

SEXUAL DIVERSITY AND DIVINE CREATION: A TIGHTROPE WALK BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE

by Yiftach Fehige

Abstract. Although modern societies have come to recognize diversity in human sexuality as simply part of nature, many Christian communities and thinkers still have considerable difficulties with related developments in politics, legislation, and science. In fact, homosexuality is a recurrent topic in the transdisciplinary encounter between Christianity and the sciences, an encounter that is otherwise rather “asexual.” I propose that the recent emergence of “Christianity and Science” as an academic field in its own right is an important part of the larger context of the difficulties related to attempts to reconcile Christianity and a recognition of diversity in human sexuality as a norm. Through a critical discussion of arguments which are upheld most disturbingly on a global scale by the Roman Catholic Church and supported with much sophistry by important stakeholders of an influential stream in analytic philosophy of religion, this paper aims to contextualize and defend the legitimacy of the question why God would create homosexuals *as such* if it is true that every homosexual act is prohibited by God. While recently advanced nonheterosexual scientific models of sexuality in nature inform the discussion, I reject the simplistic view that religions suppress and the sciences liberate in matters sexual.

Keywords: analytic philosophy; biblical fundamentalism; chastity; Christianity; creation; homosexuality; modern science; Roman Catholicism; Joan Roughgarden; Richard Swinburne; theistic Darwinism

Both science and religious doctrine are complicit in the persecution of gay, lesbian, and transgender people. (Roughgarden 2011, 101)

It was not until very recently that “Christianity and Science” emerged as an academic field in its own right (see Dixon 2010, 13–17). There are a number of reasons for this development (see Fehige forthcoming), but only one of them is of relevance in the context of this paper, namely the emergence of a certain kind of philosophy of religion in the tradition of analytic philosophy. That is to say that I contend that a certain way of

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doing analytic philosophy of religion is an important part of the reason why homosexuality remains unnecessarily a matter of dispute in “Christianity and Science.” It is the principal aim of this paper to substantiate this contention in order to make a positive case for the need of a genuine interdisciplinary Christian theology of sexual diversity, which might be characterized as a tightrope walk between a highly reflective religious faith in the Christian tradition and philosophically nuanced scientific claims about human sexuality.

In the following, I will proceed as follows. In the first section I will justify my belief that analytic philosophy of religion in its dominant stream, or mainstream as defined in the first section, has played a considerable role in the recent emergence of the field of “Christianity and Science.” To my knowledge, the contributions of analytic philosophy of religion to the rise of “Christianity and Science” have not yet been discussed in the literature, and with this paper I hope to initiate such a discussion.

In the second section, I will briefly review the paradigm change that has taken place in the Christian theology of revelation in order to provide sufficient context for the claims of the British analytic philosopher Richard Swinburne that the Christian doctrine of a divine prohibition of all homosexual acts is genuinely part of a divine revelation and that it can be used to demonstrate the truth and superiority of the Christian religion.

Use will be made of the work of Richard Swinburne in this paper to argue that central premises of one of the current mainstreams in analytic philosophy of religion confine us to an approach to matters of human sexuality that unnecessarily risks a conflict between religious faith and the sciences. In dealing with Swinburne’s defense of the view that all homosexual acts are divinely prohibited, this paper argues from a philosophical point of view; the faith commitment of Swinburne in the tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy is of secondary importance. In referring to the Roman Catholic teaching on homosexuality, however, this paper keeps the faith perspective in sight and, as it were, fills Swinburne’s abstract philosophical considerations about revelation and sexual ethics with the life of a vibrant religious community of worldwide significance.

Both of the main reference points of this paper, Swinburne and the Roman Catholic magisterium, are mutually supportive. That is to say that Swinburne’s philosophy of religion can easily be adopted to support genuine Catholic doctrines (such as the complementarity of scripture and tradition as genuine sources of revelation), and that, on a global scale, the Roman Catholic Church, in facing objections based on scientific evidence and philosophical reasoning, is probably the most influential defender of Swinburne’s view that it is part of authentic Christianity to maintain that all homosexual acts are prohibited by God.

This is not to say that Swinburne and the Roman Catholic magisterium say always exactly the same thing. In fact, it is part of the aim of this

paper to bring out the differences in order to assess the plausibility of the specific arguments that are presented by Swinburne and the Roman Catholic magisterium in their defense of the divine prohibition of all homosexual acts.

Noteworthy in the present context is that both agree on an integration model for relating Christianity and science. That means in the present context: Swinburne and the Roman Catholic magisterium affirm that the employment of evidence both from revelation and nature results in an anthropology according to which human nature is heterosexual by conceptual necessity. Such an anthropology, I will show, is unsupportable in light of philosophical considerations and scientific findings about human sexuality, as well as in the light of metatheological reflections with regard to the notion of revelation, and especially the role of tradition in relation to it. To this end, I will discuss in detail what I believe are the main arguments supporting the anthropology in question.

The third section introduces systematically the claim that all homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and defends the legitimacy of the question whether or not God creates homosexuals *as such*. The fourth section deals with the view that all homosexuals have a vocation to a life in chastity, and the fifth and sixth sections with the contention that homosexuals actually don't exist in the way we can say heterosexuals do.

I wish to show that the arguments in support of the claim of a divine prohibition of all homosexual acts are a function of a fundamental dilemma which both an influential stream in current Christian analytic philosophy, such as practiced by Swinburne, and the Roman Catholic magisterium face: either homosexuals *as such* have been created by God or there aren't any homosexuals. In the former case Christianity runs into an agnosticism that (a) ignores the fact that sexuality is an important theme in the Bible, and (b) undermines the claim that in Jesus Christ God has spoken the last word to shed light on the meaning of human life, of which sexuality is an important dimension. In the latter case, Christianity risks conflict with the sciences. I do believe that there are good conflicts, but conflict with the sciences over homosexuality is not one of them, and it is obviously in tension with an integration model for relating Christianity and the sciences to which both Swinburne and the Roman Catholic Church are committed.

THE EMERGENCE OF "CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE"

"Christianity and Science" is probably the "engine" and the biggest and most visible subfield of the growing field of "Science and Religion" (see Harrison 2010b, 41). Philosophy in the analytic tradition has been an important factor, I propose, in the emergence of the academic field of "Christianity and Science" and thus of "Science and Religion." At this point, it is still difficult to assess the actual impact of analytic philosophy

of religion on the emergence of this field, and in what follows I do no more than venture on new ground in an explorative spirit.

After the fall of logical positivism in the 1960s, an analytic philosophy of religion emerged which, according to the Canadian analytic philosopher John L. Schellenberg, in its dominant stream is a mixture of conservative Christianity and analytic philosophy. Schellenberg's observation requires two qualifications. First, the word "conservative" is not used here in a pejorative way. What is meant is a commitment to Christian doctrine as it was defined in the past by a particular Christian denomination. This commitment can but does not have to extend to social conservatism. Of course, quite often this is exactly what happens, for example, when it comes to matters of human sexuality (see, e.g., Portman 2003; Rayside 2008, 34–40; Young 2006). Second, analytic philosophy comes in many different streams. Contrary to widespread belief, there has never been only one school of analytic philosophy, and differences with other philosophical schools has become increasingly blurred over the last decades.

Schellenberg (2009) argues in a plausible manner that influential analytic philosophers of Christian faith have turned analytic philosophy of religion into a branch of conservative Christian theology, a claim that coheres well with the observation that traditional Christian theology has become "a marginalized discipline in contemporary intellectual life" (Klemm and Klink 2003, 495; see also Conway Morris 2003, 316), which is especially true as far as the renewed conversation between Christianity and Science is concerned (see, e.g., Dawkins 2006, 57). In other words, in light of Schellenberg's observations I propose to consider the possibility that a good part of traditional Christian theology has migrated into mainstream analytic philosophy of religion.

Schellenberg provides the following evidence for his characterization of what he considers to be the mainstream of analytic philosophy of religion:

- The term "Christian philosophy"—highly contested for good philosophical reasons (see Heidegger 1961, 6)—is back on the scene.
- In the United States, the Society of Christian Philosophers has grown to well over a 1,000 members and is now the largest single-interest group among American philosophers.
- Belief in God is taken for granted in philosophical discourse on religion, unless the existence of God is the topic under consideration.
- We can find discussions of Christian doctrine (like Incarnation, Trinity, etc.) in textbooks of philosophy of religion.
- The central issue in philosophy of religion is the theism/atheism divide.

The recollections of the American analytic philosopher of religion Philip Clayton (2010), help to bring out the contrast between today's situation in mainstream analytic philosophy of religion as described by Schellenberg (2009) and the time before the rise of an analytic philosophy of religion when logical positivism had a firm grip on analytic philosophy. Logical positivism was *positivistic* in that it recognized only those synthetic statements as cognitively meaningful for which there is a method of verification such that supportive evidence can be provided which is positively given in sense perception. It was *logical* insofar as it treated all other cognitively meaningful statements as analytic, and defined analyticity in terms of logical truth. Theological statements were rejected by logical positivists as cognitively meaningless because they could not be supported by evidence through sense perception and because they violated basic grammatical rules, which were taken to be a function of logical truth. Thus, back then, analytic philosophy did not have much respect for other ways of philosophizing nor did it care much for theological topics as they used to be treated in the philosophical tradition (see Clayton 2010, 140).

The fact that Oxford University Press publishes more books in philosophy of religion than in any other philosophical area, and that most of them are dedicated to very traditional theological topics, authored by self-identified analytic philosophers of religion, and in conversation with different philosophical schools, shows impressively that the situation as recalled by Clayton has long been overcome.

The rise and dominance of a certain way of doing analytic philosophy of religion as described by Schellenberg (2009) is of interest in the present context because, compared to other significant philosophical schools, since its inception analytic philosophy has had the strongest interest in and appreciation of the sciences as "the most highly developed form of the search for knowledge" (Hempel 1981/2000, 269). This positive attitude toward science has taken on different forms in analytic philosophy (e.g., in the form of logical positivism) and, I propose, has shaped to a great degree mainstream analytic philosophy of religion as described by Schellenberg. This is clearly evidenced in Richard Swinburne's very influential "philosophy of the Christian religion."¹ Swinburne argues "that it is very important to have a true religious belief, and that the best we can do towards getting one is to investigate" (Swinburne 2005, 123). Such investigation is modeled on scientific inquiry in three respects. First, it proceeds by means of formalization. Second, it seeks to gain empirical evidence for the truth of Christian theism. Third, it employs reasoning strategies that are claimed to be indispensable in science when assessing the theoretical merit of empirical phenomena.

For example, Swinburne's formal proof for the existence of God from the physical universe takes the existence and the nature of our universe in support of a (Christian) theism as an empirical hypothesis and rules out

competing theological explanations of the universe (such as polytheism and deism) on the basis of considerations of simplicity which are deemed by Swinburne to be very crucial and sometimes without an alternative in scientific reasoning when evaluating the tenability of a theory of very large scope (see Swinburne 2004, 145).

Swinburne's approach, like Alvin Plantinga's (see Plantinga 2011), is, I contend, representative of mainstream analytic philosophy of religion as characterized by Schellenberg (2009), and his philosophy illustrates, much better than Plantinga's, the power to facilitate the encounter between Christianity and the sciences. Plantinga calls Swinburne the greatest natural theologian in Christian history (see Plantinga 2010). In my view, in addition to many other factors (see Harrison 2010a, 1–4) philosophy as practiced by Swinburne has contributed in important ways to the emergence of "Christianity and Science" and thus of "Science and Religion" as an academic field in its own right. While this is certainly a positive development from the perspective of those who welcome the closer examination of the relationship between Christianity and the sciences, it has a downside which plays out in the unfortunate controversy over homosexuality and helps to bring to light the conservatism highlighted by Schellenberg (2009) in his characterization of mainstream analytic philosophy of religion.

The conservatism comes out most clearly in the stance that Swinburne takes on matters of human sexuality, homosexuality in particular (see Swinburne 2007, 289–332). He takes traditional Christian sexual ethics as evidence for the truth of Christianity as a revealed religion and with respect to homosexuality claims that God imposed "on humans [. . .] the command not to commit homosexual acts" (Swinburne 2008, 221). He does so in a way that demonstrates a genuine conservatism primarily in response to significant developments in the theology of revelation and the sciences. Let us begin with his reaction to the former before moving on to his response to the latter.

THE BIBLE, FUNDAMENTALISM, AND CONSERVATISM

Swinburne considers "the most controversial topics on which Christians have claimed the authority of revelation for their views" (Swinburne 2007, v) , including the prohibition of all homosexual acts. He concludes that the controversial ethical claims in question are well justified because Swinburne thinks he has successfully demonstrated that "God has a reason to issue the relevant command" (Swinburne 2007, 332) corresponding to particular ethical norms. His demonstrations are embedded in a theory of revelation that responds to recent developments in the way biblical scholarship and thus Christian theology studies and takes into account Scripture.

Obviously significant for the discussion of homosexuality in the Christian context is the paradigm shift that took place in the second

half of the twentieth century concerning the way theology conceives of divine revelation, because it is claimed by Swinburne and others that we can obtain evidence from Scripture to support the view that God prohibits every homosexual act. It is a moral obligation which can “plausibly be regarded as true in virtue of a command of God to fulfil them” (Swinburne 2008, 221).

Divine revelation is now widely conceived in terms of a personal-dialogical encounter between God and humanity (see Schmidt-Leukel 1999, 141–60), and not primarily as epiphany (God appears in something else) or as an instruction of statements (God dictates sentential truths). This paradigm shift in theology of revelation has resulted in the necessity to rethink the theological theorem that God is the source of moral obligation in that God reveals moral truths, including the alleged prohibition of all homosexual acts. To do exactly this is part of the central aim of Swinburne (2007).

To further flesh out the context of the project undertaken by Swinburne (2007), it is from the standpoint of the new paradigm in theology of revelation that we must say that it is a “fiction that there is a single biblical sexual standard. [. . .] The Bible does not offer a systematic set of teachings or a single sexual code, but it does reveal sometimes conflicting attempts on the part of people and groups to define sexual morality, and to do so in the name of God” (Knust 2011, 8 and 17). This dismissal of Scripture as a handbook of sexual ethics follows for at least two reasons from the nature of personal-dialogical encounters which are at the heart of the personal-dialogical model of revelation:

First, personal-dialogical encounters are ambiguous and can, therefore, involve misapprehensions as far as God’s intentions at the time of the occurrence of these encounters are concerned (see Nay 1999, 342). Second, personal-dialogical encounters as well as the testimony to them have a socio-cultural context. The biblical testimony to these encounters can therefore be misleading when reviewed within a different sociocultural context.

Related to this are the developments in biblical scholarship as far as biblical anthropology in general, and those biblical passages in particular are concerned which matter for the discussion over homosexuality, like Gen. 18:1–19:38 which has been shown not to be about homosexuality in the first place but about hospitality (see, e.g., Myers and Scanzoni 2005, 85–88).

The personal-dialogical model of revelation accommodates well the theological heterogeneity of Scripture. This in turn explains the ongoing struggle for a biblical hermeneutics in order to read Scripture as a unity. Simplified, the “unity” of Scripture is not given to faith but is the result of a faithful reading (see, e.g., Söding 2005).

The developments in the theology of revelation are the main theological context of Swinburne’s conservative but not fundamentalist views about homosexuality. It is not a fundamentalism if we define fundamentalism as

a literal reading of the Bible which is motivated by an equation of the Bible with revelation. Swinburne explicitly rejects the view that the Bible and revelation are identical (see Swinburne 2007, 136–37), and designs in a very scientific manner “four tests” that he employs in order to determine whether or not (a doctrine or) an ethical norm is of divine origin obtained through revelation. According to Swinburne, biblical norms are not self-justificatory. Even norms of Christian sexual ethics contained in the Bible require scrutiny along the lines of his four tests of revelation. Assuming that there is sufficient reason for the claim that a God as defined by classical theism would reveal godself, any norm of sexual ethics, according to Swinburne, is genuinely part of the revelation as confessed by Christians and thus a genuine Christian doctrine if and only if (1) the content of the norm is of the kind we would expect God to reveal, (2) the norm has been confirmed (in isolation or as part of a set of propositions) by a miracle and thus bears God’s signature, (3) the norm has been maintained and developed throughout the history of Christianity (*linearity in growth of the tradition*), and (4) the norm is defined by an authentic Christian church in a publicly accessible way (*consistency of the tradition*) whenever it can be shown that a particular norm was not part of the original revelation in Jesus Christ (see Swinburne 2007, 107–31).

As far as the prohibition of all homosexual acts is concerned, the application of the four tests results in the conclusion that “it must count as a central Christian doctrine” (Swinburne 2007, 303). It is “a central church doctrine” (Swinburne 2008, 223). As such, this prohibition is further evidence for the truth of Christianity because it is assumed on grounds of philosophical reasons that God as defined by classical theists, like Swinburne, will reveal godself in the form of ethical norms, such as the prohibition of all homosexual acts. As the norm passes the four tests of revelation, we obtain further evidence that God did reveal godself in Jesus Christ and thus we obtain further support for the truth of Christianity. In return, to call into question the prohibition of all homosexual acts means to question the truth of the Christian faith.

Swinburne’s view on homosexuality is not fundamentalist but conservative insofar as he responds negatively to developments in the sciences and to both an exclusively historical-critical approach to the Bible and a transition in Christian theology toward a more positive approach to homosexuality as it took place in the course of the last decades (see McNeil 1993, 29–35, 129–49, 218–41). The latter is carried by the developments in Christian theology in favor of a personal-dialogical model of revelation which has led to an attenuation of the propositional side of revelation. Revelation is primarily an encounter between God and humans. The question of the origin of the corresponding propositions, such as the doctrine of the trinity, is secondary, although not irrelevant. The shift of attention away from the “mechanisms” of a verbal inspiration to a plurality of possible ways to express propositionally the historical encounters between God and

humans has resulted in a stronger awareness than before of the historical contingency and the sociocultural limits of revelation and doctrine as affirmed in the Christian tradition.

The resulting transition in Christian theology toward a more positive approach to homosexuality is apparent enough to provoke the protest of Christian thinkers who are worried that Christianity is about to be distorted (see Whitehead 2006). They accuse most Christian theologians of tacitly consenting to a view of homosexuality that is utterly non-Christian. Swinburne shares this view and supports the traditional claim that all homosexual acts are “intrinsically disordered.”

This view has been flourishing in the Christian context for a while and the Roman Catholic Church remains the most influential advocate of this view in the face of strong philosophical, theological, and scientific objections (see Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1975, 2003; Congregation for Catholic Education 2005). For reasons of simplicity, let us call this view the View of Intrinsic Disorder. Let us take this view to mean that homosexual acts are considered to be morally wrong *as such*. That is to say, homosexual acts are morally wrong whatever the *intentions of the agents* or the *consequences of these acts* are.

HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE ORDER OF CREATION

In the case of Swinburne, the View of Intrinsic Disorder is supported by arguments from revelation as sourced from Scripture and tradition (see Swinburne 2007, 303–06). Other defenders of this view prefer arguments from the so-called new natural law (see Finnis 1970), arguments Swinburne explicitly rejects (2007, 89–90 and 310–11). The View of Intrinsic Disorder triggers many questions, more than I can possibly address in what follows. Fortunately, it is not necessary to do so, because in our discussion of it we will focus on a question that has not received the attention it deserves in order to locate homosexuality as an interdisciplinary topic in the context of the encounter between Christianity and the sciences. The question that I have in mind was probably most persuasively raised by John McNeil (see, e.g., McNeil 1993, esp. xiv, 25; McNeil 2008; see also Helminiak 2006). It is, very broadly speaking, the question of whether or not homosexuality has a point. In other words: does homosexuality have a divine purpose? We are less interested in finding an answer to this question, which would require the development of an interdisciplinary theology of sexual diversity. Of interest, instead, are the implications of this question for the encounter between Christianity and the sciences, implications that have not been reflected on sufficiently.

Unlike in Duff (2000) and Helminiak (1987), this question, in the present context, is meant to read as follows: can Christianity accept the View of Intrinsic Disorder and avoid *either* agnosticism regarding the meaning of homosexuality *or* a conflict with the sciences? I will first justify

why the question in the way that I raise it is cognitively meaningful, and then show in the subsequent sections why a negative answer is more appropriate.

To accept the View of Intrinsic Disorder is the most effective way to provoke the question as to where to locate the origin of homosexual acts in the order of creation and thus of nature. We are here mainly interested in those homosexual acts that are the authentic sexual expression of a person *P1* who has a stronger, life-long disposition to homosexual acts than to heterosexual acts. The strength of this disposition toward homosexual acts is a function of comparison to a person *P2* who has a stronger, life-long disposition to heterosexual acts than to homosexual acts. Bearing in mind the limits of any definition in this area, let us call *P1* a homosexual and *P2* a heterosexual. When we come at a later point to discuss the claim that homosexuals don't actually exist it shall become clear that I introduce a formal definition of homosexuality at this point not only for reasons of terminological clarity or pedantry.

Given the Christian doctrine that God has brought about and sustains everything there is unless it is the result of a human free-will choice (like a homosexual act), we have a very good *prima facie* reason to assume that homosexuals are created *as such* by God. Since humans are, according to Christian teaching, created in the image of God, we have no *prima facie* theological reason to assume that it is impossible for God to create homosexuals as such, unless we are committed to a reading of this doctrine that imports a sexual dimorphism into God's nature and thus a normative heterosexuality into revelation. A reading of Gen. 1:27b to this effect seems implausible (see Di Vito 2010, 71–81). Let us therefore assume that God creates homosexuals, and call this assumption for reasons of simplicity the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such. At a later point in our discussion we will reflect on theological arguments that seem to suggest the theological impossibility of this view, given the View of Intrinsic Disorder. But these counter arguments to the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such are only intelligible once we have further clarified the tension between the two views.

Such clarification obtains if we consider three additional reasons in support of the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such. These reasons are more specific than those previously mentioned in that they relate more directly to the View of Intrinsic Disorder. First, the scope of the View of Intrinsic Disorder is only all homosexual *acts* and not all homosexual *persons*. It follows that the View of Intrinsic Disorder does not exclude the *logical* possibility that God creates homosexuals *as such* if the conceptual distinction between persons and acts is sound which I see no reason to question. In fact, the Roman Catholic support for the View of Intrinsic Disorder depends on this distinction. Second, it might be that the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such is *theologically* impossible. But the

View of Intrinsic Disorder itself does not provide any reason to support the claim that this is the case. It might suggest such an impossibility (given the tension between it and the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such) but does not necessitate it. Such a suggestion makes a closer analysis of the relationship between the two views necessary rather than superfluous. Third, the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such does not mean that God creates human beings who have no choice but must engage in homosexual acts. For the sake of the argument, I will follow Swinburne and assume that creation and free-will choices in matters of sexuality are compatible concepts (see Swinburne 2004, 112–31). If that were not the case then the View of Intrinsic Disorder would rule out by conceptual necessity the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such, because, according to Swinburne, God cannot do anything that is morally wrong given that God is perfectly good (see Swinburne 1993, 184–216). To create humans who cannot but engage in homosexual acts which, according to the View of Intrinsic Disorder, are morally wrong as such is something God, therefore, cannot do. But the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such only means that God brings into existence and sustains some humans who, compared to heterosexuals, have a life-long stronger disposition to homosexual than to heterosexual acts. Homosexuals have the free choice to act on this disposition, assuming that humans can make free-will choices at all.

As a result of the foregoing considerations, we obviously end up with a problem. God creates homosexuals as such but does not permit any homosexual acts. This amounts to a serious problem because it is not self-evident why God would do that. It is not self-evident because with respect to heterosexuality Christians claim that God creates heterosexuals *as such* and permits some kinds of heterosexual acts. While we certainly cannot fully understand God and everything God does, it is also true that God can do only what reason commands, according to Swinburne (see Swinburne 1993, 145–52), and that faith depends on true religious beliefs, which are acquired by serious investigation (see Swinburne 2005, 123). Such an investigation amounts therefore almost to a moral obligation if a problem obtains as it does from the conjunction of the View of Intrinsic Disorder and the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such. Since Swinburne and the Roman Catholic magisterium are integrationalists as far as the relationship between Christian doctrine and scientific knowledge is concerned and because Swinburne models the investigation into religious matters on scientific investigation, the analysis of the tension between the two views in question must necessarily take place at the intersection of Christianity and the sciences—whatever the particulars of what the sciences have to contribute to the better understanding of human sexuality. We will first explore the theological dimension of the tension between the two views in question before we engage with the scientific side of it.

CHASTITY AND HOMOSEXUALITY

In light of the problem that emerges from the conjunction of the two views under consideration, it becomes intelligible why a number of those Christian communities who affirm the View of Intrinsic Disorder teach that homosexuality implies a vocation to a chaste life. Let us call this claim the Chastity Claim.

Since the papal magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church began in 1976 to address explicitly the pastoral and moral issues concerning homosexuality in light of scientific and philosophical objections to the View of Intrinsic Disorder, it has been promoting the Chastity Claim tirelessly and, arguably, most influentially on a global scale (see McNeil 1993, xi–xxii; and Pope 2004, 534–39). The idea behind this claim is simple; namely, to provide a meaning for homosexuality, which becomes necessary given the tension between the View of Intrinsic Disorder and the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such. God has made them the way they are, despite the prohibition of all homosexual acts, because it is God’s way to call homosexuals to a life in chastity in order to reach “Christian perfection.”

The strength of the Chastity Claim is twofold. It correctly assumes that in the Christian tradition chastity has been considered a great moral good (see, e.g., *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2345). Since chastity is a great moral good, it seems *prima facie* plausible that God could create homosexuals as such and call them to a life in chastity in order to realize this good.

In addition, the claim under consideration directly answers the legitimate question posed by homosexuals as to why they are the way they are. The question is legitimate and the Chastity Claim therefore appropriate because sexuality is a very important dimension of human life and Christianity claims, metaphorically speaking, to find in Jesus Christ the remaining piece to complete the puzzle of human life. In the words of Edward Schillebeeckx: “If the historical life of Jesus of Nazareth is God’s decisive act in human history, as christianity [sic!] claims, then this is only meaningfully intelligible if the ultimate truth concerning man’s life is revealed and realised in an exemplary and normative way in the human life of Jesus, in contrast to all other historical events. God’s decisive act in human history must therefore be a unique culminating point in a series of revelations, the final revelation” (1974, 40). In other words, in my view, the Chastity Claim does justice to the universality and finality claimed by the Christian religion.

Despite the twofold strength of the claim in question, its weakness is that it remains very unclear in what sense homosexuals can be claimed to have a vocation to a chaste life in a way that the View of Intrinsic Disorder and the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such could be reconciled. Can one really say from the point of view of Christianity that

someone has a vocation to a chaste life just by identifying him or her as a homosexual and in applying the View of Intrinsic Disorder? Little has been done in Christian theology to clarify the very notion of a vocation. Thus, we cannot rely on a well-developed theology of vocation when dealing with the Chastity Claim. Let us, therefore, have a closer look at the nature of vocation and how it relates to chastity.

In the Christian tradition, chastity is one of three so-called evangelical counsels, alongside poverty and obedience. They are among the great moral goods to which Christianity is committed. But it is all too easily forgotten that according to this tradition every Christian must live a life in chastity (see, e.g., *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2348). In this sense, to have a vocation to a Christian life means to have a vocation to the three evangelical counsels, and thus also to a chaste life. But, of course, there are different forms in which the moral good of chastity can be realized in a Christian life (see, e.g., *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2349).

Members of a religious order, for example, have committed themselves to absolute sexual abstinence by taking the vows. Married people live chastity in a way that does not exclude sexual intercourse. Hence, we must distinguish between a vocation to a chaste life in a *broad sense* (namely to a Christian life including chastity, alongside the other two evangelical counsels, poverty and obedience) and a vocation to a chaste life in a *narrow sense* (namely to a particular way to live a Christian life).

Given these clarifications, we can raise the question whether or not it is theologically viable to claim that homosexuals have a vocation to a chaste life? To answer this question, we will need to state two basic theological facts about the nature of vocations.

The first is that there is a specific *order for every vocation that is recognized by a Christian community*: a person expresses, for the lack of a better word, the *conviction* that he or she has a vocation, and only then does the Christian community initiate a process of assessing whether or not a genuine vocation exists. In other words, a Christian community cannot create vocations but only confirm them. God alone creates vocations, although probably only *within* a (Christian) community. Once a person has expressed the conviction that he or she has a vocation the Christian community needs to determine whether that is the case.

This brings us to the second basic theological fact about the nature of vocations. There is a sharp distinction between the *subjective* and the *objective* side of a vocation. As stated, a person must have a conviction about having a vocation. This is what we might want to call the subjective side of a vocation. It is logically independent of the free-will choice to live a life either in accordance with or against a vocation. A person can have a conviction about having a vocation and still decide not to seek confirmation by the Christian community. However, if a person does request such confirmation, then the Christian community uses objective

criteria which are publicly accessible and can be employed in order to reach a consensus when determining whether or not a vocation exists. A good example is a vocation to the ministerial priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. The *Codex Iuris Canonici* (Cann. 1026–52) specifies a number of objective criteria that must be employed by the Bishop in determining if a vocation exists and under what circumstances a person can be ordained in the Western Catholic Church.

Given the two theological facts about the nature of vocations, we can reach three conclusions with respect to the Chastity Claim. First, it cannot apply to those who have not accepted a vocation to a Christian life. Second, it applies to Christian homosexuals only if they subjectively have this vocation and affirm it publicly first. Finally, given the different ways in which the good of chastity can be realized in a human life, the View of Intrinsic Disorder is necessary in order to specify theologically why the Chastity Claim is meant to say that Christian homosexuals have a vocation to a life in *absolute* sexual abstinence, and not in any of the other possible ways a Christian can live a chaste life.

In the light of these three conclusions, it becomes obvious that in employing the View of Intrinsic Disorder it is not enough to state that a person is homosexual in order to determine that a vocation to a life in absolute sexual abstinence exists for that person. Such is the case only if that person expresses first his or her conviction about having a vocation to a life in absolute sexual abstinence. This means that a homosexual can be said to have a vocation to a life in absolute sexual abstinence if and only if both subjective and objective requirements for a vocation in the narrow and the broader sense are fulfilled. If the subjective requirement is not fulfilled, any claim that a homosexual has a vocation to a life in absolute sexual abstinence is theologically untenable, whatever we might have to say about the truth of the View of Intrinsic Disorder as the supposedly objective indicator of such a vocation. From all this we can reach two further conclusions, both of which allow us to suspect that a homophobic agenda is guiding the Roman Catholic teaching on homosexuality, and not merely a concern for the truth.

The first of these is of utmost importance for the many who are affected by church policies that are based on the View of Intrinsic Disorder and the Chastity Claim, namely: Given the Chastity Claim, the teaching of the papal magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church must be deemed self-contradictory when it decrees that homosexuals are not fit for the ministerial priesthood or the religious life because of their homosexuality (see Benedict XVI 2010, 152; Congregation for Catholic Education 2005).

If the claim in question were true then homosexuals would be ideal candidates for a religious life and the ministerial priesthood, because Western Catholicism (a) defines religious life in terms of the vows, including chastity in the sense of absolute sexual abstinence, and (b) ties

the vocation to the ministerial priesthood to a vocation to a life in absolute sexual abstinence (celibacy). The decreed conjunction of the two vocations renders the magisterial position on the fitness of homosexuals for the ministerial priesthood and religious life, therefore, painfully self-contradictory. I believe that this self-contradiction has not been pointed out before because the papal magisterium is very unclear as to whether homosexuality as such or past homosexual behavior disqualifies homosexuals for the ministerial priesthood or religious life. The announcements of the Apostolic See on homosexuality justify both readings. We find in them statements about a deep-seated homosexual tendency or the inability to relate properly to men and women, on the one hand, and about an involvement in a culture that is conducive to homosexual behavior, on the other (see, e.g., Congregation for Catholic Education 2005).

As for the second conclusion, if the existence of a vocation to a life in absolute sexual abstinence cannot be determined solely on grounds of the View of Intrinsic Disorder then we are back to agnosticism with respect to the meaning of homosexuality: God creates homosexuals as such but a Christian theology committed to the View of Intrinsic Disorder is unable to discern why. When the Chastity Claim was introduced, reasons were considered as to why agnosticism is not a good theological choice, namely that sexuality is a very important dimension of human life, and that Christianity claims, metaphorically speaking, to find in Jesus Christ the remaining piece to complete the puzzle of human life. We can add to this criticism of agnosticism with respect to the meaning of homosexuality by the following argument: in light of Christianity's revelatory closure (of course with eschatological reservation) and its universalism it is unlikely that God would have provided a meaning for heterosexuality (companionship and procreation) but none for homosexuality. In my view, it immediately follows from this argument that the very existence of homosexuals provides evidence against the truth of the View of Intrinsic Disorder unless we obtain an explanation as to why it should be that homosexuality cannot have a meaning comparable to heterosexuality without presupposing already the View of Intrinsic Disorder as it is in tension with the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such.

ON THE EXISTENCE OF HOMOSEXUALS

At this point, proponents of the View of Intrinsic Disorder might therefore want to entertain the claim that there are actually no homosexuals in the sense defined above but only homosexual acts resulting from bad choices. In other words, there is no such thing as a "homosexual orientation" and the related problem that pertains to the relationship between the View of Intrinsic Disorder and the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such is

groundless because the latter view is untenable. This is a position Swinburne makes his own (see Swinburne 2007, 361–63), unlike the Roman Catholic Church. Let us call the claim in question the Nonexistence Claim and have a closer look at it. The strength of the Nonexistence Claim is mainly a function of what might be called revealed (not merely biblical!) facts. In conjunction with a *uniform tradition* of Western Christianity, *Scripture* is taken to provide clear evidence for the truth of the View of Intrinsic Disorder.

From the revealed fact of this view and from the additional assumptions that God knows all truths (omniscience), can do whatever is logically possible (omnipotence), and would never deceive us (perfect goodness), it is concluded that the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such must be wrong. There can be no homosexuals in the sense defined above. It follows that there is no problem of theological meaninglessness with respect to homosexuality. The threat of an agnosticism about the meaning of homosexuality is therefore avoided. Christianity is not required to discern a meaning for homosexuality that God might have provided, because there is no such thing as homosexuality. There are only homosexual acts, which have their origin in bad and sinful choices of free-will agents acting against their human nature.

This line of response to the failure of the Chastity Claim makes the View of Intrinsic Disorder indeed less questionable, if we forget for the moment those criticisms of it that are not directly related to the line of reasoning entertained here (see for challenges from biblical theology Ellens 2006; Helminiak 2000; and for those related to (new) natural law Koppelman 2006; Pope 2004, 542–45).

Yet, to negate the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such and to endorse the Nonexistence Claim inevitably results in an irreparable conflict between Christianity and the sciences, and undermines any integrationalist stance on their relationship. This consequence necessarily follows given what the natural and social sciences have to say about human sexuality. Scientific studies show that it is an undeniable fact that there are homosexuals *in the same sense* and by *the same standards* there are heterosexuals as defined above (for recent reviews of these findings, see Burr 2007; Cadge 2007; Myers and Scanzoni 2005, 52–83; Roughgarden 2009a, 185–305). In other words, if we can claim on scientific grounds that there is something like a *heterosexual orientation* then by the same standards of acceptable science we have sufficient scientific evidence that there is also something like a *homosexual orientation* in the sense that “choice is absent from sexual orientation” (Roughgarden 2009a, 255), and “that the categories of human sexual orientation constitute ‘natural human kinds’” (Kirby 2003, 684).

There is absolutely no need to review here once more the scientific studies that support the claim that there are homosexuals in the same

sense as there are heterosexuals as defined in this paper. What is necessary, however, is to reflect on the requirements for a meaningful rejection of the results of those studies that support the claim that there are homosexuals. So, my main response against the Nonexistence Claim is not simply to refer to the sciences in order to affirm the untenability of such a claim. On the contrary, a look at the standards for a meaningful critique of scientific facts will show that such a line of response is philosophically misguided.

INTEGRATION AT JEOPARDY

The Nonexistence Claim leads to an obvious conflict with the sciences. To avoid any misunderstanding at this point: philosophically speaking, a conflict between Christianity and the sciences *as such* is not a bad thing because (a) in general the authority of science should not remain unquestioned given its rich history of failures with negative societal effects (to name only the eugenics movement among medical professionals at the beginning of the twentieth century), (b) scientific facts always depend on a framework that is guided by metaphysical and cultural assumptions that can result in a bias (against Christian assertions), and (c) it necessitates a review of traditional Christian doctrine.

However, limiting our attention to the controversy over homosexuality as it results from the Nonexistence Claim, a conflict between Christianity and the sciences becomes unacceptable if three conditions are violated: (1) A critical review of traditional Christian doctrine does not take place. (2) The critical engagement with the sciences falls below commonly acceptable standards of philosophical analysis of science. (3) The critical attitude in theological analysis that results in conflict is not displayed consistently. I am going to show that the Nonexistence Claim violates all three conditions and thus results in a terribly “bad” and thus unnecessary conflict between Christianity and the sciences.

The Nature of the Christian Tradition. As outlined earlier, Swinburne suggests a reading of the development of the Christian tradition in terms of (a) linearity in growth and (b) consistency in content. Such a reading of the Christian tradition is highly questionable. In my view, this is most obvious as far as consistency in content is concerned with respect to the general attitude toward and the specific doctrines about the Jewish people. The second half of the twentieth century has seen an unprecedented revision in this area which has resulted in a revised, yet highly inconsistent, doctrinal position on Judaism (see Fehige 2010).

A good example of nonlinearity in the growth of the Christian tradition is the discovery of the ovum and its impact on Christian teaching on human sexuality. The scientific discovery of the ovum in 1828 was an important step in falsifying the one-seed theory of reproduction that dominated most

of Christian history. The Christian teaching has been revised in favor of the active role of women in the reproductive process. This historical fact amounts to a strong reason in favor of a positive attitude toward the sciences when it comes to homosexuality because there is no *a priori* reason to rule out the possibility that a constructive dialogue with the sciences can effect a similar advance in theological knowledge as far as homosexuality is concerned.

In my view, the understanding of tradition that is presupposed in Swinburne's defense of the Nonexistence Claim to support the View of Intrinsic Disorder is highly problematic. What remains especially unclear is the status of Scripture as the normative testimony to divine revelation and thus of its role as guideline in critically evaluating binding decrees of church authorities. Questionable are also the implications of Swinburne's notion of tradition for his integrationalism. Integration *à la* Swinburne must always, it seems to me, happen at the expense of the sciences, given Swinburne's emphasis on the unrevisability of genuine Christian tradition.

Standards of Critical Analysis. Sexuality and gender "are complex and multifaceted realities that cannot be fully seen, much less understood, by using just one, or even two, disciplinary lenses" (Jung and Vigen 2010, 4). Given such interdisciplinarity, the established philosophical standards for critical analysis of cognitive claims should count as the agreed basis for assessing whether or not a discipline's critical attitude falls below reasonable standards—leaving aside here for reasons of brevity the problematic susceptibility of philosophy itself to heterosexism.

Swinburne's defense of the Nonexistence Claim violates what I would like to call the *principle of isomorphism in critical focus*. According to this principle, in theological discourse we must be as critical about scientific facts regarding heterosexuality as about those regarding homosexuality. But defenders of the Nonexistence Claim, like Swinburne (2007, 361–63), are not. They demand better scientific facts and outright reject the ones offered insofar as homosexuality is concerned. But in their demand they fail to entertain the question as to what kind of scientific facts would be required to prove that there is a heterosexual orientation in the way they expect it for a proof of a homosexual orientation. Defenders of the Nonexistence Claim commonly question the statistics about the prevalence of homosexuality. Different statistical estimates are taken as evidence against the supportability of the claim that there are homosexuals. But, don't we also have different statistical estimates about the prevalence of heterosexuality when considering the whole sociological spectrum of sexual identities? It is pointed out that we have no good explanations for the origin of homosexuality. But, do we have better explanations for the origin of heterosexuality? It is claimed that all studies in favor of the existence of a homosexual orientation are biased. But, is scientific

research on heterosexuality less biased than the scientific investigation of homosexuality? To my knowledge, there is no single contribution by an advocate of the View of Intrinsic Disorder along the lines of the Nonexistence Claim that addresses these and similar relevant questions in a manner that satisfies the *principle of isomorphism in critical focus*.² Swinburne is no exception in this respect.

Consistency of Criticism. Scientific models of human sexuality always depend on metaphysical and cultural assumptions. It requires a *philosophical framework* to identify these assumptions (see Karafyllis and Ulshöfer 2008, 4). Twentieth-century history, sociology, and philosophy of science all have produced excellent contributions which show how scientific modeling is always part of a cultural matrix that presupposes sexual dimorphism and is guided by what I would like to call the nonepistemological value of reproduction in order to establish heterosexuality as a norm while inhibiting the recognition of sexual diversity as part of nature (see Butler 1993, 1999; Longino 1990, especially 187–214). These contributions have established that the social components of sexual identity “are not peripheral to science but structure key aspects of both the institutions in which science is produced and the knowledge issuing from those institutions” (Schiebinger 2001, 53).

Advocates of the Nonexistence Claim, such as Swinburne, welcome a critical attitude along these lines of what might be called a social epistemology of scientific knowledge only as long as it counts in favor of traditional Christian doctrine. Thereby they display an arbitrariness in philosophical analysis. A look at Theistic Darwinism, which enjoys increasing popularity among Christian analytic philosophers of religion such as Swinburne, and at the discussion about Darwinian accounts of homosexuality, can help to show how in accepting both the Nonexistence Claim and Theistic Darwinism a severe inconsistency in criticism is committed which articulates an arbitrariness in philosophical analysis.

CASE STUDY: THE NONEXISTENCE CLAIM AND THEISTIC DARWINISM

The central claim of proponents of Theistic Darwinism, like Swinburne, is that God is the *ultimate* explanation for humanity. This is to say that God is the ultimate supernatural cause of all those biological processes that are responsible for the emergence of humanity and explainable in terms of evolution by natural selection (see Conway Morris 2003, especially 1–21 and 311–30; Meixner 2004; Murphy 2010; Plantinga 1993, 193–237; Swinburne 2004, 123–235). Given the overwhelming evidence in favor of the theory of evolution by natural selection despite its “discontents” (see Ruse 2006), it does not surprise that Swinburne recognizes Theistic

Darwinism as the only viable option to reconcile traditional Christian teaching and Darwinian evolution theory in order to uphold the view that God and God alone is the primary cause of the emergence of humanity. But the Nonexistence Claim and Theistic Darwinism do not sit well together, and this for a number of reasons which I would like to highlight to make my main point that a conjunction of these two propositions elevates an inconsistency in criticism as far as a careful approach to the underlying metaphysical framework of scientific theories and models is concerned.

To begin with, a number of models have been proposed to explain homosexuality in terms of evolution by natural selection (see Kirby 2003; Roughgarden 2009a, 257–61), because there is agreement among scientists that there is a problem for the theory of evolution by natural selection yet to be solved and that this problem is posed by the prevalence of homosexuality in nature: “how has homosexual orientation evolved, given that, on average, homosexual individuals produce fewer children than do heterosexual individuals [?]” (Kirby 2003, 683).

Facing such research projects, defenders of the Nonexistence Claim, such as Swinburne, have basically two options, namely (a) to deny their legitimacy, or (b) to suggest that homosexual orientation could be deemed an undesirable byproduct of evolution by natural selection. But unless advocates of this claim have addressed the shortcomings that I pointed out above under the subsection *Standards of Critical Analysis*, the first option is a nonstarter. Thus only the second option remains. But, it is not really an option either if defenders of the claim in question, such as Swinburne, would like to maintain consistency in criticism. Here is why, and with that I come to my main point:

While homosexuality does not need to be considered a byproduct and thus a deviation of nature but can be modeled as “natural and adaptive to all participants and both sexes” (Roughgarden 2009b, 244–45), the “sciences [...] all discount the very diversity that their painstaking research and primary texts so clearly document” (Roughgarden 2009a, 329). Scientific evidence does not justify such an ignorance of sexual diversity in scientific modeling (see Wilson 1978/2004, 142–47). There are a few scientific models of human sexuality developed both in terms of evolution by natural selection and in recognition of sexual diversity as part of nature. Roughgarden (2009a) defends probably the most radical and controversial model in current discussions. She wants to see sexual selection theory with its strong bias toward heterosexism abandoned in evolutionary biology and proposes as replacement theory, called social selection theory, a theory that enables the recognition of sexual diversity as part of nature.

Of more interest in our context than the details of diversity-endorsing models is the fact that the emerging debate over them is less a matter of empirical data and more one of metaphysical discourse (see Milam et al. 2011; Odlin-Smee 2009, 1112). For example, in her critique of sexual

selection theory, which she claims to be diversity-suppressing, Roughgarden notes that the way the theory is currently defended makes it “increasingly hard to test and impossible to falsify, and so sexual selection theory slowly morphs from a scientific theory into a doctrine or ideology” (Roughgarden 2009b, 22). And directly addressing those working in the social sciences and humanities, including anthropologists, theologians, and philosophers, she urges: “Workers in these disciplines must awaken to the realization that the sexual selection area of evolutionary biology is not settled science, is in considerable flux, and is not ready for export” (Roughgarden 2009b, 60). On a different occasion, she states that “science is challenged when asked to supply an accurate picture of sex, gender expression, and sexuality in nature, and this limitation impedes a scientifically informed moral and theological discussion of these issues” (Roughgarden 2011, 89). Roughgarden’s objections to widely accepted scientific models of human sexuality strongly confirm the above highlighted need of a critical engagement with scientific theories when it comes to homosexuality, and this along the lines of a social epistemology of scientific knowledge.

My main point against the Nonexistence Claim is not a simplistic referencing of scientific theories about human sexuality, but that the very existence of Theistic Darwinism demonstrates a strong awareness among defenders of the claim under consideration, such as Swinburne, of the need of a social epistemology of scientific knowledge, and thus a strong awareness of the need to revisit metaphysical assumptions to reconcile Christianity and the theory of evolution by natural selection. In the words of Alvin Plantinga: “Naturalism and evolutionary theory *together* imply the denial of divine design, but evolutionary theory *by itself* doesn’t have that implication” (Dennett and Plantinga 2011, 7). Plantinga’s point here is that naturalism is a metaphysical claim and not a scientific statement and only the former not the latter can threaten Christianity. To clarify the philosophical point Plantinga tries to make: “. . . science cannot *make* metaphysics. . . This is just as true if a *naturalistic* direction is pursued in metaphysics as it is true if the direction followed is a nonnaturalistic one” (Meixner 2010, 4).

Theistic Darwinism was developed along the lines of a metaphysical discourse in critical reaction to claims that central Christian doctrines are unsupportable in the light of the theory of evolution by natural selection, like the creation of humanity in the image of God. Thus, the proposed theistic version of Darwinism provides a template as to how to engage from a Christian perspective in a highly reflective and critical manner with the metaphysical framework of the theory of evolution by natural selection. As such it can contribute to framing a truly interdisciplinary encounter between Christianity and the sciences, and maybe even enhance an integrationalist program as endorsed by Swinburne and the Roman Catholic magisterium.

The problem is that advocates of the Nonexistence Claim, such as Swinburne, fail to extend their critical work on Theistic Darwinism to matters of human sexuality which makes their case for the claim in question suffer from an inconsistency in criticism. On the one hand, the theory of evolution by natural selection is scrutinized in detail with respect to its metaphysical framework along the lines of a social epistemology of scientific knowledge in order to uphold a traditional Christian doctrine, such as the creation of humanity in God's image. On the other hand, in following the heterosexual assumptions of evolutionary theory in supporting the Nonexistence Claim by claiming homosexuality to be a byproduct of human nature the theory of evolution by natural selection is simply taken for granted in its heterosexist metaphysical framework in order to uphold a traditional Christian teaching, namely the prohibition of all homosexual acts.

The Untenability of the Nonexistence Claim. In summary, the conflict between Christianity and the sciences emerging from the Nonexistence Claim is unacceptable because the defense of this claim (1) implies a questionable understanding of the nature of the Christian tradition, (2) falls short of fundamental standards of critical analysis, and (3) suffers from an inconsistency in criticism. The Nonexistence Claim is the last move of defenders of the the View of Intrinsic Disorder that I can think of, and, in my view, the former claim is as untenable as the latter one, as well as the the Chastity Claim. Thus I see no reason why not to accept the View that God Creates Homosexuals As Such and that God does so because homosexuality is a good thing.

CONCLUSION

I don't think I have presented a knock-down argument against the View of Intrinsic Disorder. Nor do I think there are such arguments, generally speaking. The best one can do is to make a cumulative case for the unsupportability of a particular view, and it was the aim of this paper to show why homosexuality unnecessarily remains a matter of controversy at the intersection of Christian faith and scientific inquiry. In my view, the View of Intrinsic Disorder leads either to agnosticism about the meaning of homosexuality in the order of Creation or to a conflict between the Christian faith and scientific inquiry. This is the dilemma advocates of the view in question face, and the Chastity Claim and the Nonexistence Claim are the result of attempts to solve it. I reconstructed the dilemma and showed why I think that these attempts to solve it fail greatly.

My critique of the View of Intrinsic Disorder adds to other objections to it, and taken together I think one is justified to reach the final verdict that it is time for a new approach to homosexuality within the framework of an interdisciplinary theology of sexual diversity. Such a theology seeks a critical and well-balanced relationship to its own tradition and the conversation

with new scientific models of human sexuality as proposed, for instance, by Joan Roughgarden. I myself find her proposal worthy of further discussion because I think it has much to offer for developing a metaphysics of sexual diversity which is required to guide philosophical assessments of both the Christian teaching and empirical findings about human sexuality.

It takes such a metaphysics to honor what I believe is the strongest element in the positions on homosexuality of Swinburne and the Roman Catholic magisterium, namely the search for ways of integrating Christian doctrines and the sciences. We shouldn't sacrifice this ideal of integration on the altar of the View of Intrinsic Disorder, and I have demonstrated why I consider Theistic Darwinism a template for how to approach this ideal—whether or not it can actually be attained.

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NOTES

1. Richard Swinburne, a Christian apologetic, held a chair at the University of Oxford dedicated to the "Philosophy of the Christian Religion." He is currently "Emeritus Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion." See <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~orie0087/>.
2. This has been highlighted by others before, for example, Nussbaum (1999, 189).

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