I had learned in religion class to love thy neighbour and to treat everyone the way you want to be treated. It felt like my pastor, the school board, and [my principal] were all contradicting those teachings.

– Marc Hall, age 17 (cited in Grace & Wells, 2005, p. 6)

University of Alberta

The Catholic Closet: The Institutionalization of Homophobia in Canadian Catholic Schools

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

in

Theoretical, Cultural, and International Studies in Education

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 2006

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-22191-4
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-22191-4

University of Alberta

Library Release Form

Name of Author: Tonya Callaghan

Title of Thesis: The Catholic Closet:
The Institutionalization of Homophobia in Canadian Catholic Schools

Degree: Master of Education

Year this Degree Granted: 2006

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Signature

Abstract

Because Catholic doctrine about homosexuality is contradictory and fundamentally homophobic, some lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) teachers find themselves having to deny their sexuality and resort to hiding in a metaphorical Catholic "closet" when teaching in Canadian Catholic schools. This Master's thesis employs a multi-method qualitative research framework that involves: 1) theoretical investigation, 2) policy document analysis, 3) open-ended interviews with six LGBTQ teachers, and 4) narrative inquiry and autoethnography to retell the LGBTQ teachers' stories in the form of life-narrative vignettes. This Master's thesis provides much needed insight into a previously untold aspect of Canadian schooling. It offers a valuable perspective that may assist Catholic school districts who wish to develop policy and practices that are more responsive to sexuality, diversity, and inclusion issues.

Acknowledgements

Among many, I must thank especially those lesbian and gay teachers in Canadian Catholic schools who chose to participate in this study. Their stories confirm for me that I am not alone in my experience of homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools.

My gratitude is also due to Professor André P. Grace without whom I would not have known that queer studies in education are possible. I would like to acknowledge the attentive and dedicated reading of my thesis on the part of my committee members, Professor Rosemary Foster and Professor Dianne Oberg. I am indebted to Professor Carolin Kreber who gave me a thorough grounding in conducting educational research and to Professor Raymond Morrow who helped me articulate the subtleties of social theory. Thanks are also due to Jacqueline Larson, poet and Acquisitions Editor with Wilfrid Laurier University Press, who pointed out to me the hallmarks of an engaging academic study.

In a thesis drawing somewhat upon personal experience, I would be remiss if I did not mention my family, both in Alberta and Prince Edward Island, who have been tremendously supportive of this research. Monica Callaghan, Master Teacher (now retired), who sat through one of my academic presentations and engaged with the concepts even though they were slightly foreign; Adrian Smith, Director of Student Services with the Eastern School District in Prince Edward Island, who met me in Charlottetown and shared with me his perspective on what he agrees is a pressing issue in Canadian schooling; and Brenda Myers, Child and Youth Care Worker extraordinaire, who strolled with me along the beach in Head of Hillsborough, PEI, and engaged passionately and perceptively with the topic. My sister, Alanna Callaghan, indefatigable junior high school teacher, who taught me the power of personal will; my father, Peter Callaghan, most respected boss of all bosses, who passed on to me the strength of the fighting Irish; and my mother, Phyllis Callaghan, Master Teacher (now retired), who taught me how to remain calm and collected in the face of adversity and who believed in this research from the start.

And finally, I owe countless thanks and more to my fiancée, Suzette Mayr, writer, professor, and font-line editor, who witnessed my daily struggles with the Catholic school system, encouraged me to pursue graduate studies, and without whom this Master's thesis would not have been possible.

Dedicated to the memory of Davor Solta

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Chapter One – Introduction to Thesis Topic

Introduction and Purpose

Caught between complying with the religious edicts of the Vatican and the secular laws of the state, some contemporary Canadian Catholic schools respond to queer (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender or LGBTQ) teachers in a variety of ways – most of them negative. Because Catholic doctrine is fundamentally homophobic, some LGBTQ teachers find themselves having to deny their sexuality and resort to hiding in a metaphorical Catholic "closet" when teaching in Canadian Catholic schools. Educational institutions are key instruments for perpetuating the status quo of societal structures. If a society is inherently heterosexist and/or homophobic, it follows that its educational institutions will be involved in sustaining heterosexist beliefs to some degree. Using interviews with six LGBTQ teachers and my own experience as a lesbian teacher, this Master's thesis employs qualitative methodologies to examine the institutionalization of homophobia and heterosexism in Canadian education with a focus on the experiences of LGBTQ teachers in Catholic schools.

Contemporary educational research increasingly demonstrates that heterosexism and homophobia reinforce specific forms of power and privilege that define and regulate an atmosphere of "compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich, 1986, p. 41) in secular and Catholic schools (Griffin, 1992; Harbeck, 1992; Khayatt, 1998; Kumashiro, 2002; Pinar, 1998). This atmosphere of compulsory heterosexuality forces many teachers to be closeted about their non-heterosexual identity. Nevertheless, there are some studies that show an increasing number of

gay and lesbian educators in the United States are choosing to be open about their sexuality in public schools and that some of these public schools are even accepting and welcoming their openness (Smith, 1994; Woog, 1995; Kissen, 1996). It is notable, however, that those educators who are "coming out of the closet" (that is, being open about their LGBTQ status) in their professional lives are doing so almost exclusively in non-religious schools.

Coming out does not appear to be an option for educators working in Catholic environments. In her qualitative study of 17 self-identified lesbian teachers in New South Wales, Tania Ferfolja (2005) shows how Australian Catholic schools employ institutional practices to silence lesbian teachers and their sexualities. These practices include threats of dismissal and/or "forced" resignations, implicit harassment, monitoring and surveillance, curriculum silences and censorship (Ferfolja, 2005). Ferfolja also discusses the impact of Catholic morality doctrines on freedom of speech in individual lesbian teacher's private lives.

One quantitative study, conducted by professionals in the field of psychology – Theo G. M. Sandfort, Henry Bos, and Raymond Vet (2006) – investigates the experiences of middle-class Dutch lesbian, gay, and bisexual people who work in various service industries (health, education, government), and shows that concealment of sexual orientation and experiences of prejudice and discrimination in the workplace are associated with job burnout. The authors find that job burnout related to being closeted at work is characterized by feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced competence. Sandfort,

Bos, and Vet conclude that incidents of homonegative occurances in the workplace might be better understood through more qualitative studies that focus on the perspectives of lesbians and gay men themselves because qualitative research is particularly useful in uncovering the details of individual's experiences.

This Master's thesis provides one answer to the Dutch psychologists' call for more studies on the experiences of gays and lesbians in the workplace by analyzing the stories of seven lesbian and gay teachers in Canadian Catholic schools. These stories, shared in the form of narrative vignettes, include my own account as well as the accounts of six other lesbian and gay teachers from Catholic schools in both rural and urban settings in Atlantic Canada, Central Canada, and the northern Canadian Prairie.

In terms of classifying the ethnographic narrative vignette section of this qualitative Master's thesis according to Robert E. Stake's (2005) definition, my study can be referred to as an instrumental case study because I examine particular cases in order to provide insight into the broader issue of the institutionalization of homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools. Since there are seven cases involved, the narrative vignettes can also be referred to as a collective case study, defined by Stake as an instrumental study extended to several cases for the purpose of better theorizing about a still larger collection of cases. This experiential knowledge of lesbian and gay teachers in Canadian Catholic schools will hopefully shed some light on their working conditions and bring attention to the need to make policy changes to improve those conditions.

The ethnographic narrative vignettes for each participant are derived from a series of open-ended interviews. The use of unstructured interviews and narrative vignettes is part of the poststructural qualitative research tradition in educational scholarship that emphasizes the primacy of the lived experience, the situatedness of the researcher, multi-vocal perspectives, and a grounding in action and praxis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Richardson, 1998).

In addition to the open-ended interviews and life-narrative vignettes, this Master's thesis also situates the problem of queer teachers working in homophobic Catholic schools within the framework of queer theory. I attempt to demystify the term "queer" and situate it within the context of the rise of queer theory. In chronicling how queer theory has been influenced by postmodernism and postructuralism, and so is subsequently at odds with identity politics, I also address some of its pitfalls and how it impacts educational research. I show how queer theory makes both theoretical and political space for more substantive notions of multiplicity and intersectionality.

One intersection I investigate is queer theory and aspects of Roman Catholic doctrine related to homosexuality. The Catholic position on homosexuality is often summarized and reduced into the expression "Love the sinner, hate the sin" or the more colloquial saying "It's okay to be gay, just don't act on it." I deconstruct this Catholic concept of distinguishing between being homosexual and "practicing" homosexuality using elements of queer theory that emphasize the importance of taking pride in one's homosexual identity. I argue

that it is in the interests of both employers and employees to create working environments in which lesbians and gay men can not only *be* gay, but also *be visible* about leading gay lives.

The theoretical framework in Chapter Two of this thesis also offers an analysis of how homophobia functions as a structure within Catholic schools. This theoretical analysis shows how the institutional practices of Catholic schools are conducive to maintaining and perpetuating heterosexism. I define homophobia and describe how it functions as a structure within the deeply hierarchical system of Catholic schools. Then I apply Michel Foucault's notion of surveillance and Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony to the problem of homophobia in Catholic schools in order to illuminate the ways in which homophobia functions as a structure.

The theoretical framework section helps to conceptualize the problem of homophobia in Catholic schools and the document analysis section that follows builds on the theory with exegeses of pertinent texts. Through an analysis of key Catholic documents that address the topic of homosexuality, I demonstrate that Catholic doctrine is not only contradictory but also fundamentally homophobic and is therefore not appropriate for dissemination in publicly funded Catholic schools. I confine the Catholic document analysis to specific sections within the text known as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and two key Vatican encyclicals because these texts inform Canadian bishops' construction of local catechisms intended for use in Catholic schools. I provide examples of dissension among Catholics in Canada to show that the official Catholic doctrine on the topic

of homosexuality is contested by some Canadian Catholics. The dissenting view among Canadian Catholics is essentially that homophobic Catholic doctrine is out of place in a country as respectful of fundamental human rights as Canada.

In order to provide a context for the cultural and social climate in Canada that local catechisms are supposed to reflect, I explore and describe secular developments related to homosexuality through an examination of key legal documents. Canadian research indicates that successful efforts of queer individuals to attain rights in legislative and educational contexts are inextricably linked to progress made in the legal arena (Cochrane, 2000; EGALE, 1999 & 2002; Grace & Wells, 2005). I follow the progressive advancement of same-sex legal rights in Canada through an examination of aspects of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and key Supreme Court of Canada decisions.

For example, when the Supreme Court of Canada decided in favour of gay teacher Delwin Vriend on April 2, 1998 in his legal challenge to have sexual orientation read into the Alberta Individual Rights Protection Act, the government of Alberta subsequently changed the Act (Canadian Legal Information Institute, 1998). Two years later, delegates at the Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Teachers' Association voted to include sexual orientation as a category of person protected by equality provisions in its *Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities for Teachers* (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2001). As the *Vriend* case illustrates, advances in the Canadian legal domain subsequently influence Canadian educational policy development (Grace, 2005).

I examine key legislative and legal decisions in order to understand their implications for educational interest groups and the impact they have on the development of policy. The three major sections of this thesis – the theoretical framework, the document analysis, and the ethnographic narrative vignettes – are all examples of a multi-method approach to examining the problem of homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools.

Research Problem and Questions

The overarching research problem that guides this Master's thesis is to uncover how homophobia and heterosexism are institutionalized in Canadian Catholic schools. This problem raises the following interrelated research questions:

1. How can contemporary queer theory be used to provide a framework for contextual analysis of the institutionalization of homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools?
2. How does queer theory intersect with aspects of Roman Catholic doctrine related to homosexuality?
3. How does homophobia function as a structure in Catholic schools?
4. How clear is the official Catholic doctrine on the topic of homosexuality?
5. How is the official Catholic doctrine on homosexuality manifested in the Canadian Catholic school context?
6. How have key Canadian legislative and legal decisions impacted issues facing queer teachers in Canadian Catholic schools?

7. How can my own story as a lesbian teacher in Catholic schools contribute to a deeper understanding of the institutionalization of homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools?
8. How can the stories of other queer teachers in Catholic schools across Canada create a fuller picture of the problem of homophobia in Catholic schools?
9. How do the multiple perspectives of queer Catholic teachers in Canada help to expose a system of oppression and create a desire to find new ways of working in Catholic schools?
10. What are the implications of the findings of this thesis for policy and practice in Canadian Catholic schools?

Research Methodology and Data Collection

To explore how LGBTQ teachers in Canadian Catholic schools are affected by the Catholic Church's official teachings regarding homosexuality, and to examine policy and practice, I employ a multi-method qualitative research framework that involves: 1) theoretical investigation, 2) policy document analysis, 3) the conducting of open-ended interviews, and 4) the inclusion of life-narrative vignettes.

First, I situate the problem of LGBTQ teachers working in homophobic Catholic schools within the framework of queer theory. I then investigate how queer theory intersects with aspects of Roman Catholic doctrine regarding homosexuality. I employ Michel Foucault's theory of surveillance and Antonio

Gramsci's theory of hegemony to theoretically explore the power of homophobia as a structure and instrument of oppression.

Second, I examine key Catholic documents that address the topic of homosexuality and chronicle legal and educational policy documents that have impacted the safety and well being of queer teachers in Canadian Catholic schools.

Third, I attempt to gauge the impact of both Catholic and secular policy on the experiences of LGBTQ teachers in Catholic schools through the use of interviews. I participated with my supervisor, Dr. André P. Grace and another research assistant in conducting a series of open-ended interviews with a broad range of LGBTQ teachers from every province and territory in Canada. These interviews were completed as part of Dr. Grace's SSHRC-funded research project about work and welfare issues for queer teachers in Canada (see Appendix A for a list of interview questions). All participants are over 18 years of age and voluntarily agreed to participate. The interviews were conducted as follows:

- Before any interviews took place, all research participants were asked to sign a consent form allowing Dr. Grace and his research assistants to use their stories as part of the principal investigator's research as well as our individual (master's thesis and doctoral dissertation) research efforts. (See Appendix B for consent forms).
- Collectively, Dr. Grace, another research assistant, and I employed open-ended interview techniques to engage 52 LGBTQ teachers in

an exploration of their experiences with educational policies and practices. We conducted the interviews over the telephone.

- Generally, we employed open-ended interviews as a way to avoid preconceived categorizations that might hinder the scope and limit the depth of the research inquiry. This structure keeps the focus of the interview on the research participants' perspectives and not on the researcher's own potential biases (Fontana & Frey, 1998). The open-ended interviews were approximately 60-90 minutes in length, and were audio taped and transcribed.
- The research participants were invited to review the transcripts of their interviews in an iterative process in which they could make corrections, deletions, or amendments, as they deemed appropriate.
- Once the transcripts were returned to the research participants as a form of member checking, I began my own independent analysis for themes and constructs devoting my attention primarily to six interviews with participants who work, or have worked, in Catholic school environments.

The research participants were also informed that, upon request, copies of publications or conference presentations emerging from the research could be provided. Participants were assured that standards of confidentiality and anonymity would be strictly maintained in all secondary writing and presentations.

Finally, from the stories gained through the open-ended interview process, I construct narrative vignettes of the participants' experiences. The six

participants whose stories I retell represent the number of research volunteers who, out of the larger group of 52 Canadian LGBTQ teachers, have significant experience with Canadian Catholic school environments. Their stories form a collective case study (Stake, 2005) intended to broaden understanding of the institutionalization of homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools. I use life narrative techniques (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Grace, 2001) to investigate how life-narrative research involving LGBTQ teachers can transform educational practice and contribute to theory building. Narratives can provide a way for marginalized groups to have their unique experiences known to others by having their stories told (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Fontana & Fey, 1998).

In terms of the effects of the research process on the participants, it is possible that they may experience positive benefits because life history and narrative approaches to research encourage participants to be self-reflective and expressive about their lives. These benefits may include: the ability to share personal and professional stories safely over the telephone with gay and lesbian researchers who themselves have experience teaching in Canadian Catholic schools; the opportunity to feel a part of a larger community of Catholic and non-Catholic LGBTQ educators; and the desire to make a significant contribution to research that may translate into positive changes in educational policy and practice in Canadian Catholic schools.

In addition to the stories of six research participants from Canadian Catholic schools, I also offer my own autoethnographic account of my personal experience as a closeted lesbian teaching in Canadian Catholic schools. My

autoethnographic account is an example of how the personal text can be a critical intervention in social, political, and cultural life (Holman Jones, 2005). Autoethnography is "research, writing, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social" (Ellis, 2004, p. xix). I am drawn to the anti-oppressive and emancipatory elements of autoethnographic accounts that invite dialogue and debate and have the potential to instigate and shape social change (Reinelt, 1998, p. 286). As Holman Jones (2005, p. 765) boldly proclaims, autoethnography is "believing that words matter and writing toward the moment when the point of creating autoethnographic texts *is* to change the world."

By using aspects of life-narrative research, this Master's thesis strives to reclaim the missing voices, histories, and experiences of Catholic LGBTQ teachers as important social, historical, and cultural representations that influence how we come to interpret and understand the landscape of Catholic educational policy and practice in Canada. I employ a multi-method research design that involves a four-part process largely because a variety of research methods provide a way to check research data for plausibility, authenticity, credibility, and relevance (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In addition, a multi-method approach also makes the research more holistic since different research methods provide different kinds of data (Lather & Smithies, 1997; Richardson, 1998; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000).

Significance of the Study

Since they only emerged during the 1990s, queer theory and queer studies lack a significant history of research traditions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This Master's thesis adds to emerging queer research by contributing a multi-method approach that examines the institutionalization of homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools. Additionally, much queer-themed research in the 1990s focused on textual and linguistic analysis, and failed to focus on a contextual analysis of the impact of institutional and cultural practices on queer lives (Gamson, 2000). This Master's thesis provides an analysis of educational policy that directly affects the lives of queer teachers in Canadian Catholic schools.

The use of ethnographic narrative vignettes to tell the stories of the experiences of lesbian and gay teachers in Canadian Catholic schools underscores both the importance of narrative as a possible form of liberation for marginalized groups whose voices often go unheard in our world, as well as the potential of narrative to reveal and revise that world (Holman Jones, 2005). Including the stories of these teachers' experiences answers the call for more qualitative studies that focus on the perspectives of LGBTQ people and their experiences of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the workplace (Sandfort, Bos, & Vet, 2006).

Additionally, these teachers' stories add a Canadian perspective to existing research that primarily examines the experiences of lesbian and gay teachers in American school settings (Griffin, 1992; Harbeck, 1992; Kumashiro, 2002; Pinar, 1998). Because these American studies do not highlight religious-based schools,

little is known about the difficulties lesbian and gay teachers face in schools that are opposed to homosexuality on religious grounds. I am aware of only one study conducted by Ferfolja (2005) that examines the experiences of lesbian teachers in Catholic schools, but this study is specific to Australia. In focussing on the experiences of lesbian and gay teachers in the particular environment of publicly funded Canadian Catholic schools, this Master's thesis provides much needed insight into a previously untold aspect of Canadian schooling. Describing the problem of institutionalized homophobia that lesbian and gay teachers face in Canadian Catholic schools is the first step towards changing it. Indeed, giving voice to marginalized and silenced groups has long been known to be an effective way to encourage social change (McLaughlin & Tierney, 1993).

This research will also provide knowledge and perspectives to assist Catholic school districts that wish to develop policy and practices that are more responsive to sex, sexuality, and gender diversity and inclusion issues. It will contribute to an increasing body of literature focused on queer issues in education in Canadian and international contexts (Epstein & Sears, 1999; Ferfolja, 2005; Grace & Wells, 2004; Khayatt, 1999; Podgorski, 2001).

Chapter Two – Theoretical Framework
Why Queer Theory?

Introduction

Queer theorists would rather deconstruct a term, or theoretical concept, than define one. This poses a challenge to research involving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people in real life settings, such as Canadian Catholic schools, where definitions of the LGBTQ population are not only helpful but also essential. Queer theory, itself, resists easy definition. This chapter will attempt to locate queer theory by first demystifying the term "queer" and then situating it within the context of the rise of queer theory. In chronicling how queer theory has been influenced by postmodernism and postructuralism, and is subsequently at odds with identity politics, this chapter will address some of queer theory's pitfalls and highlight what it has to offer the field of education. Ultimately, queer theory makes the examination of the lives and experiences of teachers in Canadian Catholic schools – the subject of this thesis – possible.

The Term Queer

The term *queer* has held a variety of meanings over the past five centuries. The 20th century saw a reclaiming of the term for political ends, which was acceptable to most young activists but problematic for some older individuals accustomed to the pejorative meaning of the term, creating a distinct generational gap (Baird, 2001; Nardi & Schneider, 1998; Plummer, 2005; Zita, 1994). Some consider *queer* to be offensive and derisive, while others see it merely as an inoffensive term for people whose sexual orientation and/or gender identity or gender expression does not conform to heterosexual societal norms. In order to

tackle the tenets of queer theory, it is necessary to first understand the various uses of the term *queer*, a task undertaken by some of the major intellectuals associated with queer theory.

Because the most common objects of study within queer theory are textual (i.e., films, videos, novels, poetry, and visual images), many of the works associated with the founding of queer theory come from the fields of the arts and humanities (Dilley, 1999; Gamson, 2000; Plummer, 2005). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (b. 1950) is a professor of English at the City University of New York who is often associated with the beginnings of queer theory. *Rolling Stone* dubbed her "the soft-spoken queen of gay studies" and some have called her the "mother of queer theory" (Leatherman, 1999). Others have pointed out that she is actually a co-founder of queer theory along with Judith Butler (b. 1956), a professor in the departments of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkley (Smith, 1998).

Others still have located the roots of queer theory with the work of Teresa de Lauretis, an Italian born feminist theorist who writes on the topics of semiotics, film theory and literature and is believed to have coined the phrase "queer theory" (Danuta Walters, 2005; Halperin, 2003, p. 339; Hammonds, 1997). Teresa de Lauretis (1991) first used the expression "queer theory" in her introduction to a special issue of *differences*, a journal of feminist and cultural studies published by Duke University Press. De Lauretis' introduction examined the state of lesbian and gay theory – the precursor to queer theory – in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In her book *Tendencies* (1993), Sedgwick "attempts to find new ways to think about lesbian, gay, and other sexually dissident loves and identities in a complex social ecology where the presence of different genders, different identities and identifications, will be taken as a given" (p. xiii). *Queer* is a key term in *Tendencies*, which Sedgwick explains means "across." Tracing its etymological derivation, Sedgwick says *queer* "comes from the Indo-European root – *terwekw*, which also yields the German *quer* (transverse), Latin *torquere* (to twist)" (p. xii, italics added).

Other meanings of the German word *quer* are: oblique, slanting, and diagonal. The German word *quer* can be used in phrases such as: *quer gehen*, which translates as "to go amiss or wrong;" *kreuz und quer*, "hither and thither, to and fro, and in all directions;" and *es kommit mir quer* – "I am put out by this, it thwarts my plans, or puts a spoke in my wheel." This brief investigation of the etymological roots of the term *queer* shows how it has the makings of a powerful epithet.

Since its emergence in the English language in the 16th century, *queer* has generally meant "strange," "unusual," or "out of alignment." It gained its implication of sexual deviance, especially in relation to homosexual and/or effeminate males, in the late 19th century (Halle, 2004; Jagose, 1996; Voss, 2005). Eventually, throughout most of the 20th century, *queer* was used primarily as a derogatory term for effeminate and/or gay males, and came to be applied to anyone else who also exhibited non-traditional gender behaviour (Halle, 2004).

Like Sedgwick (1993), Judith Butler (1993) also examined the power behind the term *queer*. Butler was involved early in her career in poststructuralist efforts to question the very foundational presuppositions of Western feminism. Her critique of the underlying imperialism in Western feminist theory and its implicit claim to represent "all" women lead to what is now known as queer theory (Selden, Widdowson & Brooker, 1997). According to Butler, the word *queer* "derives its force precisely through the repeated invocation by which it has become linked to accusation, pathologization, insult" (p. 226). Judging by the surprised reactions of some undergraduate University of Alberta students when I use the word *queer* in the classroom in the year 2006, the term still has powerful associations with insult.

Reclaiming the Term Queer

One of the earliest examples of reclaiming the term *queer* would have to be an essay first written in 1969 by avant-garde writer, Paul Goodman, entitled, "The Politics of Being Queer," published in *Nature Heals: The Psychological Essays of Paul Goodman* (1977). In this personal and political reflection, bisexual Paul Goodman wrote candidly about the homosexual libido – earning him an important supporting role in what was known at the time as the gay liberation movement (Parisi & Nicely, 1986).

In the 1980s, the association of the AIDS crisis with homosexuality and the subsequent sluggish attempts at intervention angered gay activist groups in the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Jagose, 1996; Phelan, 1994). Groups working in new forms of non-violent street protest related to AIDS

activism sprang up with names like ACT UP, OutRage! and Queer Nation (Phelan, 1994). In the United States, AIDS activism brought gay men and women together during a time of crisis stemming not only from the disease of AIDS itself, but also from increasing attacks on gay and lesbian life from the religious right and the Republican administrations (Danuta Walters, 2005).

Towards the end of the 20th century, the term *queer* started to gain acceptance among political activists in the United Kingdom and the United States of America who were reacting to the narrow identity politics and rigid categories that were associated with the gay liberation movement (Baird, 2001). Within queer politics, all identities (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and even some heterosexual) could unite under the general banner of "queerness." Queer political activists sought to reclaim *queer* and take it on as a label of self-respect or pride, much in the same way the insults "dyke" and "faggot" were being reframed by some communities in the Western part of the world such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Canada.

Alexander Doty (2000) outlines some of the different ways the term *queer* has been used. In addition to being a synonym for LGBT, or as an umbrella term encompassing a range of non-heterosexual subject positions, it can also be used to describe any non-normative expressions of gender, which could also include straight. According to Doty (2000), the term *queer* can even refer to things quite removed from personal sexual identity such as the "non-straight work, positions, pleasures, and readings of people who don't share the same sexual orientation as the text they are producing or responding to" (p. 6).

Sometimes *queer* can be stretched and expanded even further, Doty (2000) suggests, to include a particular form of cultural readership and textual coding that creates spaces not contained within the established labels of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and heterosexual. Queer theorists who politicize sex, gender and sexuality in such a way that removes the concept of identity from any stable reference points and resists attempts to measure and categorize sexual orientation have seized upon this expansive notion of *queer*.

The moniker *queer* also reflects an inclusive standpoint based on difference from or opposition to "heteronormativity," an ideology that Warner (1993) describes as Western culture's insistence that "humanity and heterosexuality are synonymous" (p. xxiii). Berlant & Warner (1998) expand on this earlier definition with the following:

> By heteronormativity we mean the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent – that is, organized as sexuality – but also privileged. (p. 547)

Heteronormativity, as a system of power and privilege, is most certainly in operation within educational institutions (Bryson & de Castell, 1993; Francis, 1998; Pinar, 1998).

The Emergence of Queer Theory

If the term *queer* is so troublesome to use as a word because of its past associations and current appropriations, then it is even more difficult to explain in plain language what queer theory is. Intellectuals writing on the topic of queer

theory often lament how difficult it is to define. For example, Dilley (1999) writes that it is "as elusive to nail down as mercury" (p. 457) and Plummer (2005) later agrees that it is "very hard to pin down" (p. 365) but nevertheless offers a succinct summary: "Queer theory is really poststructuralism (and postmodernism) applied to sexualities and genders" (p. 365).

Perhaps queer theory can be best understood through an examination of the milieu in which it came into existence. Queer theory arose out of the same social and political context as queer politics, with the AIDS crisis being a catalytic factor along with the concomitant rise of postmodern and poststructuralist theory in the academy (Danuta Walters, 2005; Gamson, 2000).

Queer theory draws most heavily upon the ideas of the French poststructuralists, most notably upon the work of Michel Foucault (1926-84) whose concepts of "regimes of truth" and "discursive explosions" have been extremely influential in the development of queer theory (Halperin, 1995; Plummer, 2005). Queer theory also employs the poststructuralist critical method of deconstruction (Seidman, 1995; Slagle, 1995). Within literary theory, deconstruction is about locating the moment when a text transgresses the laws it appears to set up for itself (Selden, Widdowson & Brooker, 1997). Within social theory, Dilley (1999) posits that deconstruction is "a social analysis of who, why, and what produced a text; an analysis of what is said – and unsaid – through the language, form, structure, and style of a text (a written work, a film, art)" (p. 459). Dilley goes on to explain that queer theory broadens the notion of text to move beyond the idea of a book or a film to include any form of communication that

conveys an understanding of one's world, which could be "a conversation, a life story, a memory, sexual activity, history, a gathering place, or a social trend" (p. 459).

Along with broadening our understanding of text, queer theory introduces an increased questioning of the very language used to conceive of and communicate our thoughts and inquiries. As Edelman (1995) observes, queer theory reminds us that "we are inhabited always by states of desire that exceed our capacity to name them" (p. 345). Even if we were to try to name those states of desire, the end result would be less than satisfactory because of what has to be excluded when settling upon something as confining as a name. As Britzman (1995) notes, queer theory supposes a position if not within the marginalized then at least outside of the margins of "normality." This vantage point of being on the margins makes queer theorists especially sensitive to exclusionary practices such as naming. It also affords new ways of seeing, new paradigms of analyzing, and new methods of representing queer data (Dilley, 1999).

This new way of seeing within queer theory invites a deconstruction of gender that draws upon the work of Judith Butler (1990) who regards gender as never essential and never natural, but always constructed through what she calls "performativity," or a "stylized repetition of acts" (p. 141). This playing around with gender also invites the possibility of opening queerness up to articulations of "otherness" beyond gender. Danuta Walters (2005) sees a certain amount of optimism within queer theory for people of colour in that queer theory may lead to a new theorizing of racialized identity. The idea here is that if queer theory can

successfully challenge what Danuta Walters calls "gender hegemony" (p. 11), then it can also make both theoretical and political space for more substantive notions of multiplicity and intersectionality. Danuta Walters warns, however, that white privilege is not problematized nearly enough within queer theory and that more studies need to be undertaken that address the questions of race and queerness.

Duggan (1995) posits that queer theorists critique "stable, unitary, or 'authentic' identity categories" (p. 181). Highlighting some of the key themes within queer theory, Plummer (2005) identifies queer theory as a stance in which:

- Both the heterosexual/homosexual binary and the sex/gender split are challenged;
- There is a de-centering of identity;
- All sexual categories are open, fluid, and non-fixed;
- All normalizing strategies are shunned (p. 366).

Queer theory is not only about breaking down binary oppositions and identity categories, but is also about, as Dilley (1999) encapsulates, "questioning the presumptions, values, and viewpoints from those positions (marginal and central), especially those that normally go unquestioned" (p. 462).

Identity Politics and Queer Theory

OutSpeaks is part of the arts-based, informal community education project developed by educational theorist and queer activist, André P. Grace at the University of Alberta. It is an organization of LGBTQ youths who speak out against homophobia and about being queer in presentations to high school

students in Edmonton, Alberta. One of the topics the youth frequently discuss is that the only way one can truly know another person's sexual identity is by asking that person directly. The intention behind this statement is to reduce the amount of homophobic violence towards students in schools who do not outwardly present in ways commonly accepted to be heterosexual. Indeed, violence against those who do not self identify as LGBTQ, but who are nevertheless perceived as such by others, is on the rise in Canada (Janoff, 2005).

The paradox inherent in the idea that one cannot know another's sexual identity except through a direct question is that many LGBTQ persons actually do rely on their own perceptive abilities to find like-minded persons to approach and associate with. This perceptive ability is colloquially known as "gay-dar" among some members of some LGBTQ communities. Using *gay-dar*, a newly out lesbian, for example, attempts to find other lesbians and in so doing is very focussed on her own sexual identity. Instead of a de-centering of identity, a key theme within queer theory, identity politics demands a concentration on identity.

Having a clearly defined sexual identity is not only important for making friends and zeroing in on potential partners, but it has also proven to be an effective means of political activism. In her overview of how lesbian and gay liberation movements evolved into civil rights movements intent on securing equality for marginalized minority groups, Annamarie Jagose (1996) points to the importance of having a clearly defined sexual identity for mobilizing successful political action. In the early days of political activism, lesbians and gay men first

came out to themselves and then reached out to others who also identified as lesbian or gay in order to build coalitions intent on effecting change.

The practice of identity politics, with its concern for the nature and boundaries of identity, has been central to key social movements of the 20th century in the Western world, such as the civil rights movement (Garber, 2001). The basic premise of identity politics is that an individual has a clear, unified and stable identity – say, for example, as a black man or a working-class woman – and that this solid identity should not become the basis on which one experiences discrimination. Identity politics have been successfully employed to mobilize activists around issues of race or class, but the same cannot be said around issues of sexuality and gender.

Queer activists can be at odds with queer theorists who are often preoccupied with deconstructing the accepted discourses of any given LGBTQ community, and with creating a greater openness of the ways LGBTQ people think through definitional categories in terms of their own identity. Queer theorists explicitly challenge any kind of closure or settlement on terms, and actively avoid the attempts at definitions or codification that are common in identity politics (Plummer, 2005).

The Trouble With Queer Theory

Joshua Gamson (1995) introduces what he calls a "queer dilemma," in which he claims that within the queer movement there is simultaneously a need for a public collective identity (for the purpose of effective political activism, as mentioned above) and a need to deconstruct and blur identity. He observes that

fixed identity categories can be the basis for both oppression and political power. He points to a concern, held by some lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer (LGBTQ) people, that queer theory offers very little, if any, hope at all for change because of its penchant for "deconstructing" LGBTQ identities, along with all LGBTQ political gains, out of existence (Gamson, 1995).

Along with the demise of "grand narratives" that came with postmodernism and poststructuralism came a suspicion among queer theorists of the focus within identity politics on capturing a solid sense of subjectivity in the definitions of a gay or lesbian person. This suspicion has evolved into a trend whereby queer theory has increasingly become disassociated from the concrete gay identity held by queer activists; something that, like Gamson (1995), Danuta Walters (2005) considers disturbing. It is disturbing because, in eradicating identity, we stand to lose the richness of personal experience in favour of what Danuta Walters calls the "vacuousness of positionality" (p. 10). By "positionality" Danuta Walters means the "always provisional and temporal nature of political location and action" (p. 10). Positionality is problematic because it ignores the "multiple, felt, structural determinations on people's everyday existence" (Danuta Walters, 2005, p. 10).

The main critique of queer theory comes from feminists, and lesbian-feminists in particular, who observe that it erases lesbian specificity and the tremendous difference that gender can make in an individual's day-to-day life (Butler, 1997; Campbell, 2000; Danuta Walters, 2005; Phelan, 1994). The problem, as Judith Butler (1997) outlines, is that gender is relegated to feminist

inquiry and the study of sex and sexuality is seen to be more properly located with queer theory.

A common theme running through the feminist literature responding to queer theory has to do with debates about the sex/gender split, and about whether gender or sexual difference is preferable as a category of analysis (Butler, 1997; Phelan, 1994; Tyler, 1997). Lesbian feminist Sheila Jefferys' (2003) primary critique of queer theory is that it poses a serious threat to the 20th century gains of radical lesbians. Specifically, Jefferys laments how the deconstructionist project of queer theory has subsumed the category of woman-identified-woman and buries lesbian feminists' earlier attempts to uncover the roots of women's subordination to men. Weed (1997) observes, however, that some of these debates evoke an earlier feminism and introduce old arguments into new theories in a way that is ultimately enriching and stimulating.

Queer Theory in Qualitative Research

Despite its shortcomings, feminists in the academy have taken up Queer theory because it invites new methods of investigation and analysis, which can take on a variety of forms throughout academic disciplines (Danuta Walters, 2005; Dilley, 1999). Researchers from different disciplines – such as English, history, sociology and education, for example – may use similar queer theory concepts and techniques, but the final product, or analysis from one discipline may not end up influencing another discipline. In this respect Dilley (1999) explains that queer theory would be better understood as transdisciplinary than interdisciplinary.

In his overview of various studies from different disciplines informed by queer theory, Dilley (1999) locates three tenets of queer research:

- The examination of lives and experiences of those considered non-heterosexual;
- The juxtaposition of those lives/experiences with lives/experiences considered "normal;"
- The examination of how/why those lives and experiences are considered outside of the norm. (p. 462)

Within the education discipline, most educational research informed by queer theory involves an examination of the lives and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer teachers or students in schools (Dilley, 1999). Other educational studies informed by queer theory and curriculum theory involve a close examination of texts used in educational settings (Pinar, 1998).

Towards a Queer Methodology

Queer theory has a lot to offer qualitative methodologies in terms of collecting and analyzing data. Because it questions notions of objectivity and the essentiality of fact, Dilley (1999) suggests that queer theory "opens more 'texts' for study, and more bodies of knowledge to compile, compare and evaluate" (p. 461). Halberstam (1998) concurs and observes that, in its most general form, queer theory is a refusal of all orthodox methods and is disloyal to conventional disciplinary methods. Plummer (2005) laments that the word "method" is rarely used in queer theory and asks "[w]hat ... does a queer method actually do?" (p. 366).

In answering this question, Plummer (2005) provides an overview of various studies that have employed some type of queer methodology. Of all the examples Plummer offers, the ones that are most connected to this present study of queer Catholic teachers are those that he categorizes as "exploring new/queered case studies" and "the reading of the self" (p. 368).

Using queer theory as it applies to the examination of the lives and experiences of those considered to be non-heterosexual, this Master's thesis offers a detailed analysis of the cases of six self-identified lesbian and gay teachers who have experience teaching in Catholic schools in Canada with a view to uncovering how these teachers are affected by the official teachings of the Catholic Church on homosexuality. This Master's thesis can be classified as a "queered case study" (Plummer, 2005) because it uses extensive description and contextual analysis to illuminate the complexities associated with being queer in a Catholic environment. According to Dilley's (1999) aforementioned tenets of queer research, this case study qualifies as an example of an analysis informed by queer theory because of the very fact that it offers an examination of lives and experiences of those considered non-heterosexual.

Plummer's (2005) second category, "the reading of the self" describes his observation that most researchers within queer theory "play with the author's self" (p. 368). Within queer methodologies, continues Plummer, the self is "rarely absent" (p. 368). What Plummer is alluding to here is an emergent form of ethnographic writing characterized by highly personalized accounts in which authors draw upon their own experiences to extend understanding of a particular

culture (Holt, 2003). These types of evocative writing explorations have been labelled "autoethnography" (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Ellis & Bochner (2000) describe autoethnography as:

> [A]n autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth ethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focussing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. (p. 734)

Because this Master's thesis also includes an account, in the form of a narrative vignette, of my own experiences as a lesbian struggling to teach in homophobic Catholic schools, it falls under Plummer's (2005) category of "the reading of the self," and constitutes a form of queer methodology. This highly personalized narrative vignette helps to shed further light on the particular experience of being a non-heterosexual teacher in the heteronormative environment of the Canadian Catholic school.

Concluding Remarks

Queer theory informs this Master's project in the sense that, without queer theory, the very idea of examining the lives and experiences of non-heterosexual Catholic school teachers might not be possible as a discursive exercise. Born as it is out of poststructuralism and postmodernism, queer theory deconstructs stable identity categories, a practice that can be problematic for the activist element of

the queer project that is dependent on a stable identity for effective political action and social change. Despite this queer dilemma, queer theory has a lot to offer qualitative methodologies because it questions notions of objectivity and the essentiality of fact. Like the term *queer* itself, which was once pejorative but is now restorative, queer theory can have broader applications and make both theoretical and political space for more substantive notions of multiplicity and intersectionality.

Queer Theory Meets Catholicism

Introduction

> "We should seek to be more precise in our language and work towards the day when we will be able to even avoid using the term 'homosexual' as a noun ...[instead] we should seek to speak of [them] as 'persons with same-sex attractions'"(Henry, 2001, p. 6).

In these words, Bishop F. B. Henry of the Southern Alberta diocese, Canada, describes how Catholics should refer to non-heterosexual people, using what he understands to be non-reductionist and apolitical language. Henry was writing for an audience of Catholic educators in a publication he released in 2001 called *A Resource for an Inclusive Community: A Teacher's Guide for and About Persons with Same Sex Attractions,* a guide that outlines the Church's teachings on homosexuality. The guide is an attempt to provide clarity to Catholic teachers on the often confusing matter of how to respond to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, and queer (LGBTQ) students in an ethical and humane way, while still remaining true to Catholic doctrine.

Instead of offering clarity, however, the document is rife with contradictory ideas and statements that only further obfuscate the matter. Using queer theory, I deconstruct Bishop Henry's statement about how to properly name homosexual persons as well as other statements made by key Catholic figures that he cites in his 2001 document. I also deconstruct a Catholic concept that finds expression in the colloquial phrase, "it's okay to be gay, just don't act on it," using elements of queer theory that emphasize the importance of taking pride in one's homosexual identity.

When key Catholic figures such as Bishop Henry argue that homosexuals should be more properly referred to as "persons with same-sex attractions," the message is one that emanates from a traditional understanding of homosexuality as not only abnormal but also an illness. When these types of heteronormative ideas circulate in Catholic schools, it becomes a matter of survival for homosexual teachers to conceal their identity. This section of the chapter examines a phenomenological study, informed by queer theory, and conducted in the field of education, that explores the work experiences of 12 lesbian physical educators who have had to employ sophisticated identity management techniques in order to conceal their lesbian identity while teaching in Catholic and non-Catholic schools in the United States of America. In order to uncover the enormous personal costs associated with being closeted at work, I also examine a psychological study that investigates the closeted experiences of middle-class Dutch lesbian, gay, and bisexual workers in the fields of health, education, and government. Overall, this section demonstrates that it is in the interests of both employers and employees to create working environments in which queer people can not only be queer, but also live queer.

The Catholic Context

I use the term "Catholic context" to refer to elements of official Catholic doctrine that influence policy in Catholic schools. I am not referring to individual Catholics who often hold vastly differing views from the official doctrine. For example, many practicing Catholics, priests and even some church leaders dissent from the official Catholic position that homosexuality is inherently immoral. As

recently as Sunday, February 26th, 2006, 19 Roman Catholic priests from five different dioceses across the province of Québec published an open letter in the Montréal newspaper, *La Presse*, decrying the church's opposition on both same-sex marriage and the ordination of active gays into the priesthood (Thanh Ha, 2006). In an interview, one of the authors of the letter, Father Claude Lefebvre of the Saint-Étienne parish in Montréal, said: "We don't want people to believe that everyone within the church thinks the same way" (cited in Thanh Ha, 2006, p. A8).

While this type of public dissension among priests is almost unheard of, it does have historical roots in the work of the Jesuit priests. The Jesuits are a religious order of priests within the Catholic Church who have long been known for their ministries in the fields of missionary work, human rights, social justice and higher education. Despite the Jesuits' pronounced Catholic social activism, the late Pope John Paul II and the current Pope Benedict XVI have criticized the Jesuits for being overly liberal and deviating substantially from official Church teachings and papal directives, especially on issues such as abortion, priestly celibacy, homosexuality, and liberation theology (Wright, 2004).

While the Jesuits and the dissenting priests of Québec are certainly vocal elements within the Catholic Church, their voices are not the ones being heard in Catholic classrooms. As this thesis will show more explicitly in Chapter Three, Catholic schools model their policies after official Catholic doctrine, as approved by the Pope and the Vatican. Bishop Henry's *A Resource for an Inclusive Community: A Teacher's Guide for and About Persons with Same Sex Attractions*

is a local catechism that has been informed by various Vatican approved and sanctioned documents. I confine my analysis to this document in this chapter largely because it has been highly influential in determining Catholic school policy. Additionally, the ideas contained in this document readily invite a queer deconstruction because of how they reflect the ideological condition within which gay and lesbian educators in Canada must function.

As one Catholic educator looking for direction from the Catholic Church on how to best interact with LGBTQ students, I turned to Bishop Henry's aforementioned guide but was ultimately left confused by its contradictions. The most problematic contradictions arise from Bishop Henry's use of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to buttress, strengthen, and lend authority to his own argument. For example, Bishop Henry attempts to clarify the Church's position on homosexuality with a quotation from Pope Benedict XVI, made when he was known as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and Prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith: "Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered towards an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder" (cited in Henry, 2001, p. 5).

Taking off from this statement, Bishop Henry (2001) posits his own interpretation, which deviates slightly from the official Catechism presented by Cardinal Ratzinger: "Although the Catechism does say that a homosexual orientation is 'objectively disordered,' it is homosexual genital acts that are immoral" (p. 5). Here, Bishop Henry attempts to emphasize a distinction between

homosexual orientation and homosexual genital acts, and he goes on to say "in general, sexual orientation is not freely chosen and is, therefore, not sinful" (p. 4).

This is one of the moments in Bishop Henry's guide where it appears as though he is supportive of what he would call "persons with same sex attractions." When taken within the context of the document as a whole, however, the reader is left with the overriding impression that the Catholic hierarchy regards homosexuality as an illness and that statements about how it is not sinful to simply *be* gay are merely illusions of being supportive. Such statements are offered in order to supply "good optics," if you will, that Catholics are accepting of all members of the flock.

"It's Okay To Be Gay, Just Don't Act On It."

Bishop Henry's argument translates into the common adage "it's okay to be gay, just don't act on it" (Callaghan, in press a). At first glance this idea may seem to some to be reasonable, and even accepting. However, when it supported by a contrary quotation from a Catholic Cardinal who is now the head of the Catholic Church, one has to wonder just what is the final message.

The message underlying Cardinal Ratzinger's statement is that it is clearly not "okay to be gay," as he describes the inclination towards homosexual tendencies as an "objective disorder" that leads to "intrinsic moral evil" (cited in Henry, 2001, p. 5). The "objective disorder" is the "being;" the "intrinsic moral evil" is the "doing," and since one leads to the other, it is decidedly not "okay to be gay." Bishop Henry's use of this quotation from a higher authority for the

purpose of clarification achieves the exact opposite and leaves one wondering how LGBTQ individuals are meant to understand their identity.

Queer Theory on Identity

Legitimizing Queer Identity.

Annamarie Jagose (1996) explores the limits of identity in her overview of how lesbian and gay liberation movements evolved into civil rights movements intent on securing equality for marginalized minority groups. Despite their differences, Jagose notes that both the gay and the lesbian feminist models of liberation prominent in the 1970s were intent on transforming oppressive social structures, such as Catholic doctrine on homosexuality, by representing same-sex sexual practices as legitimate.

Still, as Riki Wilchins (2004) points out, even into the 1970s and 1980s, LGBTQ people who dared to make their sexual identity known by wearing gay pride buttons, showing affection for their partner in public, or challenging antigay laws earned them the label "militant." Lance and Tanesini (2005) propose that identities are politicized commitments to particular ways of living and observe that many individuals take their sexual orientation to be a feature that plays an important role in their perception of who they are.

Catholics Reduce Homosexuality to a Behaviour.

Bishop Henry (2001) refers to homosexuals as "persons with same-sex attractions," and uses Cardinal Ratzinger's words to further describe homosexuals as people who are suffering from an "objective disorder" that invariably leads to the "intrinsic moral evil" of same-sex genital acts. Simultaneously, however,

Bishop Henry also advocates that it is not a sin to simply *be* lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, or queer, and, in so doing, he creates a contradiction that poses a serious challenge to the establishment of a healthy identity for LGBTQ Catholics. It does not make logical sense that it is ok to *be* gay, but it is not ok to *live* gay. Ontology, and its experiential expression, are inextricably linked (Butler, 1993). Yet, the subtext of Bishop Henry's statement that paraphrases Cardinal Ratzinger is that homosexuality is, essentially, a behaviour, or illness – and one that can be stopped or cured by sheer will or prayer. This ignores the power of being and the desire to express who we are.

If one were to take this subtext further, it would follow that Catholics who want to remain true to the official Catholic doctrine would believe that "practicing" (to borrow another common Catholic expression) homosexuals should not be protected against discrimination in employment, housing, access to the political process, schooling, or any other area of social life. The "intrinsic moral evil" of same-sex genital acts, faithful Catholics would argue, should not be protected, and should instead be regarded as sinful. Only those homosexuals who respond to the Catholic call to chastity, which includes for them a call to celibacy, can be seen as not sinful. The rule of thumb, then, for those Catholics who are thinking of discriminating against someone who is perceived to be homosexual should be to check first to see if this individual is actually "living in sin" by engaging in "same-sex genital acts," because if he or she is just *being* gay but not *acting* on it, then no sin is being committed.

This thin distinction underscores the contradiction that underlies the official Catholic position on homosexuality (Callaghan, in press a). An example of this type of Catholic contradiction can be found in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, spoken when he was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. On the one hand, Cardinal Ratzinger describes homosexuals as having a "strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil," yet on the other hand, when commenting on the harassment of homosexual persons he also writes: "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" (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986). The irony of this latter statement is that "homosexual persons" do, in fact, experience symbolic violence just by virtue of the contradictory Catholic doctrine that requires gay Catholics to twist themselves into the impossible position of *being* gay but not *living* gay. Having to be silent about one's sexuality and being forced to repress it is a serious limitation on one's freedom and is a form of violence that can have grave consequences on one's health (Herr, 1997). If Catholics truly want to stop violence against homosexuals, then they should develop more clear doctrine that does not require Catholics to distinguish between *being* gay and engaging in gay *behaviour*.

Essentialist Versus Constructivist Views of Queer Identity.

The idea that homosexuality can be reduced to a behaviour is hotly contested by queer activists. As Esterberg and Longhofer (1998) explain in their exploration of various responses to the anti lesbian and gay initiatives of the religious right, queer political activists tend to respond to the religious right's

contention that homosexuality is a behaviour by advocating that homosexuality is an essential and unchanging identity. "We're not made this way, some activists argue, we're *born* gay" (Esterberg & Longhofer, 1998, p. 194, emphasis in the original). As Esterberg and Longhofer rightly point out, at the same time that many queer activists argue for the essential nature of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered identity, queer theorists and other poststructuralist scholars have taken up a constructivist position.

In her widely influential, and often re-printed essay, "Axiomatic," queer theory co-founder Eve Sedgwick (1990) bemoans the tired constructivist versus essentialist views of homosexuality that were being endlessly debated in virtually every gay-oriented book written in the late 1980s. Edward Stein (1992b) succinctly encapsulates the debate as follows: "Essentialists hold that a person's sexual orientation is a culture-independent, objective and intrinsic property, while social constructivists think it is culture-dependent, relational and, perhaps, not objective" (p. 325). Jagose (1996) elaborates that essentialists regard identity as "natural, fixed, and innate" and constructivists see identity as "fluid, the effect of social conditioning and available cultural models for understanding oneself" (p. 8).

Jagose (1996) offers the important caveat that essentialism and constructivism have a more complicated relation to each other than the popular debate that sets them up as oppositional categories suggests. Fuss (1989) concurs, saying there are certain coincidences between essentialism and constructionism, and Stein (1992a) points out that the two categories should not be considered

synonymous with other related binary oppositions such as determinism and voluntarism.

If, as Esterberg and Longhofer (1998) have said, queer theorists and other poststructuralist scholars in the academy tend to take a constructivist stance, their work invariably refers back to the vastly influential work of French historian and cultural theorist, Michel Foucault (1926-84). Upon his death, Michel Foucault's work was described as "the most important event of thought in our century" (Horrocks, 1997, p. 1), and he has since been regarded by many as one of the most influential cultural theorists of the latter half of the twentieth century.

In what has become a pivotal text for queer theorists – volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality* – Foucault (1976/1978) unveils a persuasive historical narrative about the formation of a modern homosexual identity. Here, Foucault argues the constructivist position that homosexuality is necessarily a modern formation because, while there can be no denying the existence of same-sex sexual acts throughout history, the corresponding category of identification was decidedly absent within the historical contexts. Foucault posits that an "entire medico-sexual regime" (p. 42) became the dominant discourse of the nineteenth-century, which ushered in the notion of the homosexual person with an identifiable sexual identity. No longer someone who simply commits certain sexual acts, the homosexual individual comes to be principally defined by those very acts: "The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history ... Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality" (Foucault, 1976/1978, p. 43).

Foucault (1976/1978) is famous among queer theorists for boldly declaring 1870 as the exact year of the birth of homosexuality, based on an important article published that year by Carl Westphal on "contrary sexual sensations" (p. 43). "The sodomite," Foucault explains, "had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (p. 43). Incidentally, the generic subject of Foucault's writings is invariably masculine, which, as Jagose (1996) points out, has been frequently and soundly critiqued by feminist scholars. The use of the term "homosexual" in this thesis shall refer to both lesbians and gay men.

Foucault's constructivist argument in Volume One of *The History of Sexuality* is essentially one about how certain sexual acts came to be seen in the late nineteenth-century as the expression of an individual's psyche, or as evidence of a certain type of subject (Sullivan, 2003). It is an account of how a homosexual identity came to be distinct from homosexual behaviour because of its entry into the medical discourses of the late 19th century. In establishing the homosexual as a species, Foucault is referring to the historical "birth," if you will, of homosexuality. Foucault's argument is constructivist in the sense that he is pinpointing a time in history when homosexuality as an identity came into being. His is not an account of the subtle differences between essentialist and constructivist arguments as to whether one is born a homosexual or becomes one. These subtleties are thoroughly explored by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990) in her essay, "Axiomatic." Sedgwick's polemic text, *Epistemology of the Closet*, begins with "Axiomatic," which exemplifies the assertive political mood that

characterized lesbian and gay academic work in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This time frame represented an assimilation of the viewpoints and analytic methods of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and other poststructuralists. At this time, early queer theorists adopted the deconstructive mode of dismantling the key binary oppositions of Western culture, such as male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, and natural/unnatural (Abrams, 1999).

In "Axiomatic," Sedgwick (1990) offers five axiomatic bases for the book's contention that binary oppositions limit freedom and understanding, especially in relation to sexuality. In her fourth and possibly most challenging axiom, Sedgwick maintains that the binary notion of "nature versus nurture" is itself a flawed concept. Here, she suggests an alternative approach to the stalemate of essentialism versus constructivism, what she calls a "minoritizing" and a "universalizing" view. As Sedgwick makes clear, the issue is not whether one is born or becomes homosexual, but whether the politics of one's sexuality should bear upon only those who identify sexually in a similar way (minoritizing), or upon all sexualities (universalizing). Essentially the issue is: To whom is sexuality important – homosexuals or everyone?

It appears to Sedgwick (1990) that the issue of sexuality is of dire importance to the dominant culture. She expresses her fear that the question of a gay identity is always already structured by "an implicit, trans-individual Western project or fantasy of eradicating that identity" (p. 41). She argues that there is an immense scope of institutions in the United States whose "programmatic undertaking" is to prevent the development of gay people and offers the military,

education, law, penal institutions, the church, medicine, mass culture, and the mental health industries as examples. Sedgwick describes the unstable balance of assumptions between nature and culture, and contends that it would be safer to "keep our understanding of gay origin, of gay cultural and material reproduction, plural ... respectful, and endlessly cherished" (p. 44). Sedgwick's recasting of the nature/nurture debate renders the Catholic Church's representation of homosexuality even more problematic and worthy of discussion.

The Catholic Challenge to a Pluralistic Queer Identity.

It is precisely the plurality of understandings of the origin of homosexuality that Catholic officials such as Cardinal Ratzinger and Bishop Henry would like to eradicate in their statements on homosexuality, which translate into the common Catholic expression: "Love the sinner, hate the sin." If a gay man, for example, were to have a more fluid and plural understanding of his identity, as being a complex mixture of nature and culture, then he might actively seek out more and more cultural affirmation of his gay identity, which can often be found through association with gay and gay-affirming communities.

According to Catholic doctrine, this would be a wrong direction to take as it could lead to the "intrinsic moral evil" (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986) of same-sex genital acts. The only and deemed correct way to be gay, following Catholic reasoning, is to be alone with the knowledge of one's sexual identity and to remain celibate. Indeed this Catholic fear that association with other homosexuals will lead to sinful sexual acts may be founded in truth. Staying with the example of a gay man seeking out a gay community, cited above, it is not too difficult to

make the connection between his frequenting of places where gay men fraternize and an increasing level of comfort and pride in his identity as a gay man, which is sometimes expressed in forms of sexual activity. This is living and expressing one's gay humanity.

Community and Queer Identity.

An early account of the establishment of an English-speaking, European, queer community is Alan Bray's (1988) book, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*. Here, Bray offers a thoroughly engaging overview of the origins of modern homosexuality in England, which he locates at the close of the 17th century with the emergence of an urban homosexual subculture centered on establishments called "molly houses." The term "molly" was an English expression for an effeminate boy that was popular up until the 19th century but is now obsolete. A molly house could be either a part of a public house or a private residence where men with sexual interests in other men could get together, but not necessarily just for sex (Jagose, 1996).

Bray (1988) contends that while sex was more than likely the "root of the matter," this interest could just as easily be expressed in "drinking together, in flirting and gossip and in a circle of friends" as in actual liaisons (p. 84). The molly houses provided a cultural context for homosexual identity and community that had its own "ways of dressing, of talking, distinctive gestures and distinctive acts with an understood meaning, its own jargon" (Bray, 1988, p. 86). Bray underscores the important role molly houses played in recasting homosexuality as

more than a sexual act or inclination, but instead as a kind of identity, or way of being in the world.

Jagose (1996) chronicles the formation of what D'Emilio (1983) calls "homophile movements" – organisations that set up educational programs and political action groups designed to increase tolerance of homosexuality. Jagose points out that "it is no accident that the homophile movements originate in the same period in which homosexuality crystallised as an identity, when for the first time it was possible to be a homosexual" (p. 22). Originating in Europe at the end of the 19th century and culminating in the establishment of some early activist groups in the American 1950s, the homophile movements gave way to "gay liberationists" – as they came to call themselves – who, following the now famous New York Stonewall riots in 1969, were no longer content to solicit tolerance and acceptance (Jagose, 1996). As Altman (1972) explains, gay liberation is concerned with "the assertion and creation of a new sense of identity, one based on pride in being gay" (p. 109). This statement is still pertinent today in parts of the western world where pride celebrations take place, usually in the summer months, to celebrate gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans-identified and queer identities. Of course, part of celebrating one's queer identity means a liberal use of the identifying names "queer," "trans," "bi," "gay" and "lesbian," but such categorization is something the Catholic Church avoids.

Catholic Resistance to the Terms "Lesbian" and "Gay."

Based on what he has written on the subject, Bishop Henry (2001) appears suspicious and fearful of gay people taking pride in their identity. He echoes

Cardinal Ratzinger's contention that it is "deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the subject of violent malice in speech or in action" and contends that the "intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected in word, in action and in law" (p. 4). Yet apparently this dignity should not extend to positive and affirming names for the homosexual person, such as lesbian or gay. Bishop Henry writes that "[referring] to a person as 'gay' or 'lesbian' ...is not only to use politically charged language but to succumb to a reductionist way of speaking about someone else" (p. 6). Even though Bishop Henry attempts to cloak his objection to the use of the terms lesbian and gay as an attempt to see the "whole" person, his actual agenda seems clear: these terms should not be used because they are too politically charged and therefore potentially too powerful.

Bishop Henry writes, "We should seek to be more precise in our language and work towards the day when we will be able to even avoid using the term 'homosexual' as a noun ...[Instead] we should seek to speak of [them] as 'persons with same-sex attractions'"(p. 6). A homosexual should not be conceived of as a "noun" or a whole being, but rather as a person "afflicted" with the illness of "same-sex attractions." When he regards homosexuals as people with illnesses who are not deserving of an affirming name, Bishop Henry hardly upholds the "intrinsic dignity of each person" that he purports to be espousing (Callaghan, in press a).

As in the case of the common Catholic concept "it's okay to be gay, just don't act on it," Bishop Henry seems to be disguising his fear that the terms lesbian and gay could lead to powerful self-expression among homosexual

Catholics as a concern about reducing people to their sexualities. Once again, he creates an illusion of being supportive, given the Catholic Church's reputation in the public sphere for being vigorously against homosexuality in theocratic theory as well as in practice. The real meaning underlying Henry's statements is that it is not okay to be gay, that gay people should not take on politically charged names such as gay or lesbian, and that they should suppress their sexual identities by being celibate and staying in the closet.

Queer Theory in Education

The Effects of the Classroom Closet.

Queer theorists in education have explored the negative effects of having to conceal one's sexual identity in the "highly conservative and often reactionary field" (Pinar, 1998, p. 2) of education where homophobia is especially intense (Grace & Wells, 2005; Griffin, 1992; Harbeck, 1992; Khayatt, 1998; Kumashiro, 2002; Pinar, 1998). In their phenomenological study of the work experiences of twelve lesbian physical educators in American public schools, Woods and Harbeck (1992) uncover the enormous personal cost of having to remain closeted in order to work in one's chosen profession. This idea of being "closeted" refers to attempts to conceal one's non-heterosexual orientation; the notion of being "out" refers to revealing what Sedgwick (1990) calls the "open secret" that sexual identities other than heterosexuality do exist. Since none of the twelve lesbians who participated in the Woods and Harbeck study were "out," each had developed sophisticated "identity management" strategies to conceal her lesbian identity. Woods and Harbeck broke these strategies down into three categories:

(a) passing as heterosexual, (b) self-distancing from students, teachers, and administrators, and (c) self-distancing from issues of homosexuality.

The "Passing as Heterosexual" Strategy.

The "passing as heterosexual" strategy usually involves the crafting of personal fictions in which same-sex pronouns are changed to the opposing gender and same-sex situations are reworked to seem heterosexual. While not every participant in the Woods and Harbeck (1992) study engaged in passing behaviours, those that did viewed it as "an unpleasant reality of the circumstances" (p. 150). The participants expressed "upset at a system that required deception and lies, and at their daily stress levels as they worried about being discovered through accident or inconsistency" (p. 151). An individual who chooses this strategy would have to be a keen observer of heterosexual behaviour and situations in order to reproduce them accurately in the daily acting job of passing. For the lesbian teacher, this may include agonizing over wardrobe selections and making a concerted effort to "fem it up" – choosing more feminine clothing than she would normally wear.

The "Self-Distancing From Others" Strategy.

Unlike passing, the "self-distancing from students, teachers, and administrators" strategy involves rigidly avoiding communicating with others in situations that would call for an exchange of personal information or feelings. The negative feelings of dishonesty and anxiety, however, are virtually the same in both strategies. Participants who engaged in self-distancing behaviour felt "misunderstood, isolated, and dishonest. They were very aware that often they

were harming relationships that were otherwise important to them both personally and professionally" (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, p. 152). Yet, despite the costs to them in their interpersonal relationships, self-esteem and honesty, these participants felt avoidance was the safest route.

The "Self-Distancing From Homosexuality" Strategy.

Woods and Harbeck (1992) report that most of the participants in their study found ways to distance themselves from issues related to homosexuality in the school environment. They feared that, if they were to intervene in situations where students were calling one another names like "faggot" or "dyke," get involved in AIDS education, or simply respond to students' questions about sexuality, unwanted attention would be drawn to them and they would be revealed as lesbians. When these types of topics came up, participants in the Woods and Harbeck study would attempt to remove themselves from the situation altogether, or, as in the case of homophobic comments, pretend that they did not hear them. Even in the rare case when the homophobic comment was directed at the teacher herself, many of the participants chose to ignore it. When homophobic jokes were told in the staff room, some participants chose to remain silent, while others tried to make an inconspicuous exit. When dealing with a queer or suspected queer student, many participants took a cautious approach and some made the conscious decision not to counsel queer students or those they thought might be queer.

The Costs of Identity Management Strategies.

Woods and Harbeck (1992) comment that the participants felt that, in particular, their avoidance of potentially gay and lesbian students was "a betrayal

of these young people who were searching for help in defining who they were as human beings" (p. 155). The betrayal came in the form of robbing their students of an opportunity to see a positive role model that could possibly counteract some of the negative stereotypes circulating about lesbians and gay men. In addition, by distancing themselves from the topic of homosexuality, many of the participants felt that they were not capitalizing on the "teachable moment" in which they could provide accurate information about homosexuality. Moreover, by remaining closeted, the participants "realized that they were covertly communicating the message that being gay or lesbian was bad because of the need for denial" (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, p. 155). In other words, if students suspect their teacher is a lesbian, and she becomes aware of this and takes elaborate steps to conceal or deny that she is a lesbian, then the students' suspicions may be confirmed and the overriding message they may be left with is that being a lesbian is something to hide.

Is It Really Okay To Be Gay But Not Act On It?

Interestingly, the overall message that the participants in the Woods and Harbeck (1992) study felt compelled to communicate was: "It is okay to be gay or lesbian, but don't be open about it and be selective in whom you tell" (p. 161). This is essentially the same message as the Catholic adage: "It is okay to be gay, just don't act on it" discussed above. The two messages are contradictory because it is impossible for a lesbian or gay person to maintain a belief in the idea that being gay is okay if she cannot live gay and is forced to hide or deny her sexual identity to others. Woods and Harbeck observe that "while the participants all felt

quite positive about their lesbian lifestyle outside the school environment, they uniformly believed that bringing that lifestyle into their work situation would be hazardous to their careers" (p. 155) – a message that is repeated several times throughout the study. Khayatt (1999) concurs with this message that being private about being a lesbian in the school environment is a necessary part of being safe and secure at work. The participants might be telling themselves that they are okay with being a lesbian in private, but how accepting can they be of their sexual identity if a large portion of their daily experience is spent denying it?

In reading the Woods and Harbeck (1992) study, the lesbian participants do not appear to be truly comfortable with their lesbian identity. Because of the deeply homophobic and heterosexist nature of their school environments, many lived a double life in which they attempted to separate their identity as lesbians from their identity as a teacher. As Woods and Harbeck explain, "they survived by constantly denying and hiding their lesbianism in order to work within their chosen profession" (p. 160). The stories of the participants in the Woods and Harbeck study show the devastating cost in terms of the emotional energy expended and the self-esteem lost in attempting to live a double life. Each of the participants paid a personal and professional toll for concealing their identities at school.

For some, the personal toll was self-hatred and denial of their lesbianism (Woods & Harbeck, 1992). For others, the personal price paid was in the frustration, fear, and isolation that they experienced as a result of having to hide their lesbian identity. Professionally, the participants in the Woods and Harbeck

study felt unable to be fully functioning and honest members of the school community. They tried to pass as straight, they distanced themselves from students and colleagues, and they avoided the topic of homosexuality. According to Woods and Harbeck, the emotional and psychological energy required on a daily basis to maintain this charade is perhaps the heaviest price the participants in their study paid.

Coming Out of the Classroom Closet (Or Not).

While the Woods and Harbeck (1992) study did take place almost 15 years ago, there are other studies that corroborate their findings (Griffin, 1991; 1992; Khayatt, 1998). Other studies also show how some gays and lesbians are increasingly choosing to be open about their sexuality at school and that some schools are even accepting and welcoming their openness (Smith, 1994; Woog, 1995; Kissen, 1996). It is notable that those educators in the aforementioned studies who are coming out in their professional lives are doing so in non-religious schools. One obvious conclusion that can be drawn from reading these studies is that coming out was not an option for the participants in the Woods and Harbeck study, nor does it appear to be an option for educators working in Catholic environments. The identity concealing strategies described in the Woods and Harbeck study are remarkably similar to those employed by queer Catholic educators who are toiling under the illness paradigm still held by Catholic officials today that the homosexual is a "person with same-sex attractions" and therefore inherently "disordered," and by necessity a person living a secretive life.

Closeted Catholic Educators in New South Wales, Australia.

In her qualitative study based on her recent doctoral research, Tania Ferfolja (2005) details the experiences of 17 self-identified lesbian teachers in New South Wales. Focussing on the participants in her study who were working within Catholic schools, Ferfolja shows how Catholic schools employ institutional practices to silence lesbian teachers and their sexualities. These practices include threats of dismissal and/or "forced" resignations, implicit harassment, monitoring and surveillance, curriculum silences and censorship, as well as the impact of morality doctrines on freedom of speech in individual's private lives (Ferfolja, 2005). The participants who worked in Catholic schools found it necessary to be closeted as they were expected to uphold the Catholic doctrine that "homosexuality is a sin against the natural order" (Ferfolja, 2005, p. 55).

The lesbian teachers working in Catholic schools chose to remain closeted even though the Catholic Church rejects homosexuality, but not necessarily the "individual homosexual" (Love, 1997, p. 382). Apparently, the lesbians working in Catholic schools did not want to put their trust in the Catholic adage "love the sinner, hate the sin" because one can only love the sinner if that sinner is not committing the sin of "same-sex genital acts" – something that is very difficult to determine. The lesbians working in the Catholic schools of New South Wales felt it was safer to be closeted than to leave the conjecture up to their Catholic colleagues on whether or not they were sexually active.

Like the participants in the Woods and Harbeck (1992) study, the lesbian participants in the Ferfolja (2005) study developed a number of sophisticated coping strategies that involved managing their lesbian identities through passing and covering strategies. An example that Ferfolja offers is of a lesbian teacher who witnessed one of her lesbian colleagues get fired once the administration learned of her sexual identity. In firing the lesbian teacher, the principal of the school simply said that plans for the next academic year "did not include her" (cited in Ferfolja, 2005, p. 55). The lesbian teacher who witnessed the firing of her lesbian colleague became even more secretive of her sexuality than she was before. When she passed certain colleagues in the hallway whom she suspected might also be lesbians, she avoided acknowledging them for fear of drawing attention to her own lesbian sexuality (Ferfolja, 2005). While these various identity-management strategies made it possible for the lesbian teachers to continue working, they took a heavy toll on the teachers' psychological and emotional health.

Psychological Studies on the Effects of Being Closeted

The studies from the field of education that I have so far described focus on identity management strategies for lesbian and gay educators. Overall, the findings from these studies indicate that most lesbian and gay teachers feel it is safer to be in the closet about their sexuality while at work. For an investigation of the negative effects of being closeted on one's psyche, it is necessary to turn to the field of psychology. One study by Theo G. M. Sandfort, Henry Bos, and Raymond Vet (2006) that investigates the experiences of middle-class Dutch

lesbian, gay, and bisexual people who work in various service industries (health, education, government), shows that concealment of sexual orientation and experiences of prejudice and discrimination in the workplace are associated with job burnout, characterized by feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced competence. Based on findings from the study, the authors describe how hiding one's orientation requires a constant vigilance about the personal information one shares with other people as well as the ability to maintain a fine division between two worlds and two separate selves. "Not disclosing," the authors speculate, "might induce feelings of being dishonest and disconnect or alienate one from colleagues" (Sandfort, Bos, & Vet, 2006, p. 228).

Burnout, a concept originally developed by Schaufeli and Dierendonck (1993), is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced sense of personal competence that comes from what is perceived as an unbearable workload. Sandfort, Bos and Vet (2006) take this concept outside of its usual association with workload and hypothesize that burnout can also occur when one is not open about one's homosexual identity.

Indeed, as Martell, Safren and Prince (2004) report in their summary of existing research, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people seek therapy at much higher rates than their heterosexual counterparts. They propose three reasons for the higher rate of therapy among non-heterosexual people: 1) Their experience of being different has trained them to be more self-reflective; 2) they seek professional support because there is less natural support in their environment; or 3) they have greater distress in their lives (p. 14). The authors also report higher

rates of depression and anxiety among lesbians and gay men and hypothesize that this is the case because of the impact of discrimination toward and negative societal views about this population. Martell, Safren and Prince comment that, from a theoretical and developmental point of view, "anxiety can become a significant factor for any stigmatized group" (p. 92).

Conversely, being open about one's homosexuality could have positive effects. Sandfort, Bos and Vet (2006) point to one notable study by Day and Schoenrade (1997) about the relationships between communication about sexual orientation and work attitudes. Day and Schoenrade found that workers who are more open are more committed to the organization that employs them, experience less conflict between work and home, and have higher job satisfaction.

Concluding Perspectives

Clearly, it is in the best interests of both employers and employees to create working environments in which lesbians and gay men can not only *be* gay, but also *be visible* about leading gay lives. In developing policy around "sensitive issues" such as homosexuality, Canadian Catholic school districts turn to their local bishops for moral guidance. Bishop Fred Henry's 2001 guide, for example, closely mirrors encyclicals and other declarative statements from the Vatican and requires Catholic employees to uphold the tenets of the Catholic doctrine, including the idea that "it's okay to be gay, just don't act on it." This means staying in the closet for many Catholic educators. Queer theorists have long emphasized the importance of taking pride in one's sexual identity and have shown that it is not enough to simply be tolerated. Queer activists have worked

hard to establish community networks of social support that provide queer people with resources that allow them to flourish in difficult times. Now the onus is upon Catholic school districts to find ways to support their lesbian and gay employees as they try to develop more positive feelings about their sexuality and begin disclosing their sexual orientation at work.

Because Catholic school districts are in the business of providing a public service, they need to respect legislation that protects against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, irrespective of religious beliefs. When Catholic school districts create an exclusionary heteronormative sexual politics that coerces homosexual Catholic educators into remaining closeted about their homosexual identity and same-sex attraction, they are essentially committing human rights violations against their homosexual employees. Being in the closet exacts a heavy toll on homosexual Catholic educators and robs students of an opportunity to learn how to be accepting of sexual minorities. Catholic school districts need to strike a balance between the religious edicts of the Vatican and the secular laws of the state to ensure that the human rights of *all* their employees are respected.

How Homophobia Functions[1]

Introduction

I intend to explore the institutionalization of homophobia in Catholic schools by employing a Foucauldian analysis of how homophobia as a disciplinary power functions. Although they belong to fundamentally different theoretical traditions, both Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci dissect the machinations of institutional and cultural power in ways that are surprisingly complementary. I will draw upon Michel Foucault's notion of surveillance and Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony to illuminate the ways in which homophobia as a structure functions. I will confine my analysis to the following brief texts: 1) Foucault's chapter entitled, "The Means of Correct Training" in his book, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975/1995), which was first published in 1975 as *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*; and 2) Gramsci's "Notes on Education," which he wrote while imprisoned in Mussolini's gaols during the period of 1929-35, and which are now compiled as chapter two "On Education" in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971).

I will begin with a definition of homophobia and describe how it functions as a structure within the deeply hierarchical system of Catholic schools. I will follow this with a reconstruction of the arguments put forth by Foucault and Gramsci about how power works in educational institutions. I will then apply these two theorists' ideas about surveillance and hegemony to examples from my

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[1] A version of this essay has been accepted for publication.
Callaghan, T. (in press b). When God teaches sex ed.: Applying Foucault's concept of surveillance and Gramsci's notion of hegemony to the problem of homophobia in Catholic schools. *International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities, and Nations, Volume 6A*

own lived experience with the homophobic structure of a Catholic school system (Callaghan, in press b). Finally, I will conclude with a comment on the utility of using Foucault and Gramsci in a common frame of reference.

Homophobia

In "The Means of Correct Training," Foucault (1975/1995) is not interested in the "who" or "why" behind disciplinary power but instead examines how power works. Paul Rabinow (2003), a social-cultural anthropologist at Berkeley University, conducted an interview with Foucault in May of 1984, just before Foucault's death. On the topic of the subject and power, Foucault explained to Rabinow the importance of beginning an analysis with a "how" question. He introduced a double question: A) what is power? and B) where does power come from? In so doing, he underscores the importance of undertaking a critical investigation of the thematics of power. He specifies, "'How?' not in the sense of 'How does it manifest itself?' but 'How is it exercised?' and 'What happens when individuals exert ... power over others?'" (cited in Rabinow, 2003, p. 135). It is within this tradition that I will explore how homophobia works in Catholic schools. My question is, what is homophobia and how is it exercised as a power?

Social justice activist, Suzanne Pharr (1997), defines homophobia as "the irrational fear and hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex" (p. 1). For many, homophobia calls up images of loss of freedom, suppression, repression, depression, verbal and physical violence, and even death. Heterosexism, the assumption that the world is, and/or should be, heterosexual, is

further explained by Pharr (1997) as "the systemic display of homophobia in the institutions of society" (p. 16).

Discussions of sexuality are not confined to the staff room or other social places in the school, but are often part of regular classroom banter. Critical pedagogue and feminist scholar, Didi Khayatt (2000), reminds us that:

> Sexuality is present in the classroom in the wedding or commitment rings that teachers or students may wear, in talk about boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands, wives and partners, in discussions of pregnancy and family, in talk of holiday plans and in other tacit ways. (p. 267)

A seemingly innocent question about marital status can send a closeted lesbian reeling. Homophobia is powerful enough to keep LGBTQ people, who are commonly regarded by conservative estimates as occupying ten percent of the population, living lives of fear (if living "in the closet"), or living lives of danger (if living an "out" life), or a combination of both. With increased visibility comes an increased vulnerability and nowhere is this more evident than in today's schools where young people are coming out at increasingly earlier ages and newly hired lesbian and gay teachers are refusing to live in the closet (Grace & Wells, 2005).

Pharr (1997) pinpoints the source of homophobia's power to damage and destroy lives to two originators: 1) the idea that homosexuality is "sick" and 2) the idea that it is "sinful" to love someone of the same sex. Though the American Psychiatric Association (APA) once listed homosexuality as a mental illness, it now states that it is no more abnormal to be homosexual than to be left-handed

(APA, 2000). Despite this change, many still hold on fervently to the original diagnosis and still conceive of heterosexuality as the accepted norm, with homosexuality being an abnormal deviation from that norm. For example, in their publication, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (1994) present the official Catholic doctrine on the topic of homosexuality as follows:

> Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved. (p. 480)

Footnotes in the text reveal that the quotation within the above quotation stems from an earlier Catholic text entitled *Persona Humana* (a declaration on certain questions concerning sexual ethics) released by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in 1975. CDF is a department of the Roman Curia, colloquially (if inaccurately) referred to as the Vatican. Founded in 1542, the CDF was known as the Holy Office of the Inquisition until 1917; it is the oldest of the nine congregations of the Roman Curia and is one of the most active departments because it oversees Catholic doctrine (Vatican, n.d.). As this quotation from official Catholic doctrine reveals, homophobia is a *tradition*, a structure as sure as the pillars of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome – it is indeed institutionalized.

Giving voice and power to *tradition*, as outlined in the Catholic interpretation of the Bible, tidily removes Catholic clergy and school board administrators from being held accountable for homophobic beliefs, statements and actions. *Tradition* gives homophobia unchecked power to wreak havoc on people's lives. *Tradition* deserves to be respected only to the point that it is respectable – that is, insofar as it is itself respectful of fundamental human rights. The *tradition* of homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools will be examined through a close reading of Foucault's chapter entitled, "The Means of Correct Training" in his book, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975/1995); and Gramsci's "Notes on Education" in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971). These two exegeses will be followed by an application of Foucault and Gramsci's theories to the problem of homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools.

"The Means of Correct Training" by Michel Foucault

Foucault's (1975/1995) central argument of *Discipline and Punish* is that changes in the strategies of punishment now focus attention on the "soul" rather than the body, using far more insidious forms of domination and control. His chapter, "The Means of Correct Training," traces the development of certain "disciplines," or techniques for managing people, and the way they transform individuals into objects for knowledge and power through controlling processes of distinction and classification. Foucault asserts "[d]iscipline 'makes' individuals" and its success in doing so comes from the use of "simple instruments," which he calls "hierarchical observation," "normalizing judgement," and "the examination"

(p. 170). Each of these disciplining instruments involves a form of surveillance – surveillance of the body being Foucault's motif for modernity (Delanty, 2003).

The first instrument of power, "hierarchical observation," involves linking visibility to power. Using the military camp as a model, Foucault (1975/1995) describes how the architecture of control, along with a new type of surveillance in the workshops and factories, function as forms of disciplinary power. The military encampment serves as a model for other urban developments and institutions of civilian society, such as working-class housing estates, hospitals, asylums, prisons, and schools, where specific types of architecture, designed for a rigid control of space, encourage a pervasive community of hierarchical observation.

According to Foucault (1975/1995), the school building of *École Militaire*, for example, operated under imperatives of health, qualification, politics, and morality by creating a space organised around continuous surveillance. The military school was a mechanism for training arranged through architecture. This new type of surveillance was also prevalent in workshops and factories where specialized workers such as clerks and foremen appeared. Drawing upon ideas in Volume I of *Capital* (1867) by Karl Marx (1818-83), Foucault writes "[s]urveillance ...becomes a decisive economic operator both as an internal part of the production machinery and as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power" (p. 175). He describes disciplinary power as being both "absolutely indiscreet, since it is everywhere and always alert...and absolutely 'discreet', for it functions permanently and largely in silence" (p. 177).

The second instrument of power, "normalizing judgement," was for Foucault (1975/1995) a kind of "penal mechanism" that functioned "at the heart of all disciplinary systems" (p. 177). Foucault describes this penal mechanism as enjoying "a kind of judicial privilege with its own laws, its specific offences, its particular forms of judgement" (p. 178). The disciplinary systems "established an'infra-penalty'; they partitioned an area that the laws had left empty; they defined and repressed a mass of behaviour that the relative indifference of the great systems of punishment had allowed to escape" (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 178). These disciplining institutions imposed a micro penal system over almost every aspect of behaviour, notably those not included in the formal judicial system such as time, activity, speech, the body, and sexuality. Foucault describes how discipline brought "a specific way of punishing," which included the "whole indefinite domain of the non-conforming" (p. 179). Normalization, coupled with surveillance, becomes "one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age" (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 184).

"The examination," Foucault's third technique of power, is a ritualized process that combines the two other aforementioned techniques of power: hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement. Foucault casts the examination as a particular human science "technology" that "implement[s]...power relations that make it possible to extract and constitute knowledge" (p. 185). One of the examples Foucault offers is the "examining school," which he contends, "marked the beginnings of a pedagogy that functions as a science" (p. 187), where the "power of writing" (p. 189) forms the basis of

this new "science of the individual" (p. 191). "The examination," then, is a mechanism that links the formation of knowledge to the exercise of power through a formalized documentation process that renders an individual a "file" or a "case."

For Foucault, a "disciplinary régime" (p. 193) that employs the "simple instruments" of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement, and the examination signals a shift in history in which individuality went from being a privilege of rank to a characteristic of the masses. This new type of disciplining power is "exercised by surveillance rather than ceremonies" (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 193). The process of becoming a "file" and a "case" is the experience of the disempowered and subordinated. Urban disciplining institutions, with their strict timetables, controlling architecture, and ranking systems encourage a pervasive community of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and examination.

Foucault's Theory of Surveillance and Homophobia as a Structure

Foucault's (1975/1995) explanation of how subjects are produced through the imposition of disciplinary instruments of power can be applied to the problem of homophobia in Catholic schools. Each of the three "simple instruments" of power (hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and the examination) will be explored in turn.

Foucault's first instrument of power, "hierarchical observation" (which involves linking visibility to power) can be readily observed in an example from my own experience when I was first hired by a Catholic school system. It comes

in the form of the employment contract, which has a powerful clause in it requiring a new hire to agree to uphold the tenets of the Catholic faith or "Catholicity" twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. After representatives from the Catholic school board drew my attention to the "Catholicity" clause, they then informed me that employees are duty bound to report suspicious un-Catholic behaviour that they might observe in a co-worker.

The message was clear to me that it is not acceptable to be open about being non-heterosexual as that would be contrary to "Catholicity." According to the Catholic doctrine cited earlier, homosexual acts are "intrinsically disordered," and "under no circumstances can they be approved" (CCCB, 1994, p. 480). As a newly-hired teacher in a lesbian relationship, I also understood that I would have to go to great pains to hide that part of my life while teaching for a Catholic school board. I was also informed that the board would randomly check e-mail on occasion too. Even if the employing board does not actually have the personnel to carry out this form of surveillance, the threat itself is sufficient to keep teachers in line because one never knows whom one can trust.

Examples of Foucauldian "hierarchal observation" are described in the Ferfolja (2005) study of 17 self-identified lesbian teachers in New South Wales who experienced a kind of institutional silencing that included threats of dismissal and forced resignations, monitoring and surveillance, and implicit harassment. According to Foucault's argument, this form of "hierarchical observation" is "absolutely indiscreet" because the employee is made aware of the various forms

of surveillance, and it is "absolutely discreet" in the sense that one can never know when one is being observed or reported on.

Staying with the example from my own personal experience when I was newly hired by a Catholic school district, the second instrument of power, "normalizing judgement," can be observed in the way a new teacher can become subtly controlled by the homophobic structure within the school institution. "Normalizing judgement" is a form of "penal mechanism" with its own particular forms of judgement that define and repress a mass of behaviour. When it became known to others that I was not married, I was inevitably drawn into conversations about eligible men and invited to social events in order to meet them. Here, I had to find creative ways to navigate possible romantic overtures from my male colleagues who thought I was heterosexual and available. In these types of social situations, I was automatically perceived as heterosexual and felt forced to deny the truth of my own life in order to fit in and not be regarded as abnormal or risk losing my job because I would be violating the "Catholicity" clause in my employment contract.

As time went by and I was still perceived as "single," and therefore unwittingly inviting special scrutiny or speculation about my private life, I had to be especially attentive to my job performance and ensure that I did not receive negative evaluations and have more unwanted attention drawn to me. I had to be ever alert so that I would not fall victim to one of the silent forms of punishment for being "different," such as being given a new and highly inappropriate teaching assignment, undesirable extra-curricular duties, or even being transferred to a new

school. In this way, as a teacher who is also a lesbian, I had to endure a much harsher form of Foucauldian "normalizing judgement" than my heterosexual colleagues in the same Catholic school system.

Foucault's third instrument of power, "the examination," is a combination of both "hierarchical observation" and "normalizing judgement." It can be observed in the way I had to undergo several formal teacher evaluations, which is standard practice for any newly hired teacher. The difference in my case, as a new teacher who is also a lesbian, is that I was even more aware of how my difference of not being married and not having a boyfriend could possibly be adding up in the minds of my examiners. In order to throw the examiners off the trail of my "abnormality," I felt I had to outperform my colleagues so that, even if I were found out to be "different," my outstanding performance would offset any hesitation on the part of my examiners. I was keenly aware of the "power of writing" behind Foucault's "science of the individual" and knew that one oddly worded phrase in my evaluation could be read as a signal by future employers. I would do anything to keep hints of my "abnormality" out of my file.

As the Woods and Harbeck (1992) study referred to in an earlier section of this chapter illustrates, lesbian teachers often go to great lengths to keep their "abnormality" hidden and out of the watchful eyes of their ever-present examiners who may write something about it in a performance appraisal. Woods and Harbeck found that the lesbian teachers who participated in their study developed sophisticated "identity management" strategies, such as passing as heterosexual, distancing themselves from students and colleagues, and distancing themselves

from the topic of homosexuality in general. Likewise, the lesbian teachers in the Ferfolja (2005) study were also skilled at these types of identity management techniques. The Ferfolja study goes further, however, in that it records another strategy that involves the lesbian teachers distancing themselves from other colleagues in the school whom they have reason to suspect are also lesbians. The fear appears to be that if lesbian teachers associate with one another in the school, their examiners who are evaluating them in formal and non-formal ways may pick up on these teachers' lesbianism and find ways to dismiss them.

Antonio Gramsci's Notes on Education

In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971), the introduction to Chapter 2, entitled "On Education," states that Gramsci was interested in creating a revolutionary party of intellectuals from the working class, a group he called the "organic intellectuals." This Gramscian notion of an "organic intellectual" is basically an individual who emerges as a thinking person from within his or her particular class location and has the ability to challenge, resist, and eventually reorient society (Morrow & Torres, 1995).

"On Education" also provides some background regarding the Mussolini governmental reforms of education in 1923 and identifies "active education" as a watchword of these reforms. Like the governmental reformers, Gramsci also held an "active" concept of education, but not one built on rhetoric and slogans, as that of the governmental reformers. Gramsci did not associate education with the passive reception of ideas, but with the *transformative* power of ideas (Borg et al, 2002). One way of understanding Gramsci's concept of hegemony is by carefully

studying educational activities and institutions, since these are one way that bourgeois civilization perpetuates itself.

As a Neo-Marxist theorist, Gramsci can be broadly associated with *critical* accounts of societal reproduction. In this way, he can be set up in opposition to *noncritical* accounts of societal reproduction commonly associated with the structural functionalism of Émile Durkheim (1858 – 1917). More specifically, Gramsci can be placed into the conflict theory camp of Neo-Marxists, for whom "the contradictions in the capitalist mode of production, especially those between labour and capital, are taken to be decisive" (Morrow & Torres, 1995, p. 20). Neo-Marxists typically focus on the increased importance of massive cultural institutions (for example, education and the mass media), as well as the strategic role of the liberal democratic state (Morrow & Torres, 1995). Gramsci can be called a Neo-Marxist, in the sense that he explored the role of education and culture in social reproduction.

It seems that what Gramsci felt was missing from the traditional Marxist theory of power was an understanding of the subtle but pervasive forms of ideological control and manipulation that served to perpetuate all repressive structures. He identified two distinct forms of political control: *domination*, which referred to direct physical coercion by state armed forces and *hegemony*, which referred to both ideological control and, more crucially, consent (Morrow, 2005). Because he stressed the multi-dimensionality of power relations and the role of agency and social movements in social change, Gramsci's ideas would also be at home in the critical theory camp, which was influenced by both Neo-Marxist and

conflict theory traditions. In addition, he can also be identified as a critic of Marxist economic determinism because of his assertion of the power of ideas and the potential of autonomous individuals to effect social change.

In his "Notes on Education," Gramsci (1971) interprets Mussolini's Gentile educational reforms of 1923 as nominal rhetoric that misdiagnoses the real crisis in education. According to Gramsci, the real crisis in education is the increasing separation of ancient Italian tradition, passed down through the generations via the tried and true methods of the traditional school, from modern life. Gramsci (1971) laments that the Gentile educational reforms' lack of direction fosters the development of a number of diverse vocational schools at the expense of the classical, humanistic school. Gramsci (1971) proposes that the way to break this pattern is to "create a single type of formative school (primary-secondary) [that] would take the child up to the threshold of his choice of job, forming him during this time as a person capable of thinking, studying, and ruling – or controlling those who rule" (p. 40). The goal of this common school would be to "insert young men and women into social activity after bringing them to a certain level of maturity, of capacity for intellectual and practical creativity, and of autonomy of orientation and initiative" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 29). This goal would be attained upon successful completion of several phases of the common school.

The aim of the final phase of the common school would be to foster in the students an "intellectual self-discipline and the moral independence which are necessary for subsequent specialisation" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 32). The final phase comes in two parts: active and creative. The active part is associated with classical

rationality, discipline and conformism. The creative part is associated with expanding the personality of the student "through a spontaneous and autonomous effort of the pupil, with the teacher only exercising a function of friendly guide" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 33).

According to Gramsci (1971), the active phase of the common school had to be mastered first because, he argues, if working-class students were to develop into "organic intellectuals," they had to undergo a "psycho-physical training" that involves the learning of physical self-discipline and self-control – a task he admits would involve overcoming "unprecedented difficulties" (p. 35). Using the traditional grammatical study of Latin as an example of one of the great successes of the classical, humanistic school, Gramsci (1971) illustrates how students learned not only grammar but also a means through which they may "know themselves consciously" (p. 37), in terms of their cultural heritage by engaging in the ancient Italian tradition of studying Latin. Alerted to the fact that the Gentile educational reforms would phase out Latin and Greek instruction, Gramsci (1971) warns that it "will not be easy to deploy the new subject or subjects in a didactic form which gives the equivalent results in terms of education and general personality-formation, from early childhood to the threshold of the adult choice of career" (p. 40).

The Gentile reformers regarded the study of Latin as dogmatic learning of concrete facts and therefore a practice to be done away with. However, Gramsci (1971) points out how the reformers contradict themselves with the introduction of religious dogmatism to replace the "dogmatic" study of Latin: "[t]he fact that a

'dogmatic' exposition of scientific ideas and a certain 'mythology' are necessary in the primary school does not mean that the dogma and the mythology have to be precisely those of religion" (p. 41, note 15). The introduction of the formal study of religion in Italian schools signalled to Gramsci an obstacle blocking the school's ability to foster in students the necessary moral independence and intellectual self-discipline required to become an organic intellectual, armed with the transformative power of ideas and the ability to effect social change.

Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony and Homophobia as a Structure

Gramsci's notion of hegemony as the manufacturing of consent fits easily into the analysis of the problem of homophobia in Catholic schools. Hegemony refers to the ideal representation of the interests of the dominant culture as universal interests. For Gramsci, the major vehicle for bourgeois hegemony is civil society, that dynamic element of citizenship or public life that exists within the framework of the rule of law (Marshall, 1998). Cultural hegemony, the most powerful element of hegemonic manipulation, involves the production of ways of thinking and seeing and the necessary exclusion of alternative visions and discourses. The manipulative power of hegemony is readily observable in religion-based schools. Based on my own experience within this context, Catholic educators will typically claim that the training they provide young people invites critical thinking skills and that the teaching of religion is treated like any other subject. The students are presented with the basic tenets of the Catholic faith so that they may embrace Catholicism of their own volition.

When one examines how the subject of human sexuality is broached in Catholic schools in the courses simply called "religion" (which is, incidentally, the only appropriate place for this subject to be taught, according to the Catholic bishops who direct religious curriculum in Catholic schools), it is easy to see that what the students are receiving is not education, but rather "dogma" or indoctrination. The development of a provincial separate school curriculum for these "religion" classes traditionally relies heavily upon the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the many encyclicals and other declarative statements from the Vatican on the topic of homosexuality.

Units on human sexuality that are taught in "religion" classes throughout publicly funded Catholic schools in Canada are heavily infused with quotations from the Catechism, such as those referred to earlier from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (1994), that explicitly affirm the Church's teaching on homosexuality. Students attending Catholic schools in Canada learn – along with the rhythm method as an effective means of contraception, for example – that homosexual acts are "acts of grave depravity ... [that are] intrinsically disordered ... [and] contrary to the natural law" (CCCB, 1994, p. 480). It is this form of religious dogmatism that Gramsci was warning against in his critique of the Gentile educational reforms of 1923. In the human sexuality component of "religion" classes in Catholic schools, homophobia is manufactured, legitimized, and packaged for mass consumption.

It is no wonder, then, why there are so many pockets of resistance within the Catholic school systems to its homophobic propaganda. This resistance

frequently comes from students and manifests itself in such simple forms as disdain for religion class or such complex forms as speaking out against the homophobic environment of the school or trying to establish Gay-Straight Student Alliances. These acts of resistance suggest that the "psycho-physical training" involved in the learning of physical self-discipline and self-control in the earlier stages of a young Catholic's education (in what Gramsci calls the "active" stage) fostered for some students the critical thinking skills necessary to develop into "organic intellectuals" through the self-expression that comes from what Gramsci calls the "creative" stage of schooling. That students take up brave acts of resistance at all in the face of the systemic educational institutionalization of homophobia speaks to the power of the will to effect change.

Using Foucault and Gramsci in a common frame of reference

Because they belong to different theoretical traditions, one might wonder what Michel Foucault's theory of surveillance and Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony have to offer an analysis of how homophobia functions as a structure in Catholic schools. Mark Olssen (1999) examines whether a synthesis between the two different projects of Foucault and Gramsci is possible and determines that each moderates the weaknesses of the other. In "The Means of Correct Training," for example, Foucault (1975/1995) traces the development of certain "disciplines" that rely on the correct use of "simple instruments," which he calls "hierarchical observation," "normalizing judgement," and "the examination," all of which are a complicated form of surveillance. In his "Notes on Education," Gramsci (1971) focuses on the increased importance of schools as massive cultural institutions in

perpetuating subtle but pervasive forms of ideological control and manipulation. Olssen (1999) observes that the Foucauldian focus on the minute and microphysics of power can supplement and enhance the broader Gramscian focus on structures to produce a new analysis that "enables a theorization of both the sources and structural basis of power in institutions as well as its consequences and capillary effects" (p. 90).

Complementary application of Foucault's theory of surveillance and Gramsci's theory of hegemony to the problem of homophobia in Catholic schools reveals that systemic homophobia is a structure that results from an over-reliance on the traditional authority of the Catholic Catechism and the separate school system's overwhelming need to control employees on the basis of their perceived "Catholicity." However, there is an emancipatory element to these two thinkers' comments on education as well.

Foucault does not just view power as a binary between dominator/dominated or as exclusively repressive – it also has a productive element. In the conclusion of "The Means of Correct Training," Foucault (1975/1995) writes, "[w]e must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (p. 194).

Gramsci goes further than Foucault in theorizing the relations between structure and agency. Gramsci's particular understanding of the way in which the social contexts of schools mold social activity and link individuals to group

processes may explain why the idea of resistance is much more theoretically intelligible in Gramsci than in Foucault. Olssen (1999) points out that both Foucault and Gramsci conceive of intellectuals as occupying important roles as organizers of culture and disseminators of truth; both emphasize the independent and creative role of the human will; and both are, in their own ways, what Olssen calls "optimists of the will" (p. 99). When faced with homophobia as a dominating structure within Canadian Catholic schools, it is helpful to know that the power of the will can triumph over the power of seemingly immutable societal structures.

Chapter 3 – Document Analysis

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

One of the first places to look for the official Catholic stance on homosexuality is, of course, the Catholic doctrine itself. Catholic doctrine is normally found in the *catechism*, a Greek word meaning oral instruction. Almost as old as Christianity itself, catechisms were initially structured in a simple question and answer format, and were used for the instruction of children and new religious converts. With the release of the Council of Trent in 1566, Catholic Church leaders came to use the catechism of the Roman Catholic Church primarily as a manual of instruction for clergy in combating the Protestant Reformation (Wrenn & Whitehead, 1996). The catechism of the Council of Trent remained influential for four centuries until Pope John Paul II authorized the first new universal *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, or *CCC*, to be published in French in 1992 and in English in 1994 (Wrenn & Whitehead, 1996).

In the "Apostolic Constitution," a letter written by the Pope that prefaces the 1994 edition of the *CCC,* Pope John Paul II explains that the catechism is intended to be a "sure and authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine ... for preparing local catechisms ... [and for giving an account of] what the Catholic Church believes" (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops [CCCB], 1994, pp. 8-9). While the *CCC* as a whole has an aura of definitive authority in its including of a papal letter, for example, paragraph (24) of its prologue cautions that it "does not set out to provide the adaptation of doctrinal presentations ... required by the differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and

ecclesial condition among those to whom it is addressed" (CCCB, 1994, p. 15). "Such indispensable adaptations," paragraph (24) of the prologue goes on to elucidate, "are the responsibility of particular catechisms and, even more, of those who instruct the faithful" (CCCB, 1994, p. 15). In essence, the *CCC* does not dictate how and when the catechism should be followed, but relies on local catehists to determine the suitable administration of a particular aspect of the catechism in their geographical area, regional location, and social or cultural contexts. The *CCC*, then, is not so much "law" as it is a guide.

To assist local catechists in discerning the essential message of any given part of the *CCC*, paragraph (22) of the prologue points out that the end of each thematic unit features a series of italicized "In Brief" summaries that it suggests "could be memorized," presumably in the tradition of the question-and-answer format of earlier catechisms that were customarily committed to memory (CCCB, 1994, p. 14).

These "local catechists" are essentially bishops, as a section in the *CCC*'s prologue makes clear. In Section III, "The Aim and Intended Readership of the Catechism," paragraph (12) states: "This work is intended primarily for those responsible for catechesis: first of all the bishops, as teachers of the faith and pastors of the Church" (CCCB, 1994, p. 13). Through the bishops, the topics and themes covered in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are addressed to editors of local catechisms, priests, and ultimately regular Catholics. While the intended audience of the *CCC* may be bishops, they are not the exclusive readership. As

Section III, paragraph (12) of the prologue states, the catechism could "also be useful reading for all other Christian faithful" (CCCB, 1994, p. 13).

If a lay Catholic wanted to discover Catholic beliefs on the topic of homosexuality, for example, she or he could turn to the subject index and then be directed to paragraph (2357), which reads:

> Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved. (CCCB, 1994, p. 480)

This quotation, like others related to it, falls under a specific part of the catechism called "Part Three: The Life of the Faith," also known as "Life in Christ." Part Three is further divided into two sections, the second of which explores proper conduct, as specified in the Ten Commandments. The topic of homosexuality falls under the sixth Commandment, "you shall not commit adultery," because of the call to chastity.

A close examination of the above quotation reveals an unusual evocation of tradition, as in the phrase: "tradition has always declared ..." Here, the concept of tradition is personified, imbued with the power to make declarative statements. The footnotes attached to this quotation within the larger quotation reveal that this reference to "tradition" is actually an earlier Catholic text called *Persona Humana* (also known as the *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*)

released by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1975 (CCCB, 1994, p. 480).

As I have explored in Chapter Two of this thesis, homophobia is a tradition in the Catholic Church. Giving voice and power to unnamed tradition, as the above quotation does, unfortunately affords homophobia unchecked influence and dominance among Catholics. This tradition of propagating homophobia has the potential to be checked, however, by local bishops who technically have the power to write local catechisms that are more responsive to the local community that, in Canada at least, is increasingly accepting of homosexuality and respectful of the advancement of same-sex legal rights.

Vatican Encyclicals

In addition to the official Catholic doctrine that can be found in the catechism, other places to turn to discover the Catholic position on homosexuality are the encyclicals (letters sent by the Pope to all Roman Catholic bishops throughout the world), as well as letters from other chief administrators in the Vatican hierarchy such as the cardinals in charge of congregations of the Roman Curia (otherwise known as "prefects"). As Rev. Paul E. Murray (2006) has observed, the late Pope John Paul II often relegated the task of taking a stance on homosexuality to his prefects. The most recent and therefore most current letter from the Vatican about homosexuality was written by Prefect Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) and Archbishop Alberto Bovone. Entitled *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, lay Catholics more commonly refer to it as the *Halloween Letter* because

the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released it in October 1986. Since it is currently the most recent letter about homosexuality released by the Vatican, its importance is vital to the current standing of the Church's position on homosexuality. In order to understand the *Halloween Letter*, however, one must first examine its predecessor, entitled *Persona Humana* or *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*, which is referred to by Ratzinger and Bovone in the *Halloween Letter*.

Published on December 29th, 1975 by Ratzinger and Bovone's own department, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, *Persona Humana* was written by Prefect Franjo Cardinal Seper and Most Rev. Jerome Hamer. The authors state at the beginning of the letter that their ideas are informed by the discipline of psychology, which at the time was engaged in distinguishing between those who choose to be homosexual and those who are born homosexual.

Briefly, Seper and Hamer's (1975) argument is as follows: Those who choose homosexuality can be "cured" while those who are born homosexual are "incurable." Observing that many "incurable" homosexuals are "incapable of enduring a solitary life" and live lives of "love analogous to marriage," Seper and Hamer exhort that "these homosexuals must certainly be treated with understanding and sustained in the hope of overcoming their personal difficulties and their inability to fit into society" (item VIII).

At the same time, however, Seper and Hamer (1975) also refer to Sacred Scripture in which homosexual acts are "condemned as a serious depravity and even presented as the sad consequence of rejecting God" (item VIII). Even while

conjuring up Sacred Scripture, Seper and Hamer nevertheless caution that their "judgment of Scripture does not ... permit [them] to conclude that all those who suffer from this anomaly are personally responsible for it, but it does attest to the fact that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of" (item VIII).

Despite ending on this negative note, *Persona Humana* was positively received by lay Catholics, giving the impression that it was remembered for its ideas that "incurable" homosexuals often build relationships akin to marriage and should be treated with understanding. Lamenting the positive and affirming discussions about homosexuality that followed the release of *Persona Humana* in 1975, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith started work on the *Halloween Letter*, which they published a decade later as a way to stem this positive tide. In the first paragraph of the *Halloween Letter,* authors Ratzinger and Bovone (1986) explain that the subject of their letter is of "grave and widespread importance" because of what they observe to be increasing public debate, even among Catholics, on the "issue of homosexuality." They characterize this debate as one that advances arguments and makes assertions that are inconsistent with the teachings about homosexuality in the Catholic Church. The *Halloween Letter* then states that its main function is to counter "the discussion which followed the publication of [*Persona Humana*] ... [characterized by] an overly benign interpretation ... [of] the homosexual condition itself, [with] some going so far as to call it neutral, or even good" (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 3).

Persona Humana clearly distinguishes "between homosexuals whose tendency ... 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" (Seper & Hamer, 1975, item VIII). But the *Halloween Letter* reinterprets this distinction as being one not based on choosing to be homosexual or being born homosexual. Instead, the authors of the *Halloween Letter* claim the distinction is actually about "the homosexual condition or tendency and individual homosexual actions" (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 3). This departure is important because shifting the focus to homosexual actions deftly sidesteps the call in *Persona Humana* to treat those who are regarded as "incurable" homosexuals (i.e., born homosexual and openly living as such) with understanding.

The only kind of understanding that can be found in the *Halloween Letter* is a call for "special concern and pastoral attention [that] should be directed toward those who have this condition" (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 3). This understanding, however, is decidedly not intended for those homosexuals who engage in same-sex sexual activity. Ratzinger and Bovone are not interested in whether one is born or becomes homosexual but whether one engages in homosexual acts. To avoid the fate that befell *Persona Humana* when it was interpreted as an overly positive portrayal of homosexuality, the authors of the *Halloween Letter* attempt to be more definitive in their judgement of homosexuality, saying:

> Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder. (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 3)

Instead of being clear, however, Ratzinger and Bovone (1986) create a cloud of contradiction. For example, how is it possible that being homosexual is not a sin but at the same time it is "an objective disorder," rooted in "an intrinsic moral evil"? Furthermore, if "God created man in his own image," as paragraph (355) of the catechism states (CCCB, 1994, p. 82), then why would God create homosexuals with an intrinsic orientation to evil? Are Catholics to believe that God is a sadist? Since most faithful Catholics would not want to believe this, they must start to consider that the Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality is likely flawed. Perhaps Ratzinger and Bovone were hoping that the faithful readers of their *Halloween Letter* would conveniently forget the profession of faith section of the catechism that describes how God created all of reality as a reflection of his goodness.

Ratzinger and Bovone (1986) say that homosexuality is a tendency toward an intrinsic moral evil but they do not call it a sin. Perhaps to do so would appear too harsh and condemning, since calling something a sin is a serious matter in the Catholic faith. Ratzinger and Bovone present their position on the topic of homosexuality in such a way that they give the impression they are not denouncing homosexuals by calling them sinful. Sinful, no – inclined towards evil, yes. In essence, though, there is little, if any, difference between intrinsic evil

and sin. This type of contradiction plagues the remainder of the *Halloween Letter* and is especially evident in item (10) where the authors address violence against homosexuals:

> It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech or in action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church's pastors wherever it occurs ... The intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected in word, in action and in law. (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 10)

It appears that Ratzinger and Bovone (1986) are not aware that they themselves are committing the very type of violent speech and ill treatment towards homosexuals that they are seeking to condemn. When the *Halloween Letter* goes so far as to portray homosexuals as having "an objective disorder" because of an "intrinsic moral evil," it unwittingly becomes an example of the very hate speech that it is also chastising. The letter goes on to state:

> But the proper reaction to crimes committed against homosexual persons should not be to claim that the homosexual condition is not disordered. When such a claim is made and when homosexual activity is consequently condoned, or when civil legislation is introduced to protect behaviour to which no one has any conceivable right, neither the Church nor society at large should be surprised when other distorted notions and practices gain ground, and irrational and violent reactions increase. (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 10)

Ratzinger and Bovone (1986) seem to suggest in this passage that violent actions against homosexuals should come as no surprise because homosexuals bring it upon themselves by constantly testing Western culture's tolerance of the notion of civil rights for homosexuals – a shocking example of "blame the victim" rhetoric that directly contradicts the idea that "violent ... treatment" against homosexuals "deserves condemnation" and that homosexuals' "intrinsic dignity ... must ... be respected" by all Catholics (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 10). The contradictions contained in the two paragraphs of item (10) of the *Halloween Letter* have the dangerous potential to be interpreted by some people in some parts of the world as condoning or even encouraging violence against homosexuals.

Catholic Dissension

So far, I have presented the official Catholic doctrine on the topic of homosexuality as can be found in the catechism, as well as the key points of two important letters from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: *Persona Humana* (1975), and the *Halloween Letter* (1986). While these documents most certainly represent the official Vatican stance on homosexuality, not all regular Catholic clergy and laity easily accept them. One well known dissenting voice is that of Jesuit Father John McNeill who studiously re-examines scriptural and theological arguments against homosexuality in his radical book, *The Church and the Homosexual* (1993).

In his preface to the fourth edition, McNeill (1993) recounts the remarkable story of the Vatican's attempt to silence him. McNeill conceived of

the book in 1970, took four years of research to write it, and was finally granted the *Imprimi Potest* (official Vatican approval to publish) after two years of intense textual dissection by leading moral theologians in the Vatican and the United States. When the book was finally released in 1976, one year after *Persona Humana*, lively discussions that affirmed homosexuality ensued. Indeed, the positive public debate that often followed the publication of *Persona Humana* in 1975 and McNeill's book, *The Church and the Homosexual* in 1976, prompted concerned members of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to begin work on their counter document, the *Halloween Letter*, which appeared ten years later. It is precisely these types of conversations that Ratzinger and Bovone (1986) express concern about in their *Halloween Letter*, saying that such discussions give the impression that the "homosexual condition" can be regarded as "neutral, or even good" (item 3).

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) also attempted to quell public debate that gave "an overly benign interpretation" of the "homosexual condition" by rescinding their endorsement of McNeill's groundbreaking book, *The Church and the Homosexual*. In 1977, after the book had been published and circulating for only one year, CDF ordered the removal of the Vatican's *Imprimi Potest* and imposed a gag order on its author (McNeill, 1993). McNeill recounts how officials within CDF accused him of violating a nonexistent agreement that any public discussion of the ideas contained in his book would be confined to his fellow theologians.

The CDF was very uncomfortable with the dissemination of McNeill's ideas among members of the general public through various appearances he was giving on the American talk show circuit following the publication of his book (McNeill, 1993). The fear seemed to be that if the Catholic laity were talking about the Catholic Church's stance on homosexuality, then maybe they would call for a change. The CDF shut down the public debate, reverting back instead to the concept of the infallibility of the Church, claiming that its teaching on homosexuality was divinely inspired and therefore not open to change (McNeill, 1993).

Remarkably, McNeill respected his superiors' request to not speak publicly about the ideas in his book. All the while that McNeill was silent about the topic of the Catholic Church and homosexuality, however, his book spoke volumes as it was translated into French, Danish, Spanish and Italian and was widely distributed around the world (McNeill, 1993). McNeill remained silent in the hope that the Church would, over time, consider changing professional assessments of homosexuality in psychological and legal arenas throughout the western world and begin to re-evaluate its position on homosexuality. In fact, the exact opposite took place. As McNeill recounts with two vivid examples, the Vatican used its power and influence to swiftly silence any other Catholic individuals and organizations that criticized its teachings on homosexuality. The first example McNeill offers is the Vatican's unexpected dismissal of Charles Curran, a liberal sexual ethicist, from the theology faculty at the Catholic University of America in 1986. The second example McNeill reports is the

Vatican's demand, in 1987, that all Dignity chapters be denied their right to meet on Church property (Dignity is an organization that supports the self-respect of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics). These two acts of silencing on the part of the Catholic Church in 1986 and 1987, coupled with the Vatican's release of the *Halloween Letter* in 1986, finally caused Jesuit Father John McNeill to break his Vatican-imposed silence (Murray, 2006). In 1987, Father McNeill began to speak out against the *Halloween Letter* with examples from his more than 20 years of experience offering pastoral care to thousands of gay Catholics (McNeill, 1993).

One of the ideas that McNeill speaks and writes about is that the suppression of sexuality imposed by the Vatican leads to internalized homophobia and to the eventual unhealthy and unsafe expression of that sexuality (McNeill, 1993). He also contends that homosexuals are not a threat to Catholic values but instead have special gifts and can offer positive contributions to the Catholic faith (McNeill, 1993). His most profound message, however, comes in the form of a serious warning to the Vatican. He calls upon the Vatican to repent and apologize for the centuries of support it has given to homophobia, in the same way that it finally apologized to the Jews for supporting anti-Semitism for centuries (McNeill, 1993).

For his expression of these ideas, John McNeill was eventually expelled from the Jesuits (Murray, 2006). With examples like these of the Vatican's swift action to silence dissenting Catholics, it is no wonder bishops design local catechisms for Catholic school districts that closely mirror official Catholic

doctrine. However, as has been outlined above, Catholic doctrine is highly contradictory and this presents problems for the local catechisms, or pastoral guidelines, modeled after it.

Local bishops design local catechisms for Catholic school districts. The local catechisms, which are based on the *CCC*, are meant to be read by various Catholic school personnel, including district superintendents, consultants, counsellors, and teachers. When the local catechism is contradictory because it has been modeled after contradictory doctrine to begin with, it becomes problematic for counsellors and teachers in Catholic schools to interpret and explain in any kind of coherent way to young Catholic students. Through an analysis of two local catechisms designed for Catholic schools in Alberta and Ontario, the following section will show how Catholic doctrine on the topic of homosexuality is confusing, contradictory and impossible to administer in any literal sense and is therefore not appropriate for dissemination in Canadian Catholic school contexts.

Catechism for Catholic Schools in Alberta

In Chapter Two of this thesis I analyze the main points of a local catechism, written for an Alberta context in 2001 by Bishop Fred Henry of Calgary, entitled *A Resource for an Inclusive Community: A Teacher's Guide for and About Persons with Same Sex Attractions*. I will now provide an overview of the document in its entirety and comment on how it is currently being used in Catholic schools in Alberta.

Bishop Frederick Henry held several pastoral assignments in Ontario for the majority of his career and left as bishop of Thunder Bay to become bishop of Calgary in 1998 (Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary, n.d.). Just three years after arriving in Calgary, Bishop Henry presented his resource for an inclusive community to the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association (ACSTA). Catholic school trustees oversee the operation of their local school district on behalf of the provincial government, and on behalf of the Catholic community who elect them (ACSTA, 2002).

Although Bishop Henry does not explicitly state what prompted him to write his pastoral care guide, his role as a local catechist who is charged with the task of instructing the faithful would necessarily involve communication with Catholic school trustees who are both political and faith leaders in their communities. In item (1) of his document, Bishop Henry (2001) describes his focus as "a rather narrow one, i.e. a teacher's guide for dealing with persons with same-sex attractions." It is conceivable that he chose to write a local catechism on this topic because other encyclicals from the Vatican, such as *Persona Humana* (1975) and the *Halloween Letter* (1986) identified the "pastoral care of homosexual persons" to be of "grave and widespread importance" (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 1).

Bishop Henry's resource for an inclusive community can be divided into three parts. Part I, entitled "An Ecclesial Context," contains several references to Catholic doctrine pertaining to homosexuality. Part II, entitled "Pastoral Distinctions and Notes," contends that discrimination based on sexual orientation

is immoral and outlines the three levels on which it occurs: personal, institutional, and societal. Part III, entitled "Some Questions and Answers About Same Sex Attractions," contains 15 questions and answers, along with some practical suggestions about what staff, schools, parents, and students can do to improve the situation. I will analyze each of Parts I, II, and III in turn.

In Part I, "An Ecclesial Context," Bishop Henry asks readers to bear in mind four important considerations concerning the purpose of his pastoral care guide for an inclusive community. First, it is intended to "promote a spirituality of communion" (item 2). Second, it "explicitly affirm[s] the Church's teaching on homosexuality" (item 3). Third, "parents and educators should not assume that same-sex attractions during adolescence are necessarily indicative of a fundamental homosexual orientation" (item 11). Fourth, "there is more to a person than one's sexual attractions" (item 12).

The first purpose of Bishop Henry's pastoral care guide has to do with the Christian concept of "communion," a term derived from Latin *communio*, or sharing in common. By "spirituality of communion," Bishop Henry means a focus on that which we all have in common, such as the "mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us," as well as particular joys, sufferings, and burdens (item 2). The idea here is to see oneself in others and to develop a close relationship, or communion, with one another.

This opening is quickly offset, however, by Bishop Henry's second purpose, which is to "explicitly affirm the Church's teaching on homosexuality" (item 3). The quotations he selects from two key Catholic documents encourage a

much more ominous reading of the "other" than the gentle invitation to see in one another the "mystery of the Trinity." In the contradictory form that has characterized Catholic documents on the topic of homosexuality, Bishop Henry begins with quotations from Ratzinger and Bovone's (1986) *Halloween Letter* that speak of the "care of the human person" and the "intrinsic dignity of each person" (cited in Henry, 2001, items 5 & 6). He then follows these benign quotations with anti-homosexual quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that describe the homosexuality as "intrinsically" or "objectively" "disordered" (cited in Henry, 2001, item 7). With these selected quotations, Bishop Henry effectively excludes homosexuals and cancels out his earlier call for a spirituality of communion.

Bishop Henry's third purpose for writing his document is to ask parents and educators to exercise great caution and sensitivity with young people who may be experiencing same-sex attractions because they may not actually be homosexual. As he puts it, "identity is particularly fluid during adolescence" and young people just need "time as they meet the challenge of integrating their sexuality" (item 11). Bishop Henry cautions that "What is communicated in educational settings or in families can profoundly affect individual students," (item 11) and expresses concern that young people may not be given the "clear moral guidance" that acting on same-sex attractions is morally wrong (item 11). Bishop Henry concludes his third purpose by declaring, "All young people need compassion, understanding, [and] acceptance" (item 11). But, according to an anti-homosexual passage he cites from Ratzinger and Bovone's (1986) *Halloween*

Letter that describes the "homosexual tendency" as "an intrinsic moral evil," this compassion cannot be extended to those who express their same-sex attractions in physical ways (cited in Henry, 2001, item 8). Bishop Henry's generous words about compassion and acceptance give the impression that he is understanding of people "with same-sex attractions," but when taken in the context of the document as a whole, it is clear that this is not the case.

Bishop Henry's fourth purpose for his pastoral care guide for an inclusive community is closely connected to his third purpose described above. Bishop Henry wants parents and educators to exercise great caution with young people who are experiencing same-sex attractions because, if they were to affirm the young person's identity by referring to him or her as "gay" or "lesbian," then this might "re-enforce [sic] and, in some cases, legitimate an arrested psycho-sexual development" (item 12). Bishop Henry is fearful that using such "politically charged language" (item 12) would actually condone and strengthen the young person's homosexual identity, in effect making him or her more gay or lesbian. Even though in the question and answer section of his pastoral care guide he recognizes scientific theories that sexual orientation is "imprinted in our brain, before birth" (item 42), and that it is "set before adolescence" (item 44), Bishop Henry believes that using labels such as "lesbian" or "gay" can actually encourage the homosexual condition to develop fully.

Part I, "An Ecclesial Context," sets up a tone of "communion" with the "other" (i.e., homosexuals), which is effectively cancelled out by references to Catholic doctrine that essentially condemn homosexuals. Part II, "Pastoral

Distinctions and Notes," is antithetical in tone and purpose to Part I because it introduces the topic of discrimination against homosexuals. Passages from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that Bishop Henry quotes in Part I, which denounce homosexuality as "intrinsically" or "objectively" "disordered" (cited in Henry, 2001, item 7), are put aside now as he turns his focus in Part II on discrimination against homosexuals. Bishop Henry declares, "Catholic teaching states clearly that unjust discrimination based on sexual orientation is immoral and not permissible for Christians" (item 18), but he does not consider his quotations from the *CCC* that vilify homosexuality as examples of the very discrimination he is seeking to condemn.

Part II, "Pastoral Distinction and Notes," addresses three levels of discrimination based on sexual orientation – personal, institutional, and societal. In discussing societal discrimination, Bishop Henry states, "The Catholic community more and more is standing with those who are working for the acceptance and rights of homosexual persons" (item 28). Yet this directly contradicts his earlier quotation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in Part I, which states: "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered ... under no circumstances can they be approved" (cited in Henry, 2001, item 7). These two messages are at such cross-purposes that it is difficult to ascertain which of the two the reader is supposed to take as the overriding message. The remainder of Part II, "Pastoral Distinction and Notes," is so different in tone and message than Part I, "An Ecclesial Context," that it reads as if it were written by someone other than Bishop Henry.

Part III of Bishop Henry's pastoral care guide, "Some Questions and Answers About Same Sex Attractions," is similarly riddled with statements that contradict the ideas presented in Part I, "An Ecclesial Context." For example, in his answer to question number three: "Isn't homosexuality just an adolescent phase?" Bishop Henry observes that homosexuals "may pass as heterosexual until they feel safe to 'come out' and develop relationships with people of the same sex" (item 45). Similarly, in responding to question number four: "How does a person know that he or she is homosexual?" the bishop writes, "Understanding one's sexual orientation develops over a number of years, evolving from confusion to self-acceptance. Homosexual persons often recall feeling different from their peers during childhood, although that difference is not attributed to sexuality until years later" (item 46). He describes the process of "identity acquisition" and declares that the final stage, acceptance, "is characterized by personal satisfaction, pride regarding one's sexual orientation, and energy to develop intimate relations" (item 46). Developing relationships with people of the same sex, "pride" in one's sexual orientation, and "intimate relations"? These ideas are quite contrary to anti-homosexual statements from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* which Bishop Henry quotes in Part I, "An Ecclesial Context." Once again, Bishop Henry's pastoral guide for an inclusive community is so contradictory that no clear message can be taken away from it.

In responding to question number six: "Do homosexual teenagers have more problems than heterosexual teenagers?" Bishop Henry writes, "In general, homosexuals are no more prone to having problems than the heterosexual

population. Most professionals agree that homosexuality is neither an illness nor an emotional disorder" (item 48). Here, in Part III, "Some Questions and Answers About Same Sex Attractions," Bishop Henry writes that homosexuality is not an illness, but in Part I, "An Ecclesial Context," he suggests it is. In Part I, Bishop Henry calls upon lay Catholics not to use the "politically charged" terms "gay," "lesbian," or "homosexual," but to replace them instead with the phrase "persons with same sex attractions" (item 12). This phrase quite clearly has a medical ring to it, as in "persons with sickle cell anaemia." If homosexuality is not an illness, then why are we being asked to refer to it in this pathologizing way? On whether or not this "illness" can be "cured," Bishop Henry claims: "Church documents do not encourage a homosexual person to change their orientation" (item 63), yet this is simply not true. Seper and Hamer (1975) quite clearly distinguish between "curable" and "incurable" homosexuals in *Persona Humana*.

Furthermore, in response to question 11: "Where can a homosexual person go for information or support?" Bishop Henry suggests "Courage," an apostolate of the Roman Catholic Church whose purpose is "to minister to those with same-sex attractions and their loved ones" (item 56). *Courage* is a 12-Step group modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous that is intended to promote a chaste lifestyle among same-sex attracted Catholics (Gonzalez, 2004). A close look at *Courage* reveals that a conversion agenda, known as reparative therapy, is clearly present (Callaghan, in press a). Even as he contends that "Church documents do not encourage a homosexual person to change their orientation" (item 63), Bishop

Henry (2001) recommends "If a homosexual person wants to seek change, we should support him or her" (item 64). Here, Bishop Henry's pastoral care guide is yet another example of yet another Catholic Church document or organization that does, in fact, promote support for changing one's same-sex orientation. The confusing language of Catholic rhetoric might give a casual observer the impression that the Catholic Church is somewhat accepting of homosexuality, but when seemingly sympathetic statements are taken in context alongside decidedly hostile declarations, it becomes clear that the Catholic Church is not affirming of homosexuality at all.

Within Bishop Henry's pastoral care guide, Part III, "Some Questions and Answers About Same Sex Attractions," and Part II, "Pastoral Distinctions and Notes," are decidedly different in tone from Part I, "An Ecclesial Context." Many of the messages in Parts II and III directly contradict the Catholic doctrine presented in Part I. The contradictions are so profound and numerous that it is difficult to know with any certainty what the final message is. Bishop Henry (2001) clearly states that one of the main purposes of his guide is to "explicitly affirm the Church's teaching on homosexuality" (item 3), but even these teachings are confusing and contradictory.

On one hand, official Catholic Church documents contain sympathetic passages that claim homosexuals who are "incurable" should be "treated with understanding" (Seper & Hamer, 1975, item VIII); that it is "deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the subject of violent malice in speech or in action" (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 10); or that homosexuals "must be

accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity" (CCCB, 1994, p. 480). On the other hand, these same documents state that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of" (Seper & Hamer, 1975, item VIII), the "inclination of the homosexual person is ... a ... strong tendency toward an intrinsic moral evil" (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 3), and that "homosexual acts [are] acts of grave depravity" (CCCB, 1994, p. 480). These severe contradictions make it virtually impossible for bishops to explain the Catholic Church's position on homosexuality in any intelligible way either to other clergy members or to lay Catholics.

Despite its many unresolved contradictions, the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) has, by necessity, embraced Bishop Henry's pastoral care guide. Since the ACSTA represents all 23 Catholic Anglophone and Francophone school boards throughout Alberta and the Northwest Territories, and serves more than 127,000 students in 340 schools (ACSTA, 2002), Bishop Henry's pastoral care guide receives wide distribution. Individual school boards, such as Calgary Catholic, for example, have developed their own guides and workshops to assist principals and vice-principals in implementing Bishop Henry's pastoral care guide in their schools. These individual school boards' implementation guides are, like Bishop Henry's guide itself, directed solely at the occurrence of homosexuality among students and do not address the existence of gay and lesbian teachers, principals, district personnel, or support staff professionals. This focus on students in the guides designed by Catholic school boards to implement Bishop Henry's *A Teacher's Guide for and About Persons*

with Same Sex Attractions reflect Bishop Henry's belief that homosexuality is a condition that, if properly managed, can be reversed.

Catechism for Catholic Schools in Ontario

Like Bishop Henry's pastoral care guide for an inclusive community, the local catechism, or pastoral care guide, for Catholic schools in Ontario is intended as a teacher's guide for dealing with "students who have same-sex attractions." Issued by the Education Commission of the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (OCCB) on March 31, 2003, the pastoral care guide for Ontario is presented in the form of a letter, which is simply entitled "To All Involved in Catholic Education" (OCCB, 2003, p. 1). An important point to keep in mind, of course, is that the letter refers to lesbian and gay students only – the situations of lesbian and gay teachers, counsellors, or administrative staff as the others "involved in Catholic education" are not specifically addressed.

The letter, or pastoral guide, is the product of a two-day conference held in October 2002 by the OCCB in conjunction with the Institute of Catholic Education in order to strategize ways to respond to lesbian and gay students in Ontario Catholic schools (Borst, 2003). Additional comments at the end of the letter as it appears on the OCCB website state that "the controversy leading up to and resulting from the interim decision of the Ontario Superior Court in the case of *Marc Hall v. The Durham Catholic District School Board* showed that this pastoral instruction is opportune" (OCCB, 2003, p. 5). Marc Hall was the 17-year-old gay Catholic student enrolled in his senior year at Monsignor John Pereyma – a publicly funded Catholic secondary school in Oshawa, Ontario – who was

successful in obtaining an interlocutory injunction on May 10, 2002, to attend his prom with his boyfriend as his date (Grace & Wells, 2005). Earlier, on February 25, 2002, the principal of the school had refused Marc Hall permission to take his boyfriend to the high school prom on the grounds that interacting with a same-sex partner at the prom would constitute a form of sexual activity that was contrary to Catholicity (MacKinnon, 2002).

The OCCB issued its pastoral guide in the form of a letter entitled, "To All Involved in Catholic Education," immediately following the Marc Hall case, presumably as an attempt to make clear the official Catholic stance on homosexuality and to avoid embarrassingly high profile cases such as Marc Hall's in the future. Like Bishop Henry's (2001) resource for an inclusive community, the OCCB letter states that its main purpose is to "be clear about the authentic teaching of the Church on sexual morality and in particular in the area of homosexuality" (OCCB, 2003, p. 1). While the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (2003) generally paraphrases Catholic doctrine throughout their letter, addenda that follow the OCCB letter provide quotations from many of the same sections of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that Bishop Henry (2001) uses in his resource guide.

In addition to reiterating the official Catholic doctrine on homosexuality, the OCCB admonishes teachers in Catholic schools who do not put the doctrine into practice. "It is not sound or acceptable practice," the authors write, "for Catholic schools to teach that certain behaviour is contrary to Catholic teaching, but then to take no action when it is exhibited openly in a school context" (OCCB,

2003, p. 1). In reminding Catholic teachers that the Catholic Church teaches that homosexual acts are immoral, the OCCB clarifies that these acts include "genital sexual activity and erotic relational behaviour with a person of the same sex" (p. 3).

The authors also declare that "romantic behaviour between homosexual persons is morally unacceptable," and while romantic behaviour "is not confined to a set of defined activities," the authors do describe it as "one-to-one relational behaviour which involves sexual attraction" (OCCB, 2003, p. 3). The main point of the first three pages of the OCCB letter is to implore Catholic teachers to take decisive action against this type of "morally unacceptable" behaviour when they see it taking place in their schools.

Essentially, the OCCB letter instructs teachers to crack down on "immoral" homosexual behaviour that falls under the "one-to-one relational behaviour [involving] sexual attraction" definition. The vagueness of the language suggests that "immoral" behaviour could be as simple as two gay students chatting with one another in a flirtatious way, sitting closely together over lunch in the cafeteria, or associating with one another almost exclusively. It could include more overt forms of "one-to-one relational behaviour" such as two gay students holding hands, embracing one another in the hallway, or wanting to take one another to the high school prom. Because the OCCB does not provide any further details in its rather vague definition of romantic behaviour between persons of the same sex, the specific interpretation of this definition would be left

up to the individual teacher who witnesses the "immoral" homosexual behaviour in the school.

At the same time that the OCCB calls upon teachers to resort to more strict measures of enforcing Catholic doctrine, the Conference also professes that "students experiencing same-sex attraction should be treated with sensitivity and compassion" (OCCB, 2003, p. 3). On the topic of harassment against students "with same-sex attractions" the OCCB declares that teachers, counsellors, and chaplains should "ensure that all members of the school community are aware that the Church teaches that abusive behaviour toward any person, for any reason, is unacceptable" (OCCB, 2003, p. 3).

Just as Ratzinger and Bovone (1986), the authors of the *Halloween Letter*, are unable to see that their letter constitutes an example of the very same violent speech towards homosexuals they themselves are seeking to condemn, so too are the authors of the OCCB letter unable to see that their call for a more strict enforcement of Catholic doctrine amounts to a form of harassment against homosexual students.

The Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (2003) even calls upon teachers to "try to lead the homosexual student to a progressively better sexual morality," (p. 4) but this conversion agenda is not considered a form of harassment by the OCCB. The goal, according to the OCCB is "the steady progression of moral and spiritual conversion" (p. 4) with the idea being that sexual morality is on a linear continuum that progresses from immature (homosexual) to mature (heterosexual).

This idea is not that unfamiliar as it was popular in the Western world throughout the 19th century and most of the 20th century when homosexuality was regarded as an immature sexual expression, especially in the American psychiatric world dominated by psychoanalysis (Dean & Lane, 2001; Minton, 2002). Basically, the OCCB is saying that with enough guidance and pastoral care, homosexual students can achieve a "moral and spiritual conversion" to the "progressively better sexual morality" of chastity, celibacy, and possibly even heterosexuality (OCCB, 2003, p. 4).

Encouraging homosexual students to convert to "a progressively better sexual morality" is nothing other than a grievous form of harassment. This discrimination against students on the basis of sexual orientation is even more apparent when the OCCB underscores that "romantic attachments and behaviour are fully expected of heterosexual couples" (OCCB, 2003, p. 4) in the school because it prepares them for the commitment of marriage. Heterosexual romantic behaviour such as "holding hands, embracing, kissing, dating and dancing," the OCCB declares, "are all acceptable within appropriate limits" because such behaviour leads to marriage (p. 4). Of course, this position is complicated by the fact that same-sex marriage is now legal in Canada and it is possible that homosexual students who engage in romantic attachments and behaviour while attending Catholic school may eventually elect to legally marry a same-sex partner. The OCCB acknowledges that "it will be especially difficult for young persons who are experiencing homosexual romantic yearnings to understand and accept this teaching of the Church since it discourages romantic behaviour that

would be acceptable in a heterosexual context" (p. 4), but this sense of injustice will be soothed by appropriate pastoral care. With enough pastoral care "marked by concern, warmth, love, compassion and sensitivity," homosexual students will come to understand the appropriateness of this injustice and make their necessary "journey toward chastity" (OCCB, 2003, p. 4).

In the face of legal, legislative, and cultural changes, it is hard to imagine how a teacher in a Catholic school can sensitively and compassionately explain to a young homosexual student that homosexual expressions of love between persons of the same sex are not acceptable and that homosexual students are called to chastity while their heterosexual counterparts are not. From my experience teaching in high schools, young people are keenly aware of what they perceive to be injustices and would be quick to point out this double standard. Many would probably say that, because they have no intentions of becoming a priest or a nun, the call to chastity and celibacy should not apply to them.

Perhaps in anticipation of young students refusing to accept this particular Church teaching, the OCCB advises adults administering pastoral care to homosexual students to be compassionate but not to encourage or condone "objectively immoral conduct out of misplaced compassion" (OCCB, 2003, p. 4). "Catholic schools and those teaching in Catholic schools," the OCCB points out, are meant to "present the Church's teaching fully" (p. 3). "This does not mean that questions should not be explored," the OCCB (2003) goes on to explain, "but always with the intention of understanding and accepting the teaching" (p. 3).

Having taught in Catholic high schools for several years, and having seen in my own and other teachers' classes the vigorousness with which students engage in debates involving inequity and their own rights, it would be a great challenge to convince lesbian and gay students such as Marc Hall (and an increasing number of heterosexual students for that matter) that holding hands in the hallway is allowed for heterosexual students but not for homosexual students. The Catholic Church's teachings would also be hard to defend in the wake of Canadian same-sex marriage legislation that has determined that lesbian and gay relationships are in fact equal to heterosexual relationships. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church's increasingly rigid position essentially forces teachers in Catholic schools to indoctrinate rather than educate. For gay and lesbian teachers obliged to participate in the indoctrination agenda, the emotional and psychological costs are virtually incalculable.

Catholic-based Disagreement with Local Catechisms

While Bishop Henry and the OCCB certainly have the power and mandate to influence the local catechisms being taught in the Catholic schools of Alberta and Ontario, theirs is not the only voice. As I recounted in Chapter Two of this thesis, on Sunday, February 26th, 2006, 19 Roman Catholic priests from five different dioceses across the province of Québec published an open letter denouncing the church's opposition on both same-sex marriage and the ordination of active gays into the priesthood (Thanh Ha, 2006). The letter essentially criticizes the Catholic Church for its hypocrisy in its anti-gay instruction and the propagation of homophobic attitudes while refusing to acknowledge that many

Catholic priests are gay (Hustak, 2006). The message of the Québec priests' letter is that not everyone within the Catholic Church thinks the same way about homosexuality.

Indeed, many people within the Catholic Church in Canada have dissenting views on the topic of homosexuality. In preparation for a visit of Canadian bishops to the Vatican, scheduled to take place in May 2006, many religious groups across Canada met and prepared letters for their bishops so that their voices could be heard in Rome. The Canadian Religious Conference (CRC), which represents 213 Catholic religious communities, comprised of 22,000 nuns, brothers, and priests in religious orders across the country, released a public letter of their own shortly after the open letter from 19 Québec priests (Hustak, 2006). The CRC letter takes Canada's Roman Catholic Bishops to task over what the authors perceive to be the bishops' blind obedience to the Vatican on the topic of homosexuality and other subjects (Hustak, 2006). The letter claims to represent 60 per cent of the CRC members who responded to a survey by the CRC (Hustak, 2006). Although so far this kind of resistance to Vatican-directed doctrine has not had any discernable effect, the fact that there is increasing resistance among members of the Catholic clergy suggests that the Catholic Church's homophobic position may change in the future.

Concluding Remarks

Bishop Henry and the OCCB both demonstrate awareness that homosexuals "are often the victims of verbal, physical and more subtle forms of abuse [and that] suicide rates among homosexual students are higher than those of

their heterosexual peers" (OCCB, 2003, p. 3). Still, they see no problem with teaching homophobic Catholic doctrine in Catholic schools. Bishop Henry and the OCCB have missed an important opportunity to show real leadership and actively reduce discrimination against homosexuals in Catholic schools. They could have prepared instead local catechisms that were more reflective of the social climate in Canada that embraces rather than condemns homosexuals. Homosexual students in Catholic schools did not choose to be born into their Catholic families any more than they chose to be born homosexual, yet they are being asked to adhere to a call to chastity and celibacy and are symbolically excluded. Likewise, homosexual teachers did not elect to take a vow of chastity and celibacy when they graduated with their education degrees and earned a provincial teaching certificate. According to Catholic doctrine, however, homosexual students and teachers are expected to uphold vows of chastity and celibacy. Homosexual students and teachers in Catholic schools are being asked to live up to a standard that is grounded in homophobic Catholic doctrine that ignores their dignity and makes little room for them.

The Secular Side: The Advancement of Same-Sex Legal Rights In Canada

Canada is respected the world over for its *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the culmination of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's vision of an inclusive and just society. The *Charter* became law in Canada in 1982, and ten years later Trudeau wrote in his memoirs that "Canada itself" could now be defined as a "society where all people are equal and where they share some fundamental values based upon freedom" (Trudeau, 1993, pp. 322-323). Not only is the *Charter* highly valued in Canada, but substantial portions of it have also served as a model for the Bill of Rights within the 1996 Constitution of South Africa (Parkes & Lugtig, 2002).

Section 15 of the *Charter*, the equality rights provision, has the potential to have the greatest impact on the working lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered teachers employed by Catholic school boards. The Canadian Legal Information Institute (2005) records Section 15 as follows:

> 15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (p. 1).

Although sexual orientation is not listed among the nine enumerated grounds explicitly mentioned in Section 15, it was subsequently considered analogous to other grounds following several key Canadian judicial decisions that advanced the legal rights of lesbians and gay men in Canada over the past twenty years,

culminating in the 2005 enactment of the Civil Marriage Act. For example, in the 1992 *Haig v. Canada* case, the Ontario Court of Appeal found the omission of sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act violated Section 15 of the *Charter*, and ordered that sexual orientation be "read in" to the Act (Hurley, 2005). Additionally, in 1995, the Supreme Court of Canada released its first Section 15 *Charter* decision in *Egan v. Canada,* a case that addressed sexual orientation and same-sex benefits issues (Hurley, 2005). In the *Egan v. Canada* decision, the full Court found sexual orientation to be an "analogous," ground in considering discrimination for Section 15 purposes (Hurley, 2005).

Of particular significance is the Supreme Court decision in *Vriend v. Alberta* in 1998. Peter W. Hogg, the former Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School at York University in Toronto, Ontario ranked the *Vriend v. Alberta* case as one of three, all-time important Supreme Court of Canada decisions since the *Charter* became law in 1982 (Saunders, 2002). At issue in *Vriend v. Alberta* was the decision of King's University College, a Christian college in Edmonton, Alberta, to dismiss one of its laboratory instructors, Mr. Delwin Vriend, in 1991 on the grounds that his homosexuality violated its religious policy (Lahey, 1999). After his termination, Mr. Vriend attempted to file a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission but was advised that this was not possible due to the fact that Alberta's human rights legislation, at the time called the *Individual Rights Protection Act* (IRPA), did not include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination (Hiebert, 2003). The *Vriend* case went all the way to the

Supreme Court of Canada, which decided unanimously that the omission of sexual orientation from Alberta's IRPA infringed upon Section 15 of the *Charter*, and ordered that it be "read in" to the legislation (Hurley, 2005). In its decision, the Supreme Court of Canada commented that this omission was as good as "condoning or even encouraging discrimination against lesbians and gay men," and that it revealed a "sinister message" that gays and lesbians are less worthy than others (cited in Hiebert, 2003, p. 12).

As a result of the *Vriend* decision, Canadian provinces and territories were required to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination in their human rights codes. The discussions and debates that surrounded these legislative changes called upon Canadian people to re-examine the cultural and social practices that have discriminated against and excluded their fellow LGBT citizens simply because the ways LGBT people live and love fall outside of heteronormativity (Grace, 2005). Not only did the *Vriend* decision confirm equality rights for lesbian and gay Canadians, but it also caught the attention of teachers' associations across Canada who started to realize the need to develop policies that protected the rights of LGBT teachers and students in Canadian schools (Grace, 2005). In its *Vriend* decision, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed equality rights for LGBT Canadians and essentially affirmed that LGBT teachers and students have a right to pursue their educational goals in Canadian schools free from fear of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

On the heels of the *Vriend* decision, another important judicial decision led to further recognition of LGBT rights in terms of same-sex relationships. This was the 1999 *M v. H* case involving two lesbians who wanted to find a legal way to dissolve the relationship they had been in together for over ten years. In 1992, M tried to sue H for spousal support under the Ontario Family Law Act but was unable to do so because the act defined spouse in terms of opposite-sex partners (Grace, 2005). The subsequent 1999 *M v. H* case was about the failure of Ontario's Family Law Act to recognize same-sex relationships in its processes for resolving the dissolution of family relationships.

In *M v. H*, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled 8-1 that the definition of spouse as exclusively heterosexual violated the equality guarantees of Section 15 of the *Charter* (Hiebert, 2003). In the written decision for *M v. H*, Justice Iacobucci emphasized that the purpose of equality rights in the *Charter* is to "prevent the violation of essential human dignity and freedom through the imposition of disadvantage, stereotyping, or political or social prejudice" and to promote a society in which all persons are recognized as "equally capable and equally deserving of concern, respect and consideration" (cited in Hiebert, 2003, p. 12).

M v. H is significant because it led the way for provincial jurisdictions to enact legislation that explicitly extended legal rights to same-sex partners. For example, in 1999 the Ontario Legislative Assembly adopted the omnibus *Act to Amend Certain Statutes Because of the Supreme Court of Canada Decision in M v. H*, which entitled same-sex partners to the same statutory rights and

responsibilities as opposite-sex common law spouses (Hurley, 2005). Additionally, in 2001 the Manitoba Legislature adopted *An Act to Comply with the Supreme Court of Canada Decision in M v. H*, which introduced a gender-neutral definition of "common-law partner" in ten provincial statutes involving support rights and obligations as well as pensions and death benefits (Hurley, 2005).

Perhaps in anticipation of a challenge to the traditional definition of marriage following the sweeping legislative changes that came about as a result of *M v. H*, there were a series of attempts by the House of Commons within the Parliament of Canada, as well as the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, to preserve the traditional definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. However, the British Columbia Supreme Court and the Ontario Superior Court of Justice (Divisional Court) successfully challenged these proposals to preserve the traditional definition of marriage on the grounds that such a definition would be an unjustified violation of Section 15 of the *Charter* (Hurley, 2005).

These challenges, which took place primarily in British Columbia and Ontario, spanned a four-year period and led to the Supreme Court of Canada ruling on December 9, 2004 that proposed legislation authorizing same-sex marriage is consistent with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Hurley, 2005). In order to appease those who were opposed to same-sex marriage on religious grounds, the Court's decision also included a statement that the religious freedom guarantee in subsection 2(a) of the *Charter* is sufficiently broad

enough to protect religious officials from state compulsion to perform same-sex marriages against their religious beliefs (Hurley, 2005).

The Court's ruling eventually became Bill C-38, the Civil Marriage Act, which was first introduced in the House of Commons on February 1, 2005 and, after winding its way through various legislative processes and debates, was adopted by the House on June 28, 2005 (Hurley, 2005). Bill C-38 was then adopted by the Senate on July 19, 2005 and became law on July 20 as Chapter 33 of the Statutes of Canada for 2005 (Hurley, 2005). With this law, Canada became the fourth country in the world to recognize same-sex marriage, following the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain (CBC News, 2005).

Sexual Orientation and Charter Rights in Catholic Schools

Lesbian and gay teachers in Catholic schools may be protected against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation under Section 15 of the *Charter*, but how many are aware that this protection applies to them? How many of them are willing to exercise these rights and risk the negative repercussions that might come with being open about their sexuality while at work? Parkes and Lugtig (2002) cite a Canadian survey that found that 77 per cent of Canadians approve of the *Charter,* and so it is conceivable that a similar number are aware of its contents. Yet, a lesbian teacher who is aware of her *Charter* rights may find little solace in this knowledge while teaching in a Catholic school that would put its institutional rights ahead of her individual rights.

In addition to knowing their legal rights, lesbian and gay teachers in Catholic schools across Canada may also be aware of significant social and

cultural changes that have taken place in Canada since the 1970s, characterized by increased visibility of lesbian and gay issues and colourful celebrations of pride in one's same-sex identity (Warner, 2002). Working in a Catholic school, however, would require lesbian and gay teachers to step into a time warp of sorts and ignore their own personal awareness of these important social and legal advances for the rights of LGBT persons in Canada. This is because lesbian and gay teachers risk various forms of homophobic discrimination on a daily basis in Canadian Catholic schools, yet few are willing to point out that these examples of discrimination are in direct violation of equality rights that are supposed to be guaranteed by Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. While acts of homophobic discrimination also violate various equality provisions outlined in school acts and teachers' codes of professional conduct across the country, reticence and fear usually prohibits the visibility of queer teachers in Canadian Catholic schools.

Queer teachers are fearful first and foremost of their sexuality becoming known to others because, if they are also known to be dating, cohabiting, or raising a family with someone of the same sex, then they could be found to be living in direct contradiction to Catholic doctrine and may risk dismissal on those grounds. As I explained in the Catholic Documents section of this chapter, lesbian and gay Catholics are called to chastity and celibacy because, while it is acceptable to be a homosexual, according to Catholic doctrine, it is not acceptable to live as a homosexual. That is, queer Catholics may not express their sexuality in acts of physical love with someone they may be dating or living with who is

also of the same sex. Because complying with the call to chastity does not seem reasonable to many lesbian and gay Catholic teachers, several choose instead to keep that aspect of their lives separate from their professional lives. They develop elaborate identity management techniques that shield their sexual identity at all costs.

Equality rights should not be experienced only in one's private life – they are an essential part of human dignity and freedom and should be experienced in all spheres of life. The equality provisions that protect against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, guaranteed by Section 15 of the *Charter,* are at risk in Catholic schools largely because of the freedom of religion, guaranteed by Section 2(a) of the *Charter.* Additionally, Catholic schools have the confidence to go about their business with impunity because Section 93 of the *Constitution Act* of 1867 protects denominational school rights (McLachlin, 2004). Section 29 of the *Charter* also specifically addresses rights regarding denominational and separate schools (Minister of Public Works, 2003).

A dilemma arises when Section 2, freedom of religion, appears to have the power to override Section 15, the guarantee of equality rights. While freedom of religion is considered a "fundamental freedom" under Section 2 of the *Charter,* it is conceivable that Section 1 of the *Charter* could be called upon to limit this freedom if it can be shown to be harmful to a particular group of people. Section 1 of the *Charter* prohibits a hierarchy of rights from emerging in Canada. The rights and freedoms in the *Charter* are not absolute and, as a limiting clause, Section 1 of the *Charter* has the capacity to legally restrict *Charter* rights and freedoms if

such a restriction, in the words of section 1 itself, "can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society" (Minister of Public Works, 2003).

Ideally, rather than going through the courts, a better way to reduce the institutionalization of homophobia in Catholic schools would be for local bishops in Canada to interpret broadly and liberally the words of Pope John Paul II on the development of local catechisms. In his letter, "Apostolic Constitution" that prefaces each edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Pope John Paul II calls upon bishops to develop local catechisms that adapt Catholic doctrine so that it is more responsive to the "differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and ecclesial condition among those to whom it is addressed" (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994, p. 15). Because of the *Charter* and the impact of laws such as Section 15, Canada is a socially liberal and culturally diverse country that accepts and accommodates LGBT culture. It would seem to be the time now for bishops throughout Canada to start reflecting that social liberalism and cultural diversity in the local catechisms they design.

Chapter 4 – Narrative Vignettes

Narrative Inquiry as Method

Perhaps the most powerful way of illustrating the effects of Catholic Church doctrine on gay and lesbian teachers is through understanding the individual stories of these teachers via narrative inquiry. As a type of qualitative research, narrative inquiry is a portrayal of life experiences as expressed by the person who has lived them (Chase, 2005). The telling of such biographical particulars is often gained through the interview process, though the narrative may also be derived from a written piece that the qualitative researcher has elicited from the research participant for a specific purpose. This section of the Master's thesis draws upon the stories of six LGBT teachers in Catholic schools across Canada, gained via open-ended interviews, as well as my own personal story. I turn the analytic lens on myself because I believe that the personal text can be a powerful tool to effect change. I hope that presenting my story, along with the stories of other lesbian and gay teachers, will be a form of "radical democratic politics" (Reinelt, 1998, p. 286) that looks at the state of Catholic schools in Canada from a specific vantage point and invites dialogue and debate. Narrative inquiry as a method enables me to share the stories of lesbian and gay teachers in Canadian Catholic schools, which is one step toward making those environments more accepting of sex and gender differences.

The precursors to contemporary narrative inquiry are manifold. Chicago School sociologists collected life histories during the 1920s and 1930s that are accepted among sociologists as the first major sociological studies to rely upon

life history (Chase, 2005). Anthropologists also started to employ the life history method at the beginning of the 20th century in their attempts to record the details of American Indian cultures, such as Radin's (1926) "autobiography" of a middle-aged Winnebago man, entitled *Crashing Thunder* (Chase, 2005). Second-wave feminists took the life history method to new levels by focussing on women's personal narratives captured in the form of journals and autobiographies (Chase, 2005). With the 1967 release of Labov and Waletzky's seminal article, "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience," sociolinguists were able to stare down the critics of life history research by declaring oral narrative as a form of discourse worthy of study in itself (Chase, 2005). Examples from these earlier formulations show that speakers *construct* events through narrative rather than simply *refer* to events (Mishler, 1995). Now, narrative researchers understand that *how* people narrate their stories is as important as *what* they actually say in the communication process.

Chase (2005, pp. 656-657) outlines five "analytic lenses" through which present-day narrative researchers observe empirical data. These five analytic lenses reflect the influence of early life history studies on current methods of narrative inquiry, and show the uniqueness of narrative inquiry as a method of qualitative research. First, narrative as a distinct form of discourse is "retrospective meaning-making" that highlights the uniqueness of each human experience rather than any similarities it may have with others. Second, when a person narrates a story, she or he "shapes, constructs, and performs the self, experience, and reality." Third, stories are both assisted and hindered by a range

of social resources and circumstances such as the narrator's community, organizational and social memberships, and cultural and historical location. Fourth, narratives are socially situated and interactive – produced in a particular setting, for a certain audience, for a specific purpose. Fifth, narrative researchers are themselves narrators as they interpret and re-present the narratives they study.

Each of these analytic lenses is important for dispelling the romantic myth, critiqued by Atkinson and Silverman (1997), that "the open-ended interview offers the opportunity for an authentic gaze into the soul of another" (p. 305). Gubrium and Holstein (2002) also call into question the idea of a narrator's "own" voice because it gives the impression that the stories narrators tell are not socially mediated. Chase (2005) argues that the notion of interviewee as narrator is not an attempt to gain some kind of direct access to the interviewee's "authentic" self, or unmediated voice, but is instead simply a way of seeing the interviewee as a narrator of his or her own biographical experiences as she or he understands them. With these important caveats in mind, I would like to make it clear that my re-presentations of these six Catholic school teachers' stories are in no way an attempt to provide one final, fixed, and "authentic" picture or big "T" truthful account of their situations.

These teachers' stories are being retold because "giving voice" to marginalized people and "naming silenced lives" have been tried and true methods of effecting social change for several decades (McLaughlin & Tierney, 1993). Similarly, on the topic of listening empathetically, Frank (2000) writes, "Taking the other's perspective is a necessary step in constructive social change"

(p. 94). Likewise, Gamson (2002) posits that storytelling "promotes empathy across different social locations" and that "personalization ... opens discursive opportunities" (p. 189). Gamson's argument is essentially that stories invite readers to reflect on moral complexities in a much more effective way than traditional forms of argumentation. According to Gamson (2002), "storytelling facilitates a healthy democratic, public life" (p. 197).

Fully engaging in a democratic public life requires more than just "giving voice" to marginalized people. According to Tierney (2000), the goal of life history research is "to break the stranglehold of metanarratives that establishes rules of truth, legitimacy, and identity" (p. 546). Chase (2005) suggests that one way researchers can achieve Tierney's goal and effect real social change is by employing various interpretive strategies when analyzing research participants' stories that would explicitly reveal the power of oppressive metanarratives. This way, readers will learn not only about the research participants' stories, but also about how these stories have been filtered through the researcher's attempt to situate them within the constraints of the mediating aspects of culture (in the case of this Master's thesis, the heterosexist culture of the Catholic school institution).

Some readers may personally identify with the teachers' stories and be moved to understand their own stories more profoundly. Other readers who do not personally relate to the teachers' stories may still be moved to think and act in new ways that may improve the situation for gay and lesbian teachers in Catholic schools. Even readers who are invested in the status quo, such as devout Catholic school administrators, may be moved by the connection between and among the

various experiences of lesbian and gay teachers in Catholic schools and see a broader issue of oppression that can be changed.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point to a common criticism that narrative inquiry is overly personal and interpersonal. But as Stacy Holman Jones (2005) points out, the personal text can be a critical intervention in social, political, and cultural life. In effect, the personal is political. Narrative inquiry is a kind of fluid inquiry that requires ongoing reflection, a process that Clandinin and Connelly (2000) call "wakefulness." As a relatively new research method, practitioners of narrative inquiry need to be "wakeful" of all inquiry decisions. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest one way to do this is to set up response communities that can help the narrative researcher be reflective about his or her responses to, and interpretations of, stories collected in the field.

In their article, "What Makes a Good Narrative? Beyond Reliability, Validity and Generalizability," Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain:

> Like other qualitative methods, narrative relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability. It is important not to squeeze the language of narrative criteria into a language created for other forms of research. The language and criteria for the conduct of narrative inquiry are under development in the research community. (p. 7).

Some of the developing criteria Connelly and Clandinin (1990) highlight are still relevant for narrative researchers today. Van Maanen's (1988) notions of "apparency" and "versimilitude," that put the emphasis on recognizability of the field in the narrative research text, are important criteria. Lincoln and Guba's

(1985) concept of "transferability," which takes the emphasis off generalizability, is another important criteria for narrative inquirers to consider. It is not necessary for a narrative to be generalizable; instead Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe a good narrative as having an explanatory and invitational quality. Narrative inquiries explain an aspect of the world from a specific, perspectival, and limited vantage point and invite readers to see how personal accounts do count.

In terms of ethics and anonymity, in the re-presenting of the interviewee's stories, I am "wakeful" to my responsibility not to cause harm to the research participants. As per Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) suggestion, I imagine the research participants as my first, and most important, audience when I re-present their stories. It is to them that I owe due care to compose a text that does not negatively impact their lives. As a researcher, I also owe my care and consideration to the broader audience of the scholarly community.

It is my hope that my own autoethnographic narrative vignette adequately reveals my subject position and my own particular experiences that may have coloured the way I see the problem of homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools. Sharing my own personal story with the research participants helped to put them at ease since they know that their stories will be re-told by someone who is familiar with the difficulties of being raised Catholic, or working in Catholic environments, and being homosexual.

Because all of the participants in my study were or are closeted about their sexuality while teaching in Catholic schools, I respect their right to anonymity by

not using any of their real names. I have assigned the following pseudonyms: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and Mary. Additionally, any other identifying information, such as school names or specific geographical locations, has not been used.

The participants hold teaching assignments all over Canada: three are in central and northern small-sized cities in the prairie provinces; one has teaching experience in a town in the Maritimes as well as in a large urban center in central Canada; and two are teaching in and around a city in central Canada. The participants range in age from mid-twenties to mid-fifties and from 1.5 to 29 years of teaching experience.

My Story[2]

I was born into an Irish Catholic family in a rural community on Prince Edward Island, the smallest maritime province in Canada. Both my mother and my father come from large Irish Catholic families that count nuns and priests among the siblings, uncles and aunts. The promise of a better economic future convinced my parents to move our young family to western Canada. In Calgary, Alberta, my sister and I both attended Catholic school together from kindergarten to Grade Twelve. We attended church regularly, assisted with minor tasks during Mass, and happily sang along with the church hymns.

As an upper-elementary student, I can remember paying close attention to the priest's homilies every Sunday. They made me uneasy. I didn't like the stories that portrayed women as temptresses of men, as weak and punishable, or the idea that women should obey their husbands. As a young girl, I learned very early what it meant to be an ideal Catholic woman. Catholic doctrine's patriarchy and sexism were reinforced in the day-to-day operations of the Catholic schools I attended as a child. Images of shepherds tending sheep on grassy hills with the phrase: "Trust in Him and He shall lead the way," could be seen around the school, along with other messages such as "God our Father gave His only Son so that you could be redeemed."

In the classroom, boys were held out to be leaders and girls their followers. When it came to electing a classroom representative, the person

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[2] A version of this story has been published.
Callaghan, T. (2006, March 20). "That's so gay:" A narrative vignette of one lesbian's experience in Catholic schools. *Academic Exchange Extra*. Available online at http://asstudents.unco.edu/students/AE-Extra/2006/3/index.html

selected was almost always a boy. Boys were regularly asked to assist with supposedly "heavy" tasks, such as moving books from one shelf to another, a task that clearly girls could also easily do. When administration asked for assistance in setting up the gymnasium for events such as assemblies, masses, or final exams, boys were sent to help, even though the job only entailed arranging chairs in rows and setting up tables. Girls were regularly set up as the weaker of the two sexes that needed to be protected and assisted by the boys.

In Grades Five and Six, I remember developing crushes on the few other girls who, like me, did not fit in to the Catholic ideal of female behaviour. We were the ones playing "cars" in the sandbox or hanging by our knees on the monkey bars. It was on the elementary playground that I first heard the word "lezzie," and the scrapes on my knees from being pushed to the ground taught me its meaning. I was running to secure the four-square court for the lunch hour game and a boy called out: "Don't let her have it, she's a lezzie!" and then I felt a quick shove in the small of my back and my hands, knees, and shins came in contact with the gravely pavement. Whatever "lezzie" meant, it wasn't a good thing. Later, I asked my mom what that word meant and she told me it was short for the word lesbian, which she said is a woman who prefers to have relationships with other women than with men. When she asked why I wanted to know, I just told her that's what some people were calling girls at school. I never told her it was a name I was called.

In junior high, I learned I could be safe from such assaults by being tough myself and by tossing around homophobic phrases like the best of them. I

regularly uttered statements like: "That's so gay," "He's such a fag," and "Don't be a dyke." No adults ever reprimanded me for saying such things and my peers either feared me or thought I was cool. My strategy was to get a tough reputation so I wouldn't get picked on.

In the tenth grade, I made the mistake of acting on one of my crushes when I was out with three of my best girlfriends at a drive-in movie. I made the suggestion that we could kiss each other as practice for when we'd go on dates with boys and I was the first to volunteer. After my friends in the front seat saw the kiss I gave my friend who was with me in the back seat, they said they didn't want to do practice kisses on one another and abruptly left the car for more junk food. The next Monday at school was a tough one, as none of my friends would talk to me. I couldn't figure it out and then a girl I sometimes went skiing with told me that word had it that I was a lesbian. I denied it, of course, saying that I had just made a stupid suggestion that we try some practice kisses. But no matter what I did to explain it all away, I still had to get a new set of friends after that. Throughout the rest of high school, I kept my lesbian feelings underground and it wasn't until I was in university that I was finally able to come out as a lesbian.

Later, when I became a teacher and taught for some years in international schools in Europe, I came back to Canada and found myself teaching in Catholic schools. This was primarily due to the fact that public schools were not hiring at the time, and my Catholic background qualified me for teaching in a Catholic school. The longer I taught, however, the more I recognized versions of my own experience among the students I was teaching: the closeted students, the tentative

students who still weren't sure, and the students who teased and punished each other with the phrase: "That's so gay."

Well, as a Catholic teacher, I was "so gay." I was a healthy, athletic, young woman in my late twenties: I liked to wear pants a lot, I sported a short haircut, I had thick, dark eyebrows, and no boyfriend in sight. So, what's a good Catholic girl to do in a Catholic school where being "so gay" is an insult? I made a conscious decision to stay. I wanted to be there for the queer students because I knew how important it would have been for me to have had a positive role model. Of course, I couldn't be "out" to my students in a Catholic school but, as an English teacher, I could inform my students about the backgrounds of some of the writers anthologized in the government and school board approved texts. I told my students, for example, that Audre Lorde was a lesbian and that Tennessee Williams was "so gay."

Working with the students in the classroom was the least of my worries as a lesbian teaching in a Catholic school system. The heterosexist culture of the entire organizational structure and the regular, homophobic comments of my colleagues were constant sources of anxiety and stress. I was frequently asked about my marital status and why I did not have a boyfriend. On the topic of one of the greatest joys of my life – my life with my partner – I had to remain silent, even to the point where I had to pretend that my partner was just some writer I knew when her image started appearing on posters around the school promoting a writer-in-residence program. Colleagues would say: "Hey, don't you know her?" And I would have to mumble something like: "Yeah, we went to school together,"

while at the same time feeling fiercely proud of my partner but having to suppress that pride.

I was "out" to some select colleagues, but for the majority of the staff the truth of my life was so distorted and censored that I came across as a boring straight person who did nothing of any interest on the weekend. I couldn't say something like: "We went hiking," because that "we" would signal a whole new arsenal of rat-a-tat-tat questions aimed at finding out who that "we" was made up of and if I was seeing someone. If I said I went to a play or a movie, the usual follow-up question that I could predict with astonishing regularity would be: "Oh? Who did you go with?" When I said: "Oh, some friends of mine" that signalled that I was a single woman who frequently went out with her girlfriends and needed to meet a man. Then the matchmaking regalia would be rolled out and I would have to find polite ways to refuse to meet my colleague's brother or good buddy from university who was on the dating circuit. The matchmaking game started to peter out, though, when I entered my thirties and switched schools – the people at the new school either did not have enough time to get to know me and my marital status, or thought I was too old for matchmaking and didn't bother.

No matter what school I went to, I regularly witnessed homophobic jokes or comments on current events such as same-sex marriage during staff room conversations at lunch or during meetings. I started to grasp the full, institutionalized nature of the homophobia when I made an anonymous call to my union representative to inquire as to what would happen if it became known that I was co-habiting with my same-sex partner. I was told to keep quiet as I could be

fired if anyone found out – having a same-sex partner is contrary to Catholicity. I didn't bother asking my second question about getting my partner signed up on my benefits package.

I found out that other gay teachers had troubles with the benefits package too. I came across a thirty-something gay math teacher one day in the staff room who had just come into a type of long-term temporary contract that entitled him to benefits. He told me that when he called the district office to see about getting his partner on the benefits package, the administrators told him to bring his "wife" down in person along with the marriage certificate and they would be happy to set "her" up on the benefits package. The fact that he was co-habiting with a same-sex partner is almost irrelevant since co-habitation outside of wedlock is contrary to Catholicity and the benefits package is only available to legally married, Church sanctioned, couples.

Years of practice meant that I had developed sophisticated coping mechanisms for functioning in such a repressive environment. This was not the case for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) students I was encountering in Catholic schools. Sensing that I would be sympathetic, some of these students came to me with their stories of bullying and more subtle forms of mistreatment. A tall, slender gay boy with dyed jet-black hair and nail polish to match from the Teacher Advisory (TA) group in the classroom next to mine suddenly started joining my TA one day without saying a word. After a few days of this, I asked him if his own TA knew that he was spending time in my TA group. He told me his TA was a big homophobe and asked if he could please join

my TA. Without elaborating on the reasons, I made the switch with the administrators in the office and he was clear to stay.

Earlier that same year, a lesbian in Grade Twelve came up to me to ask what I was teaching and if she could be in my class. She wore oversized boys' clothes, had an asymmetrical spiky haircut, and kept her wallet in her back pocket attached to a chain on her belt loop. Though she didn't say so, I knew she came up to me that day because she recognized some kind of affinity, something sympathetic about me. Sadly, I wasn't teaching Grade Twelve English that semester so I never had the opportunity to teach her but we always acknowledged one another in the halls after that.

She knew she could trust me and she later came to me to ask for advice about how to handle the homophobic bullying she was experiencing at the school. The bullies were calling her names, whispering sexual things they would like to do to her whenever they saw her in the school hallways, following her around after school, taunting her and even occasionally throwing rocks at her. We both went to speak to the principal about the problem on separate occasions, but each time the principal said she could do nothing about it since it was off of school property. Because this student was living with her girlfriend and not her parents, I knew her case would be hopeless since administrators try to please parents so they won't take their child out of the school along with the funding that is attached to that child. I advised her to transfer out of the school and she came to visit me later to tell me that she was much better off in her new, non-Catholic school.

I knew I wasn't going to be able to deal with this homophobic environment much longer when a promising drama student in the Catholic high school where I was teaching committed suicide in 2004 after suffering several months of bullying due to his sexual orientation (as was confided to me by his friends after his death). Our school failed this boy because he did try to seek counselling at the school but clearly did not receive satisfactory results. The only way the school responded to his death was to bring in grief counsellors for a few days afterwards. Dissatisfied with this response, I felt compelled to take action regarding the Catholic school system's sanctioned and institutionalized homophobia by engaging in research about it.

This gay student's tragic death compelled me to write about the ways that many publicly funded Catholic school districts in Canada ignore their legal, professional, and ethical responsibilities to protect *all* students and to maintain a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment. I was ultimately "so gay" I could not bear teaching for the Catholic school system anymore. I decided to pursue graduate studies as a way to express my experiences instead of always having to suppress myself in the homophobic environment of the Catholic school system.

Matthew's Story

As a young man, Matthew entered the Catholic seminary to become a priest. Just two years away from his ordination date, and from gaining a Master's degree in theology, he quit. He left the seminary for many reasons, but mainly because it had become, in Matthew's words, a "Catholic Closet." For Matthew, the seminary was a place he went to hide from his sexuality. After just a few years there, the seminary started to feel very constricting and not at all what Matthew thought of as "life-giving." He grew wary of the celibacy requirement and didn't know if being a priest was a life he wanted to lead.

A key moment for Matthew came when his seminary invited Cardinal Ratzinger (who is now Pope Benedict XVI) to give mass and dine with the seminarians. Matthew was well aware that Cardinal Ratzinger was the principal author of the *Halloween Letter*, a Vatican encyclical that vociferously condemns homosexuality, and he found it difficult to sit down to supper with this man. Matthew thinks back on that evening as "one of the most offensive moments of my life." As one of the high-ranking members of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Ratzinger represented for Matthew all that was wrong with Rome at the time. Not wanting to be part of the homophobic rhetoric that was coming out of the Vatican, Matthew decided then and there that Cardinal Ratzinger's visit was a sign that he should follow his instincts and leave the seminary.

He didn't leave the reach of the Catholic Church entirely, however. Matthew sought work with a publicly-funded Catholic school system in a city in central Canada. He found a position as a lay chaplain among the non-ordained

chaplainry membership. Because the Catholic school board's expectation at that time was that school chaplains would also teach, Matthew embarked on part-time studies to become a teacher.

The Catholic high school environment seemed like a natural fit for Matthew; it was familiar to him as he was himself a product of the Catholic education system. He enjoyed the energy of the teenaged students and happily spent many hours preparing lessons for the religion and theology classes he was charged with teaching. One of Matthew's most rewarding responsibilities was leading the young people on religious retreats because it was in these types of settings that he could get to know the students better and establish a good rapport with them. As a teacher, Matthew was well-liked and respected by his students.

Matthew's newfound sense of purpose would be short-lived, however. Just as he was starting to feel he could finally lean back in his teacher's chair and relax a little in his new job, Matthew had to jump into a defensive stance and take on his employers. His Catholic school board wanted to fire him because they learned about a commitment ceremony he had had with his partner, with whom he had been having a relationship since he came to work for the Catholic school board seven years earlier.

It is unclear how the archdiocese came to know about the two men's commitment ceremony, since it was a private affair, but Matthew believes that they hired private investigators to interview some of the guests, given the archdiocese possessed so much detailed information about the event. Upon completion of their thorough investigation, the Catholic board concluded that

Matthew's commitment ceremony with his partner was analogous to a wedding (this was prior to the legalization of same-sex marriages in Canada). Because it was essentially a wedding, the Catholic board regarded Matthew as engaging in a sexual relationship with a man, which was contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. It was on these grounds that he was being fired.

Matthew learned of the school board's intention to fire him on a Friday afternoon in June, a full year after his commitment ceremony with his partner the summer before. Matthew went to his teacher's mail slot in the afternoon and found a letter from the school board waiting for him there. He opened it and read that representatives from the school board were calling him to a trustees' meeting, which would be an *in camera* session, for the purpose of discussing his dismissal from the board on account of his gay marriage. This meeting was scheduled to take place the following Monday. Officials within the Catholic school board knew what they were doing. They had an entire year to prepare a case to fire Matthew – he had approximately 48 hours to respond.

Matthew immediately left the school. His principal tried to talk to him, but Matthew could see that he was involved in the dismissal and was going to try to play "good cop – bad cop" with the board. Knowing he could not trust his principal, Matthew told him to "get lost" and then went directly to his union office. The Catholic teachers' union set upon the task of hiring Matthew a lawyer who would accompany him to the trustees' meeting on Monday. Because of the difficulty in setting something like this up on such short notice, the first time

Matthew actually spoke to his lawyer was Sunday afternoon and he was only able to meet him in person just minutes before the meeting.

Matthew didn't believe he would be fired at that meeting; he thought it would be dragged out somehow. But it wasn't dragged out at all – the board voted eight to two to have him fired on the spot. The day after the board fired Matthew, they offered him a settlement: teach for one more year as a math teacher while trying to find a teaching position in the public board on the condition that he would not speak about the matter. The idea of not speaking about the shameful way the Catholic school board was trying to fire him was not acceptable to Matthew and he did not agree to the board's conditions.

Because he did not agree to his board's offer, the process of getting his final pay was glacially slow and during this whole time Matthew was in a kind of employment limbo – for a year and a half he wasn't working, was unable to find work in the public system, was refused his final pay from the Catholic school board, and was ineligible for employment insurance. To make matters worse, Matthew's partner had decided at that time to go to teachers' college himself and was not working while studying full time. In Matthew's words, he was "financially strapped," and the time of the employment settlement period was "very, very stressful and difficult." Matthew described himself at the time as "fed up and angry by their ridiculous and slow, dragged out process" – so fed up, in fact, that he "blew up one day" and went to the media.

When his story appeared in the local paper the next day, the Catholic school board started to take him more seriously. Reflecting back on this, Matthew

remarked that he should have gone to the media the day he was fired, as he would have received a more swift response from the board. As it turned out, however, he waited four months before contacting a reporter. Upon learning that Matthew had gone to the media, the Catholic teachers' union threatened to drop him. The union said that because he had taken matters into his own hands, they could no longer support him. Matthew countered that now was the time for the union to really make a statement on this issue. Over time, the union came to see Matthew's position and switched lawyers for him from the initial one who was good for negotiating settlements to a new lawyer who was more adversarial and could manage a hearing and the lengthy grievance process.

Matthew's new adversarial lawyer was, according to Matthew, a "very devout Catholic man." He had his own struggles with the issue of an openly gay man teaching in a Catholic school. Nevertheless, this lawyer proceeded in building a human rights defence. It took him a year to interview all the pertinent people involved in the case, but in the end he told Matthew that he was going to lose. The Catholic school board's denominational rights would be upheld because they were enshrined in the *British North America Act* and the *Constitution.* Matthew's new lawyer quoted several cases that occurred prior to Matthew's wrongful dismissal involving female teachers in Catholic schools who had been fired because they were pregnant outside of marriage. Even in these cases the denominational rights argument was upheld.

Matthew was dumbfounded. He found it unfathomable that any institution in receipt of public funding could ignore provisions within provincial human

rights codes and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that protect against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Matthew's case was taking place after sexual orientation was "read in" to the Charter in 1995 and so it is understandable that he expected protection on these grounds. But protection was not something he was going to get. Instead, Matthew's devout Catholic lawyer encouraged him to settle with the Catholic school board rather than "have a losing case on the books."

Matthew dropped his grievance that hinged on the denominational clause in the teaching contract he signed with the Catholic board. As soon as he did that, the human rights complaint he was also filing with his provincial human rights tribunal became null and void. Officials at the human rights tribunal told him, "Once you've settled, you really haven't been fired anymore." They also concurred with Matthew's lawyer on the likelihood that denominational rights would supersede human rights, citing many cases that had come before them of Catholic teachers contesting wrongful dismissals for reasons such as neglecting to get an annulled divorce, for example. There were countless Catholic teachers who had been fired, tried to fight, and lost.

Knowing the odds were against him, Matthew decided to settle. "If it had been a winning case," Matthew observed, "it would have been amazing for other gay Catholic teachers – all of whom I know are still deeply afraid. I have so many gay friends working in the Catholic system who, because of my case, just do not come out in their schools. It's just not safe."

Matthew's year and a half battle with his Catholic school board took a tremendous toll on his personal life. His relationship with his partner was strained. While the two of them were "very devout and very involved in [their] church," they both decided that they had no choice but to leave the faith community they felt rejected them. Because of the financial struggles alluded to earlier, Matthew and his partner were forced to sell their home. A generous lesbian couple sympathized with their plight and took Matthew and his partner into their home to live with them on a reduced rent. Matthew commented, "Our whole life just – in my late thirties – just turned upside down." Luckily, Matthew's relationship with his partner survived this upheaval.

Being fired by the Catholic school board caused Matthew to reflect upon the effects of being closeted at work. "In terms of my teaching," Matthew said, "it made me very resolved that people need to be out." It was astounding to Matthew the number of his colleagues who had no idea he was gay until he got fired. Matthew asserts, "Gay people need to get a grip on their sexual orientation and be proud of it and come out." Coming out, according to Matthew, helps because "the more people know gay people, the less problematic it is going to be in the world." He observes, "I think we've been closeted and beaten into submission in these halls of silence for so long that it perpetuates all forms of homophobia."

The opportunity to be out at work came for Matthew when he was offered some long-term supply teaching work at an alternative high school within the public school system. Of the seventeen teachers who worked at that school, five were gay and out. On the climate at that school, Matthew says, "It was absolutely

amazing for me to go from a board where I was in the classroom closet to being out and having so many gay students."

The administration of this alternative high school felt that homophobia was such an important issue to address that they had an annual anti-homophobia day. They asked Matthew and his partner to be the honoured guest speakers and to host the event. "Even after I left that school," Matthew remarked, "I went back for those anti-homophobia days the next two years just because it was such a powerful experience and they always asked me to be a part of the panel."

Matthew would have stayed on at the alternative high school, but it was such a popular school for teachers that no full-time contract would be available to him in the immediate future. At the new public high school where Matthew now works full-time, he feels very supported by his principal and his colleagues. When same-sex marriage became legal in Canada, Matthew and his partner decided to go one step up from a commitment ceremony and have a fully legal wedding. After he married his partner, Matthew announced his marriage to his colleagues at work and they had a party for him. At the party, Matthew gave a speech in which he said, "Well, the last time I got married, I got fired for it. This time I get married and you give me a social party. I think this is really a positive statement of how Christian the public board is compared to the separate board."

Now in the public system, Matthew challenges homophobia whenever he encounters it. Instead of saying, "That offends me because I know someone who is gay," Matthew can now say, "That offends me because I am gay" – something he feels is a "way more powerful and different thing to say." In closing Matthew

reflects, "I refuse my Catholic history – to be demonized any further, to be called 'intrinsically evil.' Can you think of a phrase worse than that? You might as well say we are the devil with horns sticking out of our heads. I really want the world to know who I am and that I'm a good teacher – and that's that. That's the end of the story."

Mark's Story

After studying in a Canadian seminary college, Mark became an ordained priest and was called to serve a rural community in Atlantic Canada, where he stayed for 23 years until he decided to leave the priesthood to pursue a career in teaching. As a young man, Mark had accepted his posting to the far-away rural community without complaint, even though serving the Catholic Church in this way meant leaving the comfort of his close-knit family.

While the singularity of a solitary, rural life definitely affords much time for the contemplation required by priests, it can be at times a very lonely existence. As Mark describes it, he was "basically living alone – not just away from family, but even away from other priests, let alone on the same faith level. I lived in a diocese where, in some parts of my priesthood, I lived hours away from the nearest priest. It was a solitude that was a bit overwhelming at times."

In time, Mark became acquainted with the members of the community he was serving. Coming from a large city where priests do not always experience a great amount of reverence from the lay community, Mark was surprised at how much respect the rural people of Atlantic Canada had for Catholic priests: "I also had the luxury as a priest [there] – if I said something, many times people would see that as law. I think if anything, they would be surprised that I would be so open in regards to what they would consider an open-and-shut issue – homosexuality."

After two decades of serving this community as a representative of the Catholic Church, Mark's priestly vestments were no longer sitting as comfortably

on his shoulders as they once had. There was a right-wing shift in administration at the top levels of the church that affected church governance in such a way that priestly discipline was becoming much more authoritatively controlled. More and more Mark started to feel as though he was simply property of the Church that could be directed and moved at the will of superiors further up on the Church hierarchy. There were suddenly new rules to contend with from what he calls "a very power-hungry centralist Church."

Gradually, Mark distanced himself from the ultra-conservative messages that were coming down from top levels of Church administration. In turning away from certain aspects of the ministry, Mark was able to focus his attention on a long-neglected part of his being: his sexuality. Despite his deeply closeted existence, Mark was able to meet a man and begin a tentative relationship with him. "When that began and didn't go away," Mark reflects, "I felt like, okay, I have to deal with something and be a bit more honest with myself. So the whole coming out process was with myself more than anything else." Slowly, the two men started to become more involved in one another's lives and eventually professed their mutual love. They now describe themselves as life partners and have been together for four years.

During the time that Mark was getting to know his partner, there was a heightened visibility of homosexuality throughout Canada because of the same-sex marriage debates. Across Canada, Catholic clergy members were publicly denouncing homosexuality, citing passages of Catholic doctrine to buttress their arguments. To protect himself from any unwanted attention, Mark simply avoided

the topic altogether in his public role as a priest. "If anything homophobic came out," Mark commented, "I would just ignore it, or deal with it from a more open standpoint on my own. What I tried to do was never compromise, or misrepresent the Church's position because that was my official role – to represent the Church's position. I never misrepresented that, but I also never said anything that I didn't believe. Sometimes that would mean silence – I admit that."

Despite his attempts to simply ignore the Church's stance on homosexuality, Mark could feel a strong undercurrent pulling him away from the hateful rhetoric: "I was developing an increasing discomfort with the Church's teaching – becoming more and more antagonistic against homosexuals – I felt like I couldn't stay in the ministry and still feel good about myself as a person." Mark made the difficult decision to leave the priesthood and embark on a new career in teaching.

Now Mark teaches religion in a Catholic secondary school in central Canada. The conservative direction that Mark witnessed within the administration of the Catholic Church is also readily observable to him in Canadian Catholic schools. "In a way, I can almost be thankful for the conservative bent," Mark notes, "because they've really turned religion into being a mandatory course in all Catholic schools. There is a real need for religion teachers and I was hired on that basis. In fact … I was kind of snapped up."

Mark is aware that he left one working environment where he had to carefully manage his identity for another workplace where he has to be just as careful, but this path seemed to be the only viable option to a priest who so

desperately needed to make a change. Mark would have liked a position in the public system, but he knew that his expertise in Roman Catholicism would not have been marketable there.

Because Mark was "thrown into the classroom so quickly," he often finds himself only slightly ahead of his students in terms of planning, which is typical for any new teacher. He is pleasantly surprised at how well the teaching is going and finds the ethnic diversity of his school board enriching and challenging. Because homosexuality is not a big topic within the religious studies curriculum, it is not raised often. But when it is, Mark can always count on a lively discussion. Some students share that they have a gay uncle, for example, while others express what Mark calls an "overt cultural bias," claiming that homosexuality would never happen in their family. Mark welcomes these discussions because they are an opportunity for the students to "question themselves." He cautions: "It's not an issue of promoting it. It's just getting them to see reality – that it is in our society."

The teaching may be new for Mark, but the closeted environment is not. One way he copes is to live with his partner far enough away from the school so that he doesn't "have to run into students or anything like that." After years of living a solitary, closeted life, coming out is a gradual process for Mark: "It's coming out in terms of the place where I live as opposed to the place where I work, which I suppose is fairly normal for a lot of people."

Indeed, Mark has come to know other former priests who are now teaching in Catholic schools and, like him, are in the closet about their

homosexuality at work. "It's sort of a 'don't tell policy' ... it's assumed that there are gay people within the system, and we all know the official Church teachings on it. It's just not tolerated, it's just there – that's all." Meeting other gay teachers, especially the ones who are former priests, is a source of support and comfort for Mark: "Comfort in my position as opposed to always looking over your shoulder. Although you still, there's no doubt, you still have to be careful. You can't be flaunting or anything like that."

Because Mark is not out at work, he says he has never experienced homophobia on a personal level while teaching in a Catholic school. "I would say, though," Mark reflects, "there were comments made. Not directed to me, but that certainly made me shudder." Mark sees the topic of homosexuality as generating a split within the Catholic Church in Canada. According to Mark, there are now two distinct camps among Catholics: right and left; the right camp being those that are opposed to homosexuality and the left camp those who are accepting of it. Mark observes these right and left camps as also operating in the Catholic school where he teaches: "The lines are clearly drawn: these are the 'pro John Paul II / pro Ratzinger,' and these are the ones who are openly – including myself – 'anti.'" Nevertheless, Mark says that most of the staff is more liberal in their thinking.

When it comes to topics on the religion curriculum, Mark behaves very much as he did as a priest: "I do not see my role as to push any other agenda than the Church's. But, if I don't believe it myself – and I'm not alone in this, not just in terms of homosexuality, but also other Church teachings with other religion

teachers – you just are quiet about those things. You teach the things you are comfortable with within those boundaries." When Mark has to cover the topic of sexuality in religion class, for example, he feels that he actually does not have to compromise his personal beliefs or those of the Church because he can emphasize the parts of the curriculum that speak about accepting homosexuals as individuals worthy of dignity and respect. "I find that if it is too much beyond what I personally believe," Mark explains, "I have no problem just leaving out some of those parts because it is such a small part of the program."

In contemplating his decision to leave the priesthood, Mark says: "I have a growing satisfaction with myself as contributing more. Making my own money – that's another issue within the Church – how priests are taken care of or recompensed. Here, where I am responsible for all of my own bills, contributing in a way – you start to feel better about yourself. In a way, it's an unreal life, the life of a priest. You get a house. You get the groceries paid for. But you don't have a full appreciation of everything that you're doing. You get a fairly minimal salary ... but on the other hand everything is paid for. It was hard to find a reality in that kind of a life. You weren't getting that much money, but you didn't have that many responsibilities. Here, with the responsibilities, there is a self-respect that goes with that. At this time in my life, it's a bit late to come to that, but it's no less satisfying."

Clearly, his decision to leave the priesthood was the right one for Mark. While he is still having to function in a closeted environment within the Catholic school system, his years as a closeted priest left him well equipped with a variety

of ways to cope with having to be silent about who he really is. Additionally, working within the Catholic school system means that he does not have to lose all aspects of his religious life. "For me, it's still important to live my faith," Mark contends, "I sort of look at the Catholic Church as family. I was born into it and it's such a big part of me that it's a lot like family in that I will never deny who my family is, even though I don't want to spend a lot of time with it." He may be living a double life, but at least half of the time he can be out in the comfort of his own home with his partner.

On his new life with his partner, Mark says: "It's amazing what you can do with a support system." This is especially pronounced for Mark because he felt he didn't have any support system within the Church, with the exception of his local bishop who was very understanding when Mark expressed an interest in pursuing another career. Mark's sense of support within his Church was lost the moment he lost faith in the direction the Church was going: "That's when it went over the edge for me."

While Mark's partner is his central support, he also gains support from his family members, with whom he is now geographically close once again. His teacher colleagues at his school are also a strong source of support, as are the gay teachers he has come to know who can relate to him because they too are former priests. Where Mark now lives with his partner he feels he can be open and be himself, without having that nagging feeling of having to look over his shoulder to see who may be watching. Mark says the best part of his life right now is that he feels so much better than he did a year ago. He's glad he made the move he

did. "To stay in such a stifling environment," he says, "would have been extremely difficult."

As a religion teacher, Mark finds himself getting excited about the classes he has to teach, which is something he never expected. He is careful to point out, however, that he does not see his role as "in any way infiltrating the system, as far as the Catholic system or anything like that is concerned ... I see my role," Mark underscores, "not so much as infiltration, but as sharing my faith – as it is."

Luke's Story

Trained as a software developer, Luke found himself a job testing software with a private company. One day, a friend visited him and said, "You know what? You'd be a great teacher because you speak French." Luke's friend described the acute shortage of French teachers within the Roman Catholic school board in their city in central Canada and, knowing that Luke was born and raised Catholic, found a way to "rope [him] into doing it."

That is how Luke describes how he first came into the teaching profession. It wasn't as though he sought the job – the job sought him. Perhaps he was enticed by the idea that his skills were desperately needed somewhere, or perhaps the job paid better than his current job – whatever the reason, Luke pursued the opportunity to teach French with the Catholic board despite one great, looming obstacle: he was gay.

Even though Luke was not a certified teacher, when he went to the Catholic board to offer his services, he was quickly given a temporary position teaching French under the power of a letter of permission from the Ministry of Education that the Catholic board arranged for him.

Teaching high school went well at first. Luke found that he had an aptitude for the work and "loved the teaching." It was having to interact with his Catholic colleagues that made the work difficult. Luke assumed his duties as a French teacher during one of the times when the topic of same-sex marriage was at the forefront of debates in Canadian society. The Canadian media were running

stories on the topic, pollsters were circulating opinion surveys, and religious leaders of all types were making public statements denouncing homosexuality.

Not surprisingly, same-sex marriage was also a frequent topic among the staff at the Catholic school where Luke was teaching. In fact, the topic was so contentious that it was being discussed at many schools under his Catholic board's jurisdiction. At least that was what Luke was gathering from the e-mails the board was sending out to all the teaching staff inviting them to come to board-organized prayer circles for the purpose of ensuring that marriage remained a union between one man and one woman. As Luke recalls it, the e-mails described how prayer can help solve the current confusion surrounding marriage in Canada, as well as the instrumental role teachers could play. The board office e-mails essentially directed the teaching staff to pray that the same-sex marriage initiative would not continue forward.

"It was almost as if you were allowed to be homophobic openly," Luke recalls, "it was something that was alright simply because you were protected by your faith." Along with this form of cyber homophobia, the staff room was a very real site of homophobia for Luke. He found it difficult to be in the staff room and listen to mostly male staff members loudly "vocalizing their opinion about how they felt about [same-sex marriage] and just about homosexuality in general." It was most challenging for Luke when he found himself in the staff room without the company of other female staff members, some of whom had become friends. Whenever Luke was alone with male teachers in the staff room he felt awkward and different, with an overwhelming sense that he didn't fit in.

His difference was especially pronounced during the regular Tuesday morning pancake breakfasts when the male teachers organized themselves to make breakfast for the female teachers, using the staff room kitchen. The breakfasts were presented as a way for the men to serve the women for a change. But, from Luke's vantage point, the pancake making was just an excuse for the men to get together without the company of women and have an opportunity to bond.

It was during these exclusive all-male camaraderie sessions that "a lot of private issues came up," and Luke felt they were testing his comfort level with sexual topics, as though the other male teachers were sounding him out as to where he stood. In the banter that went on among the male teachers during these Tuesday morning pancake-making sessions, Luke observed that the men "were just overtly sexual in their own sexuality and tried to rope me into their conversations about some of the female staff members and some of the female parents and such." Luke felt these overtures were obviously an attempt "to make me feel uncomfortable or to get a reaction from me."

On a more profound level, Luke observed that the sexism and homophobia that would go on during these pancake breakfasts, and throughout the school in general, seemed somehow sanctioned: "It was almost like we were protected by the institution we were working in – that they were allowed to behave this way."

Even though he was enjoying teaching French, the pervasive homophobia of the school environment caused Luke to distance himself from his work to the point of observing "at the time, generally, it was just a job." He grew concerned

about the fact that, if he continued teaching for the Catholic board, he would never be able to get same-sex benefits for his partner, with whom he had been living for quite some time.

The pancake breakfasts were hard to take, and the lack of entitlement to same-sex benefits was clearly unfair, but Luke says the prayer circle e-mails were the "wake-up call that [he] needed to get out of the board." He entertained the notion of going back to testing software, but "[he] always thought there would be kind of a rainbow or silver lining in the profession," which he visualized as taking the form of a position with the public school board. Luke was able to continue working for the Catholic school board after he did his research and realized there were opportunities waiting for him within the public school board. He knew he could stick it out. It was only a matter of not renewing his temporary contract with the Catholic board at the end of the school year and taking a year to get certified as a teacher and Luke would be free to apply to the public board.

After teaching French for three years with the Catholic school board, that is exactly what Luke did. Luke became a certified teacher without any problems and, for the past two years, he has been a primary junior teacher with a public board in a city in central Canada. He teaches Grade Five. In comparing working for the public system to working for the Catholic board, Luke says it is "miles better ... we're still not 100% by any means, but it's way better in regards to my staff being much more supportive. I'm out and my partner comes to functions. It's accepted much more and I feel much more comfortable with myself and in my job now."

When he says that it is still not 100%, Luke is referring to the fact that he still experiences homophobia, but in the way that any homosexual might experience homophobia at work because of the homophobic dominant culture in Canada. The difference with his new job in the public school board is that the kind of homophobia Luke experiences is not institutionalized and sanctioned in the way it was in the Catholic school board.

For example, one incident that happened to Luke recently at his new job had to do with the fallout that took place after he brought his partner to a June fun fair day. Even though Luke did not introduce his partner as such, parents attending the event guessed their relationship and Luke was pleasantly surprised when some of them responded positively the next day at school, saying they were glad that he brought his boyfriend to the event. Not all the parents were as supportive, however, as Luke found out a half a year later when one of his colleagues came to his classroom, closed the door, and proceeded to tell him something that was just expressed to her. Apparently, the reason one of Luke's students was away from class for an entire week was because, as the student's father expressed to Luke's female colleague, he was fearful for his child's safety in Luke's class because he had heard that Luke was an "interesting fellow," as he put it.

For Luke, this was the "defining moment" when he realized that even though he was now in the public board, his homosexuality was not going to be accepted by everybody in the community. Since that experience, Luke has been very cautious. For example, he no longer takes pictures of his students in order to

make a collage as an end- of-year treat for them. Luke is fearful that parents may misread his classroom photography as evidence of paedophilic intentions since he is a gay man and there is a common perception among some people that gay men are linked to pedophilia. It would be a "nightmare" for Luke if parents were to start pulling their children from his class because they were fearful of him or felt he couldn't be trusted.

Even though Luke is now with the public board and he is well aware of the supports in place to ensure that students and staff are operating in a safe and caring environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, he feels that these safeguards are more in theory rather than in practice. He knows from experience that the school principal is the gatekeeper who decides what types of workshops the teaching staff will receive for professional development. Luke is aware of workshops on understanding same-sex relationships that are available through his board, but he is dismayed by the fact that no one at his school has ever availed themselves of them.

Luke feels that a common perception at his school is that since he is the only out gay teacher, there mustn't be any other gay staff members or gay students in the school and so there really isn't any need to have sensitivity training on sexuality issues. They know Luke is gay and they are fine with it, so what is the problem? Luke knows that his principal has had training on a number of sensitive issues because she will occasionally speak about them in staff meetings, but somehow she always distils the conversation down to the topic of visible minorities, while sexuality is relegated to the sideline.

Luke knows there are many protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in place within his school board, but he is extremely suspicious of the reality and the politics that take place around these issues at the school level. He is wary of asking for the supports to which he knows he is entitled. He knows, for example, that he could get his teachers' association involved if his principal allowed parents to remove their children from his class because they had heard somewhere that Luke is gay and expressed fear for their child's safety in his classroom. Asking for union protection "would be a living hell," Luke remarks, "... who would want to stay in that school after demanding support because you are meant to have it? How liveable would my school environment be for me as an employee afterwards?"

Because Luke is still doing a mentoring program, and is still in the process of being evaluated by his principal, he feels he cannot speak up about the injustice of having a parent pull of one of his students from his class because he is gay, or the fact that there is no sensitivity training about understanding homosexuality in his school. "You don't want to be the black sheep in the family," Luke cautions, "You just kind of go along with it until you're a bit more secure and confident."

Luke has thought about transferring, but he says right now there is a shortage of classroom positions. "I am stuck teaching where I am, teaching what I am," he remarks. Realizing that he has just described his current teaching position rather negatively, Luke says, "I'm making it sound quite negative – and, it's not. It's not negative at all – I don't dread going to work at all. I enjoy what I do. I

love my job. It's just I'm not in an ideal situation. I wish I was open with the families that I work with. That's my dream. But my job itself is great."

Once Luke gains the necessary job security, he plans to speak out against the homophobia he experiences and sees around him and to fulfill his dream of being open about his life with his students and the families with whom he works.

John's Story

Trained in secondary education, John first began his teaching career as a substitute teacher in a large urban center in one of Canada's prairie provinces. Unfortunately, John found substitute teaching at the high school level to be impersonal and stressful because of the relentless traveling about that the substitute teachers had to do at the high school level – going from classroom to classroom and constantly having to meet new groups of students. On the occasions that John was called to substitute teach in non-secondary schools, he discovered that he actually liked teaching at the elementary level. "You had your own classroom," John recalls, "and you could be human." So when a grade four teaching position came up in a Catholic school in a northern, prairie town, John rushed to put in an application. After two years of substitute teaching in the city, he was prepared to embark on a new life in a northern town.

John quickly found that managing the personal and the professional as a gay teacher is more complex in a smaller, northern community than in a larger urban center. "I live very discreetly up here, intentionally so," he says, "I had done so directly because I know there is discrimination." Even though he says he doesn't like the term "redneck," John nevertheless uses it to describe the people in his community. Generally speaking, John says the people where he lives tend to be "more conservative, more redneck ... more traditional in their views on certain things such as sexuality." He elaborates: "There is that feeling that many have that anything homosexual would have to be un-masculine."

One way John copes with the conservative values of his community while teaching in the even more conservative environment of his Catholic school, is to keep his own life "confidential and to myself." Maintaining a deeply closeted life is a matter of survival for John who contends, "If I had been out in any way, probably my teaching career would be over." From John's vantage point, gay teachers do not have the luxury of discussing their own personal life, interests, sexual orientation, or anything of that sort while at work. This is in stark contrast, he notes, to his heterosexual colleagues who freely talk about "the fact that they spent a weekend, say, going skiing with their boyfriend" or things of that nature.

Unlike some closeted teachers in Catholic schools in larger centres, John does not have the luxury of being out once the school day is through either. "Even in the community," he says, "you really keep to yourself. You don't get involved with the community." He has to be ever vigilant about concealing his true identity as a gay man. Not having anyone to talk to at school or outside of school increasingly bothered John over the years. "Two years ago, for example," he offers, "there was a group that had started up and I said to Virginia, 'That might be a good idea in terms of giving me social contacts and things like that,' and Virginia said, 'Well, that isn't very wise.'" John never joined the group, concluding: "Maybe for some people it's sometimes better to keep to themselves and not do these kinds of things."

John acknowledges that he has had to pay a high personal price in choosing to teach in this northern town for the Catholic board, but he wonders if it is any different from the sacrifices his heterosexual colleagues have to make when

they start families, for example. He doesn't feel it is possible to judge if he has had to pay a higher price than any of his colleagues.

Additionally, he doesn't regard the fact that he has had to keep his personal life to himself as having a negative impact on his teaching career. On the contrary, he sees it as a good thing. Admitting that his perspective may seem strange to others, John nevertheless contends that his closeted life has had a positive impact on his teaching. He explains that the time and energy he might be putting into maintaining a relationship, or building a family life, can be directed instead to his teaching. He is grateful for the extra time he has to devote to teaching-related endeavours and sees this as an advantage he may have over his heterosexual colleagues with families who just do not have that kind of time to devote to the profession. John is content in his role as "bachelor on staff."

All the time that John devotes to his teaching does not mean that he does not get involved in what he sees as important issues, such as the same-sex marriage debates. He is drawn to that topic not because it will affect him personally – as he says himself, "I've been single this long in my life and I will probably remain so." Instead, he sees it as a human rights issue: "My life is a little bit better than, say, it was for people thirty and forty years ago. I would hope that I am doing something to make life a little bit better for future generations." John is careful to keep his activism on a discreet level. He is comfortable writing letters to members of parliament on the issue of same-sex marriage, or contributing to the Canadians for Equal Marriage cause, but he cannot take the risk of writing letters to the editor about it. Having his name in print in a public forum is not

something he is free to do. Likewise, he says, "You would not see me, for example, going and marching on the issue."

John believes that gay teachers have insider knowledge when it comes to broaching the topic of human rights in the classroom because they may be personally acquainted with discrimination. In the classroom, John tries to do what he can to put a stop to discrimination of all kinds. When teaching social studies, for example, John says he is "very forthright about the discrimination and mistreatment suffered by First Nations peoples," and he makes a concerted effort to talk about all the groups of people who were killed by the Nazis during the holocaust of World War II, including homosexual persons.

When he is out on supervision and hears students insulting one another with phrases like, "that's so gay" or "faggot," John makes a point of telling them that such remarks are offensive to both homosexual and heterosexual persons, and he instructs the students to never use such comments ever again anywhere.

John is comfortable confronting homophobia on the playground, in his classroom, and from behind the relative safety of his personal computer at home. When it comes to homophobic comments that are made in the staff room, however, John feels it is safer to stay away from those. If the topic of same-sex marriage were to come up in the staff room and John happened to be there, he would be more concerned about keeping his identity as a gay man concealed than about expressing his extensive knowledge on the topic. Rather than risk being put in that kind of a compromising position, John tends to avoid the staff room

altogether. "The staff room," John says, "is a place you rarely find me – I prefer to be in my room working."

Because John has carefully constructed an image of himself as "the bachelor on staff," he says he does not personally experience overt forms of homophobia at his Catholic school. Occasionally, though, he might hear a comment that has a possible double meaning. John recounts the following example: "I was once talking to a colleague about specific needs for a student, when, out of nowhere, the person told me how he had met someone who was gay and found out he was a very decent and caring person." John found this comment to be completely out of context and he wondered, "Am I just being suspicious, or do they suspect that I am gay?"

John is confident that he has successfully passed himself off to his Catholic colleagues as a heterosexual bachelor who has simply been unlucky in love. This is important to him because, even after teaching for more than a quarter of a century in this northern community, he is still fearful that he could be fired if it became known that he is gay. He recalls back to 1977, when he first started teaching in the community, that the "immediate assumption at that time was that, if you were alone [single], you could be gay or a lesbian and, of course, you would be immediately fired." Now, he says things have softened a little as long as "you handled yourself discreetly." "You might be kept under some watch," he continues, "and you might not be fired if it became known but, then again, you might not have a whole lot of support from the board either."

John warns that even though the Catholic board may not attempt outright to fire a teacher for being gay, he is certain that they could find other reasons for the dismissal. He notes that even though he teaches for a publicly funded school board, his board is a Catholic board that expects its teachers to uphold the teachings of the Church. John describes the Church's teachings on the topic of homosexuality as "very, very certain and traditional." Although he concedes that it may be true that the Church is really opposed to homosexual acts, rather than a homosexual orientation, he would rather not test that fine line. For John, it is better if the Catholic school board does not even know he is gay at all.

The idea that the Catholic Church is accepting of a homosexual orientation is something John likes to emphasize when he is back in the safety of his classroom teaching the sexuality component of the Benziger Family Life Program to his Grade Five students. The Benziger Program supports teaching students to be morally aware and to develop Catholic values as laid out in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. In Grade Five, the series addresses sexuality in some depth. There is a brief statement that appears in a sidebar on the margin that says: "People who are homosexual have an attraction for people of the same sex. They should be treated with respect." This is the only positive statement about homosexuality that John has ever seen in a board-approved book series.

As a member of a provincial gay and lesbian educators association, John receives regular newsletters and is aware of the varied resources that are available for teaching general tolerance of difference and the elimination of bullying. He is also aware that his provincial teachers' association promotes the idea of safe and

caring schools for lesbian and gay teachers and students. After 28 years of teaching for his current Catholic board, though, John is also keenly aware that decisions pertaining to matters such as hiring and firing and the professional development of teachers rest solely with the board itself. If the Catholic board that he works for does not approve of certain progressive initiatives undertaken by the provincial teachers' association, then it does not have to make any special effort to implement them.

Although John cannot be out or present overt, queer-positive messages in his Catholic elementary school, he believes that in his own way there are things he can do on the playground and in the classroom to encourage tolerance, understanding, and acceptance of homosexuals. Even as a closeted gay man in the doubly homophobic environments of a Catholic school in a northern community, John knows that one man has the power to effect change – one student at a time.

Paul's Story

In Grade Eight, Paul was convinced he was going to die. His Eighth Grade health class was having a discussion about various kinds of diseases and one of his classmates spoke about a disease a person could get by being gay. Paul's thirteen-year-old classmate said, "You get this disease by being gay and you die." This was in the early 80's in a small town in Atlantic Canada and, while at the time there was no name for this disease, Paul's classmate was referring to what we now know as AIDS. Paul was convinced he was going to get the disease and die because he had been enduring sexual abuse at the hands of an older male in his household since he was quite young. Paul's thirteen-year-old mind reasoned that gay was having sex with a man and, since he was having male-to-male sexual contact, he was going to get this disease his classmate was talking about and he was going to die.

The next year, Paul moved to the Ninth Grade and, because he was raised Catholic and getting his education in a Catholic school, this was the grade in which he would be getting his first taste of sex education within the Family Living component of religion class. It was here that he learned that being gay was also a sin. "So, all of a sudden," Paul recalls, "not only am I going to die – I'm going to hell." Even though he was frightened and anxious most of the time he was growing up as a result of the sexual abuse he was subjected to at home and the erroneous information he was given at school, Paul never sought the assistance of an authority figure such as a priest, a guidance counsellor, or a teacher in his school. "I just knew I couldn't do that," he says.

Paul's way of coping during this time was to "pour [himself] into school." Academically, he says he was "a pretty good student." He also discovered some extracurricular activities that afforded him a certain measure of success and happiness, which he recalls were rare flashes of delight during a time when it was nearly impossible to take any pleasure in anything else he did. Mainly, Paul got through this time because of his "drive to get away." While he had some "relatively close friends" growing up, he says they were all homophobic and he didn't relish the idea of studying with them at the local university. He started to formulate a plan to study at a university in central Canada, a place he knew no one from his high school would attend. Paul "just knew" that someday the abuse would have to end, and he saw going away as the way to end it. He was right. Moving away for university did mean an end to the abuse.

It wasn't until his second year of university that Paul "became educated" about HIV/AIDS and realized that he wasn't going to die. He also learned some important life lessons about finances. He had hoped to complete a Bachelor's degree in central Canada and then return to Atlantic Canada to complete a Bachelor of Education After Degree and become a teacher, but financial realities stepped in the way. When he was entering what was to be the last year of his Bachelor of Arts degree, Paul learned that his student loans would be cut off. At the beginning of his fourth university year, Paul had also made all the necessary arrangements to apply to do his Bachelor of Education After Degree: his application was filled out and ready to go, as were all his letters of

recommendation. But those would have to be put aside, as he would have to abandon his studies and work full time in order to live.

Paul's first career was in politics, a field he entered because he "grew up with a good sense of what's right and what's wrong," as well as with a strong conviction that "one person could make a difference." Even though he was not identifying as gay at that time, he was well acquainted with the sting of homophobia and saw politics as the way to do something about it. Paul enjoyed some stability for a while working for a cabinet minister. He met a woman and they eventually married and had a child. His relationship with his wife would soon start to unravel, however, and the couple eventually initiated divorce proceedings. During this time, Paul also lost his job: "My minister got fired, and when ministers get fired, their staff get fired." With his now ex-wife preparing to move to one of the prairie provinces with their daughter, Paul saw no other choice but to move there too.

While at first he had no idea what occupation he might undertake on the prairies, it soon became clear to Paul that now was his opportunity to finally embark on his Bachelor of Education After Degree. Suddenly, the prospect of moving to the prairies was not as bad as it at first seemed. In fact, looking back on it now, Paul sees one of his courses on multiculturalism and education as instrumental in shaping who he has become today. The funny thing was, he didn't even want to take that course – he was more interested in taking a course on the foundations of religious education because he thought it would prepare him for teaching in a Catholic school, which was where he wanted to be. As it turns out,

Paul wound up in the multiculturalism course where he had an extremely powerful experience.

As he recalls it, the course was "okay and fine starting off" because it was covering the theoretical constructs of multiculturalism education – "education about the other, education for the other." Learning about race issues was new and enlightening for Paul, but it was not as challenging as what was to come next. It was when his professor moved to issues of gender and sexuality that Paul really started to squirm. He will never forget this professor, whom he describes as "open and provocative" when it came to tackling these kinds of sensitive issues. Paul remembers that he was resistant to a lot of the things she had to say and he can recall "butting heads" with her several times throughout the course. While she was "very open and very affirming" on the topic of gender and sexuality differences, Paul admits looking back that he "wasn't prepared to go down that road."

Paul remarks, "I think the best thing that shaped me was one assignment she made us do which was looking at our own origins." The assignment asked students to write an autobiography so that they could analyze their background and identity for the purpose of understanding what personal biases and perspectives they might be bringing into the classroom as future teachers. From this experience, Paul learned the term "positionality" – how one's subject position in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, cultural background, etc., shapes how one sees the world. More importantly, he "realized that [he is] white" and what it might mean to be a white male in the patriarchal society of western

culture. In terms of sexuality, Paul says he still wasn't quite ready to explore this aspect of himself, but this assignment certainly provided him with the necessary tools to begin understanding who he was and where he might be on the sexuality continuum.

While going through a custody battle over his daughter with his ex-wife, Paul sought psychotherapy and started to admit that he was "sexually confused" and that he thought he might be gay. Paul knew that his difficulty in coming to terms with his sexual identity stemmed from his long inability to differentiate between being a gay man and being a man who was sexually abused by another man. Raised Catholic and still a practicing Catholic to this day, Paul chose not to explore his sexuality during the time of his separation and divorce from his wife when he was most uncertain about his true sexual identity. Therapy helped Paul see that the sexual abuse he experienced as he was growing up is not what caused him to be gay, rather it was simply something that got in the way of coming to terms with being gay. Paul concludes, "God made me gay; not my abuser."

Paul recognizes the course he took on multiculturalism in education as being the impetus that prodded him into thinking about his sexuality. He recently went back to his university so he could find that professor to let her know how instrumental she had been in helping him discover who he is. "I gave her my thanks for what she did for me – making a place for me to be out as a human being and being somewhat out in the profession."

As for the teaching profession, Paul has not been able to secure a continuous contract. Since graduating with his Bachelor of Education After

Degree, he has had a series of temporary contracts with Catholic and non-Catholic boards in both rural and urban locations on the Canadian prairie. Paul is convinced that the reason he has not been hired on by his chosen Catholic board is because he is known to be gay and, what is more, is known to be a gay activist who is bent on reducing homophobia in schools.

One homophobic incident that shocked Paul into speaking out and taking action took place in a rural school where he was working on a temporary contract covering an educational leave from September until January. One of the students at the school was hounded out of the school by an e-mail gay basher who was sending around vicious rumours that the boy was gay. Paul says he had no idea if this student was actually gay or not. "That's the beauty of homophobia," he says, "you don't even have to know if the person is gay for it to work." The teaching staff came to learn of this incident "through the grapevine," Paul says, and that is also how he found out that this was the second incident of its kind at the school in two years.

As Paul remembers it, the boy was run out of the school on a Thursday and on the following Monday the regular, monthly staff meeting was scheduled to take place. Paul expected to see an item about bullying on the agenda. When none was there, he thought that at least it would be brought up in the discussion at the meeting. He waited patiently as each item on the agenda was addressed. When they reached the end of the list and the bullying was still not addressed, Paul knew he had to "put [his] neck on the line," and he asked, "What are the consequences for the student who did this?" The principal responded that there were not going

to be any consequences just yet because "it would be too disruptive," but he assured Paul that they were trying to find "an alternate resolution to this [problem]."

While Paul was not happy with this non-response on the part of his principal, he knew he was going to have to overlook it because he was only willing to question his principal's authority so far, considering he was on a temporary contract and he was going to have to be evaluated by this man. Shocked and deeply disappointed by what he regarded as his principal's wilful neglect of duty of care towards the boy who had been bullied, Paul was visibly upset that whole afternoon following the meeting. The school's secretary noticed Paul's distress and asked him if he was okay. They went to his classroom for a quiet chat and Paul came out to her.

The next school day was almost as stressful as the preceding one for Paul because the bullying still wasn't being addressed. Instead of going to school on the Wednesday, Paul decided to "call in sick" – take a mental health day – because of the stress. "Being gay and having this homophobia happening in my school," recalls Paul, "was so stressful that I had to get out." That day, Paul made an emergency appointment with his therapist. He also put in a call to one of the executive assistants within his teachers' federation, with whom he had already been working on a committee designed to combat homophobia in schools.

Buoyed by his therapy session and his telephone conversation to his teachers' federation, Paul went in to school the next day with the intention of addressing the bullying in the classes he was teaching. To his surprise, when he

arrived in the staff room that morning, he found the district's Director of Education preparing to have a meeting with all the staff members of the school about the homophobic incident as well as a growing drug culture in the school. The director devoted most of his talk to the issue of drugs, and on the topic of the most recent incident that happened in the school, he simply said, "We're going to try to do some mediation between the two students – the victim and the bully."

Paul felt the director was not naming the incident for the homophobia that it was. After the director had fielded some questions about the drug related issue, Paul tried to steer him back to the topic of the bullying. He pointed out that this type of bullying has a name – homophobia. He also wanted to know if he as a teacher would receive some support from administration if he were to address it as such in the classroom.

The director said, "I'm not sure I understand." Paul clarified, "If I bring appropriate resources into the classroom to deal with these issues head on, will I get support? Because, when you look that one in ten kids is gay and we have 70 students in this school, then we have seven gay kids. 30% of suicides in this country are directly linked to homophobia. That's a thousand suicides a year caused by homophobia. We have to deal with these issues. I want to know, if I deal with them, will I have support?" The director responded, "Absolutely. Not only can you, you should. You have a professional obligation to deal with these issues. That's part of the core curriculum – respecting diversity." Paul thought, "Wow! This is great. Finally, somebody in a position of authority says that I can deal with this in my classroom."

The principal of the school, however, did not appreciate this exchange between the director and one of his temporary teachers. Early the following week, the principal called Paul into his office. Paul remembers the meeting well because it was the day after the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of same-sex marriage. In front of the principal on his desk were two large bulk mail packages addressed to Paul.

Glancing down at the two packages, the principal said, "You can't go around throwing out those statistics." Puzzled, Paul asked, "What statistics?" The principal replied, "That one in ten is gay." "Well, that's the reality of it," Paul ventured. The principal continued, "You can't say there's seven kids that are gay in this school. Statistics can lie." Paul conceded, "Well, maybe you're right. I can't say that there are seven kids in this school who are gay. I can certainly say that one in ten are gay. Of course, with the law of averages, you get different concentrations."

When Paul tried to remind his principal of what the director had said in the meeting just the week before, the principal cut him off saying, "The director has had some second thoughts. You're dealing with a very delicate and controversial issue here. You have to be very careful about upsetting people in this community. This is a rural community and a lot of people object to this on moral grounds."

When Paul tried to mention what the curriculum states about diversity, the principal interrupted him, "I know what the curriculum says. But in this community, you can't say things like that. I deliver the curriculum, too, but I don't have to like it. I can tell the students what the Supreme Court decision is,

but I don't have to like that decision. As a matter of fact, I don't like the Supreme Court decision. I object to it on religious and moral grounds."

With that, Paul felt like he had "just been stabbed in the heart." "For the rest of the day," Paul recalls, "I was nauseous and sick to my stomach. I was vibrating with fear – this was going on in the middle of my professional evaluation."

As it turns out, the packages for Paul did not contain anti-homophobia material from the teachers' federation after all. That was what the principal *thought* was in the packages, and that was why he called Paul down to his office – to warn him not to use that kind of resource in his rural school.

Regarding his professional evaluation from this principal, Paul says, "It's okay. It's similar to other valid evaluations that I've had." As to whether or not the principal held his knowledge of Paul's anti-homophobia activism against him in any way, Paul says he can't be sure. Paul may know what the principal has written down about him, but what he doesn't know is what the principal is saying about him to others who may be calling for a recommendation. "He says nice things to me privately," Paul observes, "but what he says to someone else who might hire me, I have no idea."

One of the problems that has come up for Paul regarding his service to the anti-homophobia committee within his teachers' federation is that word of his committee membership has spread among people from various boards in the province who have the power to hire him. In fact, this is the reason he feels his chosen Catholic board has not hired him. Knowledge of his involvement with the

committee came about because his provincial teachers' federation was disappointed there were no full-time teachers or administrators from any of the Catholic boards in the province on the anti-homophobia committee. To rectify this situation, the federation decided to invite educators directly from all of the Catholic boards in the province to serve on the committee. One of the teachers the federation invited happened to be a vice principal who was supervising Paul at the Catholic school where he was working on a temporary contract.

Because the committee uses a euphemistic title to avoid a negative backlash, the vice principal from the Catholic school did not know what the title "Equity Reference Committee" was referring to, and so he asked for clarification. When he was told that the committee addresses lesbian and gay issues in education, he was then able to make the connection that this was actually the kind of work Paul was involved in when he would request leaves for this committee. Paul is certain that this is the reason his contract was never renewed with that Catholic board.

Paul is very disappointed that he is not working for a Catholic board because this had long been a goal of his and where he visualized himself teaching. Comparing his experiences teaching on a temporary contract between Catholic boards and public boards, Paul claims that in some ways it is easier to deal with homophobia in the Catholic system. He says he is able to do this because he just skips over the sections of the Catechism that describe homosexuality as "inherently disordered," and emphasizes instead the part that says homosexuals must be protected from all unjust forms of discrimination. It is more difficult to

address homophobia in the public system, according to Paul, because he cannot refer to the moralizing Catechism.

On the other hand, Paul laments that in a Catholic school, he feels he could never tell the students that it is acceptable to be lesbian or gay. Parsing out the meaning behind "love the sinner, hate the sin" is not something Paul feels he has the liberty to do when he is in a Catholic school. It would be too risky for him to undertake a positive discussion about homosexuality as a substitute teacher or as a teacher on a temporary contract in a Catholic school. "It is easier to talk about it in the staff room," Paul observes, "In the classroom, no, you could never do it." Of course, it would be very difficult for a gay teacher to have such conversations anywhere in a Catholic school because, as Paul says, "Obviously in the Catholic setting I can't be out at all."

One of the ways Paul, as a practicing Catholic, reconciles such doctrinal inconsistencies, is when he remembers that, historically, the Catholic Church has been wrong before. He cites Martin Luther and the Reformation, Galileo and Newton and the scientific revolution as evidence that the Church is not infallible. Paul observes, "The Church now accepts evolution, it now accepts a sun-centered system rather than an earth-centered system. Now, it took the Church 500 years to get there. I'm hoping and I pray that it won't take the Church 500 years to accept that being gay is part of God's creation, just as evolution is part of God's creation."

Paul is disturbed by the fact that he cannot be out professionally. He feels it is hypocritical to talk about authentic assessment in the classroom when he

cannot even be authentic as a teacher. "I can't be authentic if I have to hide a substantive part of who I am from my daily life in the classroom," Paul remarks. Lately, Paul has been struggling with whether or not he has "the temperament, or the desire, or the commitment, to put up with the daily – because it is daily – insults to my dignity and the dignity of gay people known and unknown in the school system."

Added to this concern is the fact that he keeps applying for jobs, but has no luck. Former professors he has spoken to about his predicament suggest that he might consider graduate studies, and Paul has enrolled in an online program towards a Certificate in Inclusive Education. To support himself, he teaches as a substitute part time, and has taken out student loans to cover the rest. He has also applied to a graduate program in educational psychology, which he hopes to begin soon. Paul's former professor, who had such a profound effect on his ability to come to terms with his sexuality, is offering one of the courses that he would dearly love to take. It is a graduate institute on anti-oppressive education and teacher activism, two topics with which Paul clearly has a lot of experience. It seems that Paul may have finally found a place where he can be his authentic self after all.

Mary's Story

Mary grew up in a northern town in one of the provinces on the Canadian prairie. But she didn't want to stay there for her university education. She chose, instead, to move further south and east to another prairie province to obtain her education degree. Mary enjoyed the sense of freedom and anonymity afforded her by her new, southern city. She took up residence with a gay male roommate while attending university. They became best friends and would regularly frequent the sole gay bar in the city. Mary easily made friends and entered into romantic relationships with other women. She felt comfortable in the gay community – it was like "family, in a sense."

It is fortunate for Mary that she could be open about her identity at home with her gay roommate, and that she had a place to go where she could feel comfortable and accepted, because this was not always the case for her at the university. She recalls a "horribly homophobic" incident, that she describes as a "really bad experience," in which she felt threatened in one of her education classes. She describes the course as "a professional studies type of class" and she remembers the homophobic incident came about during some small group work with other students in the class.

The groups were asked to discuss what they considered to be current issues in education and one of the group members in Mary's group suggested they discuss homosexual teachers. Mary didn't say anything at first. "Then this guy went on a rant," Mary recalls, "saying: 'in the wild, gay animals would be killed by the other animals, and because of this, gay people shouldn't exist in the

world.'" Mary responded quite strongly and very vocally. Normally, Mary didn't feel nearly as threatened at the university as she might have felt other places in the city. She felt free to be out as a lesbian there and many of her classmates in the room that day knew she was a lesbian and knew whom she was dating at the time. Mary felt those classmates who were aware of her sexuality were very supportive of her following the homophobic outburst she experienced that day.

Mary didn't find her professor to be particularly supportive, however. Throughout her classmate's homophobic rant and Mary's response to it, her professor "just stood there and listened to the entire conversation and said nothing." Dismayed by her professor's lack of a response, Mary went to talk with him about it later in his office. She made it clear to the professor that if he did nothing about the incident, she would go to the harassment committee. She emphasized to her professor the concern she had about her homophobic classmate because this student was planning to become a teacher, yet he was telling her that she deserved to die because she is gay. Mary's threat to take action was sufficient to shock the professor out of his apparent complacency because he did gesture towards addressing it in the next class.

The professor chose to apologize to the class for the incident, saying that it "never should have happened." The homophobic student wasn't asked to apologize. In fact, to the best of her knowledge, Mary says he suffered no repercussions at all. Mary exchanged a few e-mails with her professor afterwards in which he came across as very apologetic and very affirming. Mary's feeling about the e-mails, however, was that they had an insincere ring to them. She felt

he was just "trying to cover his butt at that point." Her professor was a sessional instructor who was also a high school teacher and had been hired only to teach this one particular course.

As for her homophobic classmate, Mary just tried to avoid him as best she could after the incident. She "knew he didn't understand it" and she felt he did not learn anything from their exchange. He would talk about the blow-out with his friends whenever Mary was within earshot and would always make sure to say loud and clear how unfair he thought it was that Mary took it upon herself to complain. Reflecting on the whole event afterwards, Mary often wondered how wise it was of her to react in the way that she did to her classmate's homophobic remarks because he was "particularly large, and particularly dumb, and particularly threatening." She worried for her personal safety because he was so physically imposing.

Putting that experience behind her, Mary concentrated on her studies. Upon graduation, she taught in two different schools in the same province in which she studied. Both assignments were temporary maternity leave contracts. One was in "a very tiny, little town" in a southern part of the province. According to Mary, the people there were "very close-minded," which she says is "just part of the culture" of that part of the province. She adds that the people were "close-minded to everything – it wasn't just isolated to homophobia. It was just the way the town was." Her other teaching assignment was in a Catholic school in a bigger town.

Not having been raised Catholic herself, Mary was pleasantly surprised by her experiences with Catholic schools in the prairie province where she trained to become a teacher. One of Mary's teaching internships was in a Catholic school in a small city, and she found her colleagues there to be "extremely open minded and very non-discriminatory in so many respects." She adds, "They were very open to anybody that was different." Because her internship experience in this Catholic school was so positive, Mary didn't have much trepidation taking a second temporary maternity leave position at another Catholic school in the province once she completed her first one.

The people who interviewed her for this new maternity leave position at the Catholic school were somewhat different from the Catholic school in which she had her internship experience, however. The principal and English Department Head told her "point blank" in the interview: "If you are living with someone in a relationship, you will politely decline the contract if we offer it to you." Nevertheless, she still felt welcome there. Looking back now, she is not sure if their friendly ways and kindness were simply due to the fact that employers were struggling to keep people in the province. Maybe they didn't care so much who they hired, she ponders. Maybe "They just wanted you there no matter what," Mary concludes.

Now that Mary has moved back to the original prairie province where she grew up, she has noticed a marked difference between the Catholic schools of her first teaching experiences and the Catholic school where she now teaches. Until she moved to her current northern, prairie town, Mary says "she never felt the

same sense of shame, or sense that my job could be gone at a moment's notice," as she does in the place where she currently works and lives. She only took the job teaching in a Catholic school because she had just moved to the region, needed work, and that was the only school that was hiring.

Even though she grew up in the area, now that Mary is out to herself as a lesbian, she finds the small, northern community to be close-minded and stifling. Doing something as simple as going to the library can be anxiety-provoking for Mary. She worries if the librarian checking her books out will notice a lesbian theme running through them. Because one of the librarians has a son who goes to Mary's school, she is fearful that "those little pieces of information" might be stored away and used against her somehow. In the community, Mary feels like she is "always watching her back." She says this is where "half of [her] angst comes from."

The other half comes from her inability to be out about her sexuality with her family members, friends, and colleagues. The only family member Mary was able to come out to is her mother, whom she says, "was not supportive in the least." As for the friends she has been able to make or reconnect with upon moving back to the northern prairie region where she grew up, Mary has not been able to find a way to come out to any of them. "It's a very lonely place to be at this point," Mary says, "because I'm not honest with any of my friends, even." Because of her inability to be honest with people, Mary feels that she is just not connecting with anyone, which she says takes a tremendous toll on her. "I feel

like most of my friends that I truly am myself with live elsewhere and far away," Mary notes. "That's very, very difficult," she concludes.

At work, Mary is deeply closeted. When she is around her Catholic colleagues, Mary finds that she is never able to talk openly about who she is, or what her desires might be regarding dating someone. Even though she works with a "fairly young staff ... the almost thirty crowd" who hail from places throughout Canada as well as locally, Mary says it is "interesting that they aren't particularly open-minded." She attributes this to "the religious aspect." "They are Catholic teachers," Mary observes, "That dictates their ideas of what is acceptable." In the staff room, Mary says it is not uncommon to hear comments like, "That's so gay," or other homophobic opinions being expressed. Mary says her colleagues are "quite openly biased" about homosexuality and she finds it more threatening to talk to them about their bigotry than to discuss bigotry and homosexuality with her students.

In the classroom, when students make remarks like, "That's so gay," or "That's so queer," Mary feels she can easily discuss with her students the etymological origins of the words and how they have come to have a homophobic meaning today. "I do feel a certain amount of freedom within my own classroom," she says, "to correct them or to hopefully get them to stop using it."

Trained as an English language arts teacher, Mary teaches Grades Seven and Eight and, because she is the English teacher, she also has the added duty of teaching religion. Mary has to plan her English program around the fact that 42 minutes of instruction will be lost to religion every day since the administrators at

her Catholic school decided religion would be best taught within the English curriculum. She finds the religion program to be "very structured and methodical," as in: "This is what Catholics believe and this is why we do what we do – it's important because we are Catholic." Students attend Mass and confession on a regular basis at the school. Mary observes that Catholic rituals permeate most aspects of the school: "It seems like it's an indoctrination, most times, of the students."

Because human sexuality is a component of the religion class, Mary had to receive special direction about how to teach it from the Religion Coordinator at the district office. She says, "I was given very strict instructions about what I could say and what I could not say, and what was unacceptable." She was astounded that even basic information such as birth control was to be presented as unacceptable from a Catholic faith perspective. She regards this as a profound disservice to the students, who during the early teen years "really need to know that information."

Mary was also told that she could not teach anything about "the gay and lesbian lifestyle," nor could she talk about gay marriage. Even though these instructions were given to her within the context of teaching religion, Mary assumed they were meant for other aspects of the curriculum as well. She felt certain that it would be unwise to speak about gay and lesbian experiences to any degree in any subject if she wanted to get a permanent contract. Mary says, "According to the administration of the school, homosexuality is a non-issue."

The adults in the school may wish it were a non-issue, but the students who attend the school are not necessarily paying any heed. For example, Mary says that there is a female student in Grade Seven "running around the school proclaiming she is bisexual," but this is entirely overlooked by the staff. Mary says her colleagues actively avoid the topic: "We don't discuss what to do with this child to help her feel better – in staff meetings or in any other way."

Mary says the students do not feel that the school is a safe place. Apparently, the principal is aware of this because he once came around to every class to conduct a survey about bullying and the impact it had on students. When the teachers analyzed the results during a staff meeting, they learned that most of the Grade Seven students said the school is not a safe place in any sense of the word. Mary remembers that the only comment the principal made about the results was that "it hadn't changed much since last year." Then the topic was "just left alone." The principal didn't bring in any anti-bullying workshops, nor was there even an anti-bullying policy developed.

Mary feels very much on her own when tackling bullying and bigotry in the classroom. She has talked with the family outreach worker in the school and he does not seem to be concerned with the same issues that bother Mary, nor does the guidance counsellor. "Every now and again, someone in the staff room will say, 'the kids don't really feel safe here, so what can we do about it?' but it just sort of goes away," Mary observes. It is disturbing to Mary that no one has really done anything with the information gained from the survey. "What is the point of doing a survey at all," she asks, "if you are not going to take action?"

Mary is conflicted about whether or not she will take a permanent contract at this Catholic school if one is offered to her. She knows that having to be closeted is having a negative impact on her health. While she has always had trouble sleeping, she feels that her insomnia has worsened now that she is living and working in a place where she feels she cannot be herself. "I feel very much like I have two lives," she says, "I have my home life where I feel I can watch whatever it is I want to watch, and then there is my life outside of my home where I don't ever completely feel like I'm honest about who I am." Mary says her inability to feel comfortable where she is living now "lends itself to a certain amount of angst on a daily basis." "What if they find out?" she wonders, "What if I get fired?"

So far, no one at the school questions Mary: "I don't present as a dyke, and I look the picture of a straight woman. So, I'm quite fortunate, I suppose, in that sense." Her colleagues just think: "she's 29 and single – big deal," but she admits that presenting as single becomes more and more complicated when she is actually seeing someone. She knows that if she were to stay there long term, it would have an adverse effect on her health, so she plans to move to a city: "The bigger the center, the easier it is," she says.

Analysis of the Narrative Vignettes

To my knowledge, the experiences of gay and lesbian teachers in Canadian Catholic schools have not been extensively studied in the discipline of education within the academy. As I have outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis, some research has been conducted in the United States on the experiences of gay and lesbian teachers, but these studies have not emphasized religious-based schools. Tania Ferfolja's (2005) study of the experiences of 17 self-identified lesbian teachers in New South Wales, Australia, is the only study I could find that focussed exclusively on the Catholic school environment. I have chosen to retell the experiences of gay and lesbian teachers in Canadian Catholic schools not only because their stories have not previously been told, but also because giving voice to marginalized and silenced groups is an effective way to encourage social change (McLaughlin & Tierney, 1993).

Because narrative inquiry based storytelling invites the reader to imaginatively take on another's perspective, its intention is to promote empathy and encourage democracy (Gamson, 2002). But encouraging citizens to fully engage in a healthy, democratic, and public life requires more than just giving voice to marginalized people. For life history research to truly effect change, Tierney (2000, p. 546) argues it must "break the stranglehold of metanarratives that establishes rules of truth, legitimacy, and identity." A metanarrative is a narrative that talks about, and thereby reinforces, other ideological narratives embedded within it. Heterosexism, the belief that all people are or should be heterosexual, is an example of a metanarrative that has a powerful ideological

hold on western societies. In an attempt to achieve Tierney's goal, I interpret the narrative vignettes of gay and lesbian teachers in Canadian Catholic schools in such a way as to reveal the power of the metanarrative of institutionalized homophobia. Describing an oppressive apparatus is the first step towards changing it.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) point to the fact that, as a qualitative research method, narrative inquiry does not fit easily into criteria such as validity, reliability, and generalizability that were designed to evaluate other types of research. This is largely because narrative inquiry presents specific stories about particular people in individual situations that are not easily generalizable to a larger population. In addition, positivist critics call into question how true or reliable a story is, especially when narrative researchers such as Mishler (1995) point out that research participants *construct* events through narrative rather than simply *refer* to those events. If personal testimony can be accepted in a court of law, it should be accepted in educational research. The very point of narrative inquiry as a form of qualitative research is to highlight the uniqueness of each human experience rather than to make an attempt to generalize that experience to a larger population. Instead of validity, reliability, and generalizability, Van Maanen's (1988) concepts of "apparency" and "verisimilitude" can be applied to the narratives to test whether or not the stories being told would be recognizable to other practitioners in the field.

Recognizability is problematic for a study that is about uncovering the hidden population of gay and lesbian teachers in Catholic schools. Those who

would be most capable of recognizing the truths of the stories would be, by necessity, other lesbian and gay teachers in Catholic schools. They would be the ones who would be most familiar with what it is like to have to be closeted in such a homophobic environment, and therefore most able to recognize it. Because some gay and lesbian Catholic school teachers are so skilled at being closeted, and rendering their sexuality and personal concerns invisible, it is not surprising that their heterosexual colleagues may have difficulty recognizing, first, that they have homosexual colleagues and, second, that there might be a homophobic atmosphere in the school. One way I have attempted to assist readers in recognizing how homophobia is institutionalized in Catholic schools is by building an understanding of the problem through the theoretical framework and document analysis sections of this thesis that precede the narrative vignettes. This way, all readers, no matter what their background, are equipped with some degree of the skill of recognizability.

In analyzing the narrative vignettes of lesbian and gay teachers in Canadian Catholic schools, I do not approach the analysis from the angle of generalizability because other narrative researchers have already pointed out that generalizability is not appropriate for narrative inquiry. Instead, I employ Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concept of "transferability," to examine how transferable the details of one participant's story would be to another participant's situation. To do this, I focus on the commonalities of the participants' stories. Identifying the most common ways that homophobia manifests itself in Canadian Catholic schools is

the first step to finding solutions to eliminate the problem and create truly safe and caring schools for *all* teachers and students.

Commonalities Among Participants' Stories

The most obvious commonality among each of the participants' stories, including my own, is that teaching in Catholic schools means being in the closet for most gay and lesbian teachers. All of the participants in my study had to be in the closet while teaching in a Catholic school. This is significant because, in light of social changes that have come about since the successes of the 20th century gay liberation movement in the Western world, lesbians and gay men of the 21st century are increasingly out at work in all sorts of fields. Despite the fact that education is often seen as a "highly conservative and often reactionary field," (Pinar, 1998, p. 2), American studies (Smith, 1994; Woog, 1995; Kissen, 1996) show that some gay and lesbian educators in the United States are increasingly choosing to be open about their sexuality at school and that some schools are even welcoming this new openness. While this may be true for non-religious schools in the United States, the stories of gay and lesbian teachers in this current study indicate that this is decidedly not the case for publicly funded Catholic schools in Canada.

Each of the Canadian participants in my study describe a Catholic school environment that seems to have been untouched by social advances gained by the gay liberation movement or legal advances in same-sex rights fought in the Canadian courts. For many of the participants, the beginning of every teaching day means stepping into a time warp of sorts where social and legal advances for

gays and lesbians are either not widely known or are ignored. The gay and lesbian teachers in the Catholic schools of this study have to suppress their knowledge of such advances at the door.

John, for example, who has to be deeply closeted both at work and outside of work in his northern, prairie town, has an extensive knowledge of the same-sex legal debates, as well as other legal matters pertaining to gays and lesbians before the Canadian courts. However, he is unable to openly express his ideas on these topics except when online at home. John is forced to keep his activism for the advancement of same-sex legal rights confined to the relative privacy of his home computer. Likewise, Mark suppresses his understanding of the great strides made in terms of the social acceptance of homosexuality that he is able to enjoy at home with his partner in their progressive neighbourhood in central Canada. Mark chooses to live far enough away from the Catholic school where he teaches religion in order to reduce the risk of being recognized by one of his students while out for a walk with his partner. While Mark may have more freedom than John because he is able to live authentically when he is not teaching, he knows the Catholic school where he works is a place where he must be immediately closeted upon entering the building.

Both Mark and John are keenly aware that the moment they walk into their respective Catholic schools every morning, they have to ignore their extensive knowledge of social and legal advances in terms of same-sex rights in Canada. Based on their descriptions of their work environments, it almost sounds as though John and Mark are walking onto a movie set when they enter their

Catholic schools: John assumes the role of the only bachelor on staff and Mark takes on the persona of the single former priest. Neither man is able to be his true, authentic self while at work.

By being true and authentic I do not mean suddenly engaging in explicit discussions about sexual practices at the workplace. On the contrary, I am referring to the freedom to be open about one's sexuality while at work – a freedom that many heterosexual people take for granted. Some people may think that sexuality is not an appropriate topic for discussion in schools, but these people are confusing sexuality with sexual practices. Critical pedagogue Didi Khayatt (2000) observes that sexuality (that is, heterosexuality) is ever present in schools in the wedding or commitment rings that teachers may wear as well as in daily conversation about one's significant other, such as nuptial plans, a spouse's illness, attempts to get pregnant, or leisure and holiday plans. In these types of discussions, heterosexual people are not speaking about sexual practices; rather, they are speaking about their sexuality, or what some would call "their life." Being closeted at work means never being able to discuss one's "life" with others. Both John and Mark are well aware of the Catholic Church's teachings on the topic of homosexuality and that homophobia is deeply rooted in the Catholic faith. For John and Mark, the idea of being out at work is a complete impossibility.

John and Mark's stories effectively illustrate the ways in which their Catholic schools seem to be untouched by social and legal advances for gays and lesbians in Canada. Luke and Mary's stories build on this by descriptively

capturing the homophobic atmospheres that pervade their respective Catholic schools. For Luke, the key motivation to finally leave his Catholic board in central Canada came when senior board officials started sending e-mails out to all employees inviting them to attend prayer circles to try to put a stop to same-sex marriage in Canada. With senior officials in his board displaying this type of homophobia, it is not surprising that teachers in the district followed their leaders' example by freely expressing their homophobic views in staff rooms and elsewhere throughout the schools in the district. According to Luke, "It was almost as if you were allowed to be homophobic openly. It was something that was alright simply because you were protected by your faith."

Likewise, Mary describes the atmosphere of the Catholic school where she teaches in a northern town on the Canadian prairie as openly homophobic. Even though many of her colleagues are young and come from all over Canada, they are not particularly open-minded and frequently say, "That's so gay," or other types of homophobic comments in the staff room. Mary connects this to what she calls "the religious aspect – they are Catholic teachers [and] that dictates their idea of what is acceptable." As an English teacher, Mary is also charged with teaching religion at her school and, because of the human sexuality component of religion class, Mary has had to receive a crash course in what is acceptable and unacceptable from a Catholic faith perspective. Revealing that she is a lesbian would be unacceptable and would most likely result not only in ostracism by the majority of her peers and employers, but possibly dismissal. She attributes her colleagues' narrow-minded views on homosexuality to the fact that they are all

products of Catholic education where homophobia is part of the hidden curriculum.

Homophobia as Cultural Hegemony

Homophobia as a hidden curriculum within Catholic schools is an example of cultural hegemony. As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, Antonio Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony refers to the ideal representation of the interests of the dominant culture as universal interests. The dominant culture I am referring to here is the culture of heterosexuality. Since the majority of human beings are heterosexual, a phenomenon exists called "heterosexism," which is an assumption that the world is, and/or should be, heterosexual. While most heterosexist cultures do recognize that homosexuality exists, it is generally regarded as unnatural and reacted to with fear and hatred – a response known as homophobia. According to Gramsci (1971), cultural hegemony is the most powerful element of hegemonic manipulation because it involves the production of ways of thinking and seeing and the necessary exclusion of alternative visions and discourses. In Canadian Catholic schools, heterosexuality and procreation are ways of thinking and seeing that are produced and emphasized at the expense of alternative, healthy sexual expressions such as homosexuality, or alternative family constructions such as lesbian-led families, for example.

As Paul's story makes clear, institutionalized homophobia is so pervasive in the Catholic district where he worked on temporary contracts that no one from the district chose to offer their services on an anti-homophobia committee within the province-wide teachers' federation. The so-called "Equity Reference

Committee" was deliberately given an innocuously vague title so that teachers throughout the province could feel free to offer their services in addressing lesbian and gay issues in education without others in their school immediately knowing the purpose of the committee. Of course, the teachers' federation would have sent out promotional flyers to schools in the province informing teachers of the existence and purpose of the new committee. Those who had an interest in human rights activism, anti-homophobia work, or creating safe and caring schools would therefore know what the "Equity Reference Committee" was all about. Even though the purpose of the "Equity Reference Committee" would have been widely disseminated, the provincial teachers' federation still had no luck in getting representation from any of the Catholic boards in the province.

Although Paul does not speculate on the reasons for this lack of response on the part of Catholic teachers, two possibilities come to mind: either administrators in the Catholic schools chose not to disseminate this information to the teaching staff, or Catholic school teachers received the promotional flyers but did not care or dare to volunteer for this committee. Whatever the reasons for the lack of Catholic teacher representation on the "Equity Reference Committee," the provincial teachers' federation sought to rectify the situation by directly inviting educators from Catholic school boards in the province to serve on the committee. As Paul remembers it, this is when his troubles began. He believes that his Vice Principal, who came to learn that the "Equity Reference Committee" addresses lesbian and gay issues in education, inferred that Paul must be gay because of his service to this committee. This highlights the fact that many people erroneously

believe that an educational committee devoted to reducing homophobia in schools would only be of interest to gay and lesbian teachers.

From the Vice Principal's perspective, Paul would have appeared to be not only gay, but also a gay activist. In Canadian Catholic schools where heterosexuality is a way of thinking and seeing that is produced and emphasized at the expense of minority sexualities, Paul's homosexuality and queer activism would have been perceived as a direct threat to the dominant culture of heterosexuality in Catholic schools. One way to keep the power of hegemonic manipulation intact, and to ensure that the interests of the dominant culture continue to be represented as universal interests, is to eliminate any subversive element that may pose a threat to the dominant culture.

In Catholic schools, eliminating a subversive homosexual element is sanctioned by Catholic doctrine that describes homosexuality as a "strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil" (Ratzinger & Bovone, 1986, item 3). Luckily for the Catholic district Paul was teaching for, finding a way to fire Paul would not be necessary since he was only teaching on a temporary contract. Instead, all the Catholic district would have to do is to simply not offer him a continuous contract. Despite being highly qualified for many of the teaching positions he has sought within his preferred Catholic school district, Paul has not been hired. He is convinced that his involvement with the provincial teachers' federation "Equity Reference Committee" is the reason he has never been offered a continuous contract with his chosen Catholic school district.

Uncovering why he was not hired would require a lengthy and costly grievance, which would not likely be successful in revealing the truth since employers would be able to offer many alternative explanations behind their decision not to hire someone. The Catholic board could say, for example, that Paul was overqualified for the position or that the hiring committee simply selected a more suitable candidate with similar qualifications. Additionally, if Paul were to initiate such a grievance, he would become even more branded than he already is. That is, Paul would be labelled not only as a gay man, and a queer activist, but also as a rabble-rouser. If this were to happen, then Paul would have even more difficulty finding work than he already does.

If Paul's understanding of why he was not hired is correct, then deliberately choosing to not hire a teacher who is presumed to be gay because of his queer activism would be an example of Gramscian cultural hegemony. A selective hiring practice such as this would underscore what Gramsci (1971) identifies as the increased importance of schools, as massive cultural institutions, in perpetuating subtle but pervasive forms of ideological control and manipulation. Actively restricting the presence of homosexual teachers in Catholic schools would secure the supremacy of the dominant culture of heterosexuality and further contribute to the institutionalization of homophobia in Catholic schools.

Surveillance Perpetuates Cultural Hegemony

While Gramsci (1971) focuses on structures and the role of education in social reproduction, Foucault (1975/1995) focuses on the infinitesimal

microphysics of power derived from complicated forms of surveillance available in institutions such as schools. As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, Foucault's (1975/1995) central argument in *Discipline and Punish* is that changes in modern strategies of punishment now focus attention on the "soul" rather than the body by employing far more insidious forms of domination and control. Foucault (1975/1995) describes disciplinary techniques for managing people that involve the use of "simple instruments," which he calls "hierarchical observation," "normalizing judgement," and the "examination" (p. 170). Each of these disciplining instruments requires a form of surveillance in order to be effective.

One of the best examples of how Catholic school boards employ surveillance techniques to control their employees is Matthew's story. Throughout the seven years that he taught for one Catholic school district, Matthew managed to keep his relationship with his partner a secret, until the day they decided to have a commitment ceremony. Even though Matthew and his partner took the extra precaution of scheduling their extremely private commitment ceremony during the summer when Matthew would not be around any of his teacher colleagues, someone from the archdiocese was informed of the event. Matthew learned of the archdiocese's knowledge of his commitment ceremony almost a year later when he was being fired because of it. He was astonished at how much detailed information they knew. Matthew is certain that the archdiocese must have hired private investigators to interview some of the guests because only someone

who attended the ceremony would have known the kind of information that the archdiocese had accessed.

The type of surveillance that Matthew was subjected to would fall under Foucault's (1975/1995) first instrument of power, "hierarchical observation," because it involves linking visibility to power. Given that Matthew was teaching for a Catholic board, he would have had to sign an employment contract that has a compulsory "Catholicity" clause requiring a new hire to agree to uphold Catholic doctrine both inside and outside of school hours. In signing the contract, Matthew consented to being observed. According to Foucault's (1975/1995, p. 177) argument, this form of "hierarchical observation" is "absolutely indiscreet," because, in signing the contract, Matthew would know that representatives of his Catholic school district could be observing him at any time to see how well his behaviour and associations conformed to Catholicity codes. Yet the "hierarchical observation" that Matthew was subjected to is also "absolutely discreet" (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 177) because it operates in secrecy and Matthew would have no way of knowing exactly when he was being observed and reported on.

The power of "hierarchical observation" is also apparent in Mark's decision to live far enough away from the school where he teaches so that he can have more freedom to be openly gay (after 23 years of living as a closeted gay man while in the priesthood). The idea here is that, if Mark is far enough away from the school, it is less likely that he will run into colleagues, superiors, or students while out for a walk with his partner, for example. Additionally, Mark is very careful when the issue of homosexuality comes up in the religion classes he

teaches. He takes great pains to make sure none of his students, or his other colleagues in the religion department, perceive him as "promoting homosexuality." Mark is careful in this regard because he can never know when he is being observed or reported on, and he wants to make sure that all of his actions are perceived to be falling well within the Catholicity quotient.

One might think that teacher colleagues or students would be less suspicious of a former priest's ability to adhere to Catholic doctrine than a regular "non-clergy" teacher, but Matthew's story makes it clear that even teachers who once seriously considered the priesthood as a vocation cannot escape suspicion and the close scrutiny of ever-present, but invisible, surveillance. Many of the participants in my study use phrases such as "I am constantly having to look over my shoulder," or "I feel like I have to always watch my back" to describe their daily existence of fearfully wondering who is observing them and piecing bits of observations together to make a composite sketch of all the ways they are "different."

Foucault's (1975/1995, p. 177) second disciplinary instrument, "normalizing judgement," is a micro penal system that defines and represses mass behaviour for the purpose of controlling those who may be bent on non-conforming. Each of the participants in my study experience a form of "normalizing judgement" while teaching in Catholic schools because the homophobic culture forces them to be closeted and to develop strategies that they hope make them appear as "normal" as possible. Luke's account of the regular

Tuesday morning pancake breakfasts put on by the male teachers for the female teachers in his school is a good example of Foucault's "normalizing judgement."

Luke felt obliged to join his male colleagues in making the breakfasts because he believed he would be regarded as "different" if he did not. Knowing that he may already be seen as different for other reasons (such as his appearance, or lack of any obvious girlfriend), Luke joined in the activity in order to avoid any further unwanted attention and/or speculation. Once a part of the group, the "normalizing judgement" became more intense as Luke was drawn into lewd conversations about female colleagues. In these moments, Luke felt as though he was being tested about his sexuality. A Foucauldian reading of this situation suggests that in being tested about his sexuality by his male colleagues, Luke experiences a specific type of punishment designed to normalize him by penalizing his perceived sexual non-conformity. Luke is punished by having unwanted attention drawn to how he may respond to discussions of sexuality for the amusement of his male colleagues. As a gay man, Luke would not be accustomed to talking about women in sexual ways, and he would have to swiftly find creative ways to respond to this topic of conversation while still appearing as "normal" as possible.

Other participants cope with the disciplining power of "normalizing judgement" by cultivating a persona that helps to redirect their "difference" away from speculation of homosexuality and towards a more "acceptable" way of being. Mary, for example, does nothing to deter her colleagues from the assumption that she is simply a 29-year-old woman who hasn't found the right

man yet. She says that the fact that she does not "present as a dyke," and looks "the picture of a straight woman" is fortunate in that her appearance, at least, has not yet aroused any suspicions on the part of her colleagues. I, too, encouraged my colleagues' assessment of me as a single woman who has simply been "unlucky in love." As Mary observes, however, this type of charade is more easily accomplished when one is, in fact, single. Being in a same-sex relationship is not so easy to conceal. I found that having to negate the existence of my partner in my life while interacting with my teacher colleagues on a daily basis was a lie that I could no longer bear. Other personas developed by the participants include John's persona, as that of a hard-working bachelor, and Mark's persona, as that of a former priest who still observes the vow of celibacy. That the participants felt compelled to cultivate a false persona indicates the Foucauldian penal mechanism of "normalizing judgement" is a powerful instrument of control that actually pressures teachers to participate in their own punishment.

Foucault's (1975/1995) "simple instruments" of "hierarchical observation," and "normalizing judgement" combine to form his third instrument of power, "the examination." According to Foucault (1975/1995, p. 185), "the examination" is a particular human technology that ritualizes the control of individuals and solidifies existing power relations by extracting and constituting knowledge. In the case of Canadian Catholic schools in the participants' vignettes, Foucault's "examination" takes the form of the formal and informal teacher evaluation. The examination is an extremely powerful tool of surveillance in schools, as each newly hired teacher must be subjected to several formal

teacher evaluations. The formal teacher evaluation is conducted by a principal or a vice principal who observes the novice teacher, usually on a minimum of three occasions, as he or she teaches a class.

However, beginning teachers are also being evaluated informally – in the hallways, in meetings, in the staff room – which can affect what is written about them in the formal evaluation. Being observed in formal and informal ways in the school constitutes examples of Foucault's "examination." The teachers in my study who are relatively new to the profession express a need to be extra vigilant about concealing their sexual identity while on a temporary contract that may lead to a continuous contract. They know they are being evaluated both formally and informally while on probation and they do not want any suggestion about their sexuality to affect their evaluation.

Mary, for example, says she experiences a "certain amount of angst on a daily basis" because she worries that her lesbian identity may be exposed. She asks: "What if they find out? What if I get fired?" She knows her evaluation would not say, "Do not retain due to lesbianism," but she is still fearful that her examiners would find some other way to write into her evaluation that she should not be offered a continuous contract. This constant fear of being exposed as a lesbian, and its subsequent adverse affect on her health, is causing Mary to question how wise it would be for her to accept a continuous contract with her current Catholic board, if they offer her one.

Likewise, Luke, who is now teaching with a public board in central Canada, is fearful of speaking up about the homophobia he is currently experiencing because he is still on probation and still being evaluated.

Paul also expresses fear about challenging the homophobia around him. He says he can only question his principal's authority up to a point and then a certain amount of self-preservation has to take over as he reminds himself that he is only on a temporary contract and will have to be evaluated by the very person whose authority he is questioning. In spite of his fear, Paul has spoken out about the way certain homophobic incidents were handled in his school and he has chosen to volunteer for an anti-homophobia committee within his provincial teachers' federation. Now that Paul cannot get a teaching job, he is starting to question whether or not this is the price he has had to pay for his activism.

As a disciplining instrument, "the examination's" power to evoke fear is not only limited to beginning teachers. John, who has been teaching in a northern prairie community for 28 years, is still fearful of losing his job if he were to be exposed as gay. One way he copes with this fear is by devoting all of his energy into his teaching so that he can maintain his reputation as a superlative teacher should the day ever come that his secret is revealed. The idea here is that, if John's principal finds out that John is gay and then initiates procedures to fire him because being gay is contrary to Catholicity, maybe John would be able to argue a case to keep his job on the grounds that he is a master teacher with stellar evaluations.

Alternatively, if John's principal discovers John is gay and feels he should be fired for it because being gay is contrary to Catholicity, he may choose to look for another reason to fire John since firing him for being gay may be costly and may bring on some unwanted publicity. If that were the case, John's exemplary performance as a teacher would make it very difficult for John's principal to find another reason, other than the fact that he his gay, to fire him. In either case, John hopes that his outstanding performance as a teacher may protect him from being fired if it became known that he is gay. As we know from Matthew's story, however, being an excellent teacher is not sufficient protection against getting fired for being a "practicing homosexual" while teaching for a Canadian Catholic school board.

Each of the participants' stories describes a culture of pervasive homophobia within their Catholic schools. Homophobia as a controlling structure within Canadian Catholic schools is an example of Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony. Michel Foucault's theory of surveillance shows how teachers in Catholic schools are controlled and disciplined in such a way as to perpetuate the ideal representation of the interests of the dominant culture as universal interests. A heterosexist culture continues to prevail in Canadian Catholic schools largely because it is too risky for the gay and lesbian teachers who work in Catholic schools to be open about their sexuality. In order to survive while teaching in Catholic schools, each of the participants in my study has had to develop sophisticated identity management techniques to effectively keep their true sexuality in the closet.

Identity Management Techniques

The identity management techniques the participants in my study employ can be classified according to two out of the three categories developed by Woods and Harbeck (1992), as outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis: (1) Passing as Heterosexual, (2) Self-Distancing from Others, and (3) Self-Distancing From Homosexuality.

As for Woods and Harbeck's (1992, p. 152) second category, the "Self-Distancing From Others" strategy, John's story is a good example. Like the participants in the Woods and Harbeck study, John intentionally avoids communicating or socializing with anyone in the school, including students, teachers, and administrators, in situations that would call for an exchange of personal information or feelings. John intentionally lives a very discreet life. He keeps the details of his personal life confidential and to himself whether he is at work or out in the community. One way to ensure that he is not asked personal questions by his colleagues at work is to avoid the staff room altogether. Unlike the participants in the Woods and Harbeck study, John does not regard his self-distancing strategy as harming relationships that would be important to him professionally. On the contrary, he says it enables him to devote more energy to the task of teaching. Indeed, John says the staff room is a place where he is rarely found; he is more likely to be found in his classroom working.

Mark's story is a good example of Woods and Harbeck's (1992, p. 153) third category, the "Self-Distancing From Homosexuality" strategy. This is largely because Mark makes a special effort not to be perceived as "promoting

homosexuality" whenever it comes up in the classroom. When discussing the topic of homosexuality, Mark behaves very much as he did when he was a priest – he does not undermine the Church's position by attempting to push another agenda. If an aspect of Catholic doctrine conflicts too greatly with what Mark personally believes, he just chooses not to address it and finds ways to avoid the topic altogether. It would be easier for Mark if he never had to deal with the topic of homosexuality while teaching religion in Catholic school. When it does come up, though, he is careful to handle it in a way that never compromises or misrepresents the Church's position and he never addresses it from a personal perspective.

None of the participants opted for Woods and Harbeck's (1992, p. 150) "Passing as Heterosexual" strategy, which involves the crafting of personal fictions in which same-sex pronouns are changed to the opposing gender and stories involving same-sex people are recast to appear heterosexual. This could be due to the fact that, according to Catholic doctrine, it is not a sin to actually *be* a homosexual – it becomes a sin only when a person engages in homosexual acts. It could also be due to the fact that this kind of coping strategy sounds like it would require a lot of work to maintain, not to mention an impeccable memory. Fabricating outright fictions would require a close attention to details such as proper names, occupations, place locations, events etc., in order to reproduce the same fiction again accurately to a new colleague. Gay and lesbian teachers in Catholic schools – especially those who are single – may not feel pressured to pass as heterosexual, in the manner described by Woods and Harbeck, by creating

a fictitious opposite sex partner and all of the accompanying narrative details that would go with it.

The majority of the participants in my study, including myself, employ an identity management strategy that does not fall neatly into any of the three Woods and Harbeck (1992) categories. I would call this new category the "Selective Self Representation" identity management strategy. The gay and lesbian teachers who adopt this strategy do not deliberately avoid situations with other colleagues that would require an exchange of personal information or feelings, nor do they avoid the topic of homosexuality. Teachers who opt for the "Selective Self Representation" strategy do socialize with their colleagues, but they are selective about the personal information they choose to share.

While my "Selective Self Representation" strategy has close links with Woods and Harbeck's (1992) "Passing as Heterosexual" strategy, there is one significant difference. Rather than fabricating outright fictions, participants who opt for the "Selective Self Representation" strategy take the slightly easier route of lying by omission. Because they are often reticent about the details of their own personal lives, they may come across as excellent listeners and extremely empathic towards the problems of others. They may also appear to be skilled conversationalists who can deftly steer topics away from the personal and on to the political, philosophical or even the whimsical. Like the other strategies described by Woods and Harbeck (1992), this strategy is a form of dishonesty in the sense that those who employ it are lying by omission.

When I was a teacher in the Catholic school system, for example, I would never have divulged to other teachers or staff members the fact that the writer pictured in a poster in my school was, in fact, my partner. Instead, she was just someone I knew. Additionally, I would also substitute the pronoun "we" with the pronoun "I" when discussing things I might have done with my partner on the weekend. Saying, "I did some gardening," instead of "We did some gardening," takes attention away from the image of two people living together in the same house.

In Mary's case, she, too, does not avoid social situations with her colleagues, but she is reserved about her feelings on personal topics such as dating. Because she doesn't "present as a dyke," Mary knows that her colleagues simply regard her as someone who is unlucky in love and she does not do anything to dissuade them from thinking this.

Similarly, Luke and Paul do not avoid staff room banter with their colleagues. Even though it made him uncomfortable, Luke actively participated in the pancake breakfasts with his male colleagues and presumably found some creative way to avoid their fixation on the topic of sexuality. Luke was comfortable with his female colleagues, and was able to become friends with some of them. As for Paul's case, because he is a teacher who takes a number of temporary contracts with several different boards, he would be accustomed to meeting new people. While Paul says he is not comfortable telling students in Catholic schools that it is okay to be gay, he is not uncomfortable discussing the

topic of homosexuality with his Catholic colleagues in the staff room, but in a disconnected way that would not implicate him personally.

Concluding Remarks

Because of the highly homophobic and heterosexist atmosphere of our Catholic school teaching environments, the participants in my study – and I include myself among them – have had to be in the closet while teaching in Catholic schools. Regardless of the type of identity management strategy we may have chosen to employ, the participants and I are (or were) forced to live a double life in which we attempt to separate our identities as gays and lesbians from our identities as teachers. We survive in our repressive Catholic school environments by ceaselessly denying and hiding our sexuality in order to continue teaching for our school board. None of the participants are able to engage authentically with others at work, or in my case, have to do so very selectively. In order to conceal our sexual orientation, we are either lying by omitting details about our personal lives, or distancing ourselves from others and from the topic of homosexuality on a regular basis.

As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, experts from the field of psychology associate the forced concealment of one's sexual orientation with a type of job burnout, characterized by feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced competence (Sandfort, Bos, & Vet, 2006). Having to be closeted in the deeply homophobic atmosphere of a Canadian Catholic school can most certainly lead to job burnout as evidenced by the number of

participants in the study who have either stopped working in the Catholic school system or are unhappy while working in the Catholic school system.

Of the seven participants in my study, four no longer teach in Catholic schools: after the suicide of the gay student at my school, I resigned from my position in order to pursue graduate studies; Matthew was fired because of his commitment ceremony with his same-sex partner; Luke did not renew his temporary contract so that he could work toward becoming certified and teaching with the public board; and Paul was never offered teaching employment beyond a temporary contract with a Catholic board and is now pursuing graduate studies. Having to be closeted is causing Mary's insomnia to worsen and she is not sure if it would be wise for her to accept a continuous contract with her current Catholic board, if she were offered one.

Even though Mark is just new to teaching, it appears as though he is able to seamlessly transfer the skills at being closeted that he acquired as a priest to being closeted while a teacher. As John is near retirement, his coping skills and identity management strategies have obviously been solid enough to keep him on the job for the entire 28 years he has been teaching with the same Catholic school district. The fact that Mark and John continue to teach for a Catholic board does not mean that they have avoided experiencing some form of job burnout.

One can only speculate on the reasons John and Mark continue teaching for their respective Catholic boards without apparent signs of job burnout. Both men came of age during an era when there were no gay rights and so became accustomed to the sacrifices of being in the closet associated with their

generation. Both men may have internalized the homophobia of their Catholic surroundings to the degree that they have normalized being in the closet. Both men may have exceptional psychological constitutions that allow them to negotiate the Catholic closet in a way that is manageable for them. Both men may continue to teach in Catholic schools because no other viable option is available. They may continue to teach in Catholic schools because their strong loyalty to the Catholic faith keeps them there. Whatever their reasons for continuing to teach in a Catholic school, only Mark and John can know if they are experiencing a type of job burnout.

Interestingly, the opposite of job burnout occurs if employees are able to be open about their homosexuality while at work. In their study about the relationships between communication about sexual orientation and work attitudes, discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, Day and Schoenrade (1997) find that workers who are free to be more open about their sexuality are more committed to the organization that employs them, experience less conflict between work and home, and have higher job satisfaction. Matthew is an excellent example of this. After he got fired from the Catholic school where he was teaching religion, Matthew eventually found work as a substitute teacher at an alternative high school with the public system. On this transition, Matthew says, "It was absolutely amazing for me to go from a board where I was in the classroom closet to being out and having so many gay students." Matthew was actively engaged with his job at the alternative high school and felt honoured to be a part of the school's "anti-homophobia days." He was so committed to the school, in fact, that

he voluntarily returned to participate two more times in the annual anti-homophobia days even after he was no longer on the payroll.

Being out at work is not just a benefit to the lesbian or gay teacher – students and employers also stand to gain as well. LGBTQ teachers who can be out at work are more likely to actively engage in their jobs, experience greater job satisfaction, and provide healthy role models for queer youth. It is obviously in the best interests of "all involved in Catholic education" to create school environments in which LGBTQ teachers can be out at work.

Messages for Pedagogical Policy

According to statistics on the Canadian workforce available from the 2001 Canada Census, an increased demand for highly skilled workers, coupled with an aging population, spells a significant labour shortage on the horizon (Statistics Canada, 2003). This means that at some point in the near future Canadian employers will have to devise incentives to retain young, skilled workers. If Canadian Catholic school boards continue to maintain a homophobic and heterosexist work environment, young gay and lesbian teachers are not likely to choose Catholic schools as potential places of employment. Even with conservative estimates that place homosexual people at only ten per cent of the population, not having access to that ten per cent could have dire consequences for an employer during a labour shortage. While my study on the experiences of seven gay and lesbian teachers in Canadian Catholic schools is not easily generalizable to the larger Canadian population, the fact that four out of seven participants are no longer teaching with Catholic school boards suggests that these employers are not doing all that they can to retain this valuable human resource.

One of those four was fired for being a "practicing homosexual," another suspects he was not hired because of his queer activism, and the two others chose to leave in order to escape an increasingly stifling homophobic work environment. When one looks at the reasons these four are no longer teaching in Catholic schools, it becomes apparent that some Catholic school boards in Canada are not only unsuccessful at retaining their queer teachers, but are actively seeking ways to force them out. These queer teachers were made to feel unwelcome in their

Catholic schools through a process that I call the institutionalization of homophobia.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four of this Master's thesis show how homophobia is sanctioned and institutionalized in Canadian Catholic schools. Chapter Two, Theoretical Framework, shows how homophobia functions as a structure in Canadian Catholic schools. Chapter Three, Document Analysis, demonstrates that Catholic doctrine about homosexuality is not only contradictory but also fundamentally homophobic and is therefore not appropriate for dissemination in publicly funded Catholic schools. This is especially evident in a country such as Canada that is highly progressive in advancing same-sex legal rights to its citizens. Chapter Four, the Narrative Vignettes, shows that it is not safe for lesbian and gay teachers to be open about their sexuality in their Canadian Catholic schools. Each of these chapters point to an institutionalization of homophobia that creates a particular Catholic closet for queer teachers in Canadian Catholic schools.

It will become increasingly difficult for Catholic school districts, though, to keep queer teachers contained in this Catholic closet in Canada. Since the gay liberation movement in the latter half of the 20th century, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer people in the Western part of the world have started to embrace their queerness and assert a new sense of identity – one based on taking pride in being queer. This new sense of pride has found its way into the dominant heterosexual culture, which has slowly started to show signs of societal acceptance of queer individuals. These social advances were likely not lost on

queer Catholics who would have seen that they, too, have the right to be open about their sexuality.

Once those same queer Catholics came to teach for Catholic schools, however, they found themselves in environments that were completely oblivious to social advances gained by the gay liberation movement, or advances in same-sex legal rights fought in Canadian courts. The participants in my study found that, in order to continue teaching with their chosen Catholic boards, they would have to live a double life in which they were closeted at work and out only when safely away from work. Several of the participants found that having to manage a double life exacted a heavy toll on their health and happiness. The only participants who are able to manage the Catholic closet with any efficiency are those who have at least 20 years of experience negotiating the exceptionally closeted environments of the priesthood or a small northern community. Those who are not fortified with this type of life experience were only able to escape the Catholic closet once they were no longer teaching in a Catholic school.

The results from my study show that the effects of the Catholic closet are so powerful that many lesbian and gay teachers in Catholic schools either search for ways to escape their homophobic work environments, or are forced out of them through homophobic hiring and firing practices. Finding a way out, or being forced out, may take years. During this time, lesbian and gay teachers must learn to live the double life that the Catholic closet demands. Those who choose to stay are so skilled at managing a double life that they believe that their sexual orientation is successfully concealed from their colleagues or superiors.

A gay or lesbian teacher's ability to cope with the Catholic closet for an extended period of time seems to be related to his or her psychological health and life circumstances and/or experiences. Whether a gay or lesbian teacher must negotiate the Catholic closet for two or 20 years, she or he is at risk of experiencing what Sandfort, Bos, and Vet (2006) describe as job burnout. According to Sandfort, Bos, and Vet (2006), job burnout, characterized by feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced competence, can occur when one is forced to conceal one's sexual orientation at work or when one is subjected to sustained homophobic discrimination in the workplace.

After less than two years of teaching for her current Catholic board, Mary describes a sense of shame, anxiety, and "angst" when she thinks about how dishonest she has to be about her life while at work. She says her inability to be honest with people means she is not really connecting with anyone. She is constantly fearful that someone may find out she is a lesbian and that she may lose her job because of it. Likewise, Luke looks back at the three years he spent teaching for a Catholic school board and concludes that "at the time, generally, it was just a job." On the fact that he cannot be out at work, Paul comments that he feels it is hypocritical to strive for authentic assessment in the classroom when he cannot even be authentic as a teacher. Paul wonders whether he has "the temperament, or the desire, or the commitment, to put up with the daily – because it is daily – insults to [his] dignity and the dignity of gay people known and unknown in the school system." Similarly, Matthew observes that gay and lesbian

teachers have been "closeted and beaten into submission into [Catholic] halls of silence for so long that it perpetuates all forms of homophobia."

While it is clear that some lesbian and gay teachers in Canadian Catholic schools experience the type of job burnout that Sandfort, Bos, and Vet (2006) describe, they are not the only ones paying a price for the institutionalized homophobia in the workplace. Canadian Catholic school boards also lose out in the sense that an employee who is experiencing job burnout will be less productive and more likely to be absent from work due to short or long term sick leaves or absenteeism in the form of "mental health" days. An absent or less productive employee can put undue financial strain on an organization. Additionally, as Day and Schoenrade (1997) point out, workers who are able to be out about their sexual orientation at work are more committed to the organization that employs them, experience less conflict between work and home, and have higher job satisfaction. Committed and happy employees mean greater productivity and greater quality of work produced.

Along with the money a Catholic school board would save from having committed, happy, and healthy teachers on staff, there is an additional benefit to students. Catholic students would benefit from gay and lesbian teachers who are free to be open about their sexuality at work because these teachers would be happier, healthier and more committed to their teaching career. There is a big difference between a teacher who is committed to her work because she feels valued and appreciated by her employers and a teacher who is committed to her work because she is trying to avoid getting fired by her employers. Theoretically,

a lesbian teacher who has a strong sense of belonging in the workplace would be more committed to her employers and more authentically invested in the quality of work performed. If gay and lesbian teachers could be out about their sexuality while teaching in Catholic schools, students would benefit not only because a non-closeted teacher would be more relaxed and comfortable in the classroom, but also because students would have an opportunity to learn about a rarely discussed population. Non-closeted lesbian and gay teachers in Catholic schools could act as positive role models for an often misunderstood and maligned population.

If lesbian and gay teachers could be out about their sexuality while teaching in a Catholic school, they could provide an important service to their employer in terms of diversity awareness. Both Bishop Henry and the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (OCCB) demonstrate knowledge of the fact that homosexuals "are often the victims of verbal, physical and more subtle forms of abuse [and that] suicide rates among homosexual students are higher than those of their heterosexual peers" (OCCB, 2003, p. 3). As leaders in their faith communities, these bishops could be instrumental in reducing homophobic violence in Canadian Catholic schools by encouraging lesbian and gay teachers to come out of their Catholic closets and provide positive role models for Catholic students. If students could see that their healthy, happy, well-adjusted, and committed English teacher is actually a lesbian, maybe they would start to realize that it really is "okay to be gay." Simply allowing lesbian and gay teachers to be out at work could go a long way toward reducing homophobic violence in

Canadian Catholic schools. Rather than regarding gay and lesbian teachers as a subversive element that poses a threat to the dominant heterosexual culture of Catholic schools, Canadian Catholic bishops could start to look upon gay and lesbian teachers as important allies in achieving their stated goal of reducing homophobic violence in Canadian Catholic schools.

Rather than looking upon the probably steady attrition of gay and lesbian teachers from Canadian Catholic schools as some kind of Darwinian natural selection that cannot be helped, Catholic school boards across Canada that want to reduce homophobic violence in their schools could start to see their gay and lesbian teachers as critical assets that should be nurtured and cultivated. Even if Catholic school boards cannot be motivated by this altruistic cause, they may find the impending labour shortage in Canada will force them to start thinking of ways to retain their teachers – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and heterosexual queer allies. In addition to the demands of the labour shortage, Catholic school boards in Canada may be increasingly faced with having to develop new policy to appropriately respond to lesbian and gay teachers in their employ who have legally gotten married to their same sex partners.

Instead of being reactive to the topic of homosexuality, Canadian Catholic school districts could start seeing the social and legal advances in Canadian society regarding same-sex rights as an opportunity to be proactive. Officials from Canadian Catholic school districts could work together with their local bishops to develop policy regarding homosexuality that is more reflective of Canadian cultural diversity and Canadian laws. The time has come for publicly-funded

Catholic school districts in Canada to start recognizing their civil responsibilities in upholding various bodies of human rights legislation that protect against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Indeed, if they were to do so, they would be heeding the call of Pope John Paul II to develop local catechisms that adapt Catholic doctrine so that it is more responsive to the "differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and ecclesial condition among those to whom it is addressed" (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994, p. 15). Only upon the development of a proactive policy regarding homosexuality will Canadian Catholic schools become truly safe and caring environments for *all* teachers and students.

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Appendix A – Interview Questions

The following research questions serve as a guide to the investigation:

The Personal

1. Tell us about yourself. Tell us about whom you are as a person?
2. How do you describe yourself as a sexual person?
3. What does it mean to you to be out?
4. Does it matter to you whether or not you are out?
5. How do you think having to hide or being silent affects a LGBT person?
6. Have the issues of hiding or being silent affected your life? If they have, how?
7. How do you think your experiences as a LGBT person compare to other LGBT persons?
8. Have you experienced homophobia in your personal or professional lives? If you did, how did you respond to it?

The Professional

1. Can you be out in your teacher's workplace?
2. What supports/barriers affect your LGBT visibility in your workplace?
3. How do you think being a LGBT person affects your career? Do you think it affects your career and how you are viewed as a teacher? Do you think it affects, for example, your ability to be promoted?
4. Does it matter to you that on May 20, 2000, delegates at the AGM of the Alberta Teachers' Association voted so that teachers now have the right to be protected against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation?
5. As a LGBT person what type of support do you expect from your association? Have you checked to see if any supports are in place?
6. As a LGBT person what type of support do you expect from your school district? Have you checked to see if any supports are in place?
7. How are things for LGBT persons in your school? Are their any school policies to deal with discrimination against LGBT teachers and students? Is

your school a supportive environment? How do other groups like parents or church groups affect what your school might do in terms of LGBT rights?

8. Are things any better for you personally or professionally because of protections included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Alberta human rights code? Or because of moves forward in the courts exemplified by the Delwin Vriend case?

9. From you experience, have things changed for LGBT teachers and students since you began teaching?

The Pedagogical

1. How do you think teachers have helped or hindered efforts to deal with prejudice against LGBT persons and homophobia in schools?

2. Have you developed or used teaching strategies or techniques for dealing with the issues of homophobia and building valued spaces and respect for LGBT persons?

3. Is work being done in your school to focus on sexual orientation issues in curriculum and instruction? In co-curricular activities such as guest speakers or student-support groups?

4. Has there been discussion in your school around including a focus on sexual orientation? What issues have teacher colleagues, parents, and other groups raised in these discussions? How do supporters of a focus on sexual orientation deal with those teachers and parents who resist such a focus or are silent around it? How do supporters deal with the challenges and risks that arise because of resistance?

5. Have you participated in any professional development activities designed to help you address issues of sexual orientation in your school?

6. If you address issues of sexual orientation are you being an advocate or an activist? What are the positives and negatives of doing this work? Of not doing this work?

Appendix B – Research Participant Consent Letter

Date:

Attention: [Insert Name]

Re: ***Participation in a national research project entitled Welfare-and-Work Issues for LGBTQ and Allied Teachers in Canada: Legislative, Legal, and Educational Policy Contexts Impacting their Personal and Professional Lives***

You are invited to participate in this study for which support has been obtained through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council: Standard Operating Grant. The purpose of this study is to research LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, and queer) and allied teachers' lives, welfare, and work, and the contexts shaping them. In Phase I, the research chronicled and analyzed legislative, legal, and educational policy documents impacting welfare and work for Canadian LGBTQ teachers. In Phase II, in which you are invited to participate, the research will use life-narrative research and open-ended interviews to investigate welfare-and-work issues from teachers' perspectives. It will be carried out as stated, and there is no deception involved.

This research project is intended to gather information from teachers that will be useful to other teachers, teachers' federations/associations, and other educational interest groups that develop policies affecting teachers' welfare and work in schools as teachers' workplaces.

The following research questions serve as a guide to the investigation:

The Personal

1. Can you tell us about your school and teaching experience as an LGBTQ teacher doing inclusive work in relation to sex, sexual, and gender differences?

2. As an allied teacher can tell us about your school and teaching experience as an ally doing inclusive work in relation to sex, sexual, and gender differences?

3. For LGBTQ teachers: Have the issues of hiding or being silent affected your life? If they have, how?

4. For allied teachers: What concerns do you have about addressing LGBTQ issues in the curriculum or in co-curricular activities? If you've done this work, how has it affected you?

5. Have you experienced or witnessed homophobia in your personal or professional lives? Did it overwhelm you? Did you ignore it, resist it, or did you find ways to be deal with it?

The Professional

1. How are things for LGBTQ persons in your school? Are their any school policies to deal with discrimination against LGBTQ teachers and students? Is your school a supportive environment?

2. What supports/barriers affect your ability to engage LGBTQ issues in your workplace?

3. For LGBTQ teachers: How do you think being a LGBTQ person affects your career? Do you think it affects how you are viewed as a teacher? Do you think it affects, for example, your ability to be tenured or promoted?

4. For allied teachers: How do you feel being involved in LGBTQ initiatives in your school or community affects your career? Do you think it affects how you are viewed as a teacher? Do you think it affects, for example, your ability to be tenured or promoted?

5. Are you aware of any formal supports or resources for LGBTQ persons in your school, district, teacher association/federation, or community?

6. From your experience, have things changed for LGBTQ teachers and students since you began teaching? If they have, why do you think they have changed?

The Pedagogical

1. In your experience, are LGBTQ issues included in the curriculum or in the teaching practices in your school?

2. Has there been discussion in your school around including foci on sexual orientation or gender identity? What issues have teacher colleagues, parents, and other interest groups highlighted in these discussions? How do supporters of positive action around sexual orientation or gender identity deal with those teachers and parents who resist such action or are silent around it?

3. Have you developed or used teaching strategies or techniques for dealing with the issues of homophobia and building valued spaces and respect for LGBTQ persons?

4. Do you utilize co-curricular activities such as guest speakers or student-support groups?

5. Do you do this work alone or with support? What kind of risks are you taking when you do this work?

Your participation in this national research project is important to expand our capacity to address issues affecting the welfare and work of LGBTQ and allied teachers in school settings. To collect data, a multi-method strategy that utilizes two methods – narrative writing and interviews – will be used. It is anticipated that narrative writing will take one hour and the interview will take one-half hour. Although you will be contacted to confirm that you are in receipt of this invitation, please do not hesitate to contact me using the information in the heading if you need further clarification.

You are invited to sign this consent letter in the space provided below once you read the following guidelines for participation:

- As a research participant, you are asked to sign this consent letter to participate.

- You will have the right to refrain from answering any particular questions, and you will have the right to opt out of the research at any time without penalty.

- Processes to provide accuracy of data, security, confidentiality, and anonymity are implemented in the design of the study. A technical recording device will be used to ensure accuracy of data collected from the interviews. Security and confidentiality measures will be implemented, including the back up of data, secure storage of tapes, and a plan for deleting electronic and taped data.

- Only the researcher and his research assistants and transcriber, all of whom are required to sign confidentiality agreements, will have access to data and information. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms will be used.

- You agree that my graduate research assistants and I can use information in secondary writing beyond the research report, which includes such writing as conference papers, book chapters,

or journal articles. The same ethical considerations and safeguards will apply to secondary uses of data.

- You will be able to review research material as part of an iterative process. You will be provided with drafts of analyses for correction, amendment, and editing. Your interpretations, resistances, and challenges will be taken into account in rewriting and editing processes.

- You will be provided with a copy of the research report culminating from this national study.

Consent to participate in a national research project entitled Welfare-and-Work Issues for LGBTQ and Allied Teachers in Canada: Legislative, Legal, and Educational Policy Contexts Impacting their Personal and Professional Lives.

Participant's Name: _____ (please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: _____ (please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Should you have any questions or concerns during any part of the research process, please contact:

André P. Grace, Ph. D.
Tel: (780) 492–0767 Fax: (780) 492–2024
E-mail: andre.grace@ualberta.ca

Appendix B – Research Assistant/Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

André P. Grace, Ph. D.
Department of Educational Policy Studies
7-104 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5
Tel: (780) 492–0767 Fax: (780) 492–2024 E-mail:
andre.grace@ualberta.ca

Attention:

_____

[Research Assistant or Transcriber's Name]

Re: ***Confidentiality agreement regarding involvement in a national research project entitled Welfare-and-Work Issues for LGBTQ and Allied Teachers in Canada: Legislative, Legal, and Educational Policy Contexts Impacting their Personal and Professional Lives***

Because LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, and queer) teachers often have to hide their sex, sexual, and/or gender differences in order to work, I understand and accept that I am required to maintain strict anonymity and confidentiality in regard to this national study. Therefore I agree to treat all information and materials confidentially and to respect the right of all research participants to anonymity as two terms of my involvement in this national study. I will not discuss or share the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than Dr. André P. Grace, the principal researcher, his graduate research assistants, and transcriber.

The purpose of this study is to research teachers' lives, welfare, and work, and the contexts shaping them in relation to LGBTQ issues and educational work. In Phase I, research chronicled and analyzed legislative, legal, and educational policy documents impacting welfare and work for Canadian LGBTQ teachers. Phase II will use a multi-method research design – life-narrative research and open-ended interviews - to investigate welfare-and-work issues from teachers' perspectives. In my involvement with this study I will comply with using processes to provide accuracy of data, security, confidentiality, and anonymity that have been implemented in the design of the study.

These include the following processes:

- A technical recording device will be used to ensure accuracy of data collected from the interviews.

- Security and confidentiality measures will be implemented, including the back up of data, secure storage of tapes, and a plan for deleting electronic and taped data.

- Only Dr. Grace, his research assistants, and transcriber will have access to data and information.

- To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms will be used.

- I will return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to Dr. Grace when I have completed the research tasks.

- After consulting with Dr. Grace, I will erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the principal researcher (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive).

Confidentiality agreement to assist in a national research project entitled Welfare-and-Work Issues for LGBTQ and Allied Teachers in Canada: Legislative, Legal, and Educational Policy Contexts Impacting their Personal and Professional Lives

Research Assistant's/Transcriber's Print Name:

_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Print Name:

_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____