alchemical process and the dynamics of the transcendent function were pointed out. Charmaz’s (1995) suggestion that meanings emerge out of the interaction between interviewer and the person being interviewed furthermore seem to reflect the alchemical process by which something new emerges, after a lengthy process of *nigredo*, out of the interaction between two or more elements.

A second similarity between Jung’s work and grounded theory is the cautious, and provisional manner in which they each approach the enterprise of theory creation. Glaser (1992, p. 16) writes:

The research product constitutes a theoretical formulation or integrated set of conceptual hypotheses about the substantive area under study. *That is all, the yield is just hypotheses.*

Jung (1946, p. 9) writes:

Theories in psychology are the very devil. It is true that we need certain points of view for their orienting and heuristic value; but they should always be regarded as mere auxiliary concepts that can be laid aside at any time. We still know so very little about the psyche that it is positively grotesque to think we are far enough advanced to frame general theories.

What seems evident is that there are some similarities between both the processes by which Jung suggested new meanings were constellated within consciousness, and the manner in which grounded theorists suggest meanings emerge, as well as in the approaches each take in conceptualising theoretical constructs. In this sense it seems that grounded theory is philosophically well suited to an exploration of individuation processes.

5.5. Fowler's Faith Development Interview

The empirical foundations of Fowler's (1981) theory of faith development rests on 359 interviews conducted with participants ranging in age from young children to the elderly (p. 307). He provides a full description of his sample, its characteristics, together with a detailed statistical analysis of his findings (pp. 313-323). He concludes:

The data collected to this point is provided not to confirm or refute the theory developed herein. The data is in rough form, and we hope that we have urged the necessary caution and exercised the necessary restraint in our examination. It has been encouraging to find that the preliminary evidence does reveal the predicted pattern in this sample. It is impossible to determine, at this point, the extent to which bias and error account for the observations. These findings are offered to provoke thought and comment from the readers and to provide a glimpse at the evidence that does now exist (p. 323).

His work on faith development has subsequently found widespread application, particularly in the fields of education (Durka, 1991), theology (Dykstra & Parks, 1986; Wulff, 1997) and psychology (Wulff, 1997; Wilbur, 2000).

Fowler's faith development interview guide was used as the basis for his own research interviews. The interview provides a detailed framework for the exploration into the processes by which a person engages with and creates meaning in their lives. The interview comprises of four sections: A full life review, and exploration of life-shaping experiences and relationships, values and commitments, and experiences of spirituality and religion. The full guide can be found in Appendix A.

5.6. Foregrounding the research process

As mentioned in the discussion earlier, Charmaz (1995) emphasises the manner in which the research questions and mode of enquiry will shape the subsequent data and analysis. She concludes, "that is why you must become self-aware about why and how you gather your data"

(p. 35). Jung (1936,p. 150) was explicit about the influence of the personal context on a researcher:

Psychological premises exist which exert a decisive influence upon the choice of material, the method of investigation, the nature of the conclusions, and the formulation of hypotheses and theories.

In this section, three of my own “psychological premises” will be discussed. These include being gay, working as a psychotherapist, and working with priests in therapy who struggle with homoeroticism in a variety of ways.

I am a gay man. The way in which I have engaged with homoeroticism, and how I now construct it as an identity, influences the manner in which I experience myself, and my own spirituality. My own journey with my experience of spirituality is one which began when I first became aware of an homoerotic dimension to myself. That I should choose to explore this area at the interface between spirituality and homoeroticism reflects a significant aspect of my own journey. The influence of my own personal familiarity with struggling with issues pertaining to sexuality and spirituality reveals two contradictory issues relevant to this discussion. Firstly, my own experiences would have served as a template of sorts, prompting me to ask particular questions, and to ignore others. The ongoing supervision during the process of data collection assisted me in becoming much more aware of the “psychological premises” by which I orientated myself in the interviews. Secondly, being gay, and my own familiarity with the related spiritual issues, seemed to provide a context in which the three priests being interviewed felt able to more freely share intimate aspects of themselves and their lives. Talking openly about the intimate matters of sexuality and spirituality cannot but be exposing. At the end of the interviews when I thanked them for the depth at which they had shared themselves, two of the priest’s reflected that they had felt able to do so, knowing that I too am gay. Their sense was that I would “understand” their experience.

A second psychological premise influencing the research process is my work as a psychotherapist. I have been in practice for almost ten years. Jungian thought has formed the

basis of my approach to psychotherapy, largely because it allows me to work at the interface between psychology and spirituality. The influence of my work on the research process was evident in the manner in which I at times tried to engage therapeutically with each participant, rather than simply focussing on the questions at hand. My familiarity with Jungian theory also meant that there was always the danger of too quickly reframing, in my own mind, the experiences of the participants in theoretical terms, rather than “waiting” for their own “meanings” to emerge. However, my therapeutic familiarity with many of the issues did also allow me to approach the sensitive and sometimes painful nature of the material in a manner which could facilitate the discussion effectively.

The third premise that requires mentioning is that I work with a number of priests in my psychotherapy practice, all of whom struggle, on some level, with a homoerotic dimension to themselves. It was this experience that led me to begin formulating my ideas regarding the current research. That I had already begun engaging with the issues on a therapeutic level is likely to have had an impact on the manner in which I worded questions in the interviews, as well as on the manner in which I went about interpreting the data. As with being gay, and working as a therapist, this third premise serves both a positive and a negative role. Although it is likely that I had a tendency to “force” my own preconceived conclusions based on my therapeutic experience, my therapeutic work with priests also sensitised me to the many issues particular to the priesthood. This familiarity allowed me to engage with each participant at the level which might not otherwise have been possible had I had no prior experience working with priests.

As has become evident, the above mentioned premises locate my role as researcher within a paradoxical space. The aspects which are most likely to have biased the research are also the strengths which allowed me to engage more fully with the material. As Bannister et al. (1994) argue, attempts to avoid the subjective nature of research do not lead to objectivity. The challenge seems to be, in the end, to allow subjectivity to be “a resource, not a problem” (p. 13).

As meanings emerge, through interaction between researcher and the subject of the research (reflecting the dynamics of the *transcendent function*), so too meanings evolve out of the process

of research supervision, between researcher and supervisor. The supervisory relationship became the foundation of the research process for me, challenging my assumptions, and my personal biases, allowing the richness of the material, and of my personal contribution to the emergence of this material, to attain a fuller and more resourceful significance.

5.7. Research Questions

This research is an exploration of the role of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth of priests, and thereby also a study of individuation processes. As discussed above, the research comprised of two sections: 1) a grounded theory process by which the role of homoeroticism was explored in the lives of the three priests participating in the study; and 2) an analysis of faith development, using Fowler's (1981) faith development interview. The first question arose out of the grounded theory analysis. The second and third questions were asked directly in relation to Fowler's notion of faith development, and related to his faith development interview. The final question brought the Sections One and Two together, examining the role homoeroticism seemed to play in each priest's life.

Section One:

1) Are priests who experience and actively work at integrating the homoerotic aspect of themselves assisted thereby in their spiritual growth, and if so, how might this be accounted for?

Section Two:

2) Following Fowler's model of spiritual development, what processes characterise each priest's approach to meaning-creation in their lives?

3) Following Fowler's model, can the psychological work of engaging with and accepting homoeroticism be conceived of as serving an initiatory function in the emergence of new processes of meaning-creation?

Section Three:

4) What role does homoeroticism serve in the spiritual growth of priests?

5.8. Generating the Data

It was envisaged that participants for the study would be selected by approaching a senior priest in the Anglican Church who had been instrumental in setting up a post-ordination training facility for priests. He agreed to discuss the study with a number of priests he thought might be willing to participate in a study of homoeroticism and spirituality. He did not anticipate any difficulties in finding participants. Despite a number of requests, only two priests eventually expressed their willingness to participate in the study. A third priest, whom I had met at a meeting regarding the training and mentoring of priests, mentioned his personal struggle regarding socially assigned categories of sexuality and sexual orientation. After telling him about my study, he willingly agreed to participate.

On first meeting each priest, he was told that it was a study of homoeroticism and spirituality. The manner in which the interviews were to be recorded was discussed, together with a full reassurance of the confidential nature of the study. Their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time, together with the return of all data recorded, was emphasised. They were also informed that they would be provided with typed transcripts of the interviews for verification. Furthermore, they would also be given a copy of the relevant and related aspects of the results of the study for further comment. They each gave written acknowledgement of their willingness to participate in the study, indicating also their awareness of the nature of the study, together with their consent for the interviews to be recorded (Appendix C).

Data for this study take the form of transcripts of audio-taped interviews with three priests. Data regarding spiritual growth were collected using Fowler's (1981) *faith development interview guide* (Appendix A). Data regarding the priest's experience of homoeroticism were collected using a semi-structured interview (Appendix B). This process of interviewing, which moves between general experiences, feelings and meanings, and specific explanations, seemed best suited to the process of grounded theory research, in that it allows the phenomena under investigation to dictate the line of questioning. Tape recordings of each interview were transcribed by the interviewer. This is in line with Charmaz's (1995) suggestion that the researcher engage "in the data collection as well as the data analysis phases of research" (p. 35).

Although it was envisaged that Fowler's faith development interview and the interview regarding experiences of homoeroticism would follow on from each other, the experience of the interview itself proved different. A number of the questions from Fowler's interview guide resulted in a full exploration of experiences of homoeroticism. For example, when asked to divide their lives into chapters, and to describe the factors contributing to these changes, all three priests spoke at length about their experiences of homoeroticism, and its influence on their lives. Many of the questions which had been planned to form part of the second part of the interview, viz., the section dealing with experiences of homoeroticism, were spontaneously answered in response to Fowler's faith development interview guide.

The resulting interviews were thus largely based on Fowler's interview guide, including also a number of semi-structured interview questions allowing for further clarification of some of the issues (Appendix B). Each interview lasted approximately four hours, and, in order to allow for a full analysis of faith development as well as further clarification regarding issues pertaining to homoeroticism, each priest was interviewed twice. The data collected from each participant thus emerged out of an eight hour interview. The initial interview was transcribed before embarking on the second, allowing for further clarification of issues.

5.9. Data Analysis

Because many of the issues pertaining to homoeroticism emerged through the course of the faith development interview, a decision was made to analyse each interview using both grounded theory procedures as well as Fowler's (1981) faith development analysis. Stern's (1994) suggestion that grounded theory be used also to provide a fresh perspective on data seemed to support this decision.

The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed and analysed using the grounded theory method of open coding (Straus & Corbin, 1990). This procedure is referred to by Charmaz (1994; 1995) as "initial coding", and can be described as a process of "examining each line of data and defining the actions or events that you see as occurring in it or as represented by it (Charmaz, 1995, p. 37). As she explains, this initial phase is a process of "categorising and

sorting data. Codes then serve as shorthand devices to label, separate, compile and organise data” (1994, p. 97). Through this process, the data becomes more focussed.

The next phase, referred to by Charmaz (1995) as “focussed coding”, is a process in which codes which appeared repeatedly in the initial coding are used to create categories. “By categorising, you select certain codes as having overriding significance in explicating events or processes in your data. A category may subsume common themes and patterns in several codes” (p. 40). Through this process four themes emerged, each of which was formulated in terms of a question. Returning to the data again, now asking these questions, allowed for the potential of the emergence of more complex meanings. The aim of this process is to search for core categories “which account for most of the variation in the pattern of behaviour” (Glaser, 1992, p. 75). A model of core roles played by homoeroticism in the lives of the three priests in the study was then developed. The process is outlined in Table 6.1, and discussed in Chapter Six in section 6.2.

Grounded theorists recommend a final step in the process of data collection and analysis, viz., that of *theoretical sampling*. This is a process of taking a further sampling of other groups or events which might also contribute to enriching the core variables. For example, an exploration of priests not consciously experiencing a homoerotic aspect to themselves might have allowed for a comparison between the two groups, thereby contributing to an understanding of the processes by which homoeroticism contributed to spiritual growth. The limited prescribed scope of this research project precluded my engaging in this final phase. However, it is hoped that the model developed in Chapter Six will serve as a springboard for further research which might include such comparisons.

The limits of the study also meant that the data were not collected in a strictly iterative manner. This process requires one to return repeatedly to the same source until the issue under study has reached *theoretical saturation* (Glaser, 1992). *Saturation* implies that no new information is forthcoming from further questioning, at which point one moves on to the next participant or event. Each interview in this study was followed by a second, equally detailed interview, thus allowing for a thorough exploration of the issues. No further information seemed necessary in order to develop a thorough analysis of the issue under study.

Each transcript was also analysed using Fowler's (1981) faith assessment process (Appendix D). This process allowed for an examination of the interview transcript on the basis of seven categories of faith assessment. These include locus of authority, form of world coherence, symbolic function, bounds of social awareness, form of logic, perspective taking, and form of moral judgment. The questions used for the analysis of each category are outlined by Fowler (1981, pp. 241-257) and can be found in Appendix D. A summary of each aspect of faith according to these categories can be found in Table 6.2.

The data for this project were thus collected and analysed using a range of procedures, including those from grounded theory and Fowler's faith development assessment. This process of making use of a number of methods to fit the requirements of a study is in line with the suggestions by Miles and Huberman (1994), who recommend flexibility and an approach designed to fit the needs of each new research endeavour.

5.10. General Methodological Issues Related to the Study

5.10.1. Confidentiality

The sensitive and personal nature of this study has necessitated that particular precautions be taken in order to protect the identities of the participants. Names and identifying details have been changed. Each participant was provided with a transcript of their interviews reflecting these changes. They gave their full consent for what now appears in this thesis. The full interview transcripts are not included, in order to protect the privacy of each participant. The faith development analyses (Appendices E, F and G) provide a detailed account of each interview, including direct quotes taken from the interviews.

5.10.2. Criteria for Evaluating Interpretative Research Findings

The processes of qualitative research challenge traditional concepts such as reliability and validity. Moustakas (in Kulkarni, 1997) suggests that the focus of such research is not on "facts", but rather on the researcher's ability to comprehensively represent people's meanings. As Shapiro (1986, p. 172) reflects, "We are embedded in our cultural and historical situation. We are both subject and object in this human realm". In this sense, qualitative research moves away

from the notion to objective truth, and rather emphasises diversity of expression and meaning, allowing the findings of qualitative research to be but one expression of a multiplicity of meanings. This does not mean that data is approached with less rigour or precision (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 182) reflect, “discovery and verification are continuously interactive processes. As soon as an item of information is identified as salient in a local situation, it becomes immediately subject to scrutiny”. This approach resonates with Charmaz’s (1994) description of verification from a grounded theory perspective: “grounded theorists check their developing ideas with further specific observations”.

Glaser (1992, p. 15) notes that a well constructed grounded theory analysis meets four central criteria:

- *Fit*: if a grounded theory is carefully induced, its categories and their properties will fit the realities under study in the eyes of subjects, practitioners, and researchers in the field.
- *Work*: if a grounded theory works, it will explain the major variations in behaviour in the area with respect to incorporating the main concerns of the participants.
- *Relevance*: Glaser argues that if a theory works and fits, it has achieved relevance.
- *Modifiability*: A theory should “not be written in stone”. It should be readily modifiable when new data presents variations in emergent properties and categories. “The theory is neither verified nor thrown out”. Instead it is modified to accommodate an integration of new concepts.

In the current study, the issues were approached from the perspective of both the researcher, and the participants. The supervisory relationship added a further dimension to this process, allowing for further clarification of the emergent meanings. The participants reported to find resonance in the meanings identified by the research process. None expressed disagreement with the conclusions arising out of the interviews.

Through this interaction between the researcher and the three priests, as well as between the researcher and supervisor, which included a process of clarification during and between interviews, as well as engaging with emergent meanings between researcher, participants and supervisor, it is hoped that both *fit* and *work*, as criteria for grounded theory analysis, were met.

It is further hoped that through achieving the above, the criteria for *relevance* are also met. The hypothetical nature of psychological theories has already been discussed, both in relation to Jungian theory, as well as Grounded Theory analysis. Implicit then, throughout this study, is the notion of *modifiability*. The conclusions are by no means “cast in stone”, but serve only to provide one account for what seems to have emerged from the interviews with the three priests in this study. In this sense it is hoped that the conclusions can also serve as a springboard for further research.

The faith development analyses were also submitted to an interactive verificatory process of *fit* and *work*. The material was presented to a colleague familiar with developmental theory, and Fowler’s stages of faith development. She also has extensive experience in working with priests. Each faith development aspect was explored. Her conclusions supported those arising from the faith development analyses.

Although Chapter Five has been devoted to exploring methodological issues pertaining to this study, it should again be noted that the process of developing Chapter Six was an organic one, emerging out of the constant dialogue between methods and processes. Identifying distinct steps is relatively artificial in that it cannot take into account the dynamic manner in which the research process evolved. The processes discussed in this chapter will thus be given further amplification in the next chapter.

5.11. Summary

In this chapter, a number the research processes and issues pertaining to methodology have been described. Two methodological processes were identified for this study, viz., grounded theory, and faith development analysis. Each were introduced, paving the way for the processes of data analysis and the development of theory. A number of research issues were discussed, including notions of confidentiality, verification of data, and the criteria for effective grounded theory analysis.

What follows, in Chapter Six, is an interpretation of three interview processes. As Gergen (1989) reminds us, “the conclusions one draws as to a text’s meaning are fundamentally dependent upon

the shared understandings existing within the community of which the reader is a member” (p. 117). The meanings which have emerged, and which are described in Chapter Six, are situated within this context. An analysis of the same interviews, in another context, and at another time, is likely to reveal different conclusions.

CHAPTER 6

THE STUDY

In the serene world of mental illness, modern man no longer communicates with the madman . . . As for a common language, there is no such thing; or rather, there is no such thing any longer; the constitution of madness as a mental illness, at the end of the eighteenth century, affords the evidence of a broken dialogue, posits the separation as already affected, and thrusts into oblivion all those stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax in which the exchange between madness and reason was made. The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason *about* madness, has been established only on the basis of such a silence. I have not tried to write the history of that language, but rather the archaeology of that silence.

Michel Foucault – *Madness and Civilization*

6.1 Introduction and Outline Of The Research Process

In this chapter the results of the current study will be reported in some detail. The results will be described in three sections. The first section explores the process of the grounded theory analysis. Each interview, including Fowler's faith development interview, was submitted to a line-by-line analysis, using grounded theory procedures. Out of this exploration a number of questions emerged, each of which became the basis for a further exploration of each interview. The second exploration make use of a process of *focussed coding*, exploring common themes and patterns evident in the research interviews. The first research question emerged out of this process. A model in which core variables can be explored will then developed as an exploration of this first research question. The second section in this chapter analyses the interviews using James Fowler's *Faith Development Interview*. This analysis will be used to answer the second and third research questions. The final section summarises the results of the first and second sections, thereby serving to answer the final research question. Table 1 outlines the research process as described above.

6.2. SECTION ONE : GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS

The process of grounded theory analysis comprised of two steps¹. In the first step, the interview transcripts were analysed through a process of line-by-line coding (Appendix H). Themes emerging from this process were used to develop a series of questions by which the data were submitted to a further, focussed coding process (Appendix J). Out of this second process, the first research question found its full articulation. These steps will now be described in full, illustrating each aspect of the analysis with excerpts from the interviews.

6.2.1. Step One : Coding And Developing Questions

The initial grounded theory analysis of the interview protocols revealed four major themes common to each participant in the study (Appendix H).

- Each priest described what have been termed *pivotal experiences*, or events, which had an impact on his life. These are experiences or events which significantly influenced the manner in which he perceived and engaged with himself and his life.
- Each priest described an *ongoing process of conceptualising his sexuality* and its relation to his spirituality.
- Each priest described an *ongoing process of conceptualising his spirituality* and its relation to his sexuality.
- Each priest described an *ongoing process by which he experienced himself in relation to his sexuality and his spirituality*.

Each of these major themes were formulated in terms of questions which could be used to return to the interviews in order to making use of a *focussed coding process*. The questions which emerged from this initial process where as follows:

1. What are the pivotal experiences in each priest's life which have had an impact on their growth personally, and as priests?

¹ Warren, one of the priests participating in the study, gave permission for extracts of his interviews to be quoted in full. These extracts will be used to illustrate the process of grounded theory analysis, as found in Appendices H and J.

2. How did each priest conceptualise the homoerotic feelings he experienced, and how did this relate to his spirituality?
3. How did each priest conceptualise his spirituality, and how did this relate to his sexuality?
4. How did each priest experience himself in relation of his sexuality and its integration into his spirituality?

6.2.2. Step Two : Focussed Coding And Development Of First Research Question

What follows is a profile of each priest who participated in the study, together with a synopsis of the *pivotal experiences* reported by each of them. Significant biographical details will be outlined, together with any information deemed necessary for more fully understanding the experience of each priest. Questions which emerged from Step One will be used in order to explore the manner in which each priest has conceptualised his sexuality and its relation to his spirituality, his spirituality and its relation to his sexuality, and his experience of himself in relation to both sexuality and spirituality, looking particularly at factors which have contributed to these processes. The results from the process of *focussed coding* will be used in this discussion. An exploration of the similarities and differences between their experiences and forms of conceptualisation will then follow, serving to explore the first question emerging from the research:

Are priests who experience and actively work at integrating the homoerotic aspect to themselves assisted thereby in their spiritual development, and if so, how might this be accounted for?

Finally, categories and core variables will be outlined as part of the concluding discussion to this first question. Note that, for this section, quotes taken from the interviews with the three priests will be in italics.

6.2.2.1 Warren

God wants me to be everything that God created me to be.

6.2.2.1.1 Profile And Interview Setting

Warren is a thirty year old man of European descent. He was ordained as a Deacon in the Anglican Church six years ago, and then priested a year later. He is currently parish priest in a small town approximately an hour and a half's drive from a major centre. He defines himself as "a gay man", and as "a gay priest". He has been in a relationship with his partner for the past two years. Warren has a Masters Degree in Theology.

Warren's name was given to me by an Anglican Priest who headed a programme in the Church aimed at "in service" training for priests, with a particular focus on their psychological and spiritual well being. I had approached this priest about my study, and asked whether it was possible for him to speak to any priests who experienced a homoerotic dimension to themselves about the possibility of participating in a study exploring their sexuality in the context of the priesthood. He mentioned that Warren was particularly interested in the study I was conducting, and was very willing to participate.

I interviewed Warren in his home. He reflected, when we spoke on the phone to set up the meeting, that he felt more comfortable talking to me in that context than he would have in the Church setting. He also felt that we were less likely to be disturbed. He had gone to great trouble to ensure that the time would not be interrupted. We had two interviews together, each four hours long. Warren reported after the second interview, conducted three weeks later, that he found the experience very intense, and deeply moving. He felt that the questions asked by me had helped him articulate things in a manner he might never otherwise have thought of. My own experience of the interviews with him was very similar. I was often very moved by the frankness and openness Warren was capable of reaching within himself.

Warren presented himself in a confident manner. He wore his long hair tied neatly back. His shirt had pinned onto it a pink triangle, as well as an AIDS ribbon. He was casually dressed and engaged comfortably with me. He seemed genuinely interested in the study I was

conducting, and was always, despite the rather sensitive nature of the topic of discussion, very willing to share as openly and honestly as he could.

6.2.2.1.2 Outline Of Pivotal Experiences

Warren is the eldest of three children. He has a brother four years younger than himself, and a sister eleven years his junior. His father worked as a sales representative for an oil company, his mother a teacher. They moved often during his childhood, largely as a result of his father's work. Both his parents are still alive. His father was recently ordained a deacon in the Anglican Church.

Warren's early memories are characterised by a sense of being "*different*". He craved acceptance and approval during his school years, often needing feedback from his male peers as to "*what they saw*" when they saw him. He described himself as having been a very "*good*" boy, his parents "*pride and joy*". His relationships with his parents seemed to be rather formal and distant. There was never a sense of deep connection with either of them. He experienced his father as being very strict. He tried hard to please both his parents. His parents were very involved in the Church, their background being a "*charismatic, conservative, fundamentalist Anglican background*". This served as the foundation to Warren's early spiritual life. During the final year at school Warren became aware, within himself, of a need to rebel against the authoritarianism of his parents, and the school environment. Despite this growing need, he continued conforming to his parents needs and wishes.

Warren first became aware of homoerotic feelings at the age of 10 or 11, finding himself very attracted to a friend of his brother's. It was only some years later, at the age of 19, that he first linked the word "homosexual" with himself, and began to develop an identity based on this definition. He saw the word in a document he filled in at the onset of National Service, and it struck him then that "*this is what I am*". He experienced his National Service as a pivotal experience. It provided him with an environment which was devoid of the familiar rules characteristic of his family life, his schooling, and the Church. It was an environment away from his family, and one in which "*I was mixing with other guys who swore, who had sex with women*". Warren stopped going to church, he stopped reading his bible, and he began to

exercise his urge to rebel which he had already began feeling during his final year at school. He had his first sexual experiences with another man during this time. His response was an ambivalent one. *“Whereas I felt incredibly guilty, incredibly upset about it, really struggling with it, I always enjoyed it. I was breaking the rules, and that felt good”*.

The first year after the completion of his National Service, the year in which he began university, was one in which his involvement in the Church increased. An awareness or sense of “calling” to the priesthood, something which for Warren was already there during High School, became more evident during that year, and Warren finally made the decision, with the encouragement of a family friend, to begin his theological studies the following year. Movement into the university environment proved to be another pivotal experience for Warren. He was exposed to an environment directly influenced by the socio-political changes occurring in South Africa at the time. Nelson Mandela had just been released, and social transformation had begun taking place on a large scale. He found these changes very exciting. It was also during this year that he became aware of the existence of a gay organisation on campus.

The following year, a year which marked the beginning of his studies in theology, began what seemed to have been one of the most significant periods in Warren’s life. His theological studies challenged his “conservative” and more “fundamentalist” views of Christianity. His lecturers debated issues which had never been open for discussion before. He mixed with students who, though Christian, held radically different beliefs to the one’s held by him. His theological views regarding sexuality began shifting. What began as an outright religious condemnation of “homosexuality” was now being challenged. Theological perspectives allowed him to consider that homoerotic feelings were morally neutral. During the years at university, prior to his ordination as Deacon, and largely as a result of the theological challenges to his spirituality, Warren describes a lengthy and gradual process of *“acceptance of being gay”*. He also began spiritual direction during this time, and began exposing himself to self-awareness courses.

Feeling a need that the Church should know “who” it was ordaining, Warren made the decision to “come out” to the Bishop just prior to his ordination as a deacon. He also “came out” to his

parents and significant friends. The response he received was unanimous: *“It’s fine to be gay, but you are not allowed to practice your sexuality”*. Warren’s spiritual perspectives at the time supported this view.

The following year, this time just prior to his ordination as a Priest, Warren made the decision, in the context of ongoing spiritual direction, academic study, and personal reflection, to explore a “gay” relationship. He met his first partner.

Warren’s relationship was soon reported to the Bishop. Reprimanded for his decision to not remain celibate, Warren was sent to an outlying parish, an hour and a half’s drive from the city he had lived and studied in. Warren’s sense of this is that he was being “punished”, and that the Church was trying to undermine his relationship by ensuring that he could not have regular contact with his partner. The relationship ended some months later. Despite Warren’s anger about this experience, he reflects that his sense of the relationship is that it was one which probably wouldn’t have lasted. The experience did, however, spur Warren to becoming more invested in the study of “homosexuality” and the Church. During the following year he explored one or two casual relationships, before meeting his current partner.

Warren was again reported to the Bishop later that year, for dancing with his partner at a private party. He was again reprimanded. Due to take up the position as parish priest in a nearby small town parish, Warren was “demoted”, and allowed to go to the parish as “Priest-in-Charge”. This he did, under considerable protest. He maintained his relationship with his partner, and made the decision to “come out” to his parish council, and then the parish. Later that year, the parish as a whole approached the Bishop and requested that Warren be made Parish Priest. The request was accepted, and, some weeks before my interview with Warren, he was formally installed as Parish Priest.

Warren presently defines himself as “a gay priest”. His relationship with his parents is a strained one. They are aware of his relationship with his partner, and do not approve of it. Warren’s relationship with his father has deteriorated, the distance between them having increased over the years. They differ vastly on theological issues. Warren’s sexuality is not

referred to, nor is his relationship with his partner spoken about. Warren experiences a deep sense of alienation from his parents. He still, however, feels a strong need to gain their approval, and tries to maintain contact with them.

6.2.2.1.3 Conceptualisation Of Homoeroticism And Its Relation To Spirituality

A process of *focussed coding* of the interview with Warren reveals a number of ways in which he has gone about conceptualising the homoerotic feelings he experiences. This process will be outlined, with particular reference to factors which seemed to contribute to the manner in which he conceptualises his sexuality.

1. Warren first conceptualised homoerotic feelings as pertaining to an identity referred to as “homosexual”.

I remember [when I went into the army] we had to sign all those damn pieces of paper. A will, and medical stuff. One of the questions was “Are you homosexual?”. I said “no”. I think then was the first time I actually heard the word. And, while I wrote “no”, I said “yes”. I realised that when I filled in that piece of paper, I realised that this is what I am.

2. His first response to homoerotic feelings he experienced were based on the spiritual perspective he had been raised with. He conceptualised the feelings in spiritual terms as being wrong.

Showering with other boys [in the army]. I think it was at this stage where I began to notice my attraction to other men.

In terms of my spirituality I felt that [these homoerotic feelings were] out, this was not right. My spiritual background up to that point had really been a charismatic, conservative Anglican background. And where I felt comfortable with that spiritual expression, it didn’t allow me to feel comfortable with being gay.

3. The idea that his homoerotic feelings in themselves might be morally neutral began to take hold during the initial years of theological study at university. The awareness of a gay organisation on campus also served to reinforce the idea that being “gay” in the world could be legitimate.

And sometime in those first couple of years [at university] I think I was beginning to say to myself, maybe being gay is not a problem, is not wrong. There was still a problem with the expression of my sexuality, but just being gay was beginning to feel alright.

4. During the years of theological study, in the context of ongoing spiritual direction, and an interest in psychological (Jungian) self-awareness courses, Warren came to define for himself an identity as being “gay”. It was in this context, just prior to his ordination as Deacon, that he made the decision to “come out” to the Bishop, and his family and friends.

At that time, just prior to my ordination, I did the Myers Briggs, I did the mentoring program with Matthew (spiritual director), I started spiritual direction. And through that process, [and] through academic, there was a coming out to myself, being gay. I could accept myself being gay.

5. The response Warren had to “coming out” reinforced the perspective that homoerotic feelings were morally neutral, but homoerotic sexual acts were not biblically acceptable. Warren felt largely reconciled to this, as it supported the religious beliefs he held at the time.

They said “It’s fine to be gay, but you are not allowed to practice your sexuality”. And I was alright with that, because that’s where I was at the time.

6. A shift in Warren's perception and experience of "God", largely as a result of his theological studies, the experience of lecturers challenging biblical texts, ongoing spiritual direction, and powerful sexual impulses, led to a slow process of beginning to combine his experience of his sexuality with what he perceived as being sacred. He began to conceptualise "being gay" as something "God made me". Warren recognised this as an "informed choice" he could make, based on what he now knew, theologically, and in the way he personally experienced being "gay". And in this context, further enhanced by increased openness to, and acceptance by, friends regarding the experience of his sexuality, Warren made the decision to explore a gay relationship. This he began just prior to his ordination as Priest.

Theologically speaking, God is everything and God is everywhere, but spiritually, God is as big as we, as I, allow him to be. And as I've grown in that and come to understand more and more, as I've read and experienced more and more, so my awareness of God is huge . . . As my awareness of myself grows, so my acceptance of myself grows. If I keep God in a little box that is small and narrow and contained, so I'm going to keep myself in that same box, because I can't be bigger than God. And as I take God out of that box and allow God to be everything that God is, so I take myself out of the box, the box imposed by society, a box imposed by my parents, and a box imposed by myself, and I can be everything that I am. And that's surely my theological understanding. God wants me to be everything that God created me to be.

7. A number of conflicts with the Church regarding Warren's decision to express his sexuality openly within the context of a relationship shifted his theological interests into the arena of sexuality within the Church. He found himself progressively needing to speak out for what he felt to be the marginalized aspect of the Christian religion. The embodiment of homoeroticism through a chosen identity as a Gay Priest became a vehicle for locating himself consciously within the margins of society, as a challenge to the dominant

culture. This became a powerful manner in which Warren now conceptualised his sexuality.

Talking to a Bishop regarding the outspoken manner in which he deals with his sexuality, Warren replied: *When you stand on a platform you speak as a black man, people can see it. When I stand up and speak, I speak as a gay man. Now people can't see that, so that's why I talk about it. I refuse to allow it as a tool to keep me quiet. In terms of the structures of the Church, if I have any role, [it] is challenging the status quo.*

I'm a gay priest. That is the experience that I have. My sexuality is an integral part of who I am. And my priestly ministry, if it's going to have any value whatsoever, is going to have to flow out of who I am.

8. Ongoing spiritual direction, theological study, and encouragement from colleagues as well as active gay and lesbian men and women in the ministry increasingly challenge Warren to continue locating his sexuality within the context of his spirituality. Warren conceptualises his sexuality as an integral part of his spiritual development, and as an expression of greater wholeness, personally and as a priest.

I haven't always felt free to allow elements of my sexuality to influence or be seen in my priestly ministry. And that was problematic, because, in a sense, I was restricting my sexuality, hiding my sexuality in terms of my priestly function. And my priestly ministry was the poorer for it. I was trying to be the best priest I can be, but couldn't because I was hiding a part of myself within that ministry.

9. Warren conceptualises his sexuality in spiritual terms as an expression of diversity within the world.

*Gay people might represent elements of [the] creative diversity of God.
If they as homosexual or bisexual people suppress their sexuality, what
they are doing is suppressing the creative diversity of God.*

The journey with his sexuality has been one in which Warren has shifted from a perception of homoeroticism as being “not right”, “evil”, and a “curse from God”, to it now being the direct expression of Warren’s experience of “God”. As is very evident in this process, Warren’s experience of his sexuality, and the manner in which he has, and continues to, engage with it, is inextricably linked to his spirituality. Warren seldom talks about his sexuality outside the context of his spirituality. A complex relationship exists between the various factors which have influenced his experience of his sexuality. These factors included persistently strong homoerotic feelings, theological studies, spiritual direction, socio-political changes in the country, mentoring from colleagues, and the response of the Church to his outward expression of his sexuality.

In this section, the processes of change that has occurred in the way in which Warren conceptualises his sexuality have been outlined. The factors which have contributed to these changes have also been highlighted. The discussion will now turn to Warren’s conceptualisation of his spirituality.

6.2.2.1.4. Conceptualisation Of Spirituality, And Its Relation To Homoeroticism

The processes and means by which Warren has conceptualised his spirituality will now be explored. As with the manner in which he conceptualised his sexuality, both the processes and factors which contributed to his experience of his spirituality will be discussed.

1. Warren’s spiritual heritage has its roots in “a charismatic, conservative, fundamentalist Anglican background”.

2. His early images of “God” are characterised by images of compliance and authoritarianism. These were images reflected to him by his family, and by his experience of the Church.

God, for me, a number of years ago, school, army, was always a father figure, a disciplinarian, who gave me, or has given us, rules to live our lives by. And heaven help us if we messed up. So that was my image of God: loving but authoritarian, [who] really did everything he could to make sure you couldn't enjoy life. That's what I grew up with, that's the image the Church instilled in me at that time.

3. An increasing need, evident already during his final year at school, to rebel against the rigid, authoritarian world created by his experience of his family and the Church, became stronger as he shifted contexts. Moving out of his home environment, and into a more permissive environment during National Service, had a profound influence on him. This new environment, out of the context of both his family, and the Church, didn't seem to care much for the rules of Warren's inherited world view. The experience hinted at the possibility of another world view, one which could potentially be more personally constructed.

I was out of home, mixing with other guys, who swore, who had sex with women. This was totally new to me. It was something completely and utterly beyond anything I had ever experienced. I didn't go to church, I didn't read my Bible, and it was just a chance, in an incredibly strict world, to let go, and bloody hell, to do what I wanted to do. And I did.

It was in this context that Warren had his first homoerotic sexual experiences. Despite the guilt he felt, the sexual experiences became a vehicle for rebellion against the world order Warren had inherited.

Whereas I felt incredibly guilty, incredibly upset about it, really struggling with it, I always enjoyed it. I was breaking the rules, and that felt good.

4. Moving into the university environment initiated the unfolding of a profound disillusionment of Warren's inherited world view. What began during National Service found greater momentum. A number of external factors influenced him in this regard:

- The university environment exposed Warren to a new socio-political environment in South Africa (a radical shift from one world view to another, as reflected by the release of Nelson Mandela and the collapse of the Apartheid Regime).
- He became aware of the presence of a gay organisation on campus. He did not feel able to join it, as "spiritually" he felt it to be "wrong". He was, however, aware of its presence as something which challenged the dominant culture.
- The presence of the End Conscription Campaign (an organisation opposed to the conscription of white males for the purposes of fighting against liberation in South Africa) also provided Warren with an experience of the possible legitimacy of opposition to a dominant culture.

Going to university was an absolute eye-opener. Nelson Mandela was released. You could sense, you could feel the changing at university. Mixing with people of a different race as equals. You could sit in a lecture, and just everyone was there. It was really just incredible.

5. The decision to follow his deepening sense of "calling" into the Priesthood, and begin his studies in theology initiated a process of profound change in the manner in which Warren conceptualised his spirituality.

- Theological study gave Warren access to an alternative world view, one in which it was spiritually acceptable to challenge authority and the dominant cultural and religious thought of the day.

For the first time ever [I] was actually being sceptical about what I read in the bible, about what I believed, and how I express[ed] that belief of mine. It was as if, through this academic study I was doing, God was peeling away layers of ignorance, of blind acceptance, of simple acceptance that I had been brought up with. Those years of studying were the most liberating experience of my life.

- Lecturers served as powerful role models for engaging in the radical process of debating and challenging the Bible as an ultimate authority. They also dared to challenge the South African political context from a spiritual perspective.

Hearing lecturers, now these are professors, and doctors, and the rest of it, tearing into [St] Paul, and just ripping him to shreds. And that other [text], about “Governments are God blessed”. It was overwhelming.

- Warren’s awareness now that the status quo, be it the Church, or the government of the day, could be challenged, paved the way for the realisation that he could legitimately begin creating an alternate world view. He began finding scriptural images which resonated with his own growing consciousness of not fitting comfortably within the dominant culture. These scriptural precedents became a powerful foundation on which Warren began creating a completely new spirituality for himself.

As the Jewish Christians were kicked out of the synagogues, they had to create a world view in which they could operate, because they could no longer operate within the Jewish world view. And so they created the world view which is reflected in the Gospel of John. And so, over that 3 year period [at university] I moved from one world view into another one, partly that had been painted for me by lecturers, but partly that I also

began to create for myself. And so, I continue to create a world, universe, a belief, a God, in which I am everything that I can be.

Because I was aware of the historical context in which the life of Jesus took place, I see the complete radicalness, the otherness, of the way Jesus lived his life. A Jesus who is so radically different to the stereotypes, the traditions, the expectations of the day.

6. In the context of the university environment, his theological studies, beginning spiritual direction, and an ongoing struggle with homoerotic feelings, Warren's perception of "God" shifted from an authoritarian, disciplinarian image to something more deeply personal and accepting. As his perceptions of God changed, so his perceptions of himself and his sexuality changed.

I can't tell you what came first, the acceptance of myself as being gay, or the acceptance of God as a loving God, that allowed me to accept myself. I can't tell. They are so intermingled that I can't separate them. I read a book by Henri Nouwen. I found him incredibly useful. And at the same time as I started reading that book, I started spiritual direction. And at the same time as starting the book and starting spiritual direction, I was coming to a place of accepting my homosexuality, my sexual orientation. That acceptance was through my academics. My spiritual direction helped me to see the conflict between my spirituality and my sexuality as being closely tied. My academic work and awareness of coming to terms, at least academically, that there was nothing wrong with homosexuality and the expression thereof. And so the journey brought these three elements together (spiritual direction, academic study, and struggle with sexuality), and it was out of this cauldron, that turmoil of the time, that I began to appreciate different aspects of God. Not that I threw out the old judgmental authoritarian disciplinarian pictures of God, but I began to become aware of other pictures of God. God as mother, . . . a God who

could accept . . . And because of these other pictures, because of spiritual direction, because of academic work, I was beginning to relate these things together, and not consider them as separate entities. I was beginning to integrate my academic work into my spiritual life, into my prayer life, I was beginning to integrate these other pictures into my prayer life, into my spiritual life, and so, over the space of about three years or so, these things became more and more integrated, and so the picture that I have of God grows out of the process of integration.

7. It was in this context that Warren's conceptualisation of his spirituality and of "God" now was able to tolerate and incorporate his experience of his sexuality.

It was a choice to accept that God had made me gay.

A number of factors contribute to and reinforce the process of repeatedly locating his sexuality within the context of his spirituality:

- Conflict with the Church regarding the relationship Warren had embarked on resulted in an intensification of his academic studies about "homosexuality" and the Church. The issue now also become a politicised one for Warren, a matter of "justice". Further criticism and a punitive response by the Church led to a deepening of Warren's quest for "justice" for, and acceptance of, practicing Gay and Lesbian Priests within the Church.
- Ongoing spiritual direction as well as continued mentoring by a colleague in the Parish in which Warren worked prior to his current posting reinforced for Warren the importance of not separating his sexuality and spirituality.
- Role models in the form of a lesbian couple, one of whom is a priest, supported Warren in his growth as both a practicing gay man and a priest.

- Moving into a committed gay relationship challenged Warren on a personal level to live out the experience of uniting his sexuality and his spiritual beliefs.
- The ongoing process of “coming out”, first to family, and the Bishop, and then to friends, and parishioners.

8. Warren conceptualises his spirituality as an integral part of his sexuality.

The tool that I’m using is my priesthood. The motivation behind it, the beingness from whence it comes, is my sexuality. Being a priest, and being me as I’m being a priest, is important. My whole ministry is about this.

When I stand up and speak, I speak as a gay man. All these things are who I am. My ministry flows out of that, and [that] impacts on my ministry.

When someone comes to me and says “What does God say about sex before marriage?”, I say to them “God doesn’t say anything. What do you say, what are your reasonings, because that’s where God speaks. Not in some law or tradition handed down for X generations. It might be correct today, to tell your daughter no sex before marriage, but tomorrow the situation is different, tomorrow the world is different, tomorrow your daughter is different. And so the answer should be different.

The movement in Warren’s spiritual journey has been a shift from an objective, rule-bound conceptualisation of his spirituality, to a deeply subjective one which is constantly being co-created at the interface between his experience of himself and the specific context of the world in which he locates his experience. His experience of, and the manner in which he has gone about conceptualising his sexuality is evidently deeply related to his spirituality. His sexuality, and the manner in which he has chosen to engage with it, has been a very vital part of the process of change in his spirituality. It would not do either his sexuality or his spirituality justice to speak in terms of *causes*. The processes involved in influencing the shifts and

changes in each are complex. Each aspect of Warren's experience clearly influences the other. Warren does not find it possible to talk about his spirituality without talking about his sexuality. As was concluded at the end of the previous section, both processes seem inextricably linked in the way in which Warren's approaches his life.

The discussion will now turn to the manner in which Warren *experiences* homoeroticism in relation to his spirituality. This will add a further, experiential dimension to the discussion, providing insight into what it *feels* like for Warren to engage with homoerotic feelings in the context of his spirituality.

6.2.2.1.5. The Experience of Self in Relation to the Acceptance and Integration of Homoeroticism into Spirituality

The grounded theory analysis of the interview reveals two levels of experience of homoeroticism evident in Warren's interview. First, the experience of homoeroticism, and second, the experience of the acceptance and appropriation of homoeroticism. Warren makes a clear distinction between these two aspects of experience. What follows is a description of the various ways in which Warren has experienced himself through the course of his life, with particular reference to his experience of himself in relation to his sexuality and his spirituality. Two dominant themes are evident in Warren's life, creating a tension around which much of his journey occurs.

1. A dominant theme, evident from early on in Warren's life, is his experience of marginality.

Looking back on his life, Warren reflects that "I can see myself as someone different to everyone else".

2. A second dominant theme characterising Warren's experience of himself as a child was the powerful need for acceptance and approval.

I always needed the approval of other guys. I remember the head boy. I would write little notes, and stick them in his school bag, saying “What do you think of me?; How do you view me?”, that kind of thing. When he gave me his approval it was nice, but when he didn’t, I thought “What do people see?; What do people see me as?”

3. Urgings from within himself to rebel against an authoritarian, rule bound world of parents and Church, allowed Warren to experience homoerotic feelings as a form of rebellion, even though he also experienced them as “a sin, a curse from God”.
4. Supported by various contexts, including National Service, and then the university, the new socio-political context in South Africa, theological study, lecturers, spiritual direction, and colleagues, Warren’s perception of his world changed radically. As his theological views changed and developed, so the experience of his sexuality as being “a curse” began shifting. Warren describes the experience of coming to terms with his sexuality in the context of his spirituality as a process incorporating a range of processes and feelings:

- A struggle, characterised by tension and conflict.

At the beginning, when I was ordained, the experience was an experience of tension, of responding to a call of God, and being gay, and I couldn’t bring them together, and that tension was very debilitating in many respects.

- A growing awareness of the destructive nature of keeping his sexuality hidden.

I haven’t always felt free to allow elements of my sexuality to influence or be seen in my priestly ministry. And that was problematic, because, in a sense, I was restricting my sexuality, hiding my sexuality in terms of my priestly function. And my priestly ministry was the poorer for it. I was

trying to be the best priest I can be, but couldn't because I was hiding a part of myself within that ministry.

- a very gradual process of integrating the experience of homoerotic feelings into experience of spirituality and role of Priest, and a realization of it's capacity to enhance the priestly ministry. "Coming out" to his parishioners was a vital aspect to this process of integration.

As I began to allow more and more of my sexuality to be displayed in my priestly ministry, so my priestly ministry has been enhanced. Now that doesn't meant that I'm a raving a queen when I'm dressed up in my robes, and things like that, that's not what I'm saying . . . But I'm being, in my priestly ministry I'm being more and more natural, being more and more me. It's a process at the moment of reflecting on my own experiences as a gay man, and taking these experiences into my priestly ministry. So, when I'm preaching, for example, I will use reflections on my own life in my sermons.

- An often traumatic, agonising process of creating and moving towards a "new order" in which to locate an identity as both gay man and priest. Warren chooses to remain within a context which provides him with an ongoing challenge to tolerate living continually within a tension created by actively placing his ministry and his sexuality together. In doing this, he functions continually within a context of "coming out".

And my priesthood, even though I was studying for the priesthood at the time, that movement caused endless tension, the continuing movement towards ordination, because the only image that I had of being a priest was an image from the world view in which I grew up. I was moving out of it and I began thinking to myself, "am I really going to be a priest?" "Is there place for me to be a priest in this new world order?" And so, I

began to create that space. It was a long [journey]: the tension between expressing my ministry as a priest and my sexuality, initially in those years was traumatic, and, with the work that I did [in spiritual direction], to bring together my spirituality and my sexuality, and I found that it worked, that there was a place for me in this new world order. A lot of tension in those years, as I took those steps. One slow agonising step after another, from one world view to another.

That's why I chose to remain where I am, because it's not so much that I'm comfortable, it's not always that I'm comfortable, there's a sense of challenge, dynamic movement, and change and growth, talking about the "not the same tomorrow as I am today" idea. This is the world view in which I live and operate at the moment.

- An ongoing experience of vulnerability and tension.

There is a sense of vulnerability. To be out is to be vulnerable, to be out is to take risks, to be out is to actually put myself in a place where I can expect some kind of ugliness, some kind of oppression, some kind of comments to be passed. Being openly gay, living a gay life, living my life, puts me in a place of vulnerability, expecting harm and hurt. It is an ongoing sensitivity.

Warren's current experience of homoeroticism in his world is characterised by a number of factors. He identifies himself as being "gay", and expresses his identity in terms of being a "Gay Priest". Warren makes a distinction between the experience of homoerotic feelings, and the experience of acknowledging and accepting these feelings. The homoerotic feelings themselves seem to hold no particular power for Warren. For him, it has been the challenge of the acknowledgement and acceptance of these feelings within a context and a society which is largely intolerant that has allowed him to make the shifts in his spiritual life. He experiences

this process of acknowledging and coming to terms with homoerotic feelings as having played a powerful transformative role in the shifts he has made in his spiritual life.

The discovery and acceptance of being gay is as integral to my life as my belief is, as my faith is. I suspect that the journey, the process would have been different, in the sense that I probably would have stayed in the more charismatic and conservative mould of the church. To imagine Warren not being gay . . . I don't know if I can do it. It scares me, but I'd probably be another, younger version of my dad.

6.2.2.1.6 Commentary

Warren's experience of himself, and the process of movement through what is often characterised as a struggle, is a complex and rich one. From the onset his experience of himself and his context is that of "other", someone who does not easily fit in, someone who is not familiar with the world in which he is born. His experience is such that he does not resonate with the world as it is constructed. There are few familiar landmarks, few role models for identification. There is little that mirrors his experience of himself back to himself. And yet, in tension with this experience of marginality, is the powerful need he has for acceptance, and approval. He works hard for this, despite locating himself in the margins of his world. This need for acceptance and approval seems to allow him to remain within the context of the Church, while simultaneously challenging the status quo.

Homoerotic feelings seem to become for Warren a mouthpiece for the deeper layers of his being, insisting on a different orientation to the world, an orientation not in keeping with the dominant culture. The taboo nature of homoerotic feelings seem to present him with a particular dilemma. The process of coming to terms with these feelings and then to create, as Warren did, an identity around them, was fraught with complications. The socially taboo aspect of homoeroticism in Warren's experience made it difficult to find an easy way of assimilating the feelings. There were few cultural role models. There was always a tension, always an unfolding of unpredictability, always the question "where do I place my homoerotic feelings?", "how do I express them?", "do I expose myself in this context?", "how will people

respond?”. The path of self-acceptance, especially in relation to homoeroticism, was not a smooth one for Warren.

It is in the context of a radically changing socio-political context, his theological studies, ongoing spiritual direction, and persistent homoerotic feelings, that Warren’s journey out of a world of compliance and rule-bound conformity comes into its own. Warren’s need to place his sexuality firmly within the spiritual context, to insist that the Bishop knows he is ordaining a “gay” man, to insist on entering into a relationship with another man, and to openly identify himself as a practicing “gay” man, and “gay Priest”, all create an ongoing tension in Warren’s life. Out of this tension is a continual unfolding of an identity, one which stands in stark contrast to the image of compliance which so dominated Warren’s childhood and early adulthood. It is an identity which also stands in conflict with the dominant Church culture, as well as in conflict with the dominant social culture. Warren is doubly marginalised: as an openly “gay” man within the Church community, and as a man who defines himself as a “gay priest” within a cultural system which has few templates for this role. He has chosen to actively locate himself within the margins of society, embodying the role which challenges the Church and society at large. He now locates his experience of homoeroticism at the interface between himself and the broader community.

6.2.2.2. Luke

[Homoeroticism] is a gift for me. And if it helps me become more authentic, and more whole, then it can be a gift to us all.

Something may always be beyond what we think we know.

6.2.2.2.1 Profile And Interview Setting

Luke is a thirty-six year old man of European descent. He is married, with two children. He was ordained as a Deacon in the Anglican Church seven years ago, and ordained Priest a year later. He is currently parish priest in a small town. He struggles with the whole idea of

categories for human sexuality, locating himself within a context of being at the same time “gay”, “heterosexual”, and “neither”. Luke has a Masters Degree in Theology.

Luke was known to me before our interview. We had met in a Church context, at a meeting regarding the training and mentoring of priests. Having mentioned to me his “issue” with sexual categories, I asked him whether he would be prepared to participate in the study. He agreed willingly. He chose to be interviewed in the context of my consulting rooms. We had two interviews together, each lasting approximately four hours. At the end of the process he reflected on having found the time very valuable. He felt that the particular interview structure had provided him with a platform for exploring aspects of himself he might not otherwise have explored. I experienced the time with Luke as being very rich. He shared freely and easily with me, allowing me to venture into some uncomfortable aspects of himself.

Luke’s manner was very informal, and friendly. He was casually dressed for the interview, and engaged easily with the interview process. He seemed very willing to explore the issues at hand, and gave very freely of himself and his experience.

6.2.2.2. Outline Of Pivotal Experiences

Luke is the eldest of four children. He has a brother a year younger than himself, and two sisters, three and four years younger, respectively. His father worked for a Milling company, and remained with the company until he retired. His mother was a teacher, and also worked as a secretary.

He recalls a very happy childhood. Many of his early memories are of his grandparents, particularly his father’s parents. He was extremely close to them. As the first grandchild, he was seen by the grandparents as “*the special one*”. Of Afrikaner background, his grandparents placed considerable emphasis on religion. Particularly close to his grandmother, (“*grandma’s special boy*”), Luke spent a great deal of time with her. She taught him to pray, and sing, and also took the children to church regularly. She would often tell him that he would one day be a priest. Luke identified with Christianity from a very early age. The image of being a strongly

committed Christian became central to his identity when still very young. His identification with being a “*perfect Christian*” developed as he grew older.

Luke has very little memory of his father as a child. He was not aware of missing him, or needing contact with him as a child. It has been in recent years that Luke has tried to work on their relationship. He is, however, often left feeling disappointed. His father seldom responds in the way Luke hopes for. He has memories of spending time with his mother. They are relatively close. His dominant memories of his childhood are largely of his grandparents.

When he was thirteen or fourteen, Luke discovered, working it out from the dates available to him, that he was conceived before his parents were married. This discovery came as a profound shock to him. He felt the sense of having been “*conceived out of wedlock*” very keenly. He also felt responsible for having brought his parents together. These issues weighed heavily on his heart for the rest of his childhood and early adulthood. A strong sense he now carried with himself was of being “*illegitimate*”. Luke, his grandmother’s first and “*special grandchild*”, destined for a special role in life, responded by investing even more fully in this sense of specialness. Quoting the lines from “Joseph’s Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat”, in which Luke played the lead role during High School, (“*I am handsome, I am smart, I’m a walking work of art*”), Luke describes how he perceived and portrayed himself during his high school years. He personified the Christian role to perfection.

The image of Joseph is an important one, in that it serves as a symbol for the dilemma Luke seemed to increasingly face as he grew up. On the one hand, he had always felt himself to be “*special*”, and in that sense “*set apart*” in this specialness. His grandmother seemed already to have been grooming him for a special role he would take on in life. And then, the awful fear of “*not being legitimate*”, of not being like other people, which was reflected in the discovery of the circumstance regarding his birth.

Luke’s world of perfection he had created began crumbling during his final year at school. He wasn’t chosen as a school prefect, something which deeply disappointed him. But, more disturbing, he became conscious of homoerotic feelings during his final year at school. These

disturbed him deeply. His impulse to “love” people deeply, firmly founded in his Christian persona, began to develop another dimension. He noticed, during the final year, and the year that followed, that the feelings of “love” he felt for boys he wanted to take care of were becoming sexualised.

He made the decision the year after completing his schooling to follow his “calling” to the priesthood. He began studying theology at university the following year, an experience which challenged the charismatic, fundamentalist approach he had had towards his spirituality. Ongoing homoerotic feelings continued to disturb him. He never found a place of resolution for these feelings during this time. Through the study of psychology he came to consider that he might be “*bisexual*”. He did not, however, engage in this as an identity. During the early years at university Luke fell in love with a fellow student. The relationship with this young man became very intimate, although they never had sex. Luke felt that neither of them had the “wherewithal to process” this experience. Both felt that it was biblically “*wrong*”. The relationship gradually fell apart.

During his final years at university, while completing his Masters Degree in Theology (in the field of Transpersonal Psychology) Luke met, and married his wife, Sarah. Luke describes the relationship as a fulfilling and rich one. During this time Luke became very politically involved. Conflict with the church regarding the nature of his political involvement resulted in his being refused ordination. This experience proved to be extremely pivotal in Luke’s life. It challenged in a most powerful manner the image of “*specialness*” and “*perfection*” Luke had created for himself. He made the decision, in the context of this crisis, to go into psychotherapy.

Luke experienced psychotherapy as significantly transformative. He began to deal with the image of “*specialness*” he had created, but also began, for the first time, talking about homoerotic feelings he experienced. This was the first context in which he “came out”. Through the ongoing experience of psychotherapy Luke began to engage with homoeroticism as being something potentially positive. He was ordained the following year.

Sometime later, in the context of his wife talking about “feeling guilty” about finding other men attractive, and that she “did not deserve to be married to an angel”, Luke made the decision to tell her about his struggle regarding homoerotic feelings. The experience was both important and pivotal for Luke, and for his marriage. His wife responded very positively, and they are now challenged to talk much more openly about their experiences of their sexuality with each other.

Luke is currently in psychotherapy, and works very actively and directly with homoerotic feelings he experiences. He engages with these feelings on a symbolic level, having made a decision that, in the context of his marriage, he would not act out on them. A young teenage boy lives with the family, whom Luke finds himself very attracted to. This is a source of ongoing struggle for him. His relationship with his father is also a source of struggle for Luke. He longs for recognition from him, and to have his father engage with him more deeply. He has never spoken to either of his parents about the homoerotic feelings he experiences, and does not feel that it would ever be possible to, most especially not to his father.

6.2.2.2.3. Conceptualisation Of Homoeroticism And Its Relation To Spirituality

A *focussed coding* analysis of the themes in Luke’s life regarding the manner in which he has conceptualised homoerotic feelings reveal a number of complex processes.

1. Luke first became aware of homoerotic feelings during his final year at school. He did not think of them in terms of an identity (as being “homosexual” or “gay”), but first made sense of the feelings in relation to popularised myths, and as an appropriate cross to bear in the quest toward being an “effective Christian”. Luke’s homoerotic feelings were conceptualised primarily in terms of being an appropriate and expected site of spiritual struggle.

One of the ways in which I coped with it was, “I really do have homosexual feelings. Was this the thorn in my flesh. That Bible says you will have a thorn. [St] Paul had a thorn, and people have said that sensitive men have homosexual feelings, and so this is going to be the

thorn in your flesh". If my sensitivity as a man helps me be an effective Christian, loving towards other people, that's where Satan's going to get me.

2. Luke's homoerotic feelings intensified. He found the conflict between his impulse as part of a strong Christian identity to help and care for other people, and the development of his own sexualised feelings towards these people (younger boys), confusing.

I feel confused about this. At one level I think Matthew (friend at university whom Luke fell in love with) needed help. He was abused by a teacher at school. And I think at one level I thought, I think when our relationship first became intimate, when we first felt strongly for each other, when we would touch one another gently, kiss one another, hug, hold each others hand, I thought maybe that's the kind of experience he would benefit from. So I think I saw it initially as helping him. But then, you know, I became aware of what I felt.

He conceptualised homoerotic feelings, based in his understanding of the bible, as being wrong.

The bible says it is wrong, so it is wrong. It was very painful. Neither of us were really able to deal with it.

3. Through the process of his academic studies Luke began to formulate an understanding of his sexuality and its expression in terms of being a choice. Through exposure to psychology, Luke began considering whether he could be bisexual.

I can choose to pursue a relationship with Sarah (Luke's wife), or choose not to. I can choose to have a sexual relationship with Matthew, or I can

choose not to. I mean that thing of choice is what helps and guides me now. I feel what I feel, [and] I make a choice.

4. Being refused ordination, and as a result, entering psychotherapy, initiated profound shifts in Luke's life. Through psychotherapy Luke began to conceptualise the struggle he had with homoerotic feelings he experienced as being psychologically meaningful.

[These homoerotic feelings] were a very rooting thing. I was on this kind of persona flight. What everybody saw was this incredible person who's got it all together. And actually he hasn't. And that's what the process was doing, bringing me back to earth, connecting me to the real world, as a total contrast to this super-spiritual being.

5. The process of engaging with and integrating homoerotic feelings became conceptualised as a journey from a persona-bound identity towards a more authentic sense of self.

And that's what the process was doing, bringing me back to earth, connecting me to the real world, as a total contrast to this super-spiritual being. Actually he wants to fondle these boys, that's what he really wants to do. And that's what I did want to do. But nobody was ever allowed to know that . . . Therapy helped so much with that, being able to talk about and work with such painful things. So much was breaking down. Realising that I had created this perfect person, this angel . . . And I can see it now: 'I feel terrible that this baby was conceived out of wedlock, but I will show you. I will be the angel you never expected'. [This] is one of the first ways in which I could begin to say this is actually a gift, this helps me connect with who I really am, and with what I really need . . . Something that I have to work with, something so powerful, that I have to work with at a completely different level. And that's the ongoing struggle.

6. Luke began to understand homoerotic feelings in psychological terms, as a projection of his own need to be loved by his father.

I try to reconstruct my fathers' and my relationship. A lot of them (the boys and young men Luke found attractive) had very distant dads, or parents had divorced. Luke played big brother, and daddy, and I gave those guys everything that my father never gave me. Was it that I wanted to believe that it could happen. Actually seeing myself in that kid, and doing for that kid what I desperately needed for me. I think the mission of being there to help everybody kind of stopped, not stopped, got kind of blown apart, in being refused ordination.

7. Luke conceptualises himself as a sexual being, rather than as a "hetero- or homosexual" person.

I can say now for myself, 'I am gay'. And in the next breath I can say 'I am heterosexual'. And then I can say, 'I am neither'. We are, I am, a sexual being. I may have what have been defined as homosexual or heterosexual feelings, but I am a sexual being. I am an evocatively erotic sexual being.

8. He struggles with his homoerotic feelings in a spiritual context. Influenced by Incarnational Theology, and ongoing work in psychotherapy, he feels increasingly able to place his homoerotic feelings in the context of his experience of spirituality, and his experience of God.

And so God can be present to me in my dreams of wanting to have sex with another man. I think, to be honest, I can work with that more easily on a dream level than I do on a day-dream/fantasy level . . . I can own it more honestly with God now. I can consciously say to God, 'I offer to you,

I want to connect to you, as somebody who fantasises about having sex with another guy'. And just to leave it like that, I acknowledge that that's who I am. That's how I experience myself.

9. Luke conceptualises the homoerotic feelings he experiences as being symbolic expressions of a deeper yearning for wholeness and authenticity, and thus as a catalyst for his ongoing psychological and spiritual growth.

It's hard to hold the tension of not denying it and not acting it out. But that's kind of what keeps me sane in the situation. Knowing that I must work with it, that it's a challenge. That I'm growing. Last Sunday, in church, I was thinking to myself. I look like an ideal priest. And then I thought, fuck the ideal priest, he's been fucking around. If only you knew what he fantasised about . . . heaven help you. But this process simply won't allow me to be that ideal priest, to be that perfect person.

It seems as if, when I become over-invested in my spiritual identity, it's there, in my dreams, in my house, he lives there in the bedroom right next door to mine.

On a personal prayer level I feel totally unashamed of this relationship [with Christopher, the teenage family friend living with Luke and his family]. I don't ask for forgiveness, I just offer it to God, saying, 'God, you know what this experience is, I give it to you'. I don't even ask for the strength not to climb into bed with him. Because although on one level this is the issue, on another level that is actually not the issue. It feels like I would be denying something in the process by saying help me not do that.

10. Through ongoing therapy, Luke is beginning to conceptualise homoerotic feelings in terms of a process to engage with, rather than as a puzzle to solve.

I push myself, and ask: “So, do you get divorced from Sarah? Is that going to solve the problem?” And then I see that I get stuck in seeing it as a problem to solve, instead of as a reality to live with.

11. Luke conceptualises homoerotic feelings as a gift, something which has the potential to guide him and other people towards greater wholeness and authenticity.

I am learning to appreciate it as a gift. And it is a gift for me. And if it helps me become more authentic, and more whole, then it can be a gift to us all.

The shifts that have taken place in the manner in which Luke conceptualised homoerotic feelings is very evident. Homoeroticism has shifted from being experienced as “a curse” to being conceptualised as a “gift”, challenging him toward greater authenticity. The primary catalyst for the shift seems to have been his experience of psychotherapy, and the interest he has in psychology. Luke’s journey with the homoerotic feelings he experiences continues to be a difficult one. The feelings challenge him daily, and he works hard to invite them in as worthwhile, honourable feelings, worthy to be placed before his experience of God. The following comment, made in jest, probably sums up his relationship with the homoerotic dimension to his life:

Thank God [for these feelings]. But why does it have to be so drastic. Can’t I smoke, or drink too much too often? Why must it be this?

6.2.2.2.4. Conceptualisation Of Spirituality, And Its Relation To Homoeroticism

Key processes involved in Luke's conceptualisation of his spirituality will now be explored, drawing again from the *focussed coding* process of the grounded theory analysis.

1. From an early age Luke identified strongly with Christianity. Influenced by his Afrikaner grandparents, and "groomed" by his grandmother for the priesthood, his understanding and experience of God was traditional.

My ouma (Afrikaans word for grandmother) always asked me to sing, she taught us to pray. I think both their influence from a religious point of view was quite strong. Went to church every Sunday, church choir, and so on. Then when I got older my ouma used to say "You are going to be a dominee" (Afrikaans word for Priest), and I used to say "no, that's not what I want".

And being a strongly committed Christian at school was a very important part of my identity.

2. This world of spiritual perfection, however, began to fall apart. A number of factors contributed to this:

- The discovery of being conceived before his parents got married. This seemed to have the effect of increasing Luke's need to present as a perfect person in the world.

I had internalised around my conception, [the idea of] being illegitimate.

As far as the world was concerned, I had it all together: responsible, good clean living Christian boy. I was consumed with that identity.

- Awareness of homoerotic feelings, first during his final year at school, and conflict between strong feelings of sexual attraction towards particular boys, and an overwhelming need to care for and love these boys as part of his Christian identity.

I was in matric when I first became conscious of feeling some kind of homoerotic feelings, not guys my own age, all younger, Std 7's or 8's. I was very conscious of it.

The mission was to love them with the love of the Lord, and then I discovered my own love for them.

- The influence of theology and psychology studies at university.

I think finding resonance in Incarnational Theology, and the Sacraments. That's why, for me, God is not separate. That's what the story of the incarnation is about. It is about God taking on flesh, even to death. The whole understanding of Jesus dying fully, not "I'll just go through this to make a point", it was a literal death . . . was, had a very profound [effect on me]. Even to consider that he didn't know, that God didn't plan it, and that even God couldn't protect him. And maybe the psychological process is, all of that is a projection of our own fears onto God. Saying, you've got to protect us, sort all of this out, because we can't. Instead of learning to say, I am responsible, in God, and in life, for every choice that I make. The different theological perspectives, and a slow process of honesty with myself helped [me not displace my sexual feelings into spiritual pursuits]"

- Allowing himself, despite religious concerns, to experience a homoerotic (though non-sexualised) relationship.

Fuck whether it is right or wrong

At one level I think Matthew needed help. He was abused by a teacher at school. And I think at one level I thought, I think when our relationship first became intimate, when we first felt strongly for each other, when we would touch one another gently, kiss one another, hug, hold each others hand, I thought maybe that's the kind of experience he would benefit from. So I think I saw it initially as helping him. But then, you know, I became aware of what I felt.

- Conflict with the religious institutions and the collapse of old world view.

The Christian Centre said that unless this play has an alter call at the end, all our members are not allowed to participate. And if they do, and it doesn't have this alter call, then they are ex-communicated. By then I had enough theological savvy to say, 'bullshit', this is crap. I had already left the Methodist Church because it was too narrow. It was all about styles of service and so on, and the fact that I was part of the Christian Centre. They gave me an ultimatum, threatened me.

This led to "the collapse of the extreme charismatic phase. Everything collapsed then, apart from a basic belief. That's all that was left.

- The Church's refusal to ordain him.

I think the mission of being there to help everybody kind of stopped, not stopped, got kind of blown apart, in being refused ordination. Learning that I couldn't be the person I wanted to be, or help in the way that I wanted to. So much of that was blown apart. Everything collapsed during those times. An amazing growing period, I can see that now. So when I was accepted, things could develop on a completely different level. God

help the Church if I had been ordained first time round. I don't know what kind of priest I would have become: ghastly, anal, self-righteous, 'woes'. No, really, something would have had to happen. Or else [caught] with a little boy somewhere, [or] get caught peeping through a key hole at [local shopping centre].

- Through psychotherapy he began to consider that his experience of his spirituality was influenced by a number of factors, many of them *psychological*. He came to understand that dynamics in his relationship with his father were played out in his need to help and mentor younger boys. He also came to see that his need to be a “perfect” Christian was influenced by his need to compensate for the feelings of illegitimacy he experienced.

[Therapy was] a very rooting thing. I had been on this kind of persona flight. What everybody saw was this incredible person who's got it all together, and actually he hasn't. And that's what the process was doing, bringing me back to earth, connecting me to the real world, as a total contrast to this super-spiritual being. Actually he wants to fondle these boys, that what he really wants to do. And that's what I did want to do. But nobody was ever allowed to know that. And that's why, that is one of the first ways in which I could begin to say, this is actually a gift, this helps me connect with who I really am, and with what I really need”.

3. Luke's current conceptualisation of his spirituality and of “God” is very influenced by Incarnational Theology, psychotherapy, and transpersonal psychology (the subject of his Masters thesis). It is through these processes that he began placing homoerotic feelings as potentially legitimate experiences within the context of his spirituality.

I can cope with the idea of God being everything . . . I experience my sexuality as part of a much bigger process that is happening, that I am in

God. This is who I am in God. And so God can be present to me in my dreams of wanting to have sex with another man.

4. As for Warren, for Luke the image of Jesus serves as a powerful role model of a man with a vision of a new world.

The way Jesus dealt with challenging the Jewish religion into a new dimension. To be open to the idea that something may always be beyond what we think we know.

The shifts in Luke's spiritual life have occurred in the context of a complex interplay between many aspects in his life. Theological studies served to allow him to cognitively reframe his spiritual perspectives, shifting away from the more fundamentalist, charismatic form of Christianity which was so much a part of Luke's youth. Psychotherapy, and his studies in psychology further allowed Luke to reframe something which had originally been defined as "wrong", as something legitimate, and meaningful. This in turn influenced his spiritual perspectives, allowing him to increasingly place his sexuality within the context of his experience of God. This challenge is an ongoing one for Luke. He does not find it easy.

6.2.2.2.5. The Experience Of Self In Relation To The Acceptance And Integration Of Homoeroticism Into Spirituality

The *focussed coding* analysis of Luke's interview revealed two central themes around which much of Luke's experience of himself and his sexuality has revolved.

1. From an early age, Luke experienced himself as someone "special". He felt compelled to help and care for other people.

[I was] Grandma's special boy.

I was a very ego-centred teenager. What typified this was I was the lead in Joseph, and the opening lines were “I am handsome, I am smart, I’m a walking work of art”, and that kind of says what I thought about myself. A teacher’s dream!! I identified with that role completely.

When I talk about wanting to do what I really want to do, it is fairly unique. It has a very different kind of thing about it. I think [to myself], “Why do I want to do it? Is it because I want to be this special person, or is it because I am special, and I do have a special contribution to make, and I really want to make it. I’m learning not to be over-invested in it.

2. The discovery in early High School that he had been conceived out of wedlock had a profound effect on him. The feeling and fear of illegitimacy is a second powerful theme in Luke’s life.

When I had the first proper connection with my dad, when I was able to talk about being in therapy, [when I was able to talk about] coping with what I had internalised around my conception, about being illegitimate; I think that was the first time I had ever spoken to my father openly about it.

3. He experienced the homoerotic feelings which gradually began to emerge as being very confusing. On the one hand, he felt the need to care deeply for friends in need. On the other, he did not know how to deal with his own feelings of attraction as he cared for these friends.

I think I did what I did and I allowed the kind of relationship I had with Matthew to happen and then to fall apart in the way that it did, because I think essentially I was very confused.

The one thing though, I know who I find attractive. And the guys I developed friendships with, all of them were very attractive. And I’ve

noticed that, [and] I've said to myself, "You say that's not your intention. But it's interesting that they are all very good looking!" But I think I can honestly say that that wasn't the mission. The mission was to love them with the love of the Lord. And then I discovered my own love for them. And to be part of their healing, to help them.

4. He also experienced the feelings as being very frightening.

Even though, with this relationship with Matthew, I couldn't quite see it, the gay thing. I was too shit scared.

5. Luke experienced homoerotic feelings as a form of rebellion against the strict code of rules he lived his live by.

At [university] it was "Fuck whether it is right or wrong".

6. Homoerotic feelings are experienced as a challenge to Luke's need for perfection.

At school it was this perfect responsible person, and I kind of carried that through varsity. In my inner world that image had kind of broken down, but it was still the image I portrayed to the world.

The image never really crumbled. I had to let it crumble.

7. Luke also experienced the process of actively working with homoerotic feelings in therapy, alongside the experience of the Church's refusal to ordain him, as a catalyst for many of the radical changes that occurred in his life.

Therapy helped so much with that, being able to talk about and work with such difficult and painful things. So much was breaking down.

Learning that I couldn't be the person that I wanted to be, or help in the way that I wanted to. So much of that was blown apart. Everything collapsed during those times. An amazing growing period.

8. Luke's journey with his homoerotic feelings since his university years has been one in which he has gradually allowed himself to tolerate the feelings as being part of a meaningful process, guiding him to greater wholeness and authenticity. His journey has been one which has required him to work with homoerotic feelings on two levels: as a priest, and as a married man. The experience of tolerating his sexuality within these contexts has been characterised by a number of processes and experiences:

- An ongoing struggle

Thank God [for these feelings]. But why does it have to be so drastic. Can't I smoke, or drink too much too often? Why must it be this?

And that's the ongoing struggle. It would be so much easier if I could just climb into bed with somebody.

- As a necessary part of spiritual growth and development.

One of the first ways in which I coped with it, you know, I really do have homosexual feelings was this is the thorn in my flesh. The bible says that you will have a thorn, Paul had a thorn, and people have said that sensitive men have homosexual feelings, and so this is going to be the thorn in your flesh.

- As a source of inner conflict in Luke's relationship with his wife.

She said to me that she was feeling terrible, because she was finding that she was attracted to other guys. And she said "you are such an angel. I'm

so unworthy of you”. And I thought to myself, “fuck this, I’m not living this lie”. And that’s when I told her.

- A slow process of learning to engage with his sexuality in a new manner.

The different theological perspectives and a slow process of honesty with myself helped that to change.

- A gradual process of reframing homoerotic feelings as being something positive within himself and his spiritual growth.

I am learning to appreciate it as a gift. It is a gift for me.

- The experience of an ongoing tension, serving as perpetual challenge to his spiritual and psychological growth.

It’s hard to hold the tension of not denying it and not acting it out.

That thorn, that wound, that I have to work with, that won’t go away.

Learning [in therapy] that my struggle is not a problem to solve, but something to engage with creatively, something I can learn to not be scared of living with. I push myself with this, and ask: “So, do you get divorced from Sarah? Is that going to solve the problem?” And then I see that I get stuck in seeing it as a problem to solve, instead of as a reality to live with.

- As a “Cross” Luke would rather not bear.

Why does it have to be so drastic? Can’t I smoke, or drink too much too often. Why must it be this?

9. Luke's current experience of homoerotic feelings is characterised by a number of factors:

- It is a persistent struggle, one which Luke experiences as uncomfortable and difficult, yet challenging and rich. This paradox plays itself out on many levels. He continues to relate to his homoerotic feelings in a symbolic manner, validating their existence and engaging actively with them, yet choosing not to act on them.

I still have a lot of work to do with this.

- They are experienced as ongoing challenges towards growth and authenticity.
- He works actively at placing these paradoxical feelings in the context of his experience of "God", in this way both validating them, and allowing them to continue challenging him.
- Luke experiences homoerotic feelings as very persistent and powerful, both within himself, and in the context of his world.

It's there, in my dreams, in my house. He lives there, in the bedroom next door to mine!

I feel them, they pulsate through my body, sometimes every cell in my body wants to give expression.

6.2.2.2.6 Commentary

As with Warren's experience, a number of factors, including theological study, conflict with the Church, psychotherapy (in Warren's case, spiritual direction), all act as vehicles for

tolerating homoerotic feelings within the context of Luke's spiritual growth. The feelings are there, persistent and unrelenting, always requiring a response, a reply, to a question often not answerable. Luke has a fulfilling and rich relationship with his wife. And yet he also has insistent homoerotic feelings, feelings which do not allow him a comfortable place within which to locate his identity. By choosing to engage with homoerotic feelings as meaningful, Luke is also choosing to live within a constant state of inner tension. What Warren enacts in the world, Luke plays out within himself: exposing himself to homoerotic feelings, working at insisting that they be part of the whole, and thus part of his experience of God.

The reframing of his spirituality, which happened in the context of his theological studies and conflict with the more fundamentalist churches, has not made integrating homoerotic feelings easier for Luke. Although the structures of the theology he now draws from are able to contain the homoerotic feelings he experiences, the experience is still a struggle. It is still something he deals with everyday, at a deep level, challenging him to explore greater depths of himself. Luke locates his experience of homoeroticism in a private space, located at the interface between himself, his wife, and his therapist.

6.2.2.3. Tom

Our understanding of God is enriched by our human relationships. And this includes the sexual dimension.

6.2.2.3.1. Profile And Interview Setting

Tom is a fifty-nine year old Anglican priest, of European origin. He has been a priest for thirty years, having been ordained in 1970. Tom completed his undergraduate studies in theology in England. On his return to South Africa he went on to complete a Masters as well as a Doctoral degree in theology. He is currently a senior priest in an Anglican Church in a major centre in South Africa.

I was given Tom's name by the same Priest who put me in contact with Warren. Tom had been told that I was conducting a study exploring homoeroticism in the context of the priesthood, and indicated a willingness to participate.

I interviewed Tom in his home, which is a flat in a complex attached to the church at which he is a priest. Tom felt that his flat would be the most comfortable environment in which to conduct the interview. When we began the interview, it became clear that Tom had spent some time thinking about his experience of his sexuality. He went on to describe, in some detail, the role of homoerotic feelings in his life. We had two interviews together, each lasting approximately four hours. Tom reported to find the interview process a challenging and moving one, allowing him the opportunity to talk freely about an issue which isn't often spoken about in such depth. I similarly found the time we spent together a very rich one.

Tom presented himself in an informal manner. He was casually dressed for the interview, and seemed most willing to participate. He had a comfortable manner about himself, and engaged easily and openly with me throughout the interviews.

6.2.2.3.2. Outline Of Pivotal Experiences

Tom is the eldest in a family of three children. He has two sisters, four and five years his junior. His father was an industrial chemist, and was nine years older than his mother. He describes his father as having been very strict, a "*disciplinarian*". His mother was a school teacher. Tom describes his mother, of Norwegian origin, as having been extremely puritanical and pietistic. His father was not a church goer in the earlier years, and seemed particularly critical of the Church. Family relationships were "*reserved*", with very little open display of emotion. Tom describes his early childhood as having been very protected. He felt shielded by his parents from other children. Tom struggled to "*fit in*" at school. He did not enjoy sports, something which he felt was a "*measure*" of fitting in. His father encouraged his intellectual development. His father stressed the importance of academic study, instilling in Tom a sense that, as a family, they had a "*higher interest in things*". This had the effect of setting Tom, and his family, apart from "the norm". His father seemed to encourage this. Very sensitised to racial issues, as well as marginalised people, particularly women, Tom's father, a Scottish

immigrant, provided Tom with a role model of someone not willing to conform to the norms established by society.

After completing his schooling, Tom went on to study architecture at university. He was not successful, and at the end of his first year, returned home and began his studies in accounting. Having always been encouraged to go to Church by his mother, Tom developed a fascination for Church buildings during the first year out of school. This continued, even when he returned home, leading to participation in a group, set up by the Bishop, of men who showed an interest in the ministry. He attended this group secretly for a number of years. He did not want his father to know of his interest in the Church. During this time new theological debates began emerging which rocked the Church's foundation. Cornerstones of the Christian religion, including the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and marriage, were being challenged by academic debate. Tom found himself very caught up in these debates, and they made a strong impression on him. By the age of twenty-three Tom had made up his mind to study for the Priesthood, and, after completing his accounting degree, made the decision to go begin his theological studies in England. A university in England was chosen on the basis of its reputation for being the best academic institution in the field of theology.

During the eight year period in England, Tom's journey regarding his sexuality moved into the foreground. Although he had been aware of homoerotic feelings throughout his childhood and adolescence, he had never consciously engaged with them. During his second year at university in England, Tom acknowledged his sexuality to himself, coming to the conclusion that he was "*homosexual*". His intellectual approach to his theology quickly allowed him to develop his own "*hermeneutic*" regarding his sexuality which could easily incorporate his feelings. His own moral sense was that, "homosexuality" was legitimate in the context of a committed, long-term relationship. Tom fell in love during this time. The object of his affection was a fellow student, John, who boasted of many sexual conquests, with both men and women. Despite Tom's concern about this, and after many painful experiences regarding John's sexual exploits, Tom made the decision, just prior to his ordination as a Priest, to enter into a sexual relationship with John anyway. Their relationship, which remained secretive, continued for many years, despite any lack of formal commitment. A further source of distress for Tom was

that John married just a few months after Tom returned to South Africa. They met intermittently over the years. The last time they had sex was in 1990. Tom's relationship with John remained largely clandestine during all this time. He had not yet "come out" to significant people in his life.

During Tom's stay in England he also explored a relationship with a woman. He felt unable to pursue the relationship in any depth, largely because of his ongoing relationship with John. The major purpose for the relationship seemed to have been experimental in nature. Although Tom didn't regret it entirely, he did feel guilty about using a person for his own growth. He found that this experience challenged, in him, the stereotypic categories of "heterosexual" and "homosexual". He concluded that the lines between these "categories" were more blurred than he had realized.

During these years Tom worked as Parish priest in a number of contexts in South Africa. A pivotal event during this time was the fostering of a young Zulu-speaking boy for a period of eight years. Tom found this experience extremely fulfilling and enriching. It also gave him access to the Zulu culture, an experience he might not otherwise have had. This served to give Tom a greater sense of identity. *"I simply couldn't be settled to be on the fringe of white suburban life".*

Since his foster son left, Tom has had a number of refugees from African countries staying with him. One such refugee, Peter, lived with Tom for four years. Before he left, Peter took it upon himself, as was customary in his culture, to seek out a wife for Tom. Becoming aware of this, Tom "came out" to Peter. Peter's efforts continued, only now looking for a male partner. This was how Tom met Victor, a twenty-nine year old Zambian man, who has now been his partner for five years.

During the year before meeting Victor, Tom's parents both died. Tom feels that it is not a coincidence that it was only in this context, after the death of his parents, that he decided to pursue a relationship with Victor, and made the decision to "come out" to his family, and the Bishop. *"I don't know if I would ever have been able to talk to my parents. It was as if I was*

subconsciously waiting for them to go, then I could go to the Bishop, speak to the rest of my family”.

Two events during the five years with Victor have proved pivotal. The first, in which Victor became involved, for a number of complex reasons, with another man. The crisis in Tom’s relationship with Victor lasted a number of months, Tom not knowing for the duration of this time what had happened. Victor often returns to Zambia to visit his family for a number of months each year. It was in this context that the crisis occurred. A vital component to this crisis was the ongoing experience of something which had no solution. Tom’s largely intellectual approach to his life was dramatically challenged. Tom described the experience as “one of the biggest crises I could have experienced”. The second crisis, similarly traumatic, was the murder of a close friend of Tom’s. This experience also presented Tom with an experience which simply had no solution. Both experiences initiated a significant crisis in Tom’s faith. Neither allowed him to find an intellectual answer to the problems he faced. These events served to challenge and shift Tom’s spirituality in a significant manner.

Tom currently defines himself as a priest who also happens to be “gay”. He experiences nothing special about his sexuality. For him it is a normal counterpart to “heterosexuality”, and a legitimate alternative in the expression of human needs for relatedness.

6.2.2.3.3. Conceptualisation Of Homoeroticism And Its Relation To Spirituality

The *focussed coding* process revealed a number of processes reflecting the manner in which Tom has conceptualised homoerotic feelings, and the factors which have influenced these.

1. Tom was aware of homoerotic feelings from an early age. Having no words or constructions for these experiences at that stage, he took these feelings “as a matter of form”.

But as I look back I realise that homoeroticism has been present in my feelings almost as long as I can remember having feelings. I don’t think before I started school, but I remember having feelings about certain other

boys. And also a funny rather romantic feeling, of heroes, it was at the time of reading all those Enid Blyton books, and adventure stories, and there were stories about children being kidnapped. To me that was very romantic, I just loved the thought of being kidnapped, by obviously a handsome man, and so, I see now that those were these feelings emerging. Obviously I just took them as a matter of form, I talked very freely about them to my parents and siblings.

2. He recalls an incident on his uncle's farm, during early adolescence, after his father had explained "the facts of life" to him, where he noticed an ox or bull mounting another bull. He concluded from this, and from similar incidents, that the phenomenon of same-sex attraction must be "natural".
3. During the year following the completion of school he became aware that a certain group of people were "homosexual", and that they "*couldn't help it*". It was during a bible study that he first became aware that "homosexuality" was defined as "bad". This was the first time he considered that there might be something "wrong" with it. He still did not identify himself with any such label.

Evident here is that, while, during his schooling, Tom remained oblivious to the manner in which "homoeroticism" was constructed by his culture, it was not a source of anxiety to him. He experienced anxiety and distress during his teenage years about not fitting in, and about not experiencing the feelings towards girls his peers seemed to feel. But it was his sense of marginality that was distressing, rather than the homoerotic feelings per se.

4. Tom's inner conviction, albeit largely intellectual, that "homosexuality" was "natural", was further reinforced by exposure to radical theological debates of the 1960s, the legalization of "homosexual" activity in England soon after Tom's arrival to study, theological study and contact with students who talked openly about homoeroticism. It was in this context that Tom came to personally accept and take on an identity as being "homosexual".

It was in the 1960's, and intellectual thought was very critical, we were going through the Honest To God debate. Anglicanism was at least sceptical, and critical. So I was caught in with that . . . Among the theological things being challenged and sometimes discarded were things like the virgin birth, the resurrection, and certainly the whole question of divorce and marriage. Anglicanism was being examined. There was even a Quaker examination of homosexuality. I don't think the Anglican church had done so yet. Certainly the whole issue of marriage was being examined.

I arrived in London, and fairly soon, an interesting coincidence, heard that parliament was in the process of legalising homosexual activity between consenting adults.

The result was that by the end, maybe a bit more, the first term of my second year, it had already been accepted by parliament, during that time I began to accept I was homosexual. And I went and bought a book at the Church bookshop, written about homosexuality from a psychological view. I read it from cover to cover, and realised that I fitted in, and started to work out a kind of, where I did fit in. Once I made the step of accepting it I accepted that this is really how I am made.

5. Tom developed a psychological explanation for his sexuality, relating it to the popular psychological causative notion of "the absent father".

I probably did think there were certain conditions in my early years which caused it. My father had been largely absent as a child, it was during the second world war, and so until about the age of three or four he was up in North Africa fighting. I probably put that as a factor, a possible cause.

Although it didn't worry me, I accepted that this was how I was made, and I might as well be ready to do something about it.

6. He went on to develop a suitable spiritual “hermeneutic’ regarding his homoerotic feelings. Based on his theological understanding of homoeroticism, Tom decided that it would be appropriate to embark on a sexual relationship in the context of a long-term, committed relationship.

Although I then worked out that I would only embark on a sexual relationship with someone who would be the equivalent of a spouse. I can remember, I certainly didn't feel any guilt. Perhaps a certain inferiority . . . I had to work out my own hermeneutic on that. And think I simply thought that they might have condemned it in those [biblical] days, but it doesn't mean that it is still condemned.

7. Tom's approach towards his sexuality during these years was largely constructed in intellectual terms. He struggled with any outward expression of homoeroticism as an identity.

[My sexuality became] formalized as an idea. I didn't like any outward display, effeminate behaviour, any mannerisms. I didn't like that, and made a point of not coming across in that way.

8. Exploration of a sexual relationship with a woman during his years of theological study led Tom to conceptualise sexuality as something more complex than the simple socially constructed distinctions between “heterosexuality” and “homosexuality”.

I realized that there was no simple distinction between hetero- and homosexuality. That there are different aspects of sexuality which could excite and arouse one, separate from relationships.

9. During the years of his relationship with John, Tom found it difficult to reconcile the homoerotic dimension of that relationship with his ministry. The relationship was not monogamous, nor committed, and, especially after John's marriage, Tom felt considerable guilt about committing adultery. Although Tom had long ago concluded that homoerotic relationships, in principle, were *natural*, he felt that the context in which he was expressing his sexuality was not spiritually appropriate. He kept his sexuality and his spirituality apart during these years.

I'm sure what is going hand in hand with my sexual relationship, I wasn't feeling entirely happy about it, was also a lack of confidence in the ministry.

I can't say it was all of an easy conscience.

I must admit to a lot of guilt. I felt I was committing adultery.

[Saying prayers after sex], that was something I would never have considered with John. There there was a dichotomy, keeping the two apart.

10. Meeting his current partner, the death of his parents, and finally feeling the freedom to "come out", had a profound influence on Tom. He made the shift from living out his sexuality "as an idea" to living it out openly in the world as a shared experience. He now lives out his vision of a committed relationship with his partner.

I went to [the Bishop], and told him everything, and asked him to tell the other Bishops. That is the major difference. I've been open with my colleagues. I've been open with my immediate family. Speaking to [the Bishop] and certain other key people meant this was no longer a secret. And I realized that the main source of guilt was that I wasn't completely

open. I think another thing, which I think is more than a coincidence, is that my mother died in 1994, and my father in 1995. I think that was a factor. I don't know if I would ever have been able to talk to my parents. It was as if I was subconsciously waiting for them to go, then I could go to the bishop, [and] speak to the rest of my family.

11. Tom currently experiences no distinction between various forms of sexuality. He conceptualised "heterosexuality" and "homosexuality" as serving the same function in society: as a vehicle of the need for relatedness.

All creature are sexual beings, part of it is for the purpose of reproduction. And part of it is to give enrichment to our relationships. As human beings we seem capable of quite intense relationships. For reproductive purposes they have to be cross-gender relationships, but it is not just for reproduction. Beyond that the gender of the other person is irrelevant. We relate sexually of the sake of good healthy relationships. It would seem that most of our relationships will be cross gender. For a minority, who are only comfortable with same-gender relationships, are simply happier and more fulfilled with these same-gender relationships. Culture, tradition, religion, society do all make demands on us to have opposite gender relationships. If we were not subject to those pressures, probably almost fifty percent of people would be happier with same-gender relationships. I think that's really how I see it, at the moment.

12. Tom conceptualises the sexual dimension of human relationships in spiritual terms as a vehicle for expressing and understanding God.

The sexual dimension is so linked to relationships generally. Our understanding of God is enriched by our human relationships. And fuelled, not fuelled, given expression, given identity and understanding by our human relationships. And this includes the sexual dimension.

Homoeroticism is conceptualised by Tom in rather different terms to the way Luke and Warren have it conceptualised. For Warren, it is a symbol of both inner (psychological and spiritual) and outer (cultural and social) transformation; for Luke it is a symbol of inner (psychological and spiritual) transformation. For Tom, it is a natural counterpart to “heterosexual” sexuality, and simply one way through which the richness of “God” is given expression through intimate relatedness between people.

6.2.2.3.4. Conceptualisation Of Spirituality, And Its Relation To Homoeroticism

The manner in which Tom conceptualises his spirituality will now be explored, using the themes emerging from the process of *focussed coding*. Factors which have contributed to his spiritual approach to his life will also be examined.

1. Tom’s religious background is in the context of the Anglican Church. His early conceptualisations of “God” were in traditional terms, influenced by his parents and family.

It must have been my mother’s piety. That was the main factor. And her own family. Very pietistic, living the “right” life. That impressed me. There were even some who wouldn’t do any work on a Sunday, very puritanical. That was probably where my father helped. He had no patience for that sort of thing.

Being told who God was, by various aunts, I must have been about two or three. Then, he was this great father figure in the sky.

2. His parents’ joint influence moulded his spiritual development, giving him the freedom to challenge biblical issues through intellectual debate.

I think we were, my mother, more attracted to something more balanced, and also more intellectual. And we didn’t have to take the bible literally, we could discuss it. A more reasoned approach.

I probably got that from my parents, my father. That we are academics, intellectuals.

3. The basis for much of Tom's approach to his spirituality during these years was an intellectual one. Influenced by the radical shifts in theology in the 1960s, and by theological study at university, Tom constructed an "idea" of his spirituality around which he functioned as a priest for many years.

I seemed to be working out all sorts of ideas in myself about how things should be. Very much the intellectual thing. That was the pattern. These new ideas starting in the United States and England. Anything dogmatic and fundamentalist was simply not in fashion at all in those days.

In my earlier ministry I could only see things through intellectual eyes.

From my [university] days, I would have disagreed with Jesus, with the Bible, the "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" issue.

4. It was in the context of this intellectual approach to his spirituality that Tom similarly found a place for his sexuality to exist "as an idea" as part of his spirituality. Although he had worked out a "*suitable hermeneutic*" in which his sexuality was incorporated into his spiritual life, it took many years before he could achieve this in practice. Until recently, his sexuality and his spirituality were kept apart.

There was a dichotomy, keeping the two apart.

5. The death of his parents, meeting his current partner, "coming out" to his family and the Church hierarchy, and two very significant crises initiated a profound shift in Tom's approach to his spirituality. This shift seemed to happen in the following way:

- The death of his parents created a context in which Tom was emotionally vulnerable. The death of his father in particular had a powerful effect on him. The experience of their death challenged the largely intellectual manner in which Tom lived his life. His parents had largely personified this intellectual approach to life.

In the end, when he was dying, and when he died, I realized how much of a rock he had been for me. On the surface, it was rather formal, distant.

There was very little open display of affection. That possibly has affected me. Physical contact, especially showing affection, is very important to me now.

- Having moved into a committed relationship after many years created a further context in which Tom was emotionally vulnerable. It is significant that he should take this risk at this particular point in his life. This is the first relationship Tom has had which fulfils his spiritual vision of a committed long-term relationship. It is likely that the reason for it taking so long for Tom to develop such a relationship does have to do with his concern regarding the taboo nature of homoeroticism in the world (especially in relation to his parents and the Church). His hesitance in moving into a relationship also seemed linked to a fear of being hurt.

I don't know if I would have ever been able to talk to my parents. It was as if I was subconsciously waiting for them to go, then I could go to the Bishop, speak to the rest of my family.

[A brief initial encounter with John during his second year of theological study, something which left Tom feeling very disturbed] made it clear to me that I must avoid having any kind of physical contact with anyone unless there is going to be some kind of permanent relationship. And where we were both in love with each other. Partly because I thought that

was the right moral approach, and secondly because I didn't want to get hurt. I felt that if I was going to have my first sexual experience with someone who was also boasting about his other sexual conquests, [with] girls, and [with] boys, I thought I would feel very hurt. Because to me it was all or nothing. I needed greater certainty in a relationship, and also took up a rather puritanical position.

- “Coming out” shifted Tom’s experience of his sexuality from “an idea” to something real, and lived. It risked a vulnerability which he had not easily risked before.
- The relationship Victor embarked on with another man shocked Tom deeply. It was this experience, and then the experience of the murder of his friend, which, in the context of an already present emotional vulnerability, served as catalysts for the profound changes which occurred in Tom’s spirituality.

I’ve simply, where there has been no solution, fallen back on prayer, and my faith, and I’ve come out of them with my faith enriched immeasurably. My simple faith has been strengthened. I don’t think there has been much of an intellectual dimension to my spiritual growth [during this time].

As I’ve grown older I’ve realized that the intellectual approach has its place, but I don’t have to intellectualise everything. I must give recognition to my feelings, and to faith. In those early days my faith was simply an intellectual pursuit.

10. Tom now conceptualises his spirituality largely in subjective terms. The context of his growth in this regard is within a more personal relationship with important aspects of Christianity, particularly his relationship with Jesus.

Perhaps I've become more traditional, more conservative. On the other hand it does reflect more truly the way in which my relationship with Jesus has grown. I can't imagine bargaining Jesus' position in my life. That's how important he is to me. On the other hand, I admit that that is a very subjective approach. My belief.

In the end, we have to take this subjectively. That Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life for me. Now I don't dispute that biblical text.

The shifts in Tom's experience of his spirituality are significant. For many years he engaged with his spirituality in a largely intellectual manner. Recent crises have challenged this approach, allowing a more subjective approach to emerge. Homoeroticism seemed to have no direct impact on these shifts. The nature of the crises, in which there were no intellectual solutions to the difficulties, seemed to serve as the catalyst for the changes occurring in Tom's spiritual life.

6.2.2.3.5. The Experience of Self in Relation to the Acceptance and Integration of Homoeroticism into Spirituality

Tom's experience of himself, as is already evident, was for many years largely characterised by an intellectual approach to his life. For a long time he experienced his spirituality, and his sexuality, as "an idea". The manner in which Tom has experienced himself in relation to his sexuality will now be explored, looking also at how he went about more comfortably locating his sexuality within the context of his spirituality.

1. Until adolescence Tom experienced homoerotic feelings he had as "a matter of form". Seeing animals of the same sex copulating further reinforced for him the idea that these sorts of feelings were natural. Concern he had regarding these feelings related to the experience of marginality as a child; a sense that he didn't feel what other children felt.

As I reached puberty, I had feelings of anxiety, my peers talking about girls and things like that, and I was wondering why I wasn't having those

feelings. I was conscious of finding certain boys or males attractive, and I think I put it down to my time hasn't come. I haven't reached that stage, and that I will be looking at girls soon.

2. Tom struggled with emerging sexual feelings. The issue of them being homoerotic did not seem to be the difficulty. Sexual feelings generally were the problem.

My masturbating. I did feel guilty. I sensed I was doing something that shouldn't be done, something dirty. That God could see me doing it.

3. Tom's sense of not fitting in persisted, and became a theme characterising much of his life.

[Not fitting in was also] linked to not liking sport. Sport was a measure of fitting in, and in that way I did feel I wasn't fitting in. I was very tall for my age, and I was conscious of being younger, and not too strong physically. My voice broke perhaps a bit later than many of the others. Perhaps I did link it to my disinterest in girls, I don't know. And yes, such terms as "not fitting in" or being a "misfit" were not current then, but I probably did have that feeling.

I was becoming an academic snob. This I probably got from my parents, my father. I think we did grow up as academic snobs, and if we want to be clever and well qualified we need to study, and not concentrate so much time on sport. I don't think I felt so inferior. There probably was that feeling of not fitting in. There has always been a resistance to conform. There has been that streak in me all the time.

Also, once getting this entrée into Zulu life I felt back at home here. I simply couldn't be settled to be on the fringe of white suburban life.

4. Despite the early acceptance of homoerotic feelings as natural, and its later justification through academic study, Tom struggled with the feelings for many years. His struggle was largely in spiritual terms, not having found a context in which to express his homoerotic feelings in a spiritually integritous way.

[I felt] I must avoid having any kind of physical contact with anyone unless these is going to be some kind of permanent relationship. And where we are both in love with each other. Partly because I thought that was the right moral approach, and secondly because I didn't want to get hurt.

I suppose my feelings of guilt, overall, were rather unsteady at times, in terms of John too.

I can't say it was all of an easy conscience. When I think how I am now, in a steady relationship.

As a result of these factors, Tom kept his sexuality apart from his spirituality for many years.

[With John] there was a dichotomy, keeping the two apart.

5. The process by which Tom has increasingly placed his sexuality within the context of his spirituality is a complex and rich one. A number of factors have played a part in this.
 - The context of his current relationship with Victor, which is that of a committed, long-term relationship, fulfils Tom's own criteria for a spiritually integritous relationship. The reasons for taking as long as he did to move into this kind of context are obviously complex. It would be tempting to oversimplify this process. However, two factors stand out.

- a) Tom's fear of being hurt.
- b) His concern regarding his parents and their response to his sexuality.
He felt unable to talk to them about his sexuality.

A number of other factors went on to allow Tom to make the shifts he did, first to "come out", and then to formalise his relationship with Victor.

- a) The death of Tom's parents.
- b) The ongoing personal work Tom had done over the years in trying to come to terms with his sexuality.

I suppose just a huge amount of rationalizing the matter over the years.

- c) A sense of urgency at not having had the kind of relationship he had always longed for.

And maybe also of being deprived for such a long time.

Tom now experiences his relationship with Victor as being completely congruent with the spiritual "hermeneutic" he worked out for himself so many years ago. Having created the suitable context Tom believes a relationship needs for its sense of spiritual alignment, he now easily experiences his sexual being as an integral part of his spiritual life.

My feelings about sexuality now is generally guilt free.

This is the advantage of starting the relationship with Victor at a mature age. Because I did see this as part of my spiritual enrichment, starting a sexual relationship with Victor. One of the things I took to quite naturally, after sex, was saying prayers, including [in the prayers] what we had just experienced together. That seemed to come together quite naturally. That was certainly something I would never have considered with John. There there was a dichotomy, keeping the two apart.

- The experience Tom had counselling (“heterosexual”) couples about sexuality and its link with spirituality reinforced in Tom the idea of the two being compatible..

A lot of my work as a priest is counselling people, and sexuality emerges often in these contexts. I’ve always tried to help couples see that their sexuality is part of their spiritual life.

- The process of “coming out” as a priest by its very nature places sexuality within the context of spirituality. Identifying himself openly to fellow clergy as a gay man who was also in a relationship locates his sexuality firmly within the context of his spirituality. Telling other people, most especially fellow clergy, requires him to tolerate the tension of presenting to the world two aspects which have been constructed as being incongruous.

I asked the Bishop [whether] I should speak to [an assistant priest], (who had a reputation for being very antagonistic towards homosexuality). And the Bishop said, “Oh yes. If he doesn’t take it well, then I don’t think he should be coming here”. And so I spoke to him and his wife about it. And his reaction was really quite remarkable. It does go to show that being open about it is really the best policy. Unexpected rewards.

6. Living openly as a gay man in the context of a spiritually and emotionally fulfilling relationship has allowed Tom to engage with his experience of his world in a more rewarding and complete manner. The risk of showing himself more fully, and then engaging with significant people in a more “whole” manner has allowed Tom to begin moving into a more subjective, and less predictable world of experience and feelings. In this sense the experience of openly sharing feelings and aspects of himself which had been kept secret for so many years was one of increased richness within himself, and in his world.

I have found that my relationship with Victor seemed to enrich my whole life, especially as it is a sexual relationship. It seemed to enrich my whole life, and add a dimension to it.

I then developed a certain resentment to the exponents of “your calling in life is to be celibate”. That’s fine, but now having, living in a sexual relationship I felt quite resentful to that sort of opinion. Because I was experiencing life at a far richer level. And the so-called celibate life seemed to be no alternative to it. And resentful to those who either say if you are gay you should be celibate, and also resentful to those who say if you can’t have a satisfactory heterosexual relationship then you ought to be celibate.

7. “Coming out” and the two crises Tom experienced in recent years have had the effect of locating him within a more unpredictable world, a world in which there are no ready (intellectual) answers. His journey has brought him to a place of being able to more easily tolerate uncertainty, and not knowing.

In my earlier days I needed to categorise things much more. I’ve been aware of consciously not doing that.

I was asked to say something at his funeral, and I had to say these very things. I had to say to the congregation that this was a profound test of my faith. I didn’t know why God allowed this to happen. There are areas [in] which I don’t have an answer.

8. His experience of his spirituality, of which his sexuality is now an integral part, has become deeply contemplative. Tom finds this a rather profound contrast to the spirituality of his youth and early adulthood.

When I'm speaking to God it becomes very personal. I am learning to get alongside the will of God, aligning myself with what his will is, with what he is doing. This is in the context of what has now become quite an intensive regime. Looking back on my ordained life, I am quite surprised to find myself at this place. I would never have thought, when I was ordained thirty years ago, that I would get to this sort of place. Quite a rigorous daily routine of daily offices and daily mass. Almost like the life of a monk. It's not just a token thing, it's a real experience. It's as if it has always been there, but now, as a result of [all] these experiences, I found myself moving into it, and finding it right for me.

6.2.2.3.6 Commentary

Tom's journey seems to have been one moving from intellectual to contemplative monk. A source of the richness Tom experiences in his spiritual life is the fulfilling relationship he now has with his partner. For Tom, the homoerotic nature of the relationship seems largely inconsequential. Homoeroticism per se does not seem to have been the source of the changes occurring in Tom's experience of his spirituality. It took a number of other difficulties, unrelated to homoeroticism, but linked to relationships, that challenged Tom to begin making the shifts in his spirituality. Tom locates his experience of homoeroticism in a semi-private space, at the interface between himself, close friends and family, and specifically chosen fellow clergy.

6.2.3. Exploring the Influence of Homoeroticism in the Spirituality of Priests : The First Research Question

The research question which emerged through the grounded theory analysis process will now be explored in some detail. This exploration will conclude the process of grounded theory analysis, drawing together the major themes and core categories emerging out of the research interviews.

Are priests who experience and actively work at integrating the homoerotic aspect to themselves assisted thereby in their spiritual growth, and if so, how might this be accounted for?

Changes in Warren's, Luke's, and Tom's spiritual lives seem evident. Of particular interest to this enquiry is the role of homoeroticism in these processes of change. Drawing from the preceding discussion, the role the process of engaging with homoerotic feelings has played in the changes occurring in the spirituality of the priests in this study will now be explored.

Warren, Luke, and Tom all came from relatively traditional Christian backgrounds. Images of God were largely authoritarian and judgmental in nature. The world was experienced by all of them in relatively "objective" terms. There were rules that needed obeying, and instructions on how to live a "good" life which could be suitably carried out. Each seemed to find a home for themselves within this framework. And for each, there seemed to be a particular "driving force" which came to characterise the manner in which their spirituality was experienced. For Warren, it was a need for acceptance and approval; for Luke, it was a striving for legitimacy; and for Tom it was an identification with the intellect. Each share a strong experience of marginality from early on in their lives. Warren and Tom felt this very keenly, and directly during their youth. Luke's experience of marginality seems more veiled, cloaked in the sense of "specialness" engendered in him from an early age. By and large they each seemed to find comfort and certainty within their respective early experiences of their spirituality and of God.

For Warren and Luke a feeling of being "ousted from Eden", the place of certainty which had until then given them some comfort from the feelings of not fitting in, began occurring in their late teenage years. It was no longer as easy to find resonance within the framework provided by their spiritual heritage. Warren began feeling a need to rebel generally, and then, like Luke, also began to experience the emergence of homoerotic feelings into consciousness. Both found these feelings very distressing, largely, it seems, because the feelings were experienced and conceptualised in spiritual terms as being "a sin", "a curse", or as "a temptation from Satan". Their experience of Christianity that had until then provided a place of safety now left them feeling judged. With homoerotic feelings defined in negative terms, their spiritual struggle

began in earnest. They had in many senses been “cast into the wilderness”. It seems that the manner in which the traditional Christian framework had constructed homoerotic feelings gave it a particular kind of power in both Warren’s and Luke’s lives. The feelings became a force to be reckoned with. Despite these struggles, each still felt their “calling” into the ministry very keenly, and were determined to embark on their respective journeys into the priesthood.

Tom’s initial experience was slightly different. His “ousting from Eden” occurred much later, and in a different way. In retrospect, he recalls being aware of homoerotic feelings from an early age. Not knowing what they were, or that they might be “wrong” in any way, he never experienced them as being anything out of the ordinary. He experienced anxiety and distress during his teenage years about not fitting in, and about not experiencing the feelings towards girls his peers seemed to feel. It was his sense of marginality that seemed most distressing, rather than the homoerotic feelings per se. It was only in his final year at school that he heard the word “homosexual”. And it was only the following year, during a bible study, that he first realised that “homosexuality” was condemned by the Bible. Exposure to somewhat radical theological thought, together with his early conceptualisation of these impulses (as seen in animals) as being “natural”, allowed Tom to quickly, albeit on an intellectual level, find a way of engaging with homoerotic feelings which could “normalise” them. He placed them on a par with “heterosexual” feelings, deciding for himself that the expression of these feelings were appropriate in the context of a long-term, committed relationship. That he could never experience this sort of relationship for many years was of deep concern to Tom. Despite his intellectual reconciliation with the “idea” of “homosexuality”, he was never really able to reconcile the full expression of his sexuality in the context of his spirituality until, five years ago, when he was able to move into a relationship characterised by commitment and mutual love. Although not explicit in Tom’s story, there is evidence, particularly in relation to Tom’s relationship with his parents and only being able to enter into a fulfilling relationship after their deaths, that Tom did experience homoeroticism as something taboo.

A number of factors common to the three priests in this study allowed them to begin reframing the construction given by Church and society to homoeroticism and its expression. These same

factors contributed to the reframing that began occurring regarding conceptualisations of their spirituality and of God.

1. Warren, Luke, and Tom describe their journeys very much as a journey towards more comfortably placing their sexuality within their spirituality; a journey of risking not keeping these aspects of themselves apart. These processes, for each, have been a struggle, characterised by conflict, pain, and difficulty. But it was through these processes, as homoerotic feelings become more acceptable to them personally, as they learnt, in the context of academic study, spiritual direction, psychotherapy, and acceptance by significant others, that each seemed more easily able to tolerate placing their experience of their sexuality in the context of their experience of God and their spiritual lives. For each it has been a *choice* to situate their experience of their sexuality in the context of God and their spiritual lives. In this sense, each has chosen to *embody* his sexuality, in his own particular manner. And in order to achieve and tolerate this, their images and experiences of who or what God was for them underwent significant transformations.

2. Warren, Luke, and Tom share the experience and influence of academic (theology, psychology, and philosophy) studies on their conceptualisation of homoeroticism, in relation to their spirituality. Each spoke of the considerable shifts that took place, not only in relation to their conceptualisation of their sexuality, but also in their conceptualisation of their spirituality as a result of these studies. Academic study allowed for the beginning of a process of reframing homoeroticism as something initially perceived to be “wrong” or “evil” into something potentially more meaningful. It also allowed for a reframing of conventional and traditional images of God and Christianity into something more personal. Each reframing process influenced the other in what eventually became for all of them a dialectical relationship between a God who could potentially contain and hold alternative images of sexuality, and a powerfully emerging personal experience of a sexuality which had until then been defined by the world as taboo. Academic study also exposed the priests to theories of social construction. Each became aware of the extent to which “God” and “sexuality” were social constructs, and

began exploring both these aspects of experiences on a more personal level. Despite the significant changes in their intellectual understanding of homoeroticism, as is evident in all their experience, something more seemed necessary to begin engaging with their sexuality on more personal levels, and for the significant spiritual shifts that were then to occur. The remaining core categories will describe these factors.

3. What might be self-evident, but should nonetheless be made explicit, is that each experienced homoerotic feelings as persistent, strong, and ever present. This seemed to increase their need to make sense of these feelings, and find a suitable form of expression for them, on whatever level deemed appropriate.
4. “Coming out” served as a significant transformative experience for each priest. “Coming out” is, of course, never a single experience, but an on-going process. Nor is it confined to the publicising of one’s chosen sexuality. For each, it was the process of sharing with someone the experience of homoerotic feelings and the particular identity they had each attached to these feelings. It was a process of risking showing somebody else something which they feared might be perceived as offensive, wrong, or bad. The tension it created in each of their lives was considerable, largely because the outcome is mostly unpredictable. It began for Luke and Warren in the context of a safer environment, namely psychotherapy and spiritual direction. This seemed possible in the larger context of having already reframed homoeroticism, at least intellectually, as something potentially acceptable. Each was able to engage in the “idea” that homoerotic feelings were in themselves not “wrong”. Warren then went on to tell his family, the Bishop, and friends. Luke went on to tell his wife. Tom, at a much later stage in his life, “came out” for the first time to the Bishop, his family, and later fellow clergy. Each describe the experiences of “coming out” as transformative. And for each, the taboo nature of homoeroticism diminished through the process of sharing themselves more openly.
5. Tom and Warren made mention of the influence of the socio-political environment on their journeys. For Tom, the awareness of the legalisation of “homosexual activity” between consenting adults in England during his stay there, and for Warren, the political

changes in South Africa, and the collapse of the Apartheid regime, had an impact on their perception and experience of themselves, and their journeys, both spiritually and with regards to their sexuality.

6. Each priest in this study was presented with significant crises or problems to which there were no obvious or prescribed solutions. Homoeroticism was not always directly related to these problems. That they seemed able to tolerate these problems, and remain within the tension created by the situation, seemed to result in the shifts they experienced in their spiritual lives. The outcome, whether homoeroticism was directly related to the problem or not, seemed to have been the further integration of homoeroticism within their spiritual lives. They have all chosen, in one way or another, to recognise, engage with, and actively integrate the homoerotic feelings they experience. And they've all chosen to remain priests, and to insist, either publicly, or personally, that their sexuality is a vital part to their lives as priests and as people. Warren lives as an openly gay man within the context of his parish. His parish have met his partner, and Warren includes his partner as part of his ministry. Luke has discussed his homoerotic feelings with his wife, and allows himself to remain within the rich context of the marriage. Tom has "come out" to the Bishop and fellow clergy, and lives together with his partner in an emotionally and spiritually fulfilling relationship. By holding the tension between insistent homoerotic feelings and their equally strong needs to remain within the priesthood, they have all challenged, either publicly or in private, the dominant cultural and Christian stereotype of a separated mind and spirit.

A fundamental process shared by the three priests has been a decision each of them made to place homoerotic feelings they experience fully within the context of their spirituality. Factors such as persistent homoerotic feelings, theological studies, "coming out", spiritual direction, psychotherapy, the socio-political environment, and other problems in their lives unrelated to homoeroticism, all contributed to the creation of dialectical situations which challenged their spiritual perspectives, and enhanced their capacity to more fully accept and integrate their sexuality.

Despite significant similarities between the manner in which Warren, Luke, and Tom have engaged with, conceptualised and experienced homoeroticism and their spirituality, there is considerable diversity in the way in which each has gone about engaging with these aspects of their experience. Warren has located his experience of homoeroticism at the interface between himself and the world at large. He identifies himself openly as a gay man, and more recently as a “gay priest”. Engaging with homoeroticism in this manner allows it be a source of continual challenge to society and the institutionalised Church. His journey with homoeroticism continues to be a source of personal challenge, as well a challenge to the wider community.

Luke’s journey with homoerotic feelings is more implicit and psychological. As a married man and priest, Luke has chosen to engage with homoerotic feelings as representing a creative impulse towards wholeness as a person. His experience of these feelings are as a persistent challenge to his *persona* to engage more deeply with his “authentic” *self*. Locating his experience of homoeroticism at the interface between himself, his wife and his therapist, his journey is a more private one than Warren’s. Luke experiences homoeroticism as a relentless and on-going challenge to his sense of identity as a man and as a priest.

Tom’s experience of homoerotic feelings is one which was for many years more intellectual. He developed an “idea” of how best to conceptualise his homoerotic feelings in relation to his spirituality, but struggled to find a way of actually living this vision out in the world. From an early age he seemed able to “normalise” homoerotic feelings, allowing them, in principle, to simply be a natural part of human sexuality. His journey has been to diffuse its power, awarding it a position on a par with “heteroerotic” feelings: an expression of a need for relatedness. In this sense homoeroticism per se has not served as a direct catalyst for the changes occurring in Tom’s spiritual life. It took a number of other crises to challenge the shifts in his spirituality. In more recent years he has achieved his vision of living out his sexuality fully as an integral part of his spiritual life. He now locates his experience of homoeroticism in a relatively private space, at the interface between himself, close friends and family, and colleagues.

Warren's, Luke's, and Tom's journeys can be characterized as being a process of moving beyond dichotomies, a process of learning to tolerate situating themselves within dialectal space. Many of the changes within their experience of their spirituality seemed to have occurred within the dialectic created by situations or experiences in which no solutions were readily available for problems presented to them. Homoeroticism has sometimes served an integral role in the creation of these dialectical experiences. At other times it has merely been incidental. Their journeys seem to have been one in which a more subjective space has been created within themselves in which to simultaneously tolerate homoerotic feelings and their experiences of their spirituality. A more personalised and unique experience of themselves, their sexuality, and their spirituality, seem to have emerged for each of them out of these experiences.

6.2.4. Summary and Conclusions

In this first section, the grounded theory analysis of the interviews was presented. Each priest's experience was explored in the context of four major themes: 1) pivotal life experiences, 2) experience of homoeroticism and its relation to spirituality, 3) experience of spirituality and its relation to homoeroticism, and 4) experience of self in relation to the acceptance and integration of homoeroticism into spirituality. Warren, Luke, and Tom seemed to share a number of aspects pertaining to their lives, their experience of homoeroticism and their spirituality. They came from similar religious backgrounds. They shared the emergence of strong homoerotic feelings during adolescence or early adulthood. They seemed to share experiences of marginality, as evidenced in their childhoods, and through the course of their adult lives. They all seemed to shift from a rule-bound, authoritarian conceptualisation of their spirituality, to an experience of their spirituality characterised by greater subjectivity. For each, their experience of homoeroticism moved from being an entirely private experience to an experience located at the interface between themselves and their outer worlds. They each differed as to where this interface was located. For Luke it was between himself, his wife, and his therapist. For Tom, it was between himself, close friends and family, and significant members of the Church hierarchy. And for Warren, homoeroticism was located at the interface between himself and the community at large.

The grounded theory analysis concluded by highlighting core categories common to the experiences of the participants in relation to homoeroticism and its relationship to their spiritual growth. A significant core category was the choice each priest made to locate his experience of homoeroticism within his spirituality. A number of factors influenced their capacity to make this choice. These included the influence of academic studies, spiritual direction, psychotherapy, socio-political changes, persistent homoerotic feelings, and the similarly strong need to become and remain priests. The manner in which each priest engaged with problems and crises they experienced, whether or not related to homoeroticism, seemed to serve as a catalyst for the shifts they experienced in their spiritual lives.

Despite similarities in their experiences, many differences in the processes by which they engaged with their sexuality were noted. For Luke and Warren, homoeroticism was experienced and conceptualised more directly as a site of resistance, and therefore a catalyst for change, serving to challenge inner (personal) and outer (social) transformation. They, however, locate their experiences in different spaces. For Warren, homoeroticism is embodied in a public space, while for Luke, it is placed in a much more private context. Tom does not conceptualise homoeroticism as a site of resistance or catalyst for change. He normalises it, and conceptualises the experience as a normal counterpart to “heterosexual” expression. He locates his experience of homoeroticism in a relatively private space.

It becomes evident through the course of the above exploration that homoeroticism seems to play a number of roles in the spiritual growth of priests, depending largely on the manner in which it is constructed, engaged with, and embodied within their lives. When embodied as “other” within the individual (as Warren and Luke do), or as “other” within society at large (as Warren and Tom do), it seems to take on the role of challenging conventional, socially constructed means by which the world (inner and outer) is apprehended. There is nothing to suggest that the participants in this study experienced homoeroticism as having any special “spiritual” power in itself, other than through the manner in which it is constructed, either personally or by society, or the manner it is engaged with at the interface between the individual and society.

This discussion completes the grounded theory analysis of the research interviews. What follows is an analysis of faith development. Fowler's (1981) faith development theory provides an integrated approach to assessing shifts and changes in the manner in which people engage with their worlds. The changes occurring in the processes by which each priest engaged with his life will be explored, looking particularly at the manner in which homoeroticism influenced these changes. The chapter will conclude with a summary of roles played by homoeroticism in the spiritual growth of the priests participating in this study, drawing from the discussions in Sections One and Two of this chapter.

6.3. SECTION TWO : FAITH DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

This second section will explore the research interviews from the perspective of Fowler's (1981) notion of faith development. The particular processes of meaning-creation as defined by Fowler will be explored, as they relate to each priest. The influence of homoeroticism on these processes of meaning-creation will then be discussed.

6.3.1. Second Research Question: Following Fowler's model of spiritual development, what processes characterise each priest's approach to meaning-creation in their lives?

As discussed in Chapter Five, Fowler (1981) identifies seven categories in relation to which the dominant features of the processes by which people orientate themselves in their lives may be identified (see Table 2 and Appendix D). A discussion of each of these categories within the context of the three priests in this study now follows. For a detailed analysis of each priest in relation to Fowler's seven categories of faith development, see Appendices E, F, and G.

6.3.1.1. Locus Of Authority

Warren's, Luke's, and Tom's loci of authority have changed significantly through the course of their lives. Each began with an attachment to parents or grandparents as being the chief sources of authority. Their spiritual orientations were located within structures of authority and judgment. Shifts in authority began as they moved out of their home contexts, and into other environments which challenged and influenced them. For each, the university context, the

socio-political context, and later the context of the Church, served to influence their perspectives regarding authority.

It was a complex interplay between the processes of academic study, spiritual direction, psychotherapy and supervision, conflict with the church, and disappointments regarding authority figures, all in the context of struggling with homoerotic feelings, that resulted, for Warren and Luke, in a shift from a group-based system of beliefs, to something more personal and subjective. Homoerotic feelings presented them with an experience for which there was no solution. Choosing to validate these feelings, and at the same time to remain within the context of the Church, challenged them both to move beyond group-based ideologies regarding “homosexuality” and the Church, and, in the context of their studies, spiritual direction, psychotherapy, and mentoring, to begin to develop and trust their own experience, despite the conflict between this experience and that of the official Church.

The shifts Tom experienced occurred in a somewhat different manner. For him, (who from an early stage in his life had “normalised”, albeit in principle, the experience of homoerotic feelings), the shifts seem to have occurred less as a result of a struggling with homoerotic feelings, and more with being presented with difficult situations to which there were no external solutions. Tolerating these seemingly impossible situations were what seemed to shift Tom from his intellectual consensus-based approach to authority, to something more subjective and experiential.

As is evident from this discussion regarding the *locus of authority* in the lives of the three priests in this study, all have moved, as a result of a number of factors, from an external, group-based orientation to their worlds, to something which resonates much more deeply with their own particular individuality. All now orientate themselves in relation to authority by subscribing to a self-ratified ideological perspective. This, in Fowler’s terms, reflects an *Individuative-Reflective* stance.

Warren, Luke, and Tom, however, also show evidence of orientating themselves using *Conjunctive* processes. In certain contexts, they locate themselves within a dialectic between

their own experience, and experiences which potentially conflict with these experiences. The point of a dialect is that there is never a *solution*. Each pole is valid, and must be taken into account. They have all chosen to construct and experience homoerotic feelings in the context of a dialectic. For Warren, presenting himself to the Church and his parishioners as a sexually active gay man and priest; for Luke, validating homoerotic feelings as meaningful in the context of his marriage; and for Tom, presenting himself to the Church hierarchy as a sexually active gay man and priest. The dialectic created in each of these situations is significant. Each is required to trust and believe in the choices they have made to locate their sexuality in the context of their spirituality. They are always open to being challenged. The capacity for remaining in the context of, and tolerating, this tension is what is most characteristic of Fowler's notion of the *Conjunctive* process.

6.3.1.2. Form Of World Coherence

Questions Fowler (1981) asks regarding this second aspect of faith analysis include: How does each priest approach his world? What is the unifying grasp they currently hold? For each of the priests in this study, significant shifts have occurred in the way in which they have made sense of their worlds. They have all moved from a perspective in which meaning in the world was objective, based on predefined rules and structures, to something far more personally experienced and constructed. The influence of theological study, the socio-political context, conflict with the Church, and considerable self-reflection (often in the context of spiritual direction and psychotherapy), with the spirituality/sexuality dialectic often in the foreground, has led each to making sense of their worlds in very particular, subjective ways. In the process, each has created explicit, conceptually mediated systems by which to understand and comprehend their worlds. This, in Fowler's terms, is reflective of the *Individuative-Reflective* process of meaning creation.

Each, however, also seems to make use of *Conjunctive* process of meaning-creation within this aspect of Fowler's analysis. For Warren and Luke, homoeroticism has played an important part in the development of this orientation. Warren is able to locate himself within the context of the Church despite ongoing conflict and his concerns about the Church's ability to give him recognition and validation as a gay man and priest. Luke seems able to tolerate living

“between” the socially constructed worlds of “heterosexuality” and “homosexuality” in the context of his marriage. For Tom, the process has been different. Crises unrelated to his sexuality presented him with situations which have challenged his neatly “boundried” world of the intellect. These crises, having no ready solutions, seemed to have the effect of guiding Tom into tolerating living in a context of “not knowing”, thereby challenging him to release his grasp on the certainty of the intellectual world he inhabited for much of his life. Through the experience of a number of conflicts, not always related to homoeroticism, each priest in the study seemed to develop the ability to tolerate living with a dialectical space in which a number of seemingly irreconcilable tensions were tolerated. This capacity is reflective, in Fowler’s terms, of *Conjunctive* faith.

6.3.1.3. Bounds Of Social Awareness

A question central to this third dimension in Fowler’s (1981) assessment of faith development is “who helped the priests shape their meanings”. A further question, not asked by Fowler, but which seems significant to the study is “what contexts have shaped their meanings?”

The three priests share much regarding the shaping of their awareness. Each were strongly influenced by their parents and family contexts, and the Church during their early years. Contexts which then served to challenge the norms established by these settings and people included university, the social-political environment, and lecturers. For each, the growing awareness of homoerotic feelings created a particular tension within themselves which spurred their exploration on, each needing to understand the dimensions of their sexuality, and its meaning in their spiritual lives. Warren explored many of these issues in ongoing spiritual direction. Luke went into psychotherapy. Tom found the intellectual world a comfort: it helped provide him with a suitable hermeneutic in which to locate his struggle, and therefore, in principal, to find resolution. All three have also been strongly influenced by homoerotic relationships they’ve experienced. Warren and Tom are currently in committed homoerotic relationships. A young adolescent boy lives with Luke and his family whom he is very close to. The homoerotic dimension to this relationship is one which challenges him daily. He finds both richness and struggle in this friendship. Each priest has chosen to locate the homoerotic feelings they feel for the people in their lives fully within the context of their spirituality.

Warren identifies himself as a practicing gay priest. His partner is part of his ministry. Luke's homoerotic feelings for the young boy living at home form part of his prayer life, as well as part of the work he continues to do in psychotherapy. The sexual dimension in Tom's relationship with his partner forms an important part of their prayer life. His experience of this dimension has enriched all dimensions of his life, most especially his spiritual life.

Evident in each of their approaches to their lives are both *Individuative-Reflective*, and *Conjunctive* processes. Communities which resonate with their beliefs (university, spiritual directors, psychotherapists, the Church) serve a vital function in all their journeys. However, each also seems able to extend themselves beyond class norms and interests, locating themselves within a more marginal space from which to operate. Warren openly identifies himself as a gay priest in a Church environment which is hardly comfortable with that identity. Luke identifies himself (to his wife and his therapist) as someone living between the socially assigned categories of "heterosexual" and "homosexual". Tom identifies himself to close family, and the church hierarchy as a priest who is gay. Alongside finding resonance from people and groups who resonate with their beliefs, they also locate themselves on the margins of society.

6.3.1.4. Symbolic Function

The question Fowler (1981) asks within this dimension of his faith development assessment is "what terms, images, or symbols are used to refer to the transcendent?"

Each priest refers to their experience of the transcendent as "God". This image of God has undergone a number of changes for each of them. They began their spiritual journeys with images of an authoritarian God as father, someone who had to be obeyed, someone who judged. For each, exposure to theological thought and debate began shifting these images. Warren and Luke discovered Incarnational Theology, amongst many other alternative interpretations of the scriptures, experiences which opened up the possibilities for a more personalised and yet more abstract conceptualisation of God. Regarding their sexuality, each discovered the teaching that "homosexuality" was morally neutral. The difficulties arose, in the light of conventional scriptural interpretation, when these homoerotic impulses were literalised.

Theoretically, this was not an issue for Tom. He was caught up in the mainstream of intellectual theological debate which, in radical terms, challenged most to the conventional teachings of the Bible. God for him remained a largely intellectual construct who could be relatively easily challenged and moulded.

Through ongoing spiritual direction and psychotherapy, as well as through role models such as lecturers and fellow priests, Warren and Luke began finding ways, in the context of shifts in their theology and persistently powerful homoerotic feelings, to locate their experience of their sexuality within the context of God. For each the experience of achieving this has been a significant one, something which is ongoing and transformative. There continues to be a complex relationship between their experience of God, and their conceptualisation and experience of their sexuality. Each aspect seems to transform the other in a dynamic process of interrelatedness. God has become something at once more personal and also more abstract.

The shifts occurring in Tom's experience of God seems to have been in the context of experiences other than that of homoerotic feelings. These feelings, as an idea anyway, have mostly been understood as being "natural". Of major concern to Tom was, however, the response his parents might have had to his sexuality. The issue here seemed to be about an assumed unacceptability of "homosexuality" to his parents, and a fear of their inability to understand the way he was able to understand it. After their deaths, Tom met his current partner, "came out" to his family and the Bishop, and began living out the vision of "natural" homoerotic relatedness he had believed in, in principle, for many years. This context of finally being able to live out his vision (of "homosexuality" being a natural counterpart to "heterosexuality") served as a backdrop to a number of experiences, unrelated to homoeroticism, which provided the context for the shifts in Tom's perspective of God. The experiences, each providing him with a situation which had no intellectual solution, challenged him to find another dimension within himself from which to experience God. These experiences moved Tom out of his largely intellectual approach to his spirituality, into a subjective and more personal experience of God. His image of God has now returned to the childhood image he had of God as "father". His faith, as he describes it, is more fundamentalist than before (he experiences his relationship with God and Jesus on a very deep level as *fact*)

and yet at the same time more subjective (he is aware that this is *his* belief, *his* own way of engaging with God).

Warren, Luke, and Tom all make use of both *Individuative-Reflective* processes, and well as *Conjunctive* processes in the manner in which they've conceptualised their experience of God. God is experienced *through* images in life, including relationships and sex. And yet God is also a personalised image for each of them. This capacity to experience God as both something abstract and something personal is reflective of Fowler's notion of the *Conjunctive* process.

6.3.1.5. Form Of Logic

In examining *form of logic*, Fowler (1981) makes the distinction in Piaget's stage of formal operational thought between a *dichotomising* style of logic (characterising an *Individuative-Reflective* orientation), and a *dialectical* style of logic (characteristic of a *Conjunctive* orientation). These processes are relatively self-evident. The former refers to the process of making distinctions between aspects of experience, the latter to finding a truth located in the tension between two seemingly distinct ideas or concepts.

It is evident that Warren, Luke, and Tom all make use of a *dialectical* form of logic, characteristic of *Conjunctive* faith processes. Each are able to tolerate the tensions created by placing sexuality within their experience of the sacred. They seem able to locate themselves, and tolerate remaining, within a context which has no obvious solution. For Warren, this tension is evident in identifying himself as a gay priest in the context of the Church which is not tolerant of such a stance. Luke actively engages with and embraces homoerotic feelings within a context of a decision not to act on them. And the crises experienced by Tom challenged him to remain within a context to which there were no solutions. This he did, with considerable effect on his experience of God. Each make use of *Conjunctive* processes in relation to their *form of logic*.

6.3.1.6. Perspective Taking And Form Of Moral Judgment

The final two dimensions referred to by Fowler (1981) will be discussed jointly. As Kohlberg (1969) notes, *perspective taking* goes through a significant change with the onset of formal

operational thinking (Appendix K). *Interpersonal* perspective taking (“I see you seeing me”) gives way to a *mutual* interpersonal style (“I see you seeing me; I see you seeing me seeing you”), which then can develop into what Fowler refers to as the *transcendence of third-person* perspective taking (“I see you seeing me seeing you seeing us in this space and time in the life of the world”). In relation to Kohlberg’s (1969) stages of moral judgment, the *Individuative-Reflective* capacity for societal perspective taking, what Fowler (1981) also refers to as the capacity for *reflective relativism* (seeing the self in relation to others from the standpoint of society), gives way in *conjunctive* processes to a less easily defined transcendent style, which allows for “knowing” but “not knowing”, “understanding” but “not understanding”, perceiving, but not needing to define or reify the rules of what is being perceived.

It is evident that, in their perception of God (abstract and personal) and in the subjective approach they each take regarding their spirituality, the three priests in the study no longer require that life should work according to predefined rules. Each has, in relation to both *moral judgment*, as well as *perspective taking*, relinquished the need to understand God or their spirituality in objective terms, and instead tolerates living within the context of something more personal and subjective. Factors influencing these shifts have already been discussed in some detail. Theological study, the socio-political context, spiritual direction, psychotherapy, persistent homoerotic feelings, homoerotic relationships, the placing of homoerotic feelings in the context of their spirituality, and various pivotal experiences and crises have all contributed to the significant shifts made by these priests in their journeys. In the light of the processes described by Fowler, the three priests make use of *Conjunctive* processes in the manner in which they orientate their perspectives and judgment of their worlds.

6.3.1.7. Summary And Conclusions

An overview of Warren’s, Luke’s, and Tom’s spiritual orientation to their lives, in Fowler’s terms, suggests that they each operate at the interface between *Individuative-Reflective* and *Conjunctive* processes. For Luke and Tom this profile might have been anticipated. Fowler argues that the *Conjunctive* process is much more evident in people who have already entered the second half of their lives. Fowler (1981), however, notes that it is unusual for a person below the age of thirty-five to make use of a *Conjunctive* approach to their spirituality. That

Warren, aged thirty, should orientate himself in this manner therefore seems significant. Clearly his capacity to locate himself within, and to embody (as *gay priest*) the dialectic between, his sexuality and his spirituality is something which continues to create a context in which much of his growth takes place. What the major influences have been in allowing for these shifts (between *Individuative-Reflective* and *Conjunctive* processes) to take place in all Warren's, Luke's, and Tom's lives will be discussed in some detail in the following section.

The aim of the analysis of faith "development" in the context of this study has been to more clearly operationalise spiritual growth. It allows one to look at the factors which influence the development of each particular process, also providing insight into the factors contributing to the movement between processes. Of particular interest to this study is the role of homoeroticism in this movement. This is the focus of the next research question.

6.3.2. Third Research Question: Following Fowler's model, can the psychological work of engaging with and accepting homoeroticism be conceived of as serving an initiatory function in the emergence of new processes of meaning-creation?

What follows now is a discussion of the manner in which new processes of meaning-creation in faith development might be accounted for, exploring particularly the role homoeroticism might serve in the emergence of these new processes. Of particular interest to this discussion are those factors which serve as catalysts for the emergence of *Individuative-Reflective* and *Conjunctive* processes of meaning-creation, as reflected in the faith development analysis of the three priests.

In Fowler's (1981) terms, factors contributing to the emergence of *Individuative-Reflective* processes include:

- clashes or contradictions between valued authority sources.
- marked changes, by officially sanctioned leaders, or policies or practices previously deemed sacred and unbreachable.

- an encounter with experiences or perspectives that lead to critical reflection on how one's beliefs and values have formed and changed, and on how 'relative' they are to one's particular group or background.

For both Warren and Luke, exposure to theological debate and the onset of university studies, particularly their theological studies, initiated the beginning of a significant conflict between previously valued *conservative, charismatic* perspectives of Christianity and the more critical ideas put forward by academics, liberation theologians, and social constructionists. Each referred to their studies as having had an important influence on their development. The further they developed their academic interests in theology, (each has a Masters degree in theology) the further they seemed to move from original perspectives handed down to them by their families, and the Church. Tom's experience was somewhat different. Taught from an early age to question the Bible intellectually, and then caught up as he was with the radical theological debates of the 1960s, the foundation to his spirituality was already more "liberal". In this sense he had no trouble, at least intellectually, locating his sexuality within his spirituality. Tom has a doctoral degree in Theology.

What is evident is that Warren's, Luke's and Tom's capacity to engage with difficulties, which include, but are no means confined to, difficulties in relation to their experience of homoeroticism, set them on a more unique path than that laid out for them by either their families, society, or the Church.

These experiences included:

- Exploring homoerotic relationships, despite the spiritual conflicts which resulted.
- "Coming out" to significant people.
- Placing homoerotic feelings directly in the context of their spiritual lives.
- A range of personal crises to which there were no ready-made solutions

These experiences, in the context of academic study, spiritual direction, psychotherapy, served as catalysts for the emergence of *Individuative-Reflective* processes. As noted in Chapter Three, these processes are marked by a new identity which is sustained by "a meaning frame

conscious of its own boundaries and inner connections and aware of itself as a ‘world-view’”. The strength characteristic of this process is one of reflection on identity (self) and outlook (ideology) (Fowler, 1981, p.182). It would seem that Warren’s, Luke’s and Tom’s ongoing struggle in working with and integrating the homoerotic component of themselves into their lives as priests requires them to maintain a constantly self-critical approach to their personal lives, as well as to the particular outlooks (theological or otherwise) they may have tended to reify. For them all, precisely because they have chosen to actively engage with this dimension of themselves, “nothing stays the same”. Either in the form of insistent dreams (as in Luke’s case), or through a continual “coming out” process, (as in the cases of Warren and Tom), the homoerotic dimension seems to continually challenge them on both personal and social levels.

It seems clear that the challenges of engaging with homoeroticism on a spiritual level have resulted in obvious clashes with valued authority sources. And for all three priests, the continual process of locating their sexuality within their spirituality has resulted in considerable self-reflection, deepening, for each of them, an awareness of the manner in which the Church and society have constructed sexuality, and the obvious need to challenge this construction. These are all factors which serve to initiate the emergence of *Individuative-Reflective* processes of meaning-creation. In the light of this discussion, it seems evident that the process of engaging with homoeroticism can serve as a catalyst for the emergence of new, *Individuative-Reflective* processes of meaning-creation.

The danger inherent in this *Individuative-Reflective* process is a tendency towards excessive confidence in the conscious mind. (ibid., p.183). The trap becomes thinking that one knows the answers, and that one has found the solutions. An indication that *Conjunctive* faith processes are emerging, according to Fowler, is a growing awareness of “anarchic and disturbing inner voices” (ibid., p.183). It is these that are likely to disturb the excessive confidence which might result from *Individuative-Reflective* processes of meaning-creation. A challenge is issued to the complacent *Individuative-Reflective* sense which comes to insist that “I know how life works”. What seems evident is that the continued struggle with homoeroticism constructed as it is as social and personal taboo, serves for Warren, Luke, and Tom to challenge aspects of themselves and their lives. It comes to represent that “anarchic and disturbing inner voice”,

keeping the psyche and its context (Church and society in Warren's and Tom's case, marriage in Luke's case) disturbed and challenged.

What is very characteristic of *Conjunctive* faith processes is the ability to tolerate paradox. What Fowler (1981) does not identify, in the emergence of *Conjunctive* processes of meaning-creation, is the influence of tolerating seemingly irreconcilable aspects of oneself or one's situation. For instance, being gay (and claiming this positively as an aspect of one's identity) and being priest, and choosing to act from both as authentic elements of one's identity (for instance Warren's identification of himself at the moment as being a *gay priest*); or having strong homoerotic impulses and placing these within a context of one's spiritual awareness (as all three priests are able to do). It seems from the interviews with Warren, Luke, and Tom, that the very process of tolerating sexuality in the context of spirituality heralds in a *Conjunctive* process, one which requires them each to tolerate placing seemingly irreconcilable opposites together: body and spirit, sex and God.

Luke, Tom, and Warren can be situated within both *Individuative-Reflective* as well as *Conjunctive* processes in their orientations towards their spiritual development. It would seem that their experience of working with and tolerating the homoerotic dimension of themselves in the context of their spirituality, a process assisted by factors such as theological study, spiritual direction, and psychotherapy, serves to continually challenge them into a *Conjunctive* (paradoxical) approach to their spiritual development.

For Luke, the homoerotic element serves as a challenge to his identity, moving him back and forth between *Individuative-Reflective* and *Conjunctive* processes. As soon as he over-invests in the role as "perfect" priest (evidenced by a sense of certainty, which is characteristic of *Individuative* reasoning), the homoerotic dimension rises up to challenge him (creating the tension characteristic of *Conjunctive* meaning-creation processes). Warren's choice to identify himself in the Church context as a "gay priest" locates him within a powerful and ongoing dialectic. His position is one of constant vulnerability. There is little certainty available to him regarding the response of either his parishioners, or the Church hierarchy. Tom's increased capacity to "come out" to the church hierarchy (Tom has not "come out" to his parish)

similarly places him within a dialectic in which he is required to deal with any response his colleagues might have towards him and his decision to live, as a priest, in a “gay” relationship. Tom’s experience, however, illustrates that a number of other factors, particularly the crises he experienced, each of which had not readily available solution, also served as significant sources of movement into *Conjunctive* processes of meaning-creation.

It becomes evident that for all three priests, the manner in which they have elected to engage with their sexuality in the context of their spirituality, and each of their ability to tolerate remaining within various dialectical situations, serves as catalysts for movement between *Individuative-reflective* processing (allowing greater certainty and clarity), and the more complex and difficult work of tolerating the tensions of *Conjunctive* (dialectical) processing.

Although not the only process initiating movement between *Individuative-Reflective* and *Conjunctive* processes of meaning creation, it is clear that engaging with, and locating homoeroticism within the context of spirituality serves an important role in the creation of a dialectic, something which is central to Fowler’s *Conjunctive* process. A great deal of growth, for each participant in the study, has taken place within the context of this dialectic.

From the above discussion it becomes evident that the process of engaging with and integrating homoeroticism within the context of spirituality seems able to serve an initiatory function in the emergence of new processes of meaning-creation.

6.3.3. Summary

The third research question has explored the role of homoeroticism as an initiatory function in the emergence of new processes of meaning-creation. Factors were explored which led to the emergence of *Individuative-Reflective* and *Conjunctive* processes. As Fowler (1981) notes, clashes with valued authority sources and encounters with experiences that lead to critical reflection on how one’s beliefs and values have formed often result in the emergence of *Individuative-Reflective* processes of meaning-creation. That homoeroticism served this purpose in the each of the three priests lives is evident. *Conjunctive* processes are often provoked as a result of what Fowler terms “anarchic and disturbing inner voices”. That

homoeroticism served this role, representing that which is taboo within the dominant Church culture, is also evident. It was also noted that the process of tolerating homoeroticism within the context of being a priest also served as a catalyst for the emergence of *Conjunctive* processes. The dialectic created by “coming out” for each of them served to create a context in which spiritual and psychological growth could take place. It was concluded that the process of engaging with and integrating homoeroticism within the context of spirituality seemed able to serve an initiatory function in the emergence of new processes of meaning-creation in the lives of the three priests participating in the study. However, it was noted that other factors unrelated to homoeroticism, such as problems or crises without overt solutions, also served as catalysts for the emergence of *Conjunctive* processes.

In the final section of this chapter, the role of homoeroticism in the spirituality of the priests in the study will be summarised in full, drawing together the results of Section’s One and Two.

6.4. SECTION THREE : CONCLUSIONS

6.4.1. Fourth Research Question : The Role Of Homoeroticism In The Spirituality Of Priests

To conclude this chapter, and drawing from the preceding discussions from Section One and Section Two, the role homoeroticism has played in the spiritual growth of the priests in this study will be summarised.

- Homoeroticism appeared to serve no role separate to the manner in which the priests experienced contemporary society and the Church having constructed it, and separate to the manner in which each priest experienced, expressed and engaged with it.
- Homoeroticism cannot be confined to any one particular role in the lives of the participants. It served a diversity of roles between and within each priest.
- Homoeroticism was experienced as being socially and personally taboo, largely as a result of the manner in which it had been constructed by traditional Christianity. In this

sense it took on the role representing that which was “wrong”, “bad” or “evil” in society.

- Homoeroticism served the role of challenging personal constructions of identity, challenging participants also to deal with and integrate something “other” than what they might have hoped to be in, or portray to, the world.
- Theological study, spiritual direction, psychotherapy, and acceptance by peers allowed for a reframing of homoeroticism. It then took on the role representing an aspect of psychological and spiritual experience which could potentially promote personal and social change.
- The overt acknowledgement of homoeroticism and its integration (as evidenced through a “coming out” process) served to create a significant dialectic, both personally, and within the particular outer worlds of each participant, creating a context in which change could occur.
- Homoeroticism served as a site of inner (intrapsychic) and outer (interpsychic) struggle, challenging the participants to actively work with understanding their sexuality from a spiritual perspective.
- Homoeroticism was embodied as a site of resistance against the dominant Church culture.
- Homoeroticism served the role as catalyst for the emergence of new processes of meaning-creation.

6.5. Summary

This chapter has sought to present an analysis of the research interviews pertaining to the spirituality of three priests, and the role homoeroticism has played in processes of spiritual growth. The results were presented in three sections. In the first section a grounded theory

analysis of the interviews was conducted. This section served to highlight core themes and processes in understanding the manner in which the priests in the study engaged with, conceptualised, and experience homoeroticism in relation to their spirituality and spiritual growth. Similarities and differences in the manner in which each priest related to these aspects of their experiences were explored. The second section of the chapter explored Fowler's faith development processes. Each priest's experience was explored using Fowler's faith development analysis. Factors contributing to the emergence of new processes of meaning-creation were described, exploring the role homoeroticism played in the emergence of *Individuative-Reflective* and *Conjunctive* processes. The chapter concluded with a summary of the roles homoeroticism appeared to play within the spiritual growth of the three priests participating in the study. It was noted that homoeroticism did not seem to play any single distinctive role outside the manner in which it has been constructed by contemporary culture, and the manner in which each priest had constructed, engaged with, and experienced it. In the latter sense, homoeroticism seemed to express a diversity of roles between and within each priest.

In Chapter Seven, the above conclusions will be explored in some detail, linking them to Jungian and post-Jungian theory explored in the initial chapters of this dissertation. The study will conclude with a summary of the findings, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Theories in psychology are the very devil. It is true that we need certain points of view for their orienting and heuristic value; but they should always be regarded as mere auxiliary concepts that can be laid aside at any time. We still know so very little about the psyche that it is positively grotesque to think we are far enough advanced to frame general theories . . . No doubt theory is the best cloak for lack of experience and ignorance, but the consequences are depressing: bigotedness, superficiality, and scientific sectarianism.

Carl Jung

7.1. Introduction

Carpenter (1914) suggested that the experiences of marginality often characteristic of gender-variant shamans prepared these individuals to become “the forward force in human evolution” (p. 59). Not fitting into stereotypic gender roles, these men and women initiated new activities, laying foundations for the priesthood, science, literature, and the arts. He suggested, furthermore, that a blending of “masculine” and “feminine” characteristics resulted in a “double-engine”, androgynous, psychic power, explaining the spiritual gifts characteristic of shamans. Jung (1938) reflected that “homosexuals” were often “endowed with a wealth of religious feelings” and a “spiritual receptivity” (p. 86). He suggested that “homosexuality” reflected an “incomplete detachment from the hermaphroditic archetype, coupled with a distinct resistance to identify with the role of a one-sided sexual being” (1936a, p. 31). Hopcke (1989) suggests that the archetypal androgyne forms the basis of gay and lesbian archetypal experience, resulting in the “spiritual reality” of “one’s homosexuality”.

Shallenberger (1998) notes that the struggle many gay and lesbian people have with their sexuality seems to have the effect of “deepening” their experience of themselves and their identities, as well as initiating a movement “towards fuller integrity” (p. 11). Kulkarni (1997) argues that the processes by which women engage with and develop lesbian identities as an expression of strong homoerotic feelings serves, through the *embodiment* of their sexuality,

and as a challenge to societal “*normalcy*”, to express the *transcendent function* and thereby act as catalysts for both personal and collective *individuation*.

Jung, in his 1930 paper, *The Stages of Life*, suggests that “problems draw us into an orphaned and isolated state where we are abandoned by nature and driven into consciousness” (p. 388). Every problem, he argues, brings with it the possibility of a widening consciousness, and therefore is a movement towards individuation.

The current study is an exploration of the role of homoeroticism in the spiritual growth, and therefore, the individuation, of three priests. As reflected above, writers and theorists have suggested that homoeroticism plays a role in both individual and collective individuation. The focus of this study is the exploration of what some of the processes might be by which homoeroticism influences the widening of consciousness. Using Jung’s (1928) theory of individuation (outlined in some detail in Chapter Three) as the overall structure for this discussion, each participant’s experience of homoeroticism in relation to their spirituality will now be explored, looking at both process and content. Particular reference will be made to the “like-with-like” alchemical illustrations referred to by Jung (1955) in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, exploring also an alternative, non-heterosexist model for processes of psychological growth and integration.

The detailed interviews and subsequent analysis revealed a wealth of material, much of which cannot be fully developed within the limits of this study. Only a number of prominent themes and processes will find a more detailed exploration within the context of the discussion. The dangers of both reductionism and elevationism when linking experience to psychological theory are always evident in a discussion of the psychological dynamics of any phenomenon. A theme developed in some detail in both Chapters One and Two, pertained to the notion of *metaphor*. The discussion that follows draws on Jungian theory as a metaphor by which to amplify and further understand each priest’s experience. The account given is by no means exhaustive. Each interpretation presents a particular Jungian vantage point by which to enter a little further into each priest’s experience.

7.2. Homoeroticism and Spiritual Growth : An Exploration of Individuation Processes

Jung's (1928) theory of individuation describes a complex process by which, through dialogue between an individual and problems experienced externally (in the world) and/or internally (intra-psychically), as well as an inherent ambivalence regarding both a need to grow and an impulse to remain unconscious, deeper and more meaningful constellations of experience emerge, individually, as well as in relation to the world. Jung's theory is one which finds its full realisation in the collective movement of humankind. He often emphasises that his vision is not of an individualistic psychology, but one in which individual human growth always serves as a site of resistance against a powerful collective impulse toward unconsciousness or one-sided conscious development.

This discussion of the role homoeroticism might play in the process by which collective unconsciousness is challenged, or by which one-sided conscious development finds a compensatory unconscious response, will take the following form. One of the fundamental processes by which individuation occurs, viz. the *transcendent function*, will serve as the overall structure in which the exploration will take place. This process was one which Jung (1928) noted within the context of his studies of alchemy: "This remarkable capacity of the human psyche for change, expressed in the transcendent function, is the principle object of late medieval alchemical symbolism" (p. 219). Jung's (1955) discussion of "like-with-like" alchemical imagery will be used to illustrate the *transcendent function*. As noted previously, Jung (1955) made direct links between alchemical imagery and processes of individuation: "We can see today that the entire alchemical procedure . . . can just as well represent the individuation process of a single individual" (p. 555). Both these resources will together serve as the structure for the discussion of each priest, looking particularly at the manner in which they engaged with homoeroticism, what its meanings have been and are for each of them, and how their experiences of this dimension of their lives has influenced the changes that have occurred in their spiritual lives. Each alchemical illustration in turn will serve as a basis for the developing discussion.

That this is a relatively artificial structure in which to locate the experiences of each priest is self-evident. As with Jung's work with alchemy, this discussion will use the alchemical

illustrations as metaphor, allowing these images to provide an amplification of processes by which change takes place. It is not the intention of this discussion to reduce the experiences of each priest to Jungian theory or alchemical processes. The theory simply serves as one means by which the richness of the data can be engaged with and explored.

7.2.1. “They Make But One”

Warren, Luke, and Tom began their spiritual journeys in the context of relatively conservative Christian orthodoxy. Each developed strong ties with their religious traditions. These traditions became important to them, and served as the foundation for their religious development. They all seemed to feel a strong attraction towards a religious expression of their early spirituality, and as they moved into young adulthood, increasingly sensed their “calling” to the priesthood. Each of them describe, as children and adolescents, experiences of feeling “different” to others. Warren and Tom felt this more keenly and directly. For Luke the experience was more veiled. He also felt “set apart”, but as a result of his “specialness”. Each carried with them, from an early age, a sense of being “other” within their social environments. How Warren, Luke, and Tom went on to engage with this experience of “otherness” will be explored throughout this discussion.

Understanding the experience of this “otherness” might provide some degree of understanding of the importance of their religious affiliations from an early stage in their lives. What these institutions could provide was a sense of belonging not otherwise experienced. Luke in particular speaks of the strong Christian *persona* he developed from an early age, one which reflected an image of perfection and specialness. His identity as a Christian was something he was extremely invested in. Shallenberger (1998) makes this observation in his study: religious institutions often serve as places of refuge for many (while still perceived to be “heterosexual”) children who experience themselves as being “different” to the norm. The crisis that emerges when homoerotic feelings begin coming to the fore is thus particularly difficult. The threat exists of losing the safety of a place of belonging should one “come out”.

For Warren and Luke, the emergence of homoerotic feelings ushered in the beginnings of a conflictual period in their lives, one which still continues on a number of different levels

through to the present. For both, these feelings were experienced as “a problem”, ousting them from their respective spiritual Edens. Alongside their strong identities as Christians, homoerotic feelings began to emerge, which for them both took on the form of strong, insistent feelings, not easily avoided. Apart from the strength of these feelings, which they both shared, they also shared their first conceptualisation of these feelings as taboo, “evil”, and “a curse”. Recall Jung’s (1951) notion of the archetypal *shadow*: “the shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego personality” (p. 7). Their first experience of the homoeroticism as *shadow* seems to result directly from absorbing the Church’s experience of this form of sexuality. As the moral problem of the Church, homoerotic sexualities are clearly a *collective shadow* to Christianity, reflecting that which is unacceptable, undeveloped, and not easily tolerated. Warren and Luke both seemed to internalise this *collective shadow*, allowing it to become a *personal shadow*. For both, homoerotic sexualities were not acceptable within the context of their spirituality.

Tom’s experience was a different one. His first experiences of homoerotic sexuality was as something “natural”. Not being aware of the concept nor taboo nature of “homosexuality” until his late teens, his early homoerotic feelings were free of guilt or anxiety. He felt anxiety about not “fitting in”, and not finding girls attractive. As a young adult he learnt that the bible condemned “homosexuality”. He never seemed to internalise this feeling fully, in that homoeroticism never wholly became, as it did for Warren and Luke, an expression of a *personal shadow*. Intellectually, drawing on radical theological debates at the time (during the 1960s), he found a way of engaging with his sexuality which allowed him to “normalise” homoerotic sexuality as “an idea”. This “idea” of the normality of homoerotic feelings was only fully realised as a “lived experience” many years later. During this long period Tom struggled enormously with homoeroticism as an expression of the *collective shadow* of both the Church and his culture.

It becomes possible at this point to introduce the first illustration of the “like-with-like” alchemical series (Jung, 1955) into the discussion. The picture in this first illustration (subtitled *They Make But One*) is of a king, dressed in yellow, and a priest, dressed in white, joined together at the foot. As representatives of the spirit (“priest”) and body (“king”) they are still

merged, and yet their difference is marked. Jung's (1955) interpretation of this first illustration suggested the undifferentiated and yet mutually dependent nature of spirit and body as experienced by "the masculine". His interpretation goes on to trace the development of a "homosexual" union as being preliminary to a more mature "heterosexual" union, as illustrated in the final scene of the series. It was suggested in Chapter Four that the images in this alchemical series could be interpreted as reflecting processes of change and integration without making use of gendered or heterosexist concepts. What follows is an alternative interpretation, while still using principles developed by Jung.

The first illustration seems to describe Warren's, Luke's, and Tom's experience of the dawning awareness of their sexuality. As much younger people, the "priest" aspect was the only one represented, or in any way developed. They all invested considerable energy into their religious pursuits, with no conscious awareness of the corporeal "king" (representing sexuality) until their late teens or early adulthood. That this aspect was there is evident in each of their stories. It was only later that it was recognised, albeit reluctantly, within consciousness. That their marginalised experience in the world, relating to their sense of "being different" might have contributed to an over-developed, or one-sided development of themselves in the realm of spirituality serves as a foundation for the compensatory emergence of "other" within themselves. An interesting phenomenon arises: their experience of being "other" could be seen to have led them to develop the spiritual aspect of themselves from an early age. This creates the conditions for the "other" to begin emerging from within. Fear of their sexuality and having a sense of its "otherness" seemed to result in this dimension of themselves being avoided, with much of their energy going into developing their spirituality.

This dynamic describes the first phase of the *transcendent function*: one-sided development results in the compensatory response from the collective unconscious in which "other" begins to emerge, often insisting itself upon ego consciousness. The relentless nature of homoeroticism in the experience of Warren, Luke, and Tom seems to confirm the strength of the compensatory response from the unconscious. As homoerotic feelings emerge, they begin to move, as "other", into the context of the alchemical "priest" aspect. The feelings are distinct, seemingly unrelated, and evidently in contradiction to one another. As in the first alchemical

illustration, “priest” and “king” are beginning to be seen together by ego consciousness. The feeling might be something like “I am a Christian, and I have homoerotic feelings”. At the point that the “king” aspect begins to move into consciousness as something assumed by the ego to be unacceptable and taboo (either collective or personal shadow), a tension is constellated. The *persona*, representing the ideal of what one thinks one ought to be for the world, is challenged. As Jung (1928) notes, the *persona* and ego consciousness initially tend to be identical. It is the archetypal *shadow* (mainly based on socially related issues, and therefore largely socially constructed) that often serves as the initial catalyst for the separation of *persona* from ego consciousness. The seeds of the idea “I am not who I thought I was” are sewn.

Alchemical images discussed in Chapter Three might also be useful to introduce into the discussion at this point. What becomes evident in the lives of Warren, Tom, and Luke, is that, at the point that homoerotic feelings move into awareness (i.e., “priest” and “king” are both “seen” by ego consciousness), a tension is constellated. Disparate elements, increasingly pushed together by the compensatory relationship between consciousness and the collective unconscious, find themselves located within a similar space (ego consciousness). This marks the conscious beginnings of the *dialogical* process (Hermans, et. al., 1992) by which the *self* attempts to emerge more fully. The alchemical term for the space in which this dialogue happens is *vas*, meaning a container. It is within this space that a “mating” or “mixing” of contradictory elements (representing the initial *massa confusa*) leads eventually to a *coniunctio*, or a coming together of “opposites”, thereby moving toward a *hierosgamos* or sacred marriage (Jung, 1953). The processes by which these changes occur will be the focus of the remaining discussion.

7.2.1.1. Summary

The first alchemical illustration highlights the beginning of the *transcendent function*’s movement towards change. One-sided development, possibly as a result of early feelings of marginality, is reflected in an over-investment in spirituality, providing Warren, Luke, and Tom with a place of refuge in the world in which they did not easily fit. The collective unconscious, in response to this one-sided development, challenges the *persona* by presenting

ego consciousness with that which is “other”, this time in the form of the collective archetypal *shadow*. Warren and Luke internalised the Church’s collective shadow, it becoming for them a personal *shadow*. Tom struggled with homoeroticism for many years, but mainly as an expression of the collective *shadow*. His concern was that the world (his parents and the Church) did not find it acceptable. Intellectually, he had reframed homoerotic feelings (as “an idea”) as being a “normal” counterpart of “heterosexuality”. As homoerotic feelings moved into consciousness (alchemical *vas*) for each of them, a particular tension was constellated between two seemingly disparate elements, spirituality (alchemical “priest”) and homoerotic sexuality (alchemical “king”). The processes by which these elements mixed for each participant in the study, thereby allowing eventually for new meanings to emerge, is the focus of this chapter.

7.2.2. “The Revelation of the Hidden”

The point at which the presence of homoerotic feelings was acknowledged by each priest marks the onset of a struggle with this dimension of themselves. The dialogue that began as an interaction between spirituality, ego consciousness (as initially mediated by the *persona*) and an emerging conscious awareness of homoerotic feelings (as *collective shadow* and then, for Warren and Luke, as *personal shadow*) seems to have culminated in an experience of a private “coming out” to themselves as a conscious recognition that “this is part of who I am”.

Warren experienced this initial personal “coming out” (as distinct to “coming out” to other people) when he answered a question regarding “homosexuality” in forms he filled in at the onset of National Service:

Warren: *I realised that when I filled in that piece of paper, I realised that this [being homosexual] is what I am.*

Tom’s experience occurred when, at the age of twenty-three, he sought out a psychological book about “homosexuality”.

Tom: *And I went and bought a book at the Church bookshop, written about homosexuality from a psychological view. I read it from cover to cover, and realised that I fitted in, and started to work out . . . where I did fit in. Once I made the step of accepting it, I accepted that this is really how I am made.*

Luke's experience differs from that of Warren and Tom in that he has not developed an identity based on his sexuality. His journey towards more consciously recognising the homoerotic aspect to himself (alongside a hetero-erotic aspect) happened in the context of psychotherapy. It was in this context that he "came out" for the first time. This experience of allowing someone else to witness and accept this aspect of himself allowed him to begin engaging less judgmentally with homoerotic feelings.

For each priest, whether recognising the homoerotic aspect to themselves as suggesting an identity, or reflecting a homoerotic dimension, the process which was initiated by this recognition was complex and multi-layered.

The second alchemical illustration, subtitled *The Revelation of the Hidden*, provides a useful image for some of the changes that began occurring. The illustration reflects a change in both figures in the picture. The king, no longer wearing yellow, has a blue robe, and a black foot. The priest, not wearing white any longer, now wears a black robe, and has a blue foot. Jung's (1955) interpretation of this second illustration suggests a mutual recognition of a complementary relatedness between elements (spirit and body) which initially seemed disparate.

Examining the experiences of Warren, Luke and Tom, it seems that the initial experience of "coming out" to themselves, i.e., the beginnings of an acceptance of the homoerotic aspect of themselves, might reflect the dawning of a recognition of an aspect of the archetypal *self*, encased in something experienced as taboo or wrong. They each begin considering the possibility that "maybe this is me", or "maybe this is an aspect of me I can't get rid of". Homoeroticism as the *collective shadow* of the Church, then being absorbed as *personal shadow* by Warren and Luke, is being considered in this moment of acceptance as a potentially

legitimate expression of themselves. *Persona*, along with ego consciousness, both of which until that stage had learnt that homoeroticism was not acceptable, are challenged.

Changes that begin emerging at this point for each priest are reflected in the second illustration by the changes in colours of the priest and king. The shift from a differentiated yellow and white to a shared and complementary blue and black seems significant. Images of the archetypal *self* begins appearing *in potentia*, not only in newly emerging aspects (homoeroticism) but in aspects of the psyche already developed (spirit). Colours reflecting the possibility of the archetypal *self* become evident in both “priest” (spirit) and “king” (body), their complementary nature now already hinted at. As homoeroticism is allowed to enter more fully into consciousness, changes begin occurring on all levels of consciousness.

There are significant differences in the manner in which Warren and Luke, on the one hand, and Tom, on the other, conceptualised and engaged with their experiences. The former, at the point of recognising the homoerotic aspects of themselves, both moved into a difficult struggle, a struggle which continues on various levels through to the present. Homoeroticism was viewed by them as “other”, something personally unacceptable, thus becoming a *personal shadow* with which they both struggled immensely. That the colours of the second alchemical illustration should be blue and black reflects the process, described by the alchemists, which begins occurring when disparate elements begin interacting within the newly constellated *vas : nigredo*, or a darkening of the *prima materia* (Jung, 1946a). Ego consciousness is challenged to shift, often overcome by symptoms, which could include depression, anxiety, or any other expression of conflict or impending transition. As homoerotic aspects of themselves were taken more seriously, the tension and difficulty Warren and Luke experienced mounted.

Luke : *Therapy helped so much with that, being able to talk about and work with such difficult and painful things.*

Warren : *At the beginning . . . , the experience was an experience of tension, of responding to a call from God, and being gay, and I couldn't bring them together, and that tension was very debilitating in many respects.*

The emerging tension, described by Jung (1957) as the second stage of the *transcendent function*, begins to challenge ego consciousness. Timmerman (1992), speaking independently of Jung or Jungian theory, writes of this process in the cycles of change as *shedding taboos*. Discussed in Chapter Four, this is a process in which previously held taboos are incorporated into consciousness, gradually allowing them to coexist with previously held moral structures (p. 87). That Warren and Luke continued to engage in this difficult, debilitating and painful process suggests that they both recognised something significant in their experience of homoeroticism, allowing them to let it coexist alongside their original spiritual structures. However, as suggested by the second alchemical image, changes occur in both “priest” and “king”. The implication is that the original spirituality (as reflected by the alchemical “priest” dressed in white) is also altered as it was brought into more conscious contact with the alchemical “king” (sexuality).

Tom’s experience differs significantly from that of Warren’s and Luke’s, largely because he did not engage consciously with homoerotic sexuality as a *personal shadow*. Although Tom initially resisted dealing with his sexuality, once he allowed it to move into consciousness, “I accepted that this is really how I am made”. The emergence of the “king” beside the “priest” was thus seemingly not a catastrophic event for him. For much of his childhood and early adolescence homoerotic feelings he experienced had not yet been defined as being unacceptable. He had also already developed a theological construct by which to experience these feelings as being a normal counterpart to heteroerotic sexuality. Important to note, though, is that Tom’s construct of the “naturalness” of homoerotic sexuality existed only as an intellectual “idea”.

Tom: *[My sexuality became] formalised as an idea. I didn’t like any outward display, effeminate behaviour, any mannerisms. I didn’t like that, and made a point of not coming across in that way.*

Jung (1955) reflected in his discussion of psychological changes and their relation to alchemy that “an insight might just as well remain in abeyance if it is simply not used” (p. 476). Tom’s

early struggle regarding his sexuality was in the context of a difficult and painful relationship with John. That this was a homoerotic relationship seemed to be something he avoided dealing with. Once John got married, the possibility of sharing this ongoing relationship with friends and family as something “natural” became even more difficult. Choosing this context in which to express his sexuality, i.e. a context in which it remained hidden from view, suggests that homoeroticism remained, in all likelihood, a *shadow* experience for Tom, despite his intellectual rationalisation to the contrary.

Tom struggled for a long time with the guilt he felt at not expressing his sexuality within the structures of a committed relationship. This context, he felt, was the context in which sexuality could best find spiritual expression. It is significant that Tom did not, for many years of his adult life, engage in a relationship which satisfied his spiritual vision of fulfilling sexual expression. As already suggested, reasons for this seemed to be the struggle Tom experienced with homoerotic sexuality as an expression of the *collective shadow* of the Church and of society, and possibly also an experience of homoeroticism as a personal *shadow*, something which was more difficult to acknowledge. His parents in particular seemed to represent this notion of the collective taboo nature of homoeroticism. It was many years later that Tom was able to exercise his insight more fully in the world. His parents’ death, and a number of crises unrelated to homoeroticism per se, became the context in which many of the personal and spiritual shifts he experienced took place. The nature of this tension will find further differentiation in the context of the discussion of the third alchemical illustration.

7.2.2.1. Summary

The second alchemical illustration reflects the emergence of a tension between two opposing elements within the psyche. The work of the *transcendent function*, now in its middle phase, reflects the growing differentiation of the elements, sexuality and spirituality, thereby escalating conflict within ego consciousness. For Warren and Luke, the darkening (*nigredo*) of the elements becomes more evident. They both allow themselves to embrace experiences in relation to homoeroticism which are painful and difficult. Tom’s experience is somewhat different. He has an intellectual construct which constructs homoerotic sexuality as something “natural”, possibly also serving to protect him from the full impact of the experience. That it

was only many years later that he was finally able to live out this naturalness of homoerotic sexuality in the world suggests that on a more emotional level, homoeroticism remained *shadow*. It was much later that the darkening, *nigredo* process, initiating change, more fully emerged in him. For each, the process of differentiation was characterised by a further “coming out” to themselves, which can be described as the process by which homoeroticism was allowed to enter into consciousness more fully and legitimately, despite the internal struggle regarding its presence.

7.2.3. Separating: “A very long time, and by putrefaction, calcinations, incineration, fixation, and coagulation the materials become solid”.

As ego consciousness grapples with contradiction and paradox, it tends to move back and forth between the opposing poles, trying to find resolution. Jung (1928) notes that consciousness separates psychological experience in order to understand it. Elsewhere he writes: “In order to bring about their subsequent reunion, the mind must be separated from the body, which is the equivalent of a ‘voluntary death’ – for only separated things can unite” (1955, p. 471). Concepts such as love and hate, right and wrong, spirit and matter, often exist as opposites in the consciousness mind. As Samuels (1985) notes, this ability to discriminate is crucial to ego consciousness. If unable to achieve this, it simply becomes a victim of “blind instinctuality” (p. 59). Each polarity holds within itself distinct qualities not shared by the other. Without a discriminating ego, these features remain merged, sacrificing their individual richness. As these disparate elements move increasingly into consciousness, tension is inevitably emerges, resulting in marked conflict and turmoil.

The middle phase through which the *transcendent function* evolves is characterised by an intense struggle between disparate elements, each moving paradoxically towards increased differentiation and greater unity (Jung, 1957). Timmerman (1992) described this middle phase in the cycle of change as a “liminal” stage, in which tension arises as previously taboo aspects are invited, albeit reluctantly, into consciousness.

Without taboos, a person is faced with perhaps the most difficult moment in the dynamic of change : the acceptance of ambiguities. As an essential middle

stage by which one moves from external certainties, it is the situation of being able to live between possibilities. Alternatives for future interpretations of oneself, not yet discovered, are multiple and undefined (Timmerman, 1992, p. 94).

Liminality, or marginality, as discussed in Chapter Four, is a space in which tensions between “normalcy” and “otherness” are tolerated. As a site of resistance against dominant trends, it provides the space in which, by simultaneously tolerating both old and new, something altogether different is allowed to emerge. As Kulkarni (1997) concludes, it is a space in which one tolerates being both an insider and an outsider, without surrendering the power of conceptualising one’s position as a site of resistance. Jung (1971, p. 298) described this space as:

The region of darkness into which one falls is not empty . . . When the surface has been cleared, things can grow out of the depths. People always suppose that they have lost their way when they come against these depths. But if they do not know how to go on, the only answer, the only advice that makes any sense is “Wait for what the unconscious has to say about the situation”. A way is only *the* way when one finds it and follows it oneself. There is no general prescription for “how to do it”.

Kulkarni (1997, p. 53) concluded, summarising Jung’s overall thesis:

This is a “true labour, a work which involved both action and suffering” (Jung, 1957, p. 121) and which has one overall purpose: “the revelation” of the potentially “whole” personality (ibid., p. 186).

The alchemical images of *nigredo*, *fermentatio*, *mortificatio* and *putrefactio* describe these processes of change (Jung, 1946a). As ego consciousness increasingly tolerates the tension between disparate elements, all elements are altered. “Like mixing two different chemical substances: if there is any combination at all, both are transformed” (Jung, 1946a, p. 163). These processes of change and differentiation were introduced in the previous section,

culminating for each priest in a “coming out” to themselves. This marked the moment when homoeroticism was allowed to enter into consciousness as a potentially significant and legitimate aspect of the experience of *self*. As homoeroticism is given an increasingly legitimate voice, it is able to influence and effect change on other aspects or elements within the psyche. The internal psychological elements, “if there is any combination, . . . are transformed” (ibid.). These processes in Warren’s, Luke’s and Tom’s experiences will now be discussed in some detail, looking particularly at the manner in which further differentiation is sought, culminating in the process of “coming out” in the external world. Each priest’s experience will now be explored separately, thereby taking into account, and emphasising, the diverse nature of their experience of homoeroticism.

7.2.3.1. Tom

It was during his second year of studying theology, at the age of twenty-four, that Tom began to consider the reality of homoeroticism in his life. Tom had already been challenged by radical theological debates occurring in the context of the Church in the 1960s, during which many cornerstones of Christianity were challenged. His experience at university affirmed these challenges. During these years Tom’s experience of his religion was largely intellectual. Much of his experience, including his sexuality, was rationalised by academic debate. That it was difficult to personally implement the visions he had worked out intellectually is reflected in the length of time it took for him to enact his vision of the healthy spiritual expression of sexuality. In Chapter Three, the archetypal *senex*, or wise old man archetype, as an archetypal expression of that aspect of the *self* which yearns for knowledge, wisdom, and a soul-full or earthed rather than spirited spirituality, was discussed in some detail. It seems that Tom, through the course of his life, first under the influence of his family, particularly his father, then again emphasised at school, and later at university, developed the *senex* aspect of himself to the detriment of the other, more emotional, dimensions of himself. Recall Hillman’s (1991) suggestion that *puer* and *senex* represent two polarities of the same whole. There is little evidence of *senex*’s counterpart, *puer* (representing the playful, mischievous, spontaneous aspect of psychological life) during Tom’s childhood and early years of university study.

Examining Tom's approach to emerging homoerotic feelings, a strong sense of responsibility and intellectualisation is evident. He dealt with his sexuality in a *senex*-like manner, locating it within ordered parameters in which it could be legitimately expressed in the context of a committed long-term relationship. The compensatory nature of the unconscious is such, as Jung (1928) reflects, that any form of one-sided development will find its complement emerging, first within the unconscious, and then, if not acknowledged and articulated, as symptoms or impulses which tend to arise out of one's conscious control. Tom's experience seems to reflect this dynamic. Despite his conscious, *senex*-like formulation of the appropriate and responsible expression of sexuality within a spiritual context, he developed a relationship with John. The mercurial, energetic, irresponsible, light-spirited *puer* seems to emerge both in Tom's response to John, and in John himself. Regardless of the feelings of guilt, and later, after John's marriage, the feelings of committing adultery, Tom maintained his relationship with John, albeit intermittently, for many years. Despite an intellectual *senex*-like reconciliation between homoerotic sexuality and spirituality, the spiritual and the sexual aspects of himself were kept separate for the duration of this relationship. The relationship was never exposed to the world.

I suppose my feelings of guilt, overall, were rather unsteady at times . . . I can't say it was all of an easy conscience. . . I must admit to a lot of guilt. I felt I was committing adultery.

With John, there was a dichotomy, keeping [sexuality and spirituality] apart.

Senex remained the dominant conscious archetypal influence on both "priest" (spiritual) and "king" (bodily or corporeal) dimensions of Tom's psychological and spiritual functioning for many years. Although the homoerotic dimension did, through the course of his relationship with John, try to dislodge the one-sided nature of *senex*'s control, it took a number of other experiences, unrelated to sexuality, to finally break the hold the archetypal wise old man had over Tom's ego consciousness. Jung (1951) often warned of the dangers when ego consciousness over-identified with any one aspect of archetypal expression to the detriment of

others. Tom's subsequent experiences reflects the manner in which the psyche seeks to effect equilibrium.

Five years ago Tom's parents died. At the same time, he met his current partner. These two factors served as the catalysts for him to make the decision to "come out" to his family, and the Church hierarchy.

I don't know if I would ever have been able to talk to my parents. It was as if I was subconsciously waiting for them to go, then I could to the bishop, [and] speak to the rest of my family.

The point at which Tom "came out" in the world could be viewed as the point at which he allowed his experience of homoeroticism to attain a more complete level of differentiation. It is named (he refers to it as "gay") within the context of his environment, and identified as something not only more tolerable to himself (this process was illustrated in the previous section) but as an aspect of himself he could now risk exposing to the world. It is at this point also that Tom's experience of homoeroticism shifts from representing the archetypal *shadow*, to becoming, as he had always envisaged, a "normal" aspect of human sexuality.

7.2.3.2. Luke

Luke's experience of studying both theology and psychology at university had a major impact on his spiritual development. His spiritual perspective shifted from a charismatic, fundamentalist approach, to one which drew on an Incarnational, embodied theology. During this time he fell in love with Matthew, a fellow student. The experience disturbed him, and brought the homoerotic aspect of himself very much to the fore. The strength of this experience with Matthew, together with his interest in a more embodied theology, challenged him to begin differentiating his sexuality, and working with it more directly. Despite his perception of its taboo nature, Luke felt compelled to express it in some way.

The different theological perspectives, and a slow process of honesty with myself, helped [me not displace my sexual feelings into spiritual pursuits]. Fuck whether [the homoerotic feelings are] right or wrong.

Luke's exposure to psychological theories regarding sexuality, together with his ongoing theological studies, resulted in a further differentiation of his experience of his sexuality. He began considering the possibility of being bisexual. In his final years of study Luke met and married his wife, Sarah.

Luke's experience of theological studies did not have an impact on the manner in which he experienced homoerotic feelings. For Luke these feelings remained a personal *shadow*, and therefore feelings which remained largely unacceptable. Getting married fortified this particularly experience of homoeroticism. If homoerotic feelings were taboo prior to getting married, their *shadow* nature now intensified. Conflict with various church groupings, mostly as a result of the perspectives he was now gaining from his theological studies, resulted in a significant changes in and further differentiation of Luke's spiritual outlook.

Luke : This [conflict] led to the collapse of the extreme charismatic phase. Everything collapsed then, apart from a basic belief. That's all that was left.

Like Tom, it was an external event which seemed to serve as catalyst for Luke to begin engaging more deeply with the homoerotic aspect to himself. Throughout his university career, homoeroticism remained a personal *shadow* to Luke, something personally and spiritually unacceptable. The dialogue homoeroticism increasingly generated within him as it moved further into consciousness made it difficult for him to ignore these feelings. He had already, soon after completing his schooling, redefined the homoerotic aspect to himself as "a thorn" in his flesh. Linking this idea of a "thorn" with something St. Paul also experienced allowed him to reframe this homoerotic aspect as something "special"; a trial all Christians had to endure in order to prove their worth. Allowing homoeroticism to have this special status meant that the process of engaging with it could at least be legitimate.

The turning down of Luke's request for ordination proved to be a pivotal experience in his life. He made the decision to enter into psychotherapy at this point, beginning a process which significantly challenged the manner in which he had engaged with his life. He came to understand that his compulsion to help other people was often a compensation for the feelings of illegitimacy he felt. He examined his relationship with his father, and found that he often wanted to help younger boys as a way of giving these boys something he never had. His *persona* of a perfect Christian was increasingly challenged as he recognised that much of what underlay his spiritual quest were his own psychological issues.

I think that the mission of being there to help everybody kind of stopped, not stopped, got kind of blown apart, in being refused ordination. Learning [in therapy] that I couldn't be the person I wanted to be, or help in the way that I wanted to. So much of that was blown apart. Everything collapsed during those times. An amazing growing period, I can see that now.

The second major challenge to his *persona* came when Luke made the decision to explore the homoerotic aspect to himself in therapy. This was the first time he had shared this aspect with anyone. As he was guided into understanding the nature of this dimension of himself, Luke began to consider that homoerotic feelings might have a deeper meaning.

[Therapy was] a very rooting thing. I had been on this kind of persona flight. What everybody saw was this incredible person who's got it all together, and actually he hasn't. And that's what the process was doing, bringing me back to earth, connecting me to the real world, as a total contrast to this super-spiritual being. Actually he wants to fondle these boys, that's what he really wants to do. And that's what I did want to do. But nobody was ever allowed to know that. And that's why, that is one of the first ways in which I could begin to say, this is actually a gift, this helps me connect with who I really am, and with what I really need.

Luke's description gives an account of the manner in which the archetypal *shadow* challenges one-sided *persona*-identified ego consciousness. Luke's *persona* was that of the perfect

Christian. He increasingly became aware that homoerotic feelings, because they did not fit into his, nor the Church's, construction of a perfection Christian, served to challenge the one-sided manner in which his growth had evolved. To experience his therapist accepting the homoerotic dimension of himself began the process by which he himself could begin accepting it. Luke's experience of "coming out" to himself seemed to happen through the process of "coming out" to his therapist. Luke chose a safe context in which to expose this as yet unacceptable aspect of himself. His experience of another person accepting him allowed for the gradual process of beginning to accept himself.

Luke's experience of "coming out" to his therapist, allowing the homoerotic dimension of himself to begin to attain some significance within himself, seemed to serve as a foundation for a second "coming out" experience. The point at which Luke also "came out" to his wife marked the further differentiation of his experience of homoerotic feelings. This was the first time Luke had allowed anyone to witness these feelings outside the context of therapy. Alongside the image of perfection Luke portrayed to the world, Luke also endeavoured to be the "perfect" husband. His *persona* of perfection he portrayed to his wife was challenged through this experience.

The first person I told was [my wife]. She said to me that she was feeling terrible, because she was finding that she was attracted to other guys. And she said 'you are such an angel, I'm not worthy of you'. And I thought to myself, 'fuck this, I'm not living with this lie'. And that's when I told her . . . She was, has been, amazing.

Through learning to tolerate his experience of homoeroticism within himself, he could now consider the possibility that his wife could also tolerate these feelings. His wife's acceptance proved to be a pivotal experience in his journey. Homoeroticism, now more differentiated, was redefined as something other than archetypal *shadow*. The process of sharing it with his wife allowed for a deepening of his experience of himself and his relationship with his wife.

7.2.3.3. Warren

Homoerotic sexual feelings began moving into conscious awareness when Warren first began his National Service. Finding himself in a context devoid of restrictions, these feelings seemed to come as a rebellion against the one-sided nature of his childhood development. His initial response was to move completely away from traditions of religion and spirituality inherited from his childhood, and explore his sexuality. Despite the guilt he felt, he felt good about sexual experiences he had. There was, however, no possibility of reconciliation between his emerging sexuality and his spiritual feelings during this time. Homoeroticism was experienced as personal *shadow*, something unacceptable and in contradiction to his inherited spirituality.

For Warren, the university setting, his theological studies, and the onset of spiritual direction had a significant impact on his spiritual growth. For the first time in his life he was exposed to the possibilities of challenging authorities, most especially the possibility of challenging the authority of the bible. As his studies broadened the foundation of his experience of his spirituality, so too his sexuality increasingly found legitimacy. His studies and spiritual direction helped him challenge his initial experience of homoeroticism as *shadow*. Awareness of a gay organisation on the local campus affirmed these changes. Increasingly his sexuality attained differentiation within himself as something more legitimate.

And sometime during those first couple of years [at university] I think I was beginning to say to myself, maybe being gay is not a problem, is not wrong. There was still a problem with the expression of my sexuality, but just being gay was beginning to feel alright.

At the same time Warren's spirituality also attained further differentiation, reflecting many changes, largely as a result of his theological studies.

For the first time ever [I] was actually being sceptical about what I read in the bible, about what I believed, and how I express[ed] that belief of mine. It was as if, through this academic study I was doing, God was peeling away layers of

ignorance, of blind acceptance, of simple acceptance that I had been brought up with. Those years of studying were the most liberating experience of my life.

Warren's decision to "come out" seemed to emerge from the shifts in his spirituality and in his perception of his sexuality. Unlike Tom's and Luke's experience, Warren's decision was prompted primarily from within himself, rather than arising as a result of an external crisis or experience.

7.2.3.4. Commentary

The third alchemical illustration in the series of five illustrations might be useful in understanding the shifts that took place in the lives of these three priests during this time. This third illustration, subtitled *A very long time, and by putrefaction, calcinations, incineration, fixation, and coagulation the materials become solid*, shows the two figures, "priest" and "king", now separated. The one wears a robe which is black on the left, and blue on the right, the other a robe which is blue on the left, and black on the right. Each participant in the study, despite the differences in their experiences regarding homoeroticism and their spirituality, reflect this process of increased differentiation between these two aspects, as portrayed in the illustration. Exposure to new environments, socio-political changes, studies in theology and psychology, spiritual direction, and psychotherapy all seemed to speak for both "king" and "priest", allowing each of these aspects to shift, change, develop, and attain greater differentiation. Each, regardless of differences in their experience, seemed to go through a process of increasingly differentiating and separating their sexuality from their spirituality. It was only after a significant period, for each priest in the study, that the possibility of a complementary relationship between these seemingly disparate elements was recognised. Their studies seemed to create the possibility of recognising this on an intellectual level. The next step, that of locating and embodying their experience in the world, was one which was unique for each of them.

Tom grappled with homoeroticism as personal and collective *shadow*. He did, however, through the overly developed archetypal *senex*, find a manner in which homoeroticism and spirituality could, at least in theory, be reconciled. Despite this intellectual resolution, Tom

struggled to find a way of living this reconciliation out in the world. The death of his parents, and meeting his current partner, served as a catalyst for a decision to “come out”, thus allowing his experience of homoeroticism to find greater differentiation. Luke came to recognise the manner in which he sublimated sexual feelings in favour of spiritual pursuits. He allowed himself to begin articulating the homoerotic aspect of himself as something distinct. It, however, remained a *shadow* experience until he began psychotherapy. It was in this context that Luke first “came out”, allowing his experience of homoeroticism to begin attaining legitimacy within himself and his relationship with his therapist, and then later in his relationship with his wife. Warren at first experienced the homoerotic aspect to himself as *shadow*. Through a complex interaction between theological studies, mentoring, spiritual direction, and persistent homoerotic feelings, his experience of his sexuality and his spirituality each attained further differentiation.

For each priest in the study, a process became evident by which an increasingly complex dialogue developed between previously disparate elements. As their experience of homoeroticism shifted from being a silenced *shadow* to representing something more legitimate, the dialogue moved from an inner one to one also played out in the world. “Coming out” seemed to represent a significant moment in which their experience of homoeroticism could become something other than a representation of the archetypal *shadow*. These moments were pivotal in the process by which homoeroticism was allowed to become something more creative within each of their lives.

As homoeroticism was given a more significant voice, new tensions emerged, some directly related to their experience of their sexuality, others completely unrelated. For each, a number of unifying images and experiences seemed to emerge out of the liminality of their experience, allowing their attitudes towards their sexuality and their spirituality to change significantly. Their experience of their sexuality began to shift from being a deeply private conflict, to be something located more openly in the world. How each chose to locate this experience differed significantly. Now that a number of the processes by which changes occurred have been discussed, the next alchemical illustration will be brought into focus. This fourth illustration

presents the unifying image. The range of images experienced by Warren, Luke, and Tom which served to increasingly unify their experience will now be explored.

7.2.4. Rejoining The Worldly and the Spiritual Power : “This man worthily followed the art”.

Earlier on in this chapter, the first feature of consciousness, viz., the ability to *discriminate* between disparate elements, was discussed. The second feature of ego consciousness becomes evident at this point: the capacity to tolerate seemingly oppositional aspects of the psyche within one space (Samuels, 1985, p. 59). It is this achievement that results in changes in the opposing elements, and ego consciousness as a whole. The experiences of this phase as described by Luke, Tom, and Warren, will now be discussed in some detail.

7.2.4.1. Tom

The death of his parents seemed to release in Tom a capacity to present a fuller picture of himself to the world. His sense that *they* would be unable to tolerate his sexuality had prevented him from expressing it openly for many years. Their deaths, together with the many years of working with his homoerotic feelings, the guilt he felt about his relationship with John (in relation to committing adultery), and counselling work he did in helping married couples integrate their sexuality and their spirituality, as well as many years of “being [sexually] deprived”, all seemed to contribute to allowing him to personally (rather than intellectually) begin integrating his sexuality within the context of his spirituality. That he already had a well-developed intellectual construct in which to locate his experience helped him make the transition more easily. It was at this point that he could begin living out his vision of a spiritually healthy sexual relationship. As his relationship with Victor developed, the spiritual dimension seemed to appear in the context of their sexual relationship “as a matter of course”.

This was one of the advantages of starting the relationship with Victor at a mature age. Because I did see this as part of my spiritual enrichment, starting a sexual relationship with Victor. One of the things I took to quite naturally, after sex, was saying prayers, including what we had just experienced together. That seemed to

come together quite naturally. That was certainly something I would never have considered with John. There, there was a dichotomy, keeping the two apart.

Although Tom had now brought the alchemical “priest” and “king” together in the process of “coming out”, he seemed aware that his approach to his spirituality remained largely intellectual. This suggests that “priest” and “king” were brought together “as an idea”, and therefore remained intellectual. Both these aspects were still dominated by the archetypal *senex*, with little evidence of *puer*. It took two further experiences, unrelated to homoeroticism, but connected to the experience of *relationship*, which challenged Tom’s intellectual, *senex*-bound ego consciousness. It is in these experiences that *nigredo*, as “a black blacker than black night”, or “dark night of the soul” (Jung, 1955, p. 521), emerged fully within Tom’s experience, resulting in fundamental shifts in his orientation to the world.

A lengthy crisis which severely threatened his relationship with Victor, together with a close friend of Tom’s being murdered, plunged Tom into a period of considerable turmoil. Both these experiences challenged Tom’s intellectual, *senex*-dominated approach to life with seemingly insoluble problems. The first, a painful threat to his relationship, challenged him to remain in the context of the relationship, even though, for many months, Tom had no way of knowing either where Victor was, or whether he would return. Staying in the context of the relationship meant that he had to tolerate uncertainty, as well as considerable pain. He chose not to foreclose on his experience, but remained open to the possibilities of something new emerging. Victor eventually returned, and a new experience of the relationship emerged.

It was an experience which certainly strengthened my faith, my experience of prayer. Also untold building and fortifying of our relationship. It was one of the biggest crises I could have experienced.

The death of his friend, despite regular prayers to God for the friend’s safety, challenged Tom’s faith. Here too, he chose to remain within the context of God, despite God seemingly having forsaken him. Recall Jung’s (1971, p. 298) description:

The region of darkness into which one falls is not empty . . . When the surface has been cleared, things can grow out of the depths.

It seems that it was Tom's capacity and willingness to tolerate the dialectical, paradoxical space these crises presented him with, challenging him to increasingly sacrifice his needs for intellectual, *senex*-like answers, that allowed for the *transcendent function* to emerge, bringing with it a more emotionally-charged *puer*.

I've simply, where there has been no solution, fallen back on prayer, and my faith, and I've come out of them with my faith enriched immeasurably . . . As I've grown older, I've realised that the intellectual approach has its place, but I don't have to intellectualise everything. In those early days my faith was simply an intellectual pursuit.

The changes that occurred in Tom's spirituality and in the experience of his sexuality as a result of tolerating the dialectical space which arose out of these crises seem significant.

I would never have thought, when I was ordained thirty years ago, that I would get to this sort of place. Quite a rigorous daily routine of daily offices and daily mass. Almost like the life of a monk. It's not just a token thing, it's a real experience. It's as if it has always been there, but now, as a result of these experiences, I found myself moving into it, and finding it right for me.

I have found that my relationship with Victor seemed to enrich my whole life, especially as it is a sexual relationship. It seemed to enrich my whole life, and add a dimension to it.

Tom's journey seems to be characterised by the movement from that of "intellectual" to contemplative, sexually-enriched "monk". The latter image is a contradictory one, reflecting the manner in which he is increasingly tolerating living within a dialectical space. This image of a contemplative, sexually-enriched "monk" is an image of the emergent *transcendent*

function having succeeded, through constellating a significant and insoluble predicament, in guiding him from one ego attitude to another. Tom now speaks with antipathy against the Church's encouragement of their gay and lesbian priests to be celibate.

I have developed a certain resentment to the exponents of "your calling in life is to be celibate". That's fine, but now having, living, in a sexual relationship, I felt quite resentful to that sort of opinion. Because I was experiencing life at a far richer level. And the so-called celibate life seemed to be no alternative to it.

For Tom, however, it was not his experience of homoeroticism per se that resulted in the major shifts in his spirituality. Rather, the *transcendent function* constellated in another form, challenging him externally with seemingly insurmountable problems unrelated to his experience of his sexuality. His capacity to allow ego consciousness to "wait for what the unconscious has to say about the situation" (Jung, 1971, p. 298) challenged his *senex*-bound spirituality, allowing a new dimension, not experienced before, to enter into awareness.

His journey seems to be one in which he is locating and tolerating alchemical "priest" and "king" within the same context, and allowing each of these aspects to find greater expression through the archetypal *senex* and *puer*. Tom's intellectual, *senex*-bound ego consciousness has shifted to incorporate the more emotional, unpredictable *puer*. As Tom reflects, "In my earlier days I needed to categorise things much more. I've been aware of consciously not doing that". That Tom is also gay is something he still finds relatively irrelevant. Homoerotic sexuality simply seems to have been one vehicle through which Tom has experienced his growth. He does not view his sexuality as representing anything special, nor different. He makes no distinction between hetero- or homoerotic relating.

The sexual dimension is so linked to relationships generally. Our understanding of God is enriched by our human relationships. And fuelled, not fuelled, given expression, given identity and understanding by our human relationships. And this includes the sexual dimension.

Over the last five years Tom's experience of homoeroticism seems to have moved from a completely private space within him, to now be located at the interface between himself and significant others. He has "come out" to family members, and to significant members of the Church hierarchy. He remains discrete in the manner in which he expresses his sexuality. He has not "come out" to his parish.

7.2.4.2. Luke

It was Luke's experience in therapy, brought about by being rejected for ordination, that served to prompt many of the changes occurring in his life. Apart from dealing with his seemingly compulsive need to help people, his experience in therapy also helped him consider that the homoerotic aspect to himself might also be something which "helps me connect with who I really am, and with what I really need".

This second formulation suggests that, as he began to consider homoeroticism more consciously as being a legitimate part of himself, Luke began to experience another dimension to these feelings. The suggestion that homoerotic feelings could help connect him with "who I really am" points to the possibility that he was beginning to consider them, not only as *shadow*, but as an expression of the archetypal *anima/animus*. As discussed previously, the *anima/animus* serves as the guiding principle of the psyche, bringing into awareness, and guiding one towards, that which is undeveloped or unknown (Jung, 1928). *Anima/animus* reflects "otherness", or "You", that which is distinct to "I" or that which is known by ego consciousness (Jung, 1945, p. 244). Samuels' (1985) described the *anima* as speaking "that which is 'out of order', which offends the prevailing order" (p. 214).

Luke continues to struggle with both constellations of homoerotic feelings within him: *shadow*, and *anima/animus*. He experiences the feelings as both "that thorn, that wound, that I have to work with, that won't go away", and increasingly as "a gift" helping "[me] become more authentic, and more whole".

That Luke has chosen, in the context of being married, to engage with homoerotic feelings on a symbolic level might explain why they are experienced as both *shadow* and *anima/animus*. As he reflects,

It's hard to hold the tension of not denying it and not acting it out . . . And that's the ongoing struggle. It would be much easier if I could just climb into bed with somebody . . . Why does it have to be so drastic? Can't I smoke or drink too much too often. Why must it be this?

A further tension is, however, evident in Luke's experience, one which relates to another constellation of archetypes.

Last Sunday, in church, I was thinking to myself: 'I look like an ideal priest'. But then I thought "Fuck the ideal priest, he's been fucking around. If only you knew what he fantasised about . . . heaven help you". But this process simply won't let me be that ideal priest, to be that perfect person. It seems as if, when I become over-invested in my spiritual identity, it's there, in my dreams, in my house, he (Christopher) lives there in the bedroom right next door to mine . . . On a personal prayer level I feel totally unashamed of this relationship [with Christopher, the teenage family friend living with Luke and his family]. I don't ask for forgiveness, I just offer it to God, saying, 'God, you know what this experience is, I give it to you'. I don't even ask for the strength not to climb into bed with him. Because although on one level this is the issue, on another level that is actually not the issue. It feels like I would be denying something in the process by saying help me not do that.

The archetypal *senex* and *puer* are evident in the above extract from Luke's interview, expressing aspects of both the alchemical "priest" and "king". Luke's tendency, throughout his life, has been to over-identify with the "priest" role, to the detriment of the more corporeal, "king" aspect of himself. As he has become more aware of the homoerotic aspect, he has noticed that he is mostly attracted to older teenage boys. It seems evident that his own *puer*-

needs are repressed, and projected onto younger boys. Luke has noticed that homoerotic feelings seem strongest at the point that he is most consumed by his priestly role. It seems that *puer*, as an expression of the more physical, sexual aspect of the alchemical “king”, emerges to compensate for one-sided development of the “priest” aspect of himself.

A complex dialogue between homoeroticism as *shadow* and *anima/animus*, and as *puer* and *senex*, expressed in a variety of combinations also in the tension between the alchemical “priest” and “king”, emerges out of Luke’s experience. That he strives to tolerate this dialogue, and give it expression, creates a dynamic dialectical space in which the *transcendent function* is able to evoke change. He currently conceptualises his work as tolerating this tension, and of waiting for something to emerge.

[I’m] learning that my struggle is not a problem to solve, but something to engage with creatively, something I must learn not to be scared of living with.

Luke does, however, provide a clue as to where his ambivalent experience of his sexuality might be leading him. His capacity to acknowledge and validate both hetero- and homoerotic aspects of himself challenges conventional stereotypes regarding dualistic categories of sexual orientation so prevalent in Western culture. At the moment this challenge remains within the context of his relationship with his wife. It is a significant challenge though, in that it requires both him and his wife to tolerate living within a context which is not clearly defined. The final image he presents is a paradoxical one, challenging socially constructed categories of sexual orientation.

I can say now for myself, “I am gay”. And in the next breath I can say “I am heterosexual”. And then I can say, “I am neither”. We are, I am, a sexual being. I may have what have been defined as homosexual or heterosexual feelings, but I am a sexual being. I am an evocatively erotic sexual being.

This image, that of “an evocatively erotic sexual being” reflects the emerging *transcendent function*. It provides an image which holds the complexities of Luke’s experience of his

sexuality in place, not requiring him to foreclose on either “hetero-“ or “homoerotic” aspects of himself. It is an image which allows the many elements which go to make up his sexuality and his spirituality to remain in dialogue.

Luke’s experience of homoeroticism is located in a distinctly private space. Many of his feelings are shared only with his therapist. His journey has been one which has gradually allowed these feelings to emerge from secrecy toward greater legitimacy both within himself, and in his relationship with his wife.

7.2.4.3. Warren

It was a year after Warren “came out” to his family, friends, and the Bishop, that he decided to move into a relationship with another man. This was just prior to his ordination as priest. Warren’s decision to do this was based on a complex array of factors. A deep awareness of the historical context of Jesus’ life, together with an understanding of the challenges Christianity first faced as it emerged as a new faith seemed to provide Warren with a significant role model.

As the Jewish Christians were kicked out of the synagogue, they had to create a world view in which they could operate, because they could no longer operate within the Jewish world view. And so they created a world view which is reflected in the Gospel of John.

Because I was aware of the historical context in which the life of Jesus took place, I see the complete radicalness, the otherness, of the way Jesus lived his life. A Jesus who is so radically different to the stereotypes, the traditions, the expectations of the day.

Warren’s definition of homoerotic sexuality thus began to shift from his experience of it as a personal *shadow*, to something which, because of its “otherness”, had the potential to challenge the Church itself. It was in this context that he made the decision to embody his feelings, and move into a sexual relationship. Warren gives an account of the multiple processes involved as

he moved towards this decision. This account is repeated in full, because it illustrates another aspect pertinent to this discussion.

I can't tell you what came first, the acceptance of myself as being gay, or the acceptance of God as a loving God, that allowed me to accept myself. I can't tell. They are all so intermingled that I can't separate them. I read a book by Henri Nouwen. I found him incredibly useful. And at the same time as I started reading the book, I started spiritual direction. And at the same time as starting the book and starting spiritual direction, I was coming to a place of accepting my homosexuality, my sexual orientation. That acceptance was through my academics. My spiritual direction helped me see that the conflict between my spirituality and my sexuality as being closely tied. My academic work and awareness of coming to terms, at least academically, that there was nothing wrong with homosexuality and the expression thereof. And so the journey brought these three elements together (spiritual direction, academic study, and struggle with sexuality), and it was out of this cauldron, that turmoil of the time, that I began to appreciate different aspects of God.

The imagery Warren uses illustrates the alchemical nature of his experience. Words and phrases such as “these three elements together”, “cauldron”, and “turmoil” provide graphic illustrations of the *massa confusa*, the *vas*, and processes of *nigredo*, *putrefactio*, and the eventual *hierosgamos* (sacred marriage) which emerged as his images of God, and his sexuality, changed. Warren’s experience also illustrates the other defining characteristic of the alchemical process: the *transmutability of the elements*. His image of God changed significantly through this process, as did his experience of his sexuality. The alchemical *transcendent function*, by provoking tension, challenges ego consciousness (as *vas*) to tolerate and hold this tension, thereby, in the end, shifting consciousness from one attitude to another. This is clearly evident in Warren’s experience.

The continuing movement towards ordination . . . caused endless tension . . . , because the only image that I had of being a priest was an image from the world

view in which I grew up. I was moving out of it, and I began thinking to myself, “am I really going to be a priest?” “Is there place for me to be a priest in this new world order?” And so, I began to create that space. It was a long [journey]: the tension between expressing my ministry as a priest and my sexuality, initially in those years was traumatic, and, with the work that I did [in spiritual direction], to bring together my spirituality and my sexuality, and I found that it worked, that there was a place for me in this new world order. A lot of tension in those years, as I took those steps. One slow agonising step after another, from one world view to another.

A number of aspects become evident in the shifts which took place in Warren. His experiences of homoeroticism appeared to shift from that of personal *shadow*, to that of *anima/animus*. He speaks of it as expressing “otherness”, and begins to embody it as something able to create “a new world view”. Notice also his reference to the image of Jesus. Jung’s (1951) exploration of the image of Christ as a symbol of the archetypal *self*, particularly with reference to the capacity, evident in the Christ image, to unite divine and human, was discussed in Chapter Three. It seems that Warren increasingly engaged with homoeroticism as an expression of the archetypal *anima/animus*, i.e. as a guide, precisely because of its “otherness”, towards the archetypal *self*. The relationship between ego consciousness and the archetypal *self* was also described in some detail in Chapter Three. As was noted in that chapter, the function of the archetypal *self* in relation to the ego is to widen ego consciousness in such a way as to free it from “the petty, oversensitive and personal world of the ego” (Jung, 1928, p. 178). The function of the ego in relation to the *self* is to be receptive to the promptings from the primordial *self*, assimilating its communications, tolerating its paradoxical, psychoid nature, while at the same time remaining anchored in the world of consciousness. Jung (1951, p. 22) concludes:

The more numerous and the more significant the unconscious contents which are assimilated to the ego, the closer the approximation of the ego to the self, even though this approximation must be a never ending process.

A lengthy extract from the interview with Warren illustrates most effectively this process by which the ego assimilates the promptings from the archetypal *self*. In it Warren describes a pivotal moment in which he comes to understand the task of his ego consciousness in relation to his experience of God and his deeper *self*. It incorporates the images of God and homoeroticism, as well as the relationship Warren's ego consciousness has with these aspects of his experience. The images offer a significant integration of conflicting aspects of Warren's experience.

I was on retreat prior to my ordination, . . . sitting in the garden, . . . on a normal chair. It had been raining, and so the grass was wet, and the leaves and the trees were wet, and the sun was shining, and I was just sitting there and appreciating the warmth, and the real splendour of the immediate environment that I found myself in. A picture of God grew out of that as I grew more and more aware of the moment. The picture was of this huge glass, silvery, crystal ball in which was me, and this environment, and God saying, 'this ball is as big or as small as [you] (Warren) want it to be'. And as I was reflecting on that and beginning to appreciate it, so this ball got steadily larger and larger, encompassing more and more of the environment I found myself in at that moment. And the awareness dawned on me that within this, is me, within the sphere of God's overwhelming love, and God's acceptance, is me. And it's me who chooses how accepting or how closed that ball will be, it's not God, it's me. And so into the cauldron came my sexuality, my pictures of God, my academic work, this ball just grows larger and larger, and so when I look at life now, God is HUGE, God is overwhelmingly accepting of everything that is happening, that's how I see it, The challenge is how big do I allow God to be . . . Theologically speaking God is everything and God is everywhere, but spiritually, God is as big as we, as I, allow him to be, and as I've grown in that and come to understand more and more, as I've read and experienced more and more, so my awareness of God is huge, and yet still there is that personal intimate contact of a God who walks with me in the minutest details of our lives . . . As my awareness of God grows, so my awareness of myself grows, so my acceptance of myself grows. If I keep God in a little box that is small and narrow

and contained, so I'm going to keep myself in that same box, because I can't be bigger than God. And as I take God out of that box and allow God to be everything that God is, so I take myself out of the box, the box imposed by society, a box imposed by my parents, and a box imposed by myself, and I can be everything that I am. And that's surely my theological understanding. God wants me to be everything that God has created me to be".

In Chapter Three, Jung's conceptualisation of the *self* as *God-image* was described. In the above extract, the process by which Warren engages with and incorporates this God-image into his ego-consciousness is made most evident (Samuels, 1985). The *self* as archetypal expression represents the connection a person has to the divine.

As Warren's capacity to tolerate and integrate the homoerotic dimension of himself increased, his focus seemed to shift from his own struggles to the struggles reflected within the Church community. Jung (1928) reflected that as consciousness widened, it moved from "that touchy egotistical bundle of personal wishes, fears, hopes, and ambitions" into the "world of objects, bringing the individual into absolute, binding and indissoluble communion with the world at large" (p. 178). Warren's concern is clearly not only regarding his own growth, but also with collective individuation: the creation of a "new world order", in which homoerotic sexuality is accepted as a spiritually legitimate form of expression. A number of ongoing conflicts with the Church, particularly regarding Warren's insistence on being openly gay, have had the effect of doubling his efforts in challenging the Church's position on "homosexuality". These conflicts have increasingly moved Warren to a place in which his identity has shifted significantly. Much of the "turmoil" and "conflict" evident in the "cauldron" seemed eventually to give rise to a new symbol, one which Warren now identifies with fully. "Like mixing two different chemical substances: if there is any combination at all, both are transformed" (Jung, 1946a, p. 163). No longer experienced as his personal *shadow*, Warren now chooses to embody his sexuality as an aspect of his ministry. He refers to himself openly as a "gay priest". This image is a dynamic one, expressing directly the workings of the archetypal *anima*. As Sandner (1993) writes, in relation to the *anima* particularly, "it binds the sexual and spiritual interests of the psyche into one entity" (p. 226). "Gay priest" is just such an image.

Warren's experience of homoeroticism seems to be located at the interface between himself and society at large. He embodies his sexuality as a site of resistance, speaking openly and purposefully to issues of heterosexism and patriarchy within the Church.

7.2.4.4. Commentary

For each priest, a process of renaming seemed to have occurred, through which their sexuality and their spirituality were located within the same space. For Warren and Tom, the renaming is more explicit; for Luke, the experience is implied, and more diffuse. Warren calls himself a "gay priest"; Tom describes the emergence of what might be referred to as a sexually-enriched "monk"; and Luke describes a priest who is an "evocatively erotic sexual being" who is both "heterosexual" and "gay", and "neither". This process of "renaming" marks the third phase in the cycles of change identified by Timmerman (1992). The first she referred to as "shedding taboos" (*shadow* is brought into consciousness as something potentially positive), and the second as "liminality" (the process of tolerating the tension emerging out of the constellation of opposing elements within consciousness) (pp. 87-99). Timmerman notes that the final stage in the cycle of change is characterised by the emergence of a new role or self-image (p. 99).

For Tom and Warren, the new roles or self-images emerging out of their journeys are more self-evident. The shifts are distinct and marked. Luke remains within a difficult tension, one which does not provide him with easy solutions. That he can tolerate the image of not fitting into either socially predefined sexual orientation is significant. The image of being "both" (gay and "heterosexual" and "neither") is a complex one, requiring his ego consciousness to tolerate a difficult tension.

The fourth alchemical illustration, referred to as *Rejoining The Worldly and the Spiritual Power* : "*This man worthily followed the art*, portrays the rejoining of "priest" and "king" as the emergence of a transformed spiritual and worldly power, now become one (Jung, 1955). As the *transcendent function* is increasingly able to fulfil its work through ego consciousness's capacity to tolerate dialectical, liminal space, the new image is able to emerge. The way in which each priest seems increasingly able to tolerate this space has been discussed in some

detail. One more aspect which embraces and tolerates a confluence of the spiritual and the sexual will now be brought into focus. Although “coming out” has already been discussed in some detail, it will now be explored as an image linking spirituality and sexuality.

Despite the significant differences in the manner in which they have conceptualised and engaged with their sexuality in the context of their spirituality, Warren, Luke and Tom all felt the need to “come out” within particular contexts: Tom to his family, and the Church hierarchy; Luke to his therapist and his wife; and Warren to his family, friends, the Church and his parish. As Shallenberger (1998) reflects, the “coming out” process often results in “a deepening and acceptance of their identities”, and “a movement toward fuller integrity” (p. 11). The image of a priest “coming out” seems to have added significance. Like the alchemical illustration discussed above, it is an image which tolerates the sexual and the spiritual in one constellation. That a priest is perceived as being “spiritual” is self-evident. Boswell’s (1980) reflection that gay people (in contrast to “heterosexual” people) tend to be defined in sexual terms was discussed in Chapter Four. It seems that this sexualised image stereotypically linked to gay and lesbian people becomes an advantage in the context of spirituality, especially in relation to priests. The process of acknowledging homoerotic feelings (as they all do) and “coming out” as sexually active gay men (as Warren and Tom do), portrays an image of a spirituality which is reconciled with sexuality, without the protection of marriage, or the justification of procreation. Homoerotic sexuality is expressed in the process of “coming out” within the priesthood as a spiritually rich form of intimacy.

The influence of the embodiment of homoerotic sexualities in the context of the priesthood also has implications for the wider community. These will be explored in the final section of this chapter.

7.2.4.5. Summary

Through a number of painful experiences, including the death of his parents, a threat to his relationship with his partner, and the death of a close friend, Tom entered a number of difficult “dark night of the soul” experiences. Allowing himself to remain within these experiences, and not foreclose by finding intellectual solutions, seemed to create the conditions through which

major shifts took place in his experience. A new experience of himself emerged, one in which Tom might now be described as a contemplative, sexually-enriched monk.

Through his experience of ongoing therapy, Luke seemed to experience homoeroticism as representing the archetypal *anima/animus*. What he also became aware of was the manner in which homoerotic feelings intensified when he over-invested in his priestly role. It was suggested that the *puer/senex* archetypal constellation found expression in this conflict. As Luke's experience of his sexuality and his spirituality finds greater differentiation, the dialectical space in which he locates himself seems to become more dynamic. A complex interplay of *shadow*, *anima/animus*, *puer* and *senex* seems to create a dialogue between aspects of the increasingly differentiated yet more unified alchemical "priest" and "king".

As Warren began to experience his sexuality as representing something more than the archetypal *shadow*, and as his awareness of issues of sexuality within the Church context increased, he began viewing the expression of homoeroticism as a site of resistance against the dominant Church culture. It was in this context that it seemed as if Warren had begun to experience homoeroticism as an expression of the archetypal *anima/animus* (as something which "binds the sexual and spiritual interests of the psyche into one entity"). Ongoing conflict with the Church as a result of his decision to openly practise his sexuality seemed to double his attempts at challenging the dominant Church culture. The process of tolerating his need to express his sexuality as something legitimate within a context which does not accept the expression of homoerotic sexuality, while at the same time being committed to remaining within that context, has resulted in many shifts. An image which has now emerged, as an expression of the *transcendent function*, is that of being a "gay priest". That the alchemical "king" and "priest" are both represented in this image is self-evident.

Through many "dark night" experiences, new images began to emerge for Warren, Tom, and Luke which allow them to increasingly locate homoerotic feelings within the context of their spiritual growth. They have all chosen to place their experience of their sexuality firmly within the context of their personal growth, and their growth as priests, despite inner conflict, and outer opposition. As they grappled with homoeroticism as *shadow*, both collective and

personal, and increasingly reframed it as something enriching, and legitimate, many shifts took place within their spiritual lives. These shifts have not always happened directly in relation to homoeroticism per se. For Tom and Luke external events, unrelated to homoeroticism, guided them into very difficult and painful experiences, the result of which was a greater integration of alchemical “priest” and “king”, *shadow*, *anima/animus*, *puer* and *senex*. Through these experiences the homoerotic aspect was also highlighted, and given more legitimate expression. Warren’s experience was one in which he worked more directly with homoeroticism, allowing it to become an instrument of personal change. Many of his spiritual developments happened directly in relation to his experience of homoeroticism.

The images which emerged out of the liminality experienced by each priest as they grappled with tensions and insoluble problems seem significant. The appearance of the *transcendent function*, as the psyche moves from one attitude to another, presents images which signify a union of previously dichotomous elements: “gay priest”, “gay man who is also a contemplative, sexually-enriched monk”, and “priest who is ‘gay’, ‘heterosexual’, ‘neither’, and an ‘evocatively erotic sexual being’”. The implications of these images for these men, the Church, and for society at large will now be explored.

7.2.5. The Royal Pair : “So say the philosophers that when blackness appears one must rejoice”.

The final illustration in the alchemical series, *The Royal Pair*, presents an image of “the (spiritual) king joined to a similarly crowned queen” (Jung, 1955, p. 508). Jung views the “(spiritual) king” as being a union of “priest” and “king” from the previous illustrations. This union, he suggests, serves as a preliminary unification of like-with-like in preparation for a more complete (heterosexual) union of opposites, as represented in this final illustration in the series. Jung’s heterosexist perspectives, together with his concern with “opposites”, were discussed in some detail in Chapter Three. In the discussion of these difficulties in Jung’s theories, an alternative, non-gendered interpretation to this final illustration was suggested, in which the queen was viewed as representing “other”, thereby beginning the next cycle by which the *transcendent function* finds expression. This alternative interpretation will now be

explored in some detail, as the implications of the images emerging from Warren's, Luke's, and Tom's experience are examined.

Luke's struggle is a complex one. He does not feel able to place himself comfortably within a predefined identity. Allowing himself to increasingly acknowledge the homoerotic dimension to his being, while choosing to remain within the context of his marriage, creates an obvious tension. The emerging image of a priest who experiences himself as an "evocatively erotic sexual being" who is "heterosexual", "gay", and "neither" is one which is not easily situated within our culture, most especially not within the culture of the Church. He has already located the image (both "heterosexual" and "homosexual", and "neither") within his marriage, thereby giving expression to "other" within that context. Having brought his experience of homoeroticism slightly more into the world, the tension potentially created increases. Through this "coming out" process, Luke's wife, and thereby his marital relationship, also enters the dialogue or alchemical *vas* of his experience. As an image of greater integrity, reflected by the fourth alchemical illustration, is presented to his wife through "coming out", a new dynamic emerges. The alchemical queen, as an *other* element, enters the picture, mixing with and potentially challenging the "evocatively erotic sexual being", "heterosexual", "gay", "neither" image which took many years to find expression in Luke. As he is required to tolerate the tension, now experienced both within himself and in his marital relationship, the work of the *transcendent function* begins again. This time it is located slightly more externally, at the interface between Luke's inner and outer relational world. That this is a difficult experience for Luke to tolerate is made evident in his plea:

*Thank God [for these homoerotic feelings], but why does it have to be so drastic?
Can't I smoke, or drink too much too often? Why must it be this?*

Tom locates his experience of his sexuality in a less private space than Luke does. He has "come out" to close family members, and the Church hierarchy, and has developed an identity based on the homoerotic feelings he experiences. In recent years he has begun living out his vision of a spiritually and sexually enriching homoerotic relationship. Although he does not characterise his experience of his sexuality as representing a site of resistance against dominant

attitudes towards homoerotic sexuality, the process of “coming out” has identified him as “other” within the Church. As he presents himself more fully to his world (reflected by the fourth alchemical illustration) as a gay man and priest, he begins a process of embodying the *transcendent function* of homoerotic sexuality within our current society. He speaks, albeit unintentionally, for the liminal nature of homoeroticism within a strongly patriarchal context. Being more open leaves him vulnerable to a range of responses which are out of his control. In this sense he opens himself up to the emergence of the alchemical queen (fifth illustration), as a new, unknown and unpredictable element to contend with in his journey. No longer experienced only as a private matter, homoeroticism moves from an inner experience to the interface between him and his immediate community. The potential dialogue is widened as he risks allowing new elements to enter the alchemical *vas*. As described earlier, the mixing of new elements means that over time all aspects will be altered and changed. In this sense, by being more open about his sexuality within the Church, and by embracing his experience as a sexually-enriched “monk”, he creates an intra- and an inter-psychic potential space in which both he, and those coming into contact with him and his experience, are potentially changed, particularly regarding attitudes towards homoerotic sexualities within a spiritual context. As already pointed out, the *transcendent function* serves primarily to shift ego consciousness from one attitude to another. By “coming out”, Tom expresses and embodies the first stage of the *transcendent function* in the outer world, creating the space in which attitudes towards sexuality and spirituality might potentially shift. This is not his expressed intention. It is, however, the effect of his actions.

Warren currently locates his experience of his sexuality at the interface between himself and the community at large. It is no longer a private experience for him, but something he shares openly with people with whom he comes into contact, including his parishioners. He consciously and intentionally characterises his sexuality as a site of resistance, thereby actively embodying, as a “gay priest”, the role of the *transcendent function* within the Church community, and society at large. He purposefully speaks for “that which offends the prevailing order”, articulating and embodying “otherness”. By presenting the dialectical image of “gay priest” (reflected in the fourth illustration of “king” and “priest”) in such an overt manner within the Church, Warren creates the potential space in which new responses can emerge,

either from within himself or from the community at large. He expresses the experience as follows:

Being openly gay, living a gay life, living my life, puts me in a place of vulnerability. That's the kind of tension that exists, and in a sense it has a motivating impact.

The queen in the fifth alchemical illustration comes to represent this unknown response. By embodying the Church's and society's collective *shadow*, and by reframing it in an integrated, dialectical image combining sexuality and spirituality, Warren allows the expression of homoeroticism to take on the role of the archetypal *anima/animus*. As with Luke and Tom, the manner in which Warren now expresses homoeroticism also allows it to represent a renewal of the processes of the *transcendent function*, only now more overtly located at the interface between Warren and the outer world. He locates his experience of homoeroticism in a fully public space, speaking directly and openly for an integrated spirituality and sexuality within a world in which these images are not compatible. The emergence of the alchemical queen comes to represent the as yet unknown compensatory response, from both within himself, and from the world at large, to the new image of "gay priest".

The journeys Luke, Tom, and Warren have been on might be summarised as representing a process by which homoeroticism moved from an undifferentiated, private, liminal experience to something now located at the interface between their experiences of themselves and their relationships with their worlds. This seems to reflect Jung's (1928) description of individuation as being that process which brings the individual "into absolute, binding and indissoluble communion with the world at large". The radical images of "gay priest", "contemplative, sexually-enriched 'monk'", and "evocatively erotic sexual being" stand in stark contrast to the official requirement of celibacy the Church has for gay and lesbian priests. By representing homoeroticism in the manner in which Warren, Luke, and Tom do, a tension is created between themselves and their environments, and the processes of individuation seem able to move more freely between the inner world and collective life. As Jung (1928, p. 185) concludes:

The processes of the collective unconscious are concerned not only with personal relations of an individual, but with his relations to society and to the human community in general.

7.3. Commentary

This chapter has explored the role of homoeroticism in the processes of individuation and spiritual growth of three priests, drawing links with their experiences and Jungian theory. The “like-with-like” alchemical illustrations Jung described in his 1955 paper *An Enquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy* were used as a structure for the discussion. This alchemical series was also used as a metaphor to illustrate the process of emergence of the *transcendent function*. The roles homoeroticism played in the emergence of this function were described in some detail. A summary of the main roles played by homoeroticism in the lives of the three priests participating in the study will now be presented. This commentary will be framed in the context of Jungian theory, looking particularly at homoeroticism in relation to processes of individuation.

Evident in the experience of each priest were persistently strong homoerotic feelings, experienced consciously from late adolescence or early adulthood. For Warren and Luke, these feelings were immediately labelled as being taboo (collective and personal *shadow*), in line with traditional Christian teachings they had absorbed. Tom’s experience differed slightly. It was some time later that he first learnt that homoerotic feelings were deemed unacceptable by the Church. Until that point he had felt no distress or anxiety regarding these feelings. It seems that for all of them, their distress began at the point that current religious definitions were placed on their experience. The power homoeroticism seemed to have related then to the manner in which it was constructed and located at the interface between them as individuals, and society (and the Church) at large. It is not possible to talk about their “inner” journeys as something separate from the external world. Their struggle with homoeroticism related directly to the manner in which society and the Church had constructed it, and the manner in which they engaged with, and perceived it, and so their conflicts were as much within themselves as they were in relation to the external world. As each of them began to deal with these feelings,

albeit reluctantly at first, their experience was to move more deeply into their inner psychological/spiritual lives. It was a number of years later that any of them first spoke to someone else about these feelings. The liminality of their experience with regard to first responding to and dealing with these feelings was self-evident.

One of the initial roles homoeroticism seemed to take on for each participant was that of collective *shadow*. Absorbing the traditional teachings of the Church, their sexual feelings came to be conceptualised as “other”, something “evil”, “a curse”, and “wrong”. In this sense, for Warren and Luke, it quickly began serving the role also of their personal *shadow*. *Persona* constructions of themselves were challenged by this experience of homoeroticism. Individuation processes seemed to be set in motion at the point where homoeroticism, experienced as *shadow*, began challenging an over-identification of ego consciousness with *persona*, and for each there was the dawning sense that “I am not who I thought, or hoped, I was”. Tom’s experience was somewhat different. For many years, he reconciled homoeroticism within himself as something personally and spiritually acceptable, “as an idea”. It was much later that he embodied this reconciliation, finally living it out fully in the world. The personal *shadow* nature was less obvious, though still evident, in Tom’s life.

A second role taken on by homoeroticism in the experiences of the priests in the study was that of the archetypal *anima/animus*, expressing the “other” and “that which offends” within the Church environment. As the guiding principle of the psyche, the *anima/animus* serves to direct ego consciousness, by embodying “otherness”, towards increased realisation of the archetypal *self*. Luke spoke of homoeroticism guiding him toward greater “authenticity”. Warren’s description of himself as a “gay priest” reflects Sandner’s (1993) image of the *anima* as that which “binds the sexual and spiritual interests of the psyche into one entity” (p. 226). That Warren consciously presents this image of “otherness” within the context of the Church reflects Kulkarni’s (1997) suggestion that homoeroticism, as embodied by lesbians in her study, is a “site of resistance from the margin against the concept of ‘normalcy’ that rules at the centre of mainstream culture” (pp. 212-213). Jung spoke of “normalcy” as something which worked against processes of change. As he writes, “What I fear greatly and suspect greatly is normality. That is something people are trained to. It is like a tight lid” (quoted in Weaver,

1982, p. 93). The notion of being “trained”, as reflected in Jung’s concern, suggests an image of the *persona*, as that part of the psyche which endeavours to do what is required of it in order to attain acceptability in the world. Warren seems to embody homoeroticism in such a way as to challenge that which people are trained to be, disturbing them and generating thereby a potentially new response. As Samuels (1985) reflects, to “disturb”, “offend”, and challenge with “other” is *anima/animus*’s role as it guides the individual and collective psyche towards individuation.

A third role embodied by homoeroticism was that of the *puer/senex* archetypal constellation, challenging over-developed archetypal *senex* to incorporate its *puer* aspect. In Chapter Three, Hillman’s (1991) suggestion that the archetypal *puer* and *senex* are two sides of the same form of archetypal expression was discussed. *Senex* challenges *puer* out of superficiality and frenzied spiritual flight, while *puer* challenges *senex* out of reclusive, depressive self-reflection. Experienced as insistent and relentless, *puer* continues to provoke Luke to engage with homoeroticism within the context of his spirituality, challenging his tendency to over-identify with his priestly role. As an expression of the compensatory function of the collective unconscious, homoeroticism served to challenge one-sided development of ego consciousness. Homoeroticism also found expression as the archetypal *puer* for Tom, challenging him out of an overidentification with the intellect-bound *senex*.

Fourthly, homoeroticism emerged within the experience of each priest as an expression of the alchemical *transcendent function*. Warren, Luke, and Tom invested considerable energy in their spiritual growth from early on in their lives. They all seemed to successfully avoid acknowledging their sexuality until relatively late in their adolescence, or even early adulthood. As homoerotic feelings began to emerge, the *transcendent function*’s work had begun: that of responding to the one-sided *spiritual* (“alchemical priest” image) development of ego-consciousness, and allowing the “other” (alchemical “king” image) to begin emerging. The stages of the *transcendent function* were evident in the experiences of the participants of this study. Their capacity to tolerate the second phase of the transcendent function, viz. that of withstanding the tension and conflict which emerged as homoeroticism became increasingly

differentiated within conscious experience, accounted for significant shifts within ego consciousness.

The process of “coming out” seemed to attain significance in the experience of each participant in this study. A number of roles this process served will be discussed, all pertaining to the *transcendent function*. “Coming out” seemed to potentially locate the *transcendent function* in the world, creating tension at the interface between the individual and his environment. In this manner each participant, in his own way, challenged dominant cultural stereotypes, both in relation to the priesthood (“priests shouldn’t express or experience homoerotic feelings”) and in relation to dominant heterosexist discourse (“‘heterosexuality’ is the norm). These findings support Kulkarni’s (1997) observations that homoeroticism, as embodied by lesbian experience, can be understood as expressing the *transcendent function* in the way it challenges dominant cultural stereotypes by articulating its unexpressed and undeveloped unconscious counterpart. Kulkarni (ibid.) went on to note that women in her study conceptualised lesbian experience as a “site of resistance” against heterosexist culture. Warren conceptualised his experience of homoeroticism in this manner, embodying it, as expressed by the image of “gay priest”, as a site of resistance against the dominant Church attitude towards the expression of homoeroticism within a spiritual context. Although Tom did not conceptualise his experience of homoeroticism overtly as a site of resistance, he did speak against the Church’s calling for gay and lesbian priests to be celibate. Living more openly as a practicing gay man and priest embodies his experience as a site of resistance against the dominant Church culture regarding this notion of celibacy.

“Coming out” as an active gay man and priest within the context of the Church served to *embody* spirituality within the context of homoeroticism. Kulkarni (1997) noted that for many lesbian women in her study, discovering and exploring a “spiritual” dimension to their sexuality had great significance. As was noted in findings of the current research, reflected in Chapter Six, all participants in this study insisted in locating their experience of their sexuality within the context of their spirituality. Warren and Tom embodied this by “coming out” to the Church hierarchy. Their actively embodying their experience of sexuality within the context of

their roles as priests seems to provide what Empereur (1998, p. 9) suggests is needed if the Church is to assist people effectively as we move into the twenty-first century:

We need to look for new paradigms and more examples of integration . . .
Despite all the efforts made by spiritual writers and practitioners as well as feminists to overcome this dualistic approach we still lack the kind of integration of matter and spirit required if spirituality and sexuality are to become partners in our movement toward God.

It was noted in Chapter Three that the *transcendent function* was the primary means by which the psyche guided ego consciousness toward individuation. As is evident from this study, homoeroticism, as an expression of the *transcendent function*, embodying also the role of archetypal *shadow*, *anima/animus*, *puer/senex*, served a role of guiding the priests on paths of personal growth and change in which dualities were redefined in a more dialectical space. The shifts occurring in all their lives are evident. For Warren and Luke homoeroticism played a more direct role in this process. For Tom it was more veiled. The former actively conceptualised homoeroticism as a catalyst for change. These findings reflect those emerging from Kulkarni's (1997) study of lesbian identity. Her findings suggested that grappling with homoerotic sexualities, as expressed through lesbian identities, challenged the women in her study to develop and grow in ways that might not otherwise have done. Not having stereotypical role models on which to base their experience, participants in Kulkarni's study spoke of a need to create or "self-define" their own roles. As with the priests in the current study, there were no "safe cultural containers for these decisions" (Kulkarni, 1997, p. 211). The participants in the current study seemed to exhibit what Kulkarni referred to as "the great courage required to follow the call of the unfolding psyche" (ibid.).

In this sense, "coming out" as priests also serves to challenge the collective individuation of the Church and society at large. No longer relegated to the status of *shadow*, homoeroticism is embodied by Warren and Tom as an expression of the archetypal *anima/animus*, challenging the Church to deal with a taboo, *shadow* image of sexuality which has been integrated into spirituality. Jung suggested that "homosexuals", by resisting an identification "with the role of a one-sided sexual being" (1936a, p. 31), served to express "otherness" within the dominant

culture. Empereur (1998) argued that gays and lesbians who insist on directly living out their sexuality within the context of their spirituality are able to assist society in “overcoming a dualistic understanding and experience of the human person, or society, and of our relationship with God” (p. 8). He concludes, “I believe that when the history of spirituality in the twenty-first century is written, it will show the many ways in which the gay experience will have enriched both theology and spirituality” (ibid.). As Carpenter (1914) and Kulkarni (1997) both argue, embodying “otherness” within a dominant culture allows for the forward movement of the culture as a whole. Homoeroticism seems to serve such a function within the current Church culture.

As was concluded in the previous chapter, and is also evident from the above discussion, the results of this study suggest that homoeroticism did not appear to serve a role separate to the manner in which society and the Church have constructed it (as archetypal *shadow*), and separate to the manner in which each priest in the study expressed, experienced, or engaged with it (*shadow*, *anima/animus*, *puer/senex*, and *transcendent function*). There was no evidence to suggest that homoeroticism itself was experienced as something inherently spiritual in nature. Furthermore, no evidence was found to support Carpenter’s (1914) or Hopcke’s (1989) gendered images of the archetypal “masculine” and “feminine”, or their composite, the archetypal “androgyne” as being integral to the identities of the priests in this study. Homoeroticism was also not confined to any one particular role in the lives of the participants, but seemed to present, in Samuels’ (1989) terms, “multifarious potentials”. Homoeroticism served a diversity of roles between and within each priest. These roles have been outlined above. These findings in general support those suggested by Kulkarni (1997), in which she reflects that no one single archetypal image emerged by which homoeroticism, expressed as lesbian identity in her study, .

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that, when embodied by each priest, either as identity, or simply as an aspect of *self* requiring expression, homoeroticism served to reflect “multifarious potentials” within the processes of psychological and spiritual individuation. As a culturally and historically bound process, the embodiment of homoeroticism served to:

- challenge normalcy within the dominant culture (as an expression of the archetypal *shadow*, and the *anima/animus*).
- embody dualities (create a dialectic space in which sexuality and spirituality could coexist, as also reflected in and embodied by the *persona/shadow*, *senex/puer*, alchemical “priest” and “king”, and *ego/self* archetypal constellations within ego consciousness).
- express the *transcendent function* (thereby giving expression to the compensatory nature of the collective unconscious, and thereby challenging ego consciousness toward increasingly embracing promptings from the archetypal *self*).
- create conditions for individual and collective individuation.

7.4. Summary

In this chapter the results of the study were discussed within a context of Jungian and post-Jungian psychology, using the “like-with-like” alchemical illustrations reflected in Jung’s 1955 paper *An Enquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy* as a structure for the exploration. Each participant’s experience was examined from a Jungian perspective, highlighting both commonalities and differences reflected in their experiences. Results suggested that the power homoeroticism seemed to attain in the lives of each priest related to the manner in which it had been constructed by contemporary society, and the manner in which the participants engaged with, related to, and experienced it as a process in their lives. There was no indication that homoeroticism was experienced as having any “spiritual” power in and of itself. As an expression of “multifarious potentials”, homoeroticism served a diversity of roles. When embodied, experienced, and engaged with as *shadow*, *anima/animus*, *senex/puer*, and alchemical “priest” and “king”, homoeroticism served to challenge normalcy and embrace dualities, creating a dialectical *potential space* in which the *transcendent function* could emerge as an expression of the psyche’s tendency toward personal and collective individuation.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

As regards ourselves, we remain blind, despite everything and everybody.
 Carl Jung

This dissertation has explored the role of homoeroticism in the individuation of three priests. Against a backdrop of post-Jungian pluralism, homoeroticism was defined outside popular discourse in which it is largely examined and explored in relation to sexual identity. It was suggested at the outset that homoeroticism, defined as the experience of sexual, emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual attraction to someone of the same sex, whether or not the people experiencing these feelings define themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, has many forms of expression, a number of which may be significantly restricted if looked at only from the perspective of reified constructs such “homosexuality” and “heterosexuality”, or even from the perspectives of contemporary identities such as gay, lesbian or bisexual. This study thus located homoeroticism within a broader context in which its role as a *process* in psychological and spiritual growth, might be examined. The notion of spiritual growth was linked to Jung’s concept of individuation, using Fowler’s theory of faith development to articulate more precisely the processes evident in individuation. Fowler’s theory was located within a pluralistic synchronous model of development, in which each stage could reflect an authentic process of meaning-creation not required to “evolve” or develop into anything else in order to attain legitimacy.

An exploration of individuation and spirituality examined the processes by which the archetypal *self* challenged ego consciousness to surrender “petty”, individualistic concerns in the movement towards greater *self*-awareness. Processes by which the archetypal *shadow*, *anima/animus*, *puer* and *senex*, challenged the ego were explored. Jung’s notion of the *self* as a unitary construct was criticised. The concept of the *self* was then located within a pluralistic model in which it could represent a multivocal, dialogical, polytheistic experience within the psyche. The *transcendent function*, as an expression of the process by which the psyche induces and provokes changes, was examined, particularly in relation to Jung’s alchemical metaphor. The exploration of individuation processes concluded by linking Jung’s notion of individuation with Fowler’s

concept of faith development. The specific processes of meaning-creation characteristic of each of Fowler's stages were discussed, noting similarities with Jungian theory of individuation.

The discussion of individuation served as a foundation to an exploration of homoeroticism and spiritual growth. The roles homoeroticism seems to have played within traditional cultures as well as through the course of the history of the Christian Church were explored in some detail. The suggestion that homoeroticism, as a representation of the archetypal *hermaphrodite* and *androgyne*, reflected a specific spiritual potentiality was examined. Carpenter's (1914) proposal that people embodying homoerotic sexualities challenged dominant cultural stereotypes, initiating the forward movement of the culture as a whole was discussed, linking these thoughts with similar reflections made by Jung. These observations found further resonance in the recent study by Kulkarni (1997), in which she concluded that, by challenging normalcy, and embodying dualities, women expressing homoeroticism through lesbian identity served as a *site of resistance* against dominant heterosexist culture, and in so doing, giving expression to the *transcendent function*. In this manner, Kulkarni concluded, these women's experience initiated both individual and collective individuation.

The present study explored the meaning and experience of homoeroticism in the lives of three priests. A grounded theory analysis of the interviews with these men suggested the following: Homoeroticism fulfilled a diversity of roles in each priest's life, depending largely on how it was constructed, engaged with, and experienced. There was nothing in this study to suggest that homoeroticism served any roles outside of the manner in which it was constructed at the interface between the individual and his environment. At this interface the embodiment of homoeroticism took on a number of roles: it was that which is taboo, socially and/or personally; it served to challenge pre-existing notions of identity; it was conceptualised as a site of resistance against dominant trends within the Church; it served to create a dialectic in which personal and collective growth could potentially be initiated. A discussion of these results from a Jungian perspective suggested that homoeroticism reflected "multifarious potentialities", taking on the roles of the archetypal *shadow*, the *anima/animus*, *puer/senex*, the *transcendent function*, as ego consciousness was challenged by the archetypal *self* to broaden its boundaries, and in so doing,

realise itself. These issues were all explored in some detail within the context of Jung's like-with-like alchemical metaphor of individuation.

8.1. Limitations of this Study

The nature of this study has been an exploratory one, the general purpose being to generate ideas and create a space in which to think differently about issues of homoeroticism and spirituality. The conclusions drawn remain tentative and largely hypothetical. They pertain to the experiences of the three priests in this study.

The interviews conducted, while relatively detailed, fell short of fulfilling the grounded theory requirement for a fully iterative process whereby the issues could be explored more thoroughly, over a significant period of time, until such time as the themes reached *theoretical saturation*. The prescribed limitations of this study, together with the need for a diversity of responses, meant that the iterative process was sacrificed. The issues under study are complex, often requiring considerable thought and reflection on the part of the participants. A more extensive interview process may have allowed each priest to more fully articulate himself regarding the many issues dealt with in the study. In this sense, issues might have found greater clarification and differentiation had the process of data collection followed grounded theory procedure more closely.

The study focussed only on priests who experienced an homoerotic dimension to themselves. An exploration also of the spiritual growth of priests not experiencing homoerotic feelings would have facilitated a detailed comparison regarding the influence of sexuality on spirituality and processes of meaning-creation, thereby allowing for a more thorough understanding of the role of homoeroticism in individuation processes.

The study focussed on the experiences of Anglican priests. The reasons for this were largely pragmatic. As a result of my professional contact with the Anglican Church, it was a population of priests most accessible to me. However, it would be important to explore the experiences of a range of priests and ministers regarding homoeroticism. The Anglican Church in South Africa is comparatively liberal regarding issues of homoerotic sexuality. In this sense the sample used in

this study might have a particular bias. That this could be the case need not be a problem. What would be important would be to make a full study of priests from various denominations. A study of Catholic priests, for instance, might reveal a different range of conflicts and experiences, particularly in relation to the issue of celibacy.

The limitations of my training as a qualitative researcher needs to be mentioned. My bias and orientation as a therapist were discussed in Chapter Five. That I tended to focus on the issues from the perspective of both a therapist and a gay man is most likely. It was through the process of conducting this research that I first familiarised myself with grounded theory. An experienced qualitative researcher would, in all likelihood, have approached the research interview differently and analysed the data in a different manner.

8.2. Recommendations for Further Research

The plethora of recent publications regarding experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual men and women regarding their spirituality is heartening. However, as noted at the onset of this dissertation, few studies have been conducted exploring the influence of homoeroticism on spirituality and spiritual growth. Similarly, few studies have been conducted exploring the manner in which priests and ministers of religion experience their sexuality in relation to their spirituality. This study represents an attempt at opening up the study of homoeroticism as a *process* in spiritual growth.

Studies replicating and developing the research described above would serve an important function in examining the findings reported in this dissertation. A more detailed, iterative research process, with a range of priests and ministers from a diversity of denominations, would allow for the development of a more comprehensive framework in which to further explore the relationship between spirituality and homoeroticism. As Jung (1971, p. 185) reflects, “ultimate truth, if there is such a thing, demands the concert of many voices”. The overt expression of the experience of homoeroticism within the context of spirituality is still too recent a phenomenon to be able to insist upon any general conclusions regarding their relationship. Only in the context of detailed studies of “many voices” can we begin to gain more insight into the patterns evident in the role homoeroticism might play within a spiritual context.

Further study of a range of experiences of homoeroticism, not confined to gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity, would also allow for a greater differentiation of the experience of homoerotic sexualities within the context of spirituality and individuation. Freud (1953) suggested that both hetero- and homoerotic streams of libidinal energy permeate the human psyche, each the other's complement. Whatever exists consciously will find its counterpart represented in the unconscious. That sexual or libidinal energy is restricted by oversimplified constructs such as "heterosexuality" and "homosexuality" is emphasised in this dissertation. Exploring homo- and heteroerotic experience as something available to everybody, outside reified constructs of human sexuality, might allow for a greater understanding of sexuality within the context of individuation processes.

Studies of the experience of sexualities, both homoerotic and heteroerotic, as processes within spiritual growth and individuation would create a context in which comparisons could be made, allowing both heteroerotic and homoerotic experience to find greater differentiation. Homoerotic sexualities are not unique in the manner in which they have been excluded from a spiritual context. Heteroerotic sexualities, within a Christian context, are still largely confined to procreation and marriage. That there might be a far greater application of the experience of human sexualities as processes in spiritual growth and development needs to be explored.

8.3. Final Commentary

An explicit aim of this study has been to free the experience of homoeroticism from the constraints of the reified construct of "homosexuality" by studying it as a *process* in psychological and spiritual growth. Defining homoeroticism in the manner in which it was used for this study also separated homoeroticism from the experience of gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity. It was argued that while these identities give significant expression to homoeroticism, as gay, lesbian and bisexual people we do not have copyright on homoerotic experience. It was hoped that by focussing on homoeroticism as a *process*, a discourse could be constructed in which homoeroticism potentially finds further differentiation, rather than being limited to predefined categories of sexual orientation. However, as was noted in Chapter Four, the differentiation between "heterosexuality" and "homosexuality", evidenced at the beginning of

the twentieth century, need not only represent a reification and objectification of human sexuality. Jung (1955) argued that aspects of psychological experience need to be separated before they can be brought together again within a new constellation. Sexuality and spirituality were separated early on in Christian history. Only comparatively recently has human sexuality found itself the focus of similar dualistic interpretation. The alchemical “like-with-like” series, used extensively throughout this dissertation, illustrates the process by which seemingly disparate elements separate, thereby finding greater differentiation, before coming together in a more dialectical manner, in so doing creating conditions in which yet further change emerges. The creation of the notion of “the homosexual” has allowed for a greater articulation of homoerotic experience, something which might not otherwise have occurred. However, that homoeroticism now be solely represented by the construct of “homosexuality” needs to be challenged. This study has suggested that homoeroticism expresses “multifarious potentialities” within human experience. As it finds greater articulation, especially within a spiritual context, age-old dualities are challenged, creating conditions in which the dichotomous relationship between sexuality and spirituality potentially finds resolution. The sacralisation of homoerotic sexualities is a significant historic opportunity to challenge dominant cultural stereotypes regarding the expression of sexuality within a spiritual context, particularly dualistic stereotypes which for centuries have controlled the expression of spirituality, keeping it within the confines of patriarchal discourse.

That spirituality and sexuality are separate elements is something Jung challenges on a fundamental level. His notion of the psychoid archetype insists on their coexistence, as two sides of the same archetypal experience. Post-Jungian theorist, Andrew Samuels (1999, ch.7, p.4) argues that “the transpersonal is always there in society already, at the spiritoid level, where spirituality and sociality merge. The problem, if there is one, is that we failed to notice this”. It is in this sense that the priests in this study express, each in their own way, either privately, or very publicly, a resacralisation of homoerotic sexuality, bringing [back] into awareness that which has been there all along. The result is a radical one. Dichotomies give way to dialectical *potential space* out of which, as an expression of the *transcendent function*, spirituality and homoeroticism emerge as a unified image. The space created by this dialectic in our present cultural context provokes “historic opportunities” by which new constellations of experience, both sexual and

spiritual, can emerge. Homoerotic sexualities, within this vision, come to represent “multifarious potentialities” by which individuation, on an individual and collective level, finds expression.

The significance of the study of homoeroticism and spirituality within our current Western Christian context is made most evident in the reflections of feminist theologians such as Stuart (1995) and Hayward (1994), among many, who suggest that homoerotic sexualities, precisely because of their taboo nature, hold the key to the Church’s challenge to integrate sexuality and spirituality. These writers argue that the Church is unlikely to adequately deal with the needs of Christian men and women in the twenty-first century if these challenges are not met. Creating a context in which psychological research can explore and amplify the experiences of the men and women who embody “otherness”, particularly in relation to homoeroticism and spirituality, therefore has a certain urgency. That the embodiment of homoerotic sexualities is punishable by death in over forty countries, in many cases with the full sanction of religious law (Harvey, 1997, p. 2), adds considerable impetus to this urgency.

We are still a far cry from a common awareness that this is a matter of the destiny of everyone on this earth and that the chances of anyone’s survival are small if humanity does not learn to rediscover out of need a new solidarity (Gadamer, 1981, p. 85, quoted in Kulkarni, 1997, p. 219).

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APPENDIX A**FAITH DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW (Fowler, 1981, pp. 310-312)****A: LIFE REVIEW**

1. Factual Data: Date and place of birth; number and ages of siblings; occupation of primary caregivers; ethnic, religious and racial affiliation; Characterisation of social class – family of origin and now?
2. Divide life into chapters: (major) segments created by changes or experiences – “turning points” or general circumstances.
3. What other people or experiences have been important or significant?
4. Thinking about yourself at present, what gives your life meaning? What makes life worth living for you?

B: LIFE-SHAPING EXPERIENCES AND RELATIONSHIPS

1. At present, what relationships seem most important to your life? (e.g. intimate, familial, or work relationships).
2. You did/did not mention your father in your mentioning of significant relationships.
 - When you think of your father as he was during your childhood, what stands out? What was his work? What were his special interests? Was he a religious person? Explain.
 - When you think of your mother . . . [same questions]
 - Have your perceptions of your parents changed since you were a child? How?
3. Are there other persons who at earlier times or in the present have been significant in the shaping of your outlook on life?
4. Have you experienced losses, crises, or suffering that have changed or “coloured” your life in particular (special) ways?

5. Have you had moments of joy, ecstasy, peak experience or breakthrough that have shaped or changed your life? (e.g. in nature, in sexual experience or in the presence of inspiring beauty or communication).
6. What were the taboos in your early life? How have you lived with or out of those taboos? Can you indicate how the taboos in your life have changed? What are the taboos now?
7. What experiences have affirmed your sense of meaning in life? What experiences have shaken or disturbed your sense of meaning?

C. PRESENT VALUES AND COMMITMENTS

1. Can you describe the beliefs and values or attitudes that are most important in guiding your own life?
2. What is the purpose of human life?
3. Do you feel that some approaches to life are more “true” or right than others? Are there some beliefs or values that all or most people ought to hold and act on?
4. Are there symbols or images or rituals that are important to you?
5. What relationships or groups are most important as support for your values and beliefs?
6. You have described some beliefs and values that have become important to you. How important are they? In what ways do these beliefs and values find expression in your life? Can you give some specific examples of how and when they have had an effect? (e.g. time of crisis, decisions, causes invested in, groups affiliated with, risks and costs of commitment).
7. When you have an important decision or choice to make regarding your life, how do you go about deciding. Example?
8. Is there a “plan” for human lives? Are we – individually or as a species – determined or affected in our lives by power beyond human control?
9. When life seems most discouraging and hopeless, what holds you up or renews your hope? Example?
10. When you think about the future, what makes you feel most anxious or uneasy (for yourself and those you love, for society or institutions, for the world)?
11. What does death mean to you? What becomes of us when we die?

12. Why do some persons and groups suffer more than others?
13. Some people believe that we will always have poor people among us, and that in general life rewards people according to their efforts. What are your feelings about this?
14. Do you feel that human life on this planet will go on indefinitely, or do you think it is about to end?

D. RELIGION

1. Do you have or have you had an important religious experience?
2. What feelings do you have when you think about God?
3. Do you consider yourself a religious person?
4. If you pray, what do you feel is going on when you pray?
5. Do you feel that your religious outlook is “true”? In what sense? Are religious traditions other than your own “true”?
6. What is sin (or sins)? How have your feelings around this changed? How did you feel or think about sin as a child, an adolescent, and as a younger adult?
7. Some people believe that without religion morality breaks down. What do you feel about this?
8. Where do you feel that you are changing, growing, struggling, or wrestling with doubt in your life at the present time? Where is your growing edge?
9. What is your image (or idea) of mature faith?

APPENDIX B

Guiding questions for experience of HOMOEROTICISM AND SPIRITUALITY

1. When did you first become aware of experiencing homoerotic feelings, and how did you explain it to yourself? How has this changed?
2. How do you describe your sexuality to yourself?
3. How do you experience homoeroticism in relation to your spiritual life?
4. What was your first religious understanding of what these homoerotic feelings were, and how has this changed?
5. Do you think homoeroticism any particular meaning in the world today?
6. How do you deal with homoeroticism and being a priest? How has this changed over the years?
7. How do you experience “God” in the context of your sexuality?

APPENDIX C**ETHICS FORM****AN EXPLORATION OF HOMOEROTICISM AND SPIRITUALITY :
A PHD RESEARCH PROJECT**

I, _____, freely accept to participate in this study, and acknowledge the following:

1. Participation in this study is voluntary.
2. I give consent for all information from the interviews to be used in the study.
3. I am aware that the interview will be taped.
4. I am aware that, if, at the end of the interview, I am no longer comfortable with allowing the information provided by me to be used in the study, I can withdraw, and have the tape-recording returned to me.
5. I am aware that this study is an exploration of homoeroticism and spirituality.
6. I am aware that I will have full access to the results as well as to the final report.
7. I am aware that, while all information I provide can be used for the study, my identity will be fully protected.
8. I am aware that records will be kept, and that these will be regarded as fully confidential, and kept secure in the manner in which patient records are kept. I am also aware that when the information is no longer required for the purposes of the research, it will be shredded.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D**FAITH ASSESSMENT**

Fowler (1981) identifies seven categories in relation to which the dominant features of the stage of a person's spiritual development may be identified (p241). Each category will now be identified, together with an outline of the questions pertaining to the assessment of each.

1. Locus Of Authority

- a) To whom or to what does the person look for decisive guidance as regards his decisions about actions or beliefs?
- b) To whom or what did the person look for approval and sanction of his beliefs and values?
- c) What criteria – explicit or implicit – operated in his choice of which authorities to trust and depend upon?
- d) What constituted worthy authority for him, and where is it located?
- e) How has the locus of authority changed through the course of the person's life?

2. Form Of World Coherence

- a) What form or focus does the unifying grasp take?
- b) To what degree are meanings reflected upon and integrated?
- c) To what degree is each priest critically self-conscious about the meanings that sustain them and about how they differ from those of other persons or groups?
- d) How concerned is they about the internal consistency between elements of his system of meanings and values?

3. Bounds Of Social Awareness

- a) Who helped shape the manner in which meaning is created, who were excluded?
- b) How diverse was the range of experience and outlooks of others that are coordinated with their own?

- c) Who were the significant others in relation to whom they developed and maintained their sense of identity and the vitality of their spiritual growth?
- d) Whose questions and challenges did their faith have to withstand?
- e) What spaces, places and environments served to help develop their images of themselves, others and their sense of meaning in their lives?

4. Symbolic Function

- a) With what terms, images, or metaphors does each priest refer to their experience of the transcendent?
- b) Are these references intended to be literal or metaphorical in quality?
- c) Are they one-dimensional and literal, or multileveled and multivalent in character?
- d) Do they question the symbols and metaphors for conceptually suitable meanings?

5. Form Of Logic

In order to assess this, Fowler (1982) draws strongly from Piaget's (1977) ideas regarding cognitive functioning, and develops his final stage, formal operations, into three further categories.

- a) How does each priest relate to the data of his own life and experience?
- b) From what vantage point do they construct and reflect on their memories, their hopes, and their present?

Fowler (1981) discusses a *dichotomising* style of formal operational thinking, characteristic of *Individuative-Reflective* meaning creation. This form of logic, already familiar with the symbolic level, is particularly attuned to making distinctions and creating boundaries: it is a form of logic which tends towards making "either/or" distinctions. A second style of formal operational thinking, referred to as *dialectical*, is more characteristic of *Conjunctive* processes. "Truth requires maintaining and honouring the tensions between the various perspectives . . . [It] is alive to . . . paradox, [where] truth appears in the 'coincidence of opposites'" (Fowler, 1981, p.253). The third style of formal operational thinking is referred to as the *synthetic* form. This "carries forward the strengths of the previous stages, but it overcomes the paradoxical by discerning and

responding to a 'oneness in and beyond the many'. What Fowler (1981) seems to be suggesting here is an ability to discern a truth beyond paradox, without losing the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of the truth. It becomes a truth that is loosely and mercurially held, rather than dogmatically adhered to.

6. Perspective Taking And 7. Form Of Moral Judgment

The final two vantage points by which Fowler (1981) examines spiritual faith development bring cognitive structuring in social relations into sharper focus (ibid. p.254). As discussed in Chapter Three, perspective taking goes through a profound change with the onset of formal operational thinking. An *interpersonal* perspective taking ("I see you seeing me") gives way to a *mutual* interpersonal style ("I see you seeing me; I see you seeing me seeing you"), which then can develop into what Fowler refers to as the *transcendence of third-person* perspective taking ("I see you seeing me seeing you seeing us in this space and time in the life of the world"). In relation to Kohlberg's (1969) stages of moral judgment, the *Individuative-Reflective* capacity for societal perspective taking, what Fowler (1981) also refers to as the capacity for reflective relativism (seeing the self in relation to others from the standpoint of society), gives way to a less easily defined transcendent style, which allows for knowing but not knowing, understanding but not understanding, perceiving, but not needing to define or reify the rules of what is being perceived.