Homosexual inclinations and the passions: A Thomistic theory of the psychogenesis of same-sex attraction disorder

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The Catholic Church has held that every human being is a child of God, and every person deserves to be treated with dignity and love regardless of their actions. The phrase “love the sinner, hate the sin” is a simple summary of the approach the Church takes to loving all human beings. The Church has also held firmly that both homosexual acts and homosexual inclinations are disordered, although the origins or contributing factors of homosexual inclinations are not entirely understood. In this paper, I apply principles from St. Thomas Aquinas’s treatise on the passions to show that habitual mis-identification of the cause of pleasure associated with the apprehension of beauty, or misjudgments, may be involved in the psychogenesis of same-sex attraction disorder.

Keywords: Thomas Aquinas, Passions, Same-Sex Attraction, Disorder, Paraphilia

INTRODUCTION

When used as a medical term, the word “disorder” is defined as “a derangement or abnormality of function; a morbid physical or mental state” (Dorland’s 2012). Diabetes is an example of a physical disorder, while alcoholism and other addictions are examples of mental disorders. Most alcoholics and other addicts begin life in a non-addicted state, but at one point they begin using pleasure-causing substances. Their habitual use of the pleasure-causing substances may result in the belief that ingesting those substances is natural to them. Although the alcoholic can remember times without using the substance, he may still feel that he was born with the

tendency to consume large amounts of alcohol daily. These beliefs and thought patterns may lead an alcoholic “to believe that the use of alcohol was at first desirable, then necessary, and eventually an inevitable part of their existence” (Wilcox 1998, 83). Because of his slavery to the addiction, and because he feels discriminated against by society for his being labeled as “abnormal” or “disordered,” he could go so far as to form an alliance with his drinking buddies at the pub and advocate for the removal of the “disorder” label from the psychology textbooks. Non-alcoholics with alcoholic family members or friends could feel false compassion for the alcoholic and could join in advocacy efforts to label their condition as normal.

No matter how hard the alcoholic works to prove that his drinking is normal, however, and even if he persuaded textbook writers to re-label his disorder as normal, alcoholism will always be a disordered condition. This would be an example of labeling evil as good. Similarly, the last forty years or so have been marked by a push for the labeling of the disordered condition of homosexual inclinations to be re-labeled as normal. Those with the disorder and others with misguided compassion for them claim that homosexuality and homosexual inclinations are normal conditions. Gerard van den Aardweg comments on this when discussing proposed causes of same-sex attraction disorder (SSAD):

The two currently prevailing opinions on the causes and dynamics of homosexuality [defined by Van den Aardweg as chronic same-sex attraction after age 17 or 18, accompanied by near-absence of or strongly reduced heterosexual attraction] are first, that they are “genetic,” and second, that they are “still unknown, but probably inborn.” Both views have been advocated for some decades now by the proponents of the gay ideology, supported by a stream of like-minded ideas and interpretations in professional periodicals. These views have penetrated everywhere, including the Christian and academic world. They serve as the pseudo-scientific rationale for the successful “discrimination” argument... Much public and private research money is spent on studies that are thought to be potentially useful to the international undertaking to socially normalize same-sex behavior and relations. The intensified search for physical correlates of SSA during the last decades must be seen in this light. The general trend is to interpret and present the findings one-sidedly as supportive of the wished-for biological causation; psychologists and social psychologists try to demonstrate the normalcy of homosexual

relations and gay parenting. By contrast, research and publications at variance with the normality view are virtually tabooed at universities and research institutes and unwelcome with most professional journals and publishing houses. (Van den Aardweg 2011, 331)

The *Catholic Church*, however, has held the opposite position—that homosexual acts and inclinations are disordered (*Catechism* 1997, n. 2357–2358). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that

Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained... The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. (*Catechism* 1997, n. 2357–2358)

The *Catechism* likely uses the word “disordered” to mean “contrary to reason.” Most, if not all, psychological disorders are contrary to reason.

Although the psychogenesis is not thoroughly understood, theories have been proposed that explain factors which predispose one to homosexual inclinations. The theories and the evidence supporting those theories, according to Van den Aardweg, are likely to be psychological instead of biological:

In reality, primary, efficient causes of same-sex attraction (SSA), inclusive of homosexual pedophilia, have not been found and are very unlikely ever to be found in the field of “biology.” Overwhelming evidence points to “psychology,” namely, to the person’s psychological life history, his childhood and adolescent experiences, and his

family and peer relationships. (Van den Aardweg 2011, 331)

Van den Aardweg cites multiple studies that indicate the genetic hypothesis of inheritance of homosexual inclinations to be “most unlikely” (Van den Aardweg 2011, 333). Instead, the evidence suggests environmental factors like parent–child relationships, sibling relationships, and peer relationships which lead to habitual behaviors and thought patterns known as “gender nonconformity” in pre-homosexual boys and girls (Van den Aardweg 2011, 336–337). Gender nonconformity is marked by the absence of masculine traits in boys and a “deficient identification with femininity in behavior and/or self-view in girls” which, according to Van den Aardweg, often begin at home “as effects of *upbringing* and *parent-child interactions*” (Van den Aardweg 2011, 337). Two common factors of men with same-sex attraction are an emotionally distant father “and/or disturbed father relationships or paternal absence, at any rate, as well as a lack of father-son confidentiality and of positive paternal influences” along with “maternal over-influence” during childhood (Van den Aardweg 2011, 338).

Others, like Dr. Richard Fitzgibbons, have proposed that “the three most important risk factors for developing same-sex attraction disorder (SSAD) in men are weak masculine identity, mistrust of women, and narcissism” (Fitzgibbons 1999, 87), while for women the risk factors are mistrust of men’s love, a weak feminine identity, and intense loneliness (Fitzgibbons 1999, 90). The identification of these risk factors can help treat and prevent the disorder, but there are certain aspects of same-sex attraction disorder that can likely be explained in more detail. For instance, one might ask, how does non-sexual pleasure and normal attraction

to beauty factor into the discussion? Why are many women “attracted” to the beauty of other women, yet they do not identify themselves as homosexuals? Can a man likewise recognize beauty (more commonly referred to as “handsomeness”) in another man and not consider himself to be homosexually inclined? Why do some men who identify “beauty” in another man consider themselves to be “homosexual,” while others do not? What is the reason for the difference between the two? (These questions could easily be read out of context and mis-understood. I am not implying that it is normal for men to seek out or look for “beauty” in other men in the same way as a single heterosexual male seeks out the beauty of a potential female spouse. “Beauty” will be defined later simply as “order and harmony between the features of an object.” So, I am instead asking why some men recognize order and harmony between facial features of another man—like they would recognize order and harmony between the colors and shapes of a sculpture or a painting—and are not homosexually inclined, while other men recognize the same harmony and order between facial features but consider themselves to be homosexually inclined.)

St. Thomas Aquinas’s discussion on the passions provides principles that can assist in answering those questions. His treatise on the passions provides insight into the human experiences of love and pleasure. The connection he makes between love and union as well as his theory of the role of pleasure and its relation to “the good” and “the beautiful” are of utmost importance and are applicable to various human experiences, including same-sex attraction disorder. Although it is an unpleasant topic to discuss and one that most would prefer to avoid, it is necessary to propose plausible theories on the psychogenesis of same-sex attraction disorder in order to provide prevention and treatment

strategies for what many people consider to be a “trial” (as the *Catechism* states). A reasonable explanation is needed and can be proposed to show how homosexual inclinations are disordered and how they may begin.

In this paper I will use St. Thomas’s theory of the passions as well as current theories on homosexual inclinations to propose that they may be based on illusions of affective and real sexual unions as well as habitual mis-identification of the cause of pleasure (or a misjudgment of the cause of pleasure) that results from the apprehension of beauty and other human goods. I will show that when a person apprehends a beautiful object, that person will experience pleasure—even if the object is a person of the same gender. I will then explain that the normal response to the apprehension of that beauty is to acknowledge the order and harmony between the features of the object, as opposed to desiring a sexual union with the object. I will explain that an error in judgment could play a role in the disordered response to the apprehension of beauty and other goods, resulting in an individual mis-identifying the cause of pleasure associated with the apprehension of beauty of a same-gendered individual. One may misjudge the pleasure to be indicative of a “natural” tendency to perform sexual acts with the individual apprehended as beautiful. Finally, I will explain that the habituation of this misjudgment and associated mental state may be a contributing factor to the development of same-sex attraction disorder.

It should be noted that the theory proposed in this paper is based on the assumption that a person first experiences pleasure of a non-sexual sort from association with others of the same sex and then moves (via mediation by a judgment) to sexual attraction to same-gendered individuals. While this assumption may not be

true for all individuals with same-sex attraction disorder, it is very likely true for many, if not most; and these arguments would certainly apply to this subgroup. Also, the theory utilizes texts from St. Thomas Aquinas, but it is not the only possible “Thomistic” theory of same-sex attraction disorder. Furthermore, as it is the case with all theories, objections may be raised to what is presented in this paper. One possible objection is that while this theory is plausible there is not yet supporting rigorous evidence demonstrating that the theory is correct. Sometimes (but, admittedly, not always) common sense can be used to explain reality, as was the case when cigarette smoking was logically linked to lung cancer prior to any available rigorous scientific evidence. Due to the backlash (and associated threats and acts of violence or defamation—see Marcus 2013 and Westen 2013) an investigator receives for making the slightest suggestion that same-sex attractions are disordered, though, scientific evidence in regards to the topic presented in this paper will likely be hard to come by. Lastly, some of the material in this paper is verbally graphic and while the references contain pertinent information, some references also contain images of human genitalia and excretory organs. The reader is forewarned.

ST. THOMAS’S TREATISE ON THE PASSIONS

First, it is necessary to present some basics of St. Thomas’s treatise on the passions. What is St. Thomas’s definition of a passion? As Robert Miner explains, St. Thomas took the approach of defining “passion” over a wide-range of passages in the *Summa theologiae* (Miner 2009, 31). Thus, it is essential to follow where St. Thomas leads throughout his treatise on the passions.

He begins by explaining that passions are “in” the soul:

The Apostle says (Romans 7:5): “When we were in the flesh, the passions of sins which were by the law, did the work in our members.” Now sins are, properly speaking, in the soul. Therefore passions also, which are described as being “of sins,” are in the soul. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 22, a. 1)

Next, St. Thomas states outright that passions are the same as affections or emotions and in doing so he ties the passions to the appetitive part (St. Thomas uses the words “parts” and “powers” interchangeably (Pasnau 2002, 144)) of the soul rather than the apprehensive:

Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei* ix, 4) “the movement of the soul, which the Greeks called *pathe*, are styled by some of our writers, Cicero for instance, disturbances; by some, affections or emotions, while others rendering the Greek more accurately, call them passions.” From this it is evident that the passions of the soul are the same as the affections. But affections manifestly belong to the appetitive, and not to the apprehensive part. Therefore the passions are in the appetitive rather than in the apprehensive part. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 22, a. 2)

Thus, he explains that he uses the word “passion” instead of “emotions,” but for St. Thomas they are the same. The soul has five genera of parts/powers (vegetative, sensitive, appetitive, locomotive, and intellectual (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 78, a. 1), each corresponding to the operation it performs or has the capacity to perform—non-rational operations, sensitive operations, the capacity to desire, capacity to move, and capacity to make judgments of reason), and St. Thomas determines that the passions belong to the appetitive part of the soul. He elaborates:

the word “passion” implies that the patient is drawn to that which belongs to the agent. Now the soul is drawn to a thing by the appetitive power rather than by the apprehensive power: because the soul has, through its appetitive power, an order to things as they are in themselves: hence the Philosopher says (*Metaph.* vi, 4) that “good and evil,” i.e., the objects of the appetitive power, “are in things themselves.” On the other hand the apprehensive power is not drawn to a thing, as it is in itself; but knows it by reason of an “intention” of the thing. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 22, a. 2)

The individual who experiences a passion is drawn to the good or evil of an object and this is characteristic of the appetitive power (or part) of the soul. Elsewhere St. Thomas says that “the appetitive power is a passive power, which is naturally moved by the thing apprehended” and the appetitive soul performs two distinct types of apprehension—sensitive and intellectual apprehension (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 80, a. 2). Basically, “the sensitive appetite tends toward concrete singulars that are apprehended by the senses, whereas the rational appetite tends toward universal goods that are perceived by the intellect” (Miner 2009, 21). The passions are more in the sensitive appetite than the intellectual appetite:

Damascene says (*De Fide Orth.* ii, 22), while describing the animal passions: “Passion is a movement of the sensitive appetite when we imagine good or evil: in other words, passion is a movement of the irrational soul, when we think of good or evil.” (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 22, a. 3)

Elaborating on this, St. Thomas notes that “passion is properly found where there is corporeal transmutation. This corporeal transmutation is found in the act of

the sensitive appetite” (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 22, a. 3).

To summarize: For St. Thomas, there is one human soul with five parts or powers. The passions are “in” the appetitive part of the soul. The appetitive part of the soul performs sensitive and intellectual apprehensions. Passions involve sensitive apprehensions of the appetitive soul and bodily changes (what would now be labeled as changes in biochemistry). Hence, a working definition of passion according to St. Thomas is “a movement of the sensitive appetite of the soul in which a bodily change occurs when one thinks of good or evil.” Robert Brennan summarizes St. Thomas’s discussion on “passion” in writing:

The act of a sensitive appetite is called a passion. The term “passion” is almost lost to modern psychology, and this is a great misfortune.... Nowadays, if passion is referred to at all, its meaning is limited either to erotic movements of the sort that we associate with carnal love, or to impulses of an angry nature. Perhaps the moderns are impatient at the idea of designating the acts of our animal appetites by a name that would seem to connote passivity, especially in view of the fact that these appetites are so obviously connected with outer behavior. But this is a total misunderstanding of Aquinas’s teaching. For him, passivity indicates an active-reactive condition of the organism, or a power of being acted upon in a manner that determines the organism to act. In a more profound sense, passivity means a capacity for suffering; and so the passions are sufferances, wherein the living organism allows itself to be affected by the presence of certain objects in its environment, making its own responses according to the demands of sensitive life. (Brennan 1941, 151–152)

A passion, then, can be said to be experienced by a “patient” who is in a sense “acted upon” by an object; the

passion is a sort of suffering and a change in the individual acted upon.

According to St. Thomas, the movement that occurs in the appetitive power when a passion is experienced is preceded in time by an “act of the apprehensive power” (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 46, a. 2). Passions are preceded in time by sensitive apprehensions. These sensitive apprehensions are not judgments of reason, but judgments can and often do precede sensitive apprehensions. St. Thomas describes the connection between judgments and passions in *Summa theologiae* I, question 81, article 3, and elsewhere. Robert Miner cites Claudia Eisen Murphy’s summary of this connection in *Summa theologiae* I, question 81, article 3 (Miner 2009, 100–104). Murphy writes:

passions can be not only *responsive* to reason, but also responses to reason’s judgment. Reason forms a judgment which automatically gets translated into an object accessible to the sensory appetite, and gives rise to a passion that is a response to the judgment. (Murphy 1999, 177)

According to Murphy, St. Thomas then distinguishes between two ways in which passions can follow a judgment of reason, quoting *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*:

A passion of the lower appetite can follow from something apprehended by the intellect in two ways. [1] In one way insofar as that which is understood by the intellect as a universal is represented in the imagination as a particular thing. And in this way the lower appetite is moved—e.g., when a believer accepts with his intellect the intelligible notion of future punishments and forms phantasms of them by imagining the fire burning, the worms gnawing, and other things of that sort, from which there follows the passion of fear in the sensory appetite. [2] In another way, insofar as the intellective

appetite is moved by an intellectual cognition, from which, by some sort of overflow (*redundantia*) or command, the lower appetite is moved along with it. (Aquinas *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, 26.3 ad 13 in Murphy 1999, 178)

The second mode is pertinent to this discussion in that an apprehension of the intellect may precede the passion. An “apprehension of the intellect” is a judgment, which means for St. Thomas, the passions can be preceded by judgments. It is self-evident that passions can be followed by judgments. Even so, St. Thomas mentions that at least one passion—“delight” or “pleasure”—is followed by a judgment: “bodily pleasures are realized in the sensitive faculty which is governed by reason: wherefore they need to be tempered and checked by reason” (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 31, a. 5, ad 3). Thus, the senses are governed by reason, and a judgment of reason should follow a pleasurable apprehension of sight, sound, touch, etc.

Now we must determine how “love” and “pleasure” fit into St. Thomas’s discussion on the passions. In order to explain this, St. Thomas discusses “good”:

Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei* xiv, 7,9) that all the passions are caused by love: since “love yearning for the beloved object, is desire; and, having and enjoying it, is joy.”... Now good has the aspect of an end, and the end is indeed first in the order of intention, but last in the order of execution. Consequently the order of the concupiscible passions can be considered either in the order of intention or in the order of execution. In the order of execution, the first place belongs to that which takes place first in the thing that tends to the end. Now it is evident that whatever tends to an end, has, in the first place, an aptitude or proportion to that end, for nothing tends to a disproportionate end; secondly, it is moved to

that end; thirdly, it rests in the end, after having attained it. And this very aptitude or proportion of the appetite to good is love, which is complacency in good; while movement towards good is desire or concupiscence; and rest in good is joy or pleasure. But in the order of intention, it is the reverse: because the pleasure intended causes desire and love. For pleasure is the enjoyment of the good, which enjoyment is, in a way the end, just as the good itself is, as stated above (q. 11, a. 3, ad. 3). (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 25, a. 2)

Hence, love is the proportion or aptitude of the appetite toward a good, and pleasure is resting in the good. St. Thomas elaborates on this by writing “Accordingly, the first change wrought in the appetite by the appetible object is called ‘love,’ and is nothing else than complacency in that object” (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 26, a. 2). The good is the only cause of love (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 27 a. 1), and

evil is never loved except under the aspect of good, that is to say, in so far as it is good in some respect, and is considered as being good simply. And thus a certain love is evil, in so far as it tends to that which is not simply a true good. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 27, a. 1, ad 1)

Elsewhere he compares the different kinds of loves that are distinguished by the different appetites. These appetites are the sensitive, natural, and intellectual appetites (sensitive and intellectual appetites were defined previously, while the natural appetite is “natural inclination” that follows from the natural form of a thing (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 80., a. 1). He explains love’s connection with the thing loved in each of those appetites:

Now in each of these appetites the name “love” is given to the principle of

movement towards the end loved. In the natural appetite the principle of this movement is the appetitive subject's connaturalness with the thing to which it tends, and may be called "natural love": thus the connaturalness of a heavy body for the center, is by reason of its weight and may be called "natural love." In like manner the aptitude of the sensitive appetite or of the will to some good, that is to say, its very complacency in good is called "sensitive love," or "intellectual" or "rational love." (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 26, a. 1)

Hence, there is a kind of connaturality with a suitable good that is loved in the natural appetite. The phrase used by St. Thomas to describe love—"complacency in the good"—implies a certain kind of union between the "agent" and the "patient" or the object loved and the lover of the object. St. Thomas explains this union in writing:

The union of lover and beloved is twofold. There is a real union, consisting in the conjunction of one with the other. This union belongs to joy or pleasure, which follows desire. There is also an affective union, consisting in an aptitude or proportion, in so far as one thing, from the very fact of its having an aptitude for and an inclination to another, partakes of it: and love betokens such a union. This union precedes the movement of desire. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 25, a. 2, ad. 2)

In a way, then, love is sought after for a type of union between the object loved and the lover of the object. This is a union because it is a "resting" of the lover "in" the object loved.

Next it is important to analyze St. Thomas's discussion on "pleasure." His basic definition for pleasure was given previously—"rest in good is joy or pleasure" (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 25, a. 2) and "pleasure is the enjoyment of the

good" (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 25, a. 2). He does, however, provide a more in depth discussion on pleasure ("pleasure" and "delight" are used interchangeably), and he begins his discussion by asking whether pleasure is even a passion. He explains that it is a passion because

every emotion arising from a sensitive apprehension, is a movement of the sensitive appetite: and this must needs be said of delight, since, according to the Philosopher "delight is a certain movement of the soul and a sensible establishing there of all at once, in keeping with the nature of the thing." (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 31, a. 1)

Next, St. Thomas again brings "nature" into the discussion, as he apparently views understanding nature as essential to understanding the passions:

we must observe that just as in natural things some happen to attain to their natural perfections, so does this happen in animals. And though movement towards perfection does not occur all at once, yet the attainment of natural perfection does occur all at once. Now there is this difference between animals and other natural things, that when these latter are established in the state becoming their nature, they do not perceive it, whereas animals do. And from this perception there arises a certain movement of the soul in the sensitive appetite, which movement is called delight.... It is therefore evident that, since delight is a movement of the animal appetite arising from an apprehension of sense, it is a passion of the soul. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 31, a. 1)

Hence, pleasure/delight is a movement of the appetite that results from a judgment that an object is perfective of or is "in accord with" the apprehender's nature.

Pleasures should indicate the fulfillment of one's nature.

What, however, does St. Thomas mean when he says that something is perfective of or "in accord with nature"? St. Thomas explains that in man, pleasures can be considered natural to man or "in accord with nature" in two ways:

First, inasmuch as intellect and reason is the principal part of man's nature, since in respect thereof he has his own specific nature. And in this sense, those pleasures may be called natural to man, which are derived from things pertaining to man in respect of his reason: for instance, it is natural to man to take pleasure in contemplating the truth and in doing works of virtue. Secondly, nature in man may be taken as contrasted with reason, and as denoting that which is common to man and other animals, especially that part of man which does not obey reason. And in this sense, that which pertains to the preservation of the body, either as regards the individual, as food, drink, sleep, and the like, or as regards the species, as sexual intercourse, are said to afford man natural pleasure. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 31, a. 7)

Some pleasures, then, are natural to man, and these pleasures function as a signal or an indication that one is resting in an intellectual good. Other pleasures are natural to man because they indicate the union of one with a good that is common between all men and other animals, and these include goods that maintain one's health or one's species. Attainment of those goods fulfills one's nature. Alexander Pruss articulates:

Our pleasures signal realities as well. The pleasure of eating signals the reality of the goodness of the nutrition. Similarly, sexual pleasure signals the reality of the goodness of physical union or reproduction or both.... It may be argued that a desire for one's partner to have sexual

pleasure is an intrinsic part of the selflessness of erotic love. This is correct. However, desire for one's own pleasure, providing that this desire is not the primary motivation for the sexual act (because pleasure is not an end in itself), is undoubtedly also a part of the phenomenology of erotic love, and there is no reason to deny that this is a good thing. It is good because the pleasure signals a good reality. (Pruss 2003, 65)

So, pleasures signal the reality of the goodness of an object that one unites with.

What about the contrary? Are some pleasures unnatural? St. Thomas explains that there are unnatural pleasures:

Under each kind of pleasures, we find some that are "not natural" speaking absolutely, and yet "connatural" in some respect. For it happens in an individual that some one of the natural principles of the species is corrupted, so that something which is contrary to the specific nature, becomes accidentally natural to this individual: thus it is natural to this hot water to give heat. Consequently it happens that something which is not natural to man, either in regard to reason, or in regard to the preservation of the body, becomes connatural to this individual man, on account of there being some corruption of nature in him. And this corruption may be either on the part of the body—from some ailment; thus to a man suffering from fever, sweet things seem bitter, and vice versa—or from an evil temperament; thus some take pleasure in eating earth and coals and the like; or on the part of the soul; thus from custom some take pleasure in cannibalism or in the unnatural intercourse of man and beast, or other such things, which are not in accord with human nature. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 31, a. 7)

Hence, some things can *appear* or *seem* to be natural to an individual, but in

reality they are instead a corruption of the individual. There is an implied gradual (and habitual) change associated with these unnatural pleasures in that they *become* connatural—they change from not natural to *seemingly* natural—over a period of time. Moreover, there is an implied *illusion* when one experiences an unnatural pleasure. When something *seems* or *appears* as good or perfective of one's nature but really is not, the pleasure associated with the action of attaining the supposed good is based on an illusion. One is deceived into believing that one has attained a human good because one is experiencing pleasure. Some may take pleasure in eating dirt (a condition known as "pica" is experienced by individuals who compulsively eat non-food substances (Rose, Porcerelli, and Neale 2000, 353) and they may be deceived into thinking they are receiving nutrition, a human good). This experience of pleasure is based on an illusion.

The passage from Pruss explained that one function of pleasure is to indicate that something apprehended or attained is good in reality. The "good reality" that pleasure signals is the good which one is brought into conjunction with. This "conjunction" (union) is one of the three requirements for pleasure, as St. Thomas explains:

And this appears from the consideration of the three things needed for pleasure, viz. the good which is brought into conjunction, that to which it is conjoined, and the conjunction itself. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 31, a. 5)

These three requirements imply a judgment of reason because an object must be determined to be good through the use of reason before one can be conjoined with it. Hence, *pleasure signifies a kind of union with an object judged as good*. In the words of St. Thomas, "pleasure arises from union

with a suitable object perceived or known" (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 31, a. 5), but something can become unnaturally pleasurable "either in regard to reason, or in regard to the preservation of the body" as a result of corruption of a "part of the soul" (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 31, a. 7). One part of the soul that could become corrupted is the rational faculty, which could result in one making mis-judgments. Habitual mis-judgments result in an object or objects seemingly being perfective of one's nature and one having a sense of connaturality for those objects. In other words, habitual mis-judgments lead one to be inclined or disposed to unnatural pleasures.

Again, it was mentioned that "bodily pleasures are realized in the sensitive faculty which is governed by reason: wherefore they need to be tempered and checked by reason" (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 31, a. 5, ad. 3). When a bodily pleasure is experienced, one should verify that the pleasure is not unnatural. Unnatural pleasures are contrary to reason, or in other words, they are disordered.

APPLYING ST. THOMAS'S TREATISE ON PASSIONS TO SSAD

Thus, we have something to work with in St. Thomas's treatment of the passions. It seems that his understanding of the passions sheds light on the potential psychogenesis of same-sex attraction disorder. How, then, can St. Thomas's treatment of the passions be applied to explain a possible psychogenesis of SSAD?

In order to further understand SSAD, it is important to grasp how an "attraction" can be disordered. The word "attraction" in same-sex attraction disorder refers to a "sexual" attraction, but it seems as though one can be "attracted" to the beauty in a same-gendered individual in a non-sexual

way. It is easy to observe the fact that women often recognize beauty in other women without being sexually attracted to them. Simply listening to conversation between women verifies this proposition. Often women will say, “you are beautiful!” to other women, and there is no sexual connotation in the statement. Beauty is itself a good or, as will be explained shortly, it is the same as the good, only differing in how it is sensed. Some questions arise, though, when the apprehended beautiful object is a human being. Is there a proper or normal response to the apprehension of the beauty of a human being? Is the sensing of beauty only possible when apprehending a member of the opposite gender, and hence, are men and women unable to sense beauty in an individual of the same gender?

St. Thomas wrote that beauty “consists in due proportion” (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 5, a. 4, ad. 1). He also wrote that “beautiful things are those which please when seen” and “the senses delight in things duly proportioned, as in what is after their own kind—because even sense is a sort of reason, just as is every cognitive faculty” (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I q. 5, a. 4). “Due proportions” of the human body can be understood to be harmony or order between the various facial or body features and characteristics, and St. Thomas proposes pleasure to be a normal response to apprehending the order between those features and characteristics.

So, if “the senses delight in things duly proportioned,” and if both men and women can be duly proportioned and both men and women sense objects with their sight, does it follow that men and women “delight in” or experience pleasure from seeing a duly proportioned individual of the same gender? St. Thomas says the senses delight in things duly proportioned; both genders have senses, and both

genders apprehend individuals of the same gender. The senses do not seem to discriminate between genders when apprehending due proportions. The answer, then, is that men and women are designed to be able to recognize beauty in all creatures including members of the same gender. If each gender is able to sense beauty in a same-gendered individual, and if the sensing of beauty causes pleasure (or “is pleasing” as St. Thomas says), then when a woman senses the beauty of another woman she will experience pleasure and the same will happen to a man when he sees beauty (or handsomeness) in another man. One can sense beauty in an individual of either gender, and the pleasure that results is independent of the apprehended person’s gender. The pleasure experienced when apprehending beauty/handsomeness in the same gender can be in accord with nature or contrary to nature. It is contrary to nature and contrary to reason when it becomes *sexual* pleasure. It is in accord with nature when it simply signifies the apprehension of a beautiful human being.

In his treatise on the passions St. Thomas writes about the connection between “the beautiful and the good” in that the beautiful can be a cause of love in the same manner as the good:

The beautiful is the same as the good, and they differ in aspect only. For since good is what all seek, the notion of good is that which calms the desire; while the notion of the beautiful is that which calms the desire, by being seen or known. Consequently those senses chiefly regard the beautiful, which are the most cognitive, viz. sight and hearing, as ministering to reason; for we speak of beautiful sights and beautiful sounds. But in reference to the other objects of the other senses, we do not use the expression “beautiful,” for we do not speak of beautiful tastes, and beautiful odors. Thus it is evident that

beauty adds to goodness a relation to the cognitive faculty: so that “good” means that which simply pleases the appetite, while the “beautiful” is something pleasant to apprehend. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II q. 27, a.1, ad. 3)

A few important points should be noted here. First of all, seeing the beautiful object “calms the desire” and results in pleasure. Secondly, the pleasure experienced may or may not follow a *judgment of reason* of the object seen. One may first see a beautiful object, then judge that the object has “due proportions,” and then feel pleasure. One may also see a beautiful object, experience pleasure immediately, and then judge that the object has due proportions. Finally, one may see a beautiful object, experience pleasure, and either not make a conscious judgment at all or make a different judgment than one involving the proportions of the object. In the first case pleasure follows a judgment, in the second case a judgment follows pleasure, and in the third case pleasure may or may not be preceded by a judgment. St. Thomas says that bodily pleasures should be checked by reason; this means that a judgment *should* follow an experience of pleasure, although this may not always be the case.

Here is one area (among multiple possibilities) where SSAD may begin. Sensing the beauty of another individual naturally causes pleasure, and this is in accord with reason. However, if one does not understand what the cause of the pleasure is when one senses a beautiful object, one could easily become confused. One could identify the cause of the pleasure to be the visual sensing of beauty—the response that follows from visually sensing “due proportion” in the words of St. Thomas—in another individual, one could not identify there being a cause at all, or one could identify the cause of pleasure in a

disordered way. This disordered identification of the cause of pleasure is simply an error in judgment or a mis-identification of the cause of pleasure associated with the apprehension of beauty. One misjudges the cause of pleasure resulting from apprehending beauty in an individual of the same gender to be indicative of one’s “natural” sexual compatibility for the individual apprehended as beautiful.

An example here should shed some light on the subject. Let us say that you are sitting by a window that looks outside at the spring-time flowers blossoming on the trees. It is a perfectly sunny morning, so the white blossoms shine and radiate with beauty. For a moment you stare at the flowers and admire their beauty, and in doing so you feel pleasure. You sense the flowers with your sight, you apprehend them as being beautiful, and you feel pleasure as a result of your mind uniting itself to the mental image of the beautiful flowers. You think to yourself, wow, those are really beautiful flowers, and you might even thank God for their beauty. According to St. Thomas, one should “check” that this pleasure is in accord with reason. So, if you stop and think about why you are feeling pleasure, you will identify the cause of the pleasure to be the apprehension of a beautiful object—an object with well-ordered or due-proportioned parts and features. You have identified the cause of the pleasure associated with the apprehension of beauty in a natural/normal way and in accord with reason.

Now, change the analogy slightly. This time you see and apprehend the beauty of the flowers, and you experience pleasure from that apprehension. However, you have been taught by your parents, school teachers, and society in general that experiencing pleasure when apprehending these particular beautiful flowers is an indication that you should eat the flowers. In other words, you are taught that the

cause of the pleasure you receive from seeing and apprehending beautiful flowers is because you are naturally inclined to *unite with them physically*. Even further, the flower is an opium flower which causes a “bodily transmutation” (in Thomistic language) or biochemical reaction (in modern language) that is similar to the bodily experience that has been described as human orgasm. (The opium poppy is a plant, not a tree. This is hypothetical, so for the sake of the example just pretend that opium grows on trees.) In describing the effect that opiates can have on the body, James G. Pfaus writes

Opiates... produce a rush of euphoria followed by a prolonged period of relaxation, a state that has been referred to as a “pharmacogenic orgasm.”... A “natural” version of this state is induced by an orgasm. (Pfaus 2009, 1517)

You eat the flower and experience the orgasm-like pleasure. Since your society defines sexual union as “receiving orgasm-like pleasure as a result of physical contact with any object,” you believe that you are sexually uniting with the flower. In Thomistic language, you might say that you feel that the orgasm-like pleasure is indicative of your nature being perfected by a sexual union with the opium flower. You have also been taught by your parents and society that the orgasm-like response you receive from eating the opiate flower indicates that you are inclined or oriented to a sexual “union” with that *whole tree*. Because you are “naturally inclined” to the orgasm-like pleasure associated with your uniting physically with the flower (a part of the tree), you feel you have a right to sexually unite with the whole tree.

In the second scenario, you identify the cause of the pleasure that you receive from seeing and apprehending those particular flowers to be indicative of your “natural

tendency” to physically unite with the tree as opposed to the pleasure indicating that you are apprehending the due proportions of the flowers. The second scenario shows how an apprehension of beauty could begin normally and become abnormal. The scenario begins with the sense of sight apprehending a beautiful object in a normal way; the situation becomes abnormal when you associate orgasm-like pleasure with the apprehension of the object. You begin to associate the sight of the flower with the orgasm-like pleasure that will be obtained shortly after eating the flower. The habituation of this association results in an inclination to be solely sexually attracted to that tree. Because you receive sexual orgasm-like pleasure from eating (physically uniting to) the flower, you identify yourself as an opium-flower-tree-sexual. It should go without saying that this second scenario is a misidentification (or a misjudgment) of the cause of pleasure associated with the apprehension of beauty.

The analogy can be taken in another direction as well, and although it is unpleasant to mention, it is necessary to understand what I am describing here as a possible explanation for the psychogenesis of homosexual inclinations. The analogy explains that the individual receives pleasure from apprehending a beautiful flower on a tree. Initially, the pleasure is normal, in that it indicates that the individual is apprehending due proportions between the features and properties of the flower. The pleasure referred to in the analogy is non-sexual pleasure. Yet, there is a condition known as “dendrophilia” in which an individual is sexually attracted to trees: “The person may have sexual contact with trees, venerate them as phallic symbols, or both” (Corsini 2001, s.v. “dendrophilia”). It is under the general group of psychosexual disorders known as paraphilias, which are basically defined as “a group of

psychosexual disorders in which deviant forms of sexual behavior with atypical functions, objects, or frequencies are necessary for sexual excitement” (Corsini 2001, s.v. “paraphilia”). Along with sexual attraction to trees, there are sexual attractions to animals, human corpses, feces, particular odors, urine, stealing, and women’s shoes (Corsini 2001, s.v. “paraphilia”). There are also individuals who are sexually attracted to dead animals (Aggrawal 2011, 74). It is of utmost importance to note that paraphilias are marked by a “sexual preference” for objects (trees, women’s shoes, corpses, dogs, urine, etc.) and these objects “*are necessary for sexual excitement.*” Anil Aggrawal, in discussing humans with sexual preferences for animals writes:

It was Richard Freiherr von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902), who introduced the terms *zoophilia erotica* and *zoerasty* in 1894. Many authors use the terms zoophilia, zoophilism, zoerasty, zooerastia, bestiality, and bestiosexuality interchangeably, [but] there is supposed to be a subtle difference between them. *Zoophilia* and *zoophilism* (Greek, *zoon*, animal; *philia*, love) are usually considered synonymous. These terms refer to a perversion, where the affected individual is both emotionally and sexually attracted to animals. Individuals engaged in this behavior—known as *zoophiles* or simply *zoos*—begin to love the animals as their own family members and form a deep emotional bond with them. Sexual union with the animals arises as a part of that emotional bonding. (Aggrawal 2011, 73)

So, “zoophiles” can form an emotional bond with an animal, and “sexual union” arises from that emotional bond. The same author distinguishes between different types of zoophiles, suggesting the label, “regular zoophile” for the “so-called ‘classic’ zoophile,” those who “do not enjoy sexual intercourse with humans and prefer

animals for intercourse” (Aggrawal 2011, 75). So, there are human beings who are not sexually attracted to other human beings and instead are stimulated to the point of orgasm only by (non-rational) animals.

It should briefly be noted here that the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-5)* distinguishes between a “paraphilia” and a “paraphilic disorder.” It defines “paraphilia” as “any intense and persistent sexual interest other than sexual interest in genital stimulation or preparatory fondling with phenotypically normal, physically mature, consenting partners” (APA 2013, 685). On the other hand,

a *paraphilic disorder* is a paraphilia that is currently causing distress or impairment to the individual or a paraphilia whose satisfaction has entailed personal harm, or risk of harm, to others. A paraphilia is necessary but not a sufficient condition for having a paraphilic disorder, and a paraphilia by itself does not necessarily justify or require clinical intervention. (APA 2013, 685–686)

So, according to the American Psychiatric Association (APA), a human being having sexual relations with a dog, cat, or a penguin is only “disordered” if he or she experiences distress or impairment, or if it causes personal harm or harm to others. From the definition provided by the APA, even avisodomy (breaking the neck of a bird while penetrating it for sex (Aggrawal 2011, 76)) could avoid the label of “paraphilic disorder” (unless, of course, the APA gives birds the status of persons, thereby making avisodomy an action that harms “another”; it is also possible that the APA considers humans as merely non-rational animals, thereby making avisodomy disordered in that it results in harm of another animal).

If one can develop a sexual inclination solely for birds (“ornithophilia”), bees (“melissophilia”), dogs (“canophilia”), cats (“aelurophilia”) (Aggrawal 2011, 76), women’s shoes, trees, or urine, it is easy to see how one could develop a sexual inclination solely for same-gendered individuals. If one can deviate from the norm of heterosexual human attraction to require a dog, cat, or feces to achieve orgasm, then one could easily deviate from the norm of heterosexual attraction to require a same-gendered individual for sexual arousal and orgasm.

There are striking similarities between same-sex attraction disorder and paraphilias, and in fact, prior to 1973 homosexuality was labeled as a paraphilia. James Cantor explains that “Interestingly, many paraphilics recall events from early childhood during which they became and then remained fascinated with the object(s) or behaviors of their future sexual interest” (Cantor 2012, 240). The disorder in same-sex attracted individuals may stem from or may involve a similar fascination. It is a misjudgment of the cause of pleasure, which eventually becomes a disordered sexual inclination. In SSAD, this mis-identification of the cause of pleasure associated with the apprehension of beauty could occur when one observes a same-gendered individual’s face and/or body with due proportion. Same-sex-attracted individuals could easily be confused as to the reason why they receive pleasure from looking at a beautiful or handsome individual of the same gender, or they could over time develop sexual attraction to an atypical object (member of the same gender) that is observed in paraphilias. Cantor notes that

Homosexuality, more than any other atypical sexual interest, has achieved greater social acceptance over time, and advocates

for other atypical sexual interests—BDSM, cross-dressing, diaperism, etc.—understandably seek the same recognition and rights. Thus, thinking of paraphilias as merely another sexual orientation suggests the conclusion that *everyone* with an atypical sexual interest should benefit from greater tolerance. (Cantor 2012, 237)

There are individuals with atypical sexual attractions—like sexual attraction to diapers—advocating for “recognition and rights,” and the “opium-flower-tree-sexual” analogy in which the individual felt he or she had a right to union with the whole tree is not a stretch. The logic used by advocates for “homosexual rights” is the same logic used by those with diaper and tree paraphilias.

UNNATURAL PLEASURE AND SSAD

It was mentioned previously that one experiences pleasure when one is conjoined with “the good”; the same holds when one apprehends and is cognitively conjoined with the beautiful. It follows that when a woman apprehends and is therefore (mentally) conjoined with the beauty of another woman, she will experience pleasure. Also, when a woman engages in a conversation with another woman, she will experience pleasure which indicates the reality of the situation—that her nature is perfected by that conversation with the other woman and that the conversation (not necessarily the content of the conversation) itself is a human good. The same would hold for a man—if he senses the beauty (again, “handsomeness” is the term more appropriate in today’s language) of another man, the natural response would be to experience pleasure. If a man engages in conversation with another man, the resulting pleasure indicates the two are partaking in a human good.

It seems as though some men and women here mis-identify the cause of the pleasure that results from sensing the beauty of someone of the same gender, or the pleasure associated with communication, or any other normal pleasure associated with the interactions with same-gendered individuals. (Another possibility is that the same-sex attracted individuals know that the pleasure they experience from apprehending beauty in another individual of the same gender is normal, but they decide to take it a step further to sexual fantasy. This possibility is beyond the scope of this paper.) At first, these individuals might be “questioning” what the cause of their pleasure associated with the apprehension of beauty is, due to the widespread propaganda aimed at attempting to make homosexual inclinations appear as normal. Some men and women then could easily (mis-)judge that the pleasure they experience is indicative of a *sexual* “connaturalness” for that other person. Over time, these thoughts likely recur and become habitual, and they likely become “second nature” so to speak; they eventually believe that the pleasure is indicative of their “sexuality.” In reality, the pleasure they experience is simply caused by the apprehension of the beauty of the other individual, and this beauty as well as the pleasurable reaction to the beauty is good in itself. When partaking in a conversation with a same-gendered individual, the natural pleasure experienced by both communicators is indicative of their partaking in a human good. It indicates that they are fulfilled by that conversation. Homosexually inclined individuals may mis-identify the cause of that pleasure to be indicative of a “sexual” connaturalness for the individual they are conversing with or looking at.

A previously quoted passage from St. Thomas explains the phenomenon of unnatural pleasures seemingly becoming natural to an individual:

Under each kind of pleasures, we find some that are “not natural” speaking absolutely, and yet “connatural” in some respect. For it happens in an individual that some one of the natural principles of the species is corrupted, so that something which is contrary to the specific nature, becomes accidentally natural to this individual: thus it is natural to this hot water to give heat. Consequently it happens that something which is not natural to man, either in regard to reason, or in regard to the preservation of the body, becomes connatural to this individual man, on account of there being some corruption of nature in him. And this corruption may be either on the part of the body—from some ailment; thus to a man suffering from fever, sweet things seem bitter, and vice versa—or from an evil temperament; thus some take pleasure in eating earth and coals and the like; or on the part of the soul; thus from custom some take pleasure in cannibalism or in the unnatural intercourse of man and beast, or other such things, which are not in accord with human nature. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 31, a. 7)

A person can be led to believe that a certain behavior or tendency is natural to them due to a corruption in their nature. Corruption in nature includes corruption in thinking or reasoning. An individual sexually attracted to trees or women’s shoes is clearly not using proper reasoning. The same holds for homosexually inclined individuals. In order to “become accidentally natural,” habituation of the action is necessary. This is what it seems St. Thomas is indicating in the phrase “from custom some take pleasure in...” (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 31, a. 7). The individual with SSAD becomes corrupted, and this corruption becomes a habitual mis-identification of the cause of pleasure associated with the apprehension of beauty.

David Prosen recounted his experience of being led to believe there is such a thing as a “gay” identity. He had experienced same-sex attraction for as long as he could remember, and as a result he believed that he was “gay.” The attraction to same-gendered individuals was present from early on in his life without his conscious choice, so he concluded that he must have been born that way. Furthermore, when he engaged in the homosexual lifestyle

it made perfect sense to go along with what felt natural. However, it was logical only because it appeared to be truth.... In reality, lies had to be built upon lies for them to add up to something with the semblance of truth. (Prosen 2012)

In following those lies, he ended up believing he was gay, but that he did not choose that for himself. Instead, he believed that God must have made him that way (Prosen 2012).

The individual’s habitual actions and dispositions made him feel like his lifestyle was “natural.” This concept articulated by St. Thomas can be applied to many psychological disorders. For instance, an alcoholic begins by taking one drink, and he receives pleasure from that one drink. Over a period of time, he drinks more and receives pleasure on a regular basis, and he wants to return to that pleasure. He may claim that he is just a social guy who naturally hangs out at Irish pubs, and that his drinking fifteen beers a night is also natural to him. Yet, we know that drinking fifteen beers a night is not natural. The alcoholic is “corrupted” in nature, yet his alcohol consumption *appears* natural to him, and he misjudges it to be natural. While in reality it is not natural, it is possible for him to have been born with a genetic pre-disposition to alcoholism (which could be labeled an “alcoholic gene”).

GENETICS AND DISORDERS

There seems to be a clear link between genetics and alcoholism (and other addictions) in some cases. Mary-Anne Enoch states:

It has been established, largely through twin and adoption studies, that the heritability (the genetic component of the variance) of all addictive substances lies between 40% and 70%, the heritability of alcoholism is about 50%, and that of cocaine and opiate addiction is about 60% to 70%. (Enoch 2012, 150)

While genetics seem clearly to be involved in some cases of alcoholism, Enoch explains that environmental factors like early-childhood stress play a role in the development of alcoholism as well (Enoch 2012, 152). A different paper explains:

Twin studies have demonstrated that the amount of alcohol one consumes has a genetic influence. Age at first drink appears to be associated with alcohol-related problem behavior, but progression to alcoholism is under stronger genetic control than initiation, and the effect of early exposure to predict outcome is genetically mediated. (Morozova et al. 2012, 1)

It does not follow, however, that an individual with a genetic pre-disposition to alcoholism is destined to be an alcoholic. If one discovered through genetic consultation that one has the “alcoholic genes,” should one resign oneself to the destructive alcoholic lifestyle? Is genetic pre-disposition for a specific habitual behavior an indicator of how one ought to live one’s life? Furthermore, is a genetic pre-disposition an indicator of what is natural or normal? Clearly the answer is no to all of those questions. Through reason we can know that there are some well-ordered and disordered habitual

behaviors, and alcoholism falls into the latter category. Evidently, one can be genetically predisposed to a certain disordered behavior.

While there are studies indicating a link between genetics and alcoholism, the same cannot be said about SSAD. Van den Aardweg notes that “*Twin research* in particular has virtually debunked the myth of genetic causation,” and he cites multiple studies to support his claim (Van den Aardweg 2011, 331–333). Still, even if one was to find evidence linking genetics to homosexuality, it does not follow that SSAD is normal. If a genetic predisposition was the only necessary condition for determining the normality of a lifestyle or set of behaviors, then alcoholism, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and eating disorders (Samek, Koh, and Rueter 2013, 219)¹ would have to be considered normal. Van den Aardweg makes a similar comment:

Logically, if SSA—or for that matter, pedophilia—were determined by genetic or physiological variables, that would not make these orientations more normal or natural. (Van den Aardweg 2011, 331)

This means that there is likely no such thing as a “gay person,” in the way that there are “male” and “female” heterosexual persons. Rather there are heterosexuals, and homosexuality is a “disordered” condition of a heterosexual person. Joseph Nicolosi notes that

there is no such thing as a gay person. Gay is a fictitious identity seized upon by an individual to resolve painful emotional challenges. To consider that the concept of a gay identity is valid, a person must necessarily deny significant aspects of human nature. (Nicolosi 1999, 98–99)

For a “gay identity” to be valid, not only would significant aspects of human nature need to be rejected, but so too would

scientific facts. These “significant aspects of human nature” are not elaborated on by Nicolosi, but a short discussion here on human anatomy and physiology will reveal a few of those aspects. The discussion will involve a graphic explanation of sexual relations between a male and a female as well as the anatomy and physiology of the anus and surrounding areas, but the details are necessary.

COMPARISON OF “HETEROSEXUAL” AND “HOMOSEXUAL” PERSONS

Both men and women have sex organs. Vincenzo Puppo notes that

In anatomy textbooks there is a separation between the embryological development of the internal and external genital organs in the male and in the female. It is important to know this because it is related to the function of these organs, i.e. the internal genitals have a reproductive function, while the external ones have the function of giving pleasure.... There is an important difference between the two genders: in the male, ejaculation and the release of sperm happen at the same time as orgasm. In the female, however, orgasm is not connected to reproductive function, and ovulation is not accompanied by orgasm. The ovum is fertilized when it is in the uterine tubes, which are internal organs, but the clitoris and the other female erectile structures are located externally. (Puppo 2011, 4)

The textbooks also distinguish between the “primary sex organs” and the “accessory” or “secondary” sex organs. The primary sex organs are the testes in males and the ovaries in females (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 1066). The “accessory” reproductive organs include the male and female genitalia (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 1066). The external male genitalia include

the penis, which “is a copulatory organ, designed to deliver sperm into the female reproductive tract” (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 1069). Marieb and Hoehn explain:

To understand penile anatomy, it is important to know that its dorsal and ventral surfaces are named in reference to the erect penis. Internally, the penis contains the spongy urethra and three long cylindrical bodies (*corpora*) of erectile tissue, each covered by a sheath of dense fibrous connective tissue. This *erectile tissue* is a spongy network of connective tissue and smooth muscle riddled with vascular spaces. During sexual excitement, the vascular spaces fill with blood, causing the penis to enlarge and become rigid. This event, called *erection*, enables the penis to serve as a penetrating organ. (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 1069)

The debate on homosexuality in men surrounds what or who the penis penetrates. Marieb and Hoehn presume that the norm is a female vagina, as they write,

Although there is more to it, the chief phases of the male sexual response are (1) *erection* of the penis, which allows it to penetrate the female vagina, and (2) *ejaculation*, which expels semen into the vagina. (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 1072)

Others, however, believe that the male anus is also a sex organ and presumably a possible target for penetration. Van den Aardweg writes:

the sense of what is biologically healthy and normal (and morally good) in relation to sexuality becomes obfuscated and the justifications for sexually abnormal behavior (both in frequency and risks to medical and psychological health) grow ever more absurd. Consider this example: a brochure “for boys and men” by the German governmental Agency for Health Education reveals, “Officially, the anus is not counted among the sexual organs, but actually it should be. At the anus very many nerves end which can easily be

pleasurably stimulated.... One may also count the anus as belonging to the category of sexual organs since many homosexual and also heterosexual people practice anal intercourse ... that can be very exciting for both partners.” This is abnormality “normalized” by pseudo-biological argumentation. (Van den Aardweg 2011, 332)

Thus, some claim that the anus is a sexual organ because it can be stimulated to result in a feeling of pleasure. Since the anus, according to the aforementioned description, appears to be receptive of elongated, cylindrical objects which cause pleasure, and because the penis is elongated and cylindrical, it is presumed that this must be a normal or natural part of human sexuality. Scientific enquiry of the anus will show that this is not the case, but for now we will review the anatomy and physiology of the female sexual organs including the vagina and clitoris.

The female external genitalia include the vulva, while the vagina is an internal genital organ (Puppo 2011, 4). The vulva includes the clitoris, which is

a small, protruding structure composed largely of erectile tissue, which is homologous to the penis of the male. Its exposed portion is called the glans of the clitoris. It is hooded by a skin fold called the prepuce of the clitoris, formed by the junction of the labia minora folds. The clitoris is richly innervated with sensory nerve endings sensitive to touch, and it becomes swollen with blood and erect during tactile stimulation, contributing to a female’s sexual arousal. (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 1088)

It is important to note that the clitoris plays a major part in female orgasm, and it is located externally. “During sexual excitement,” write Marieb and Hoehn,

The clitoris, vaginal mucosa, and breasts engorge with blood; the nipples erect; and increased activity of the vestibular glands lubricates the vestibule and facilitates the entry of the penis. These events, though more widespread, are analogous to the *erection* phase in men. Sexual excitement is promoted by touch and physical stimuli and is mediated along the same autonomic nerve pathways as in males.... The final phase of the female sexual response, *orgasm*, is not accompanied by ejaculation, but muscle tension increases throughout the body, pulse rate and blood pressure rise, and the uterus begins to contract rhythmically. As in males, orgasm is accompanied by a sensation of intense pleasure and followed by relaxation. (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 1098–1099)

Thus, we have an overview of how the female body functions during sexual arousal and orgasm. One important point to acknowledge is the natural lubrication of the entrance into the vagina. A second important point is the role that the clitoris plays in orgasm. I will return to these points in a moment.

It was mentioned previously that some claim that the anus is a sexual organ because it can be stimulated to cause pleasure. Thus, a discussion on the anus is necessary here. Somnath Palit, Peter J. Lunniss, and S. Mark Scott note that

At rest, the anal canal remains closed to preserve continence. The anal sphincter complex is extremely dynamic and is influenced by a variety of reflexes and modulation by higher centers in such a way that rather than acting as a passive barrier, it provides an airtight seal at all times except when the subject wants to pass flatus or defecate. (Palit, Lunniss, and Scott 2012, 1451)

They continue:

The anal canal epithelium is lined by highly sensitive nerve endings derived

from sensory, motor and autonomic nerves, in addition to the enteric nervous system. The anal sensory area contains specialized sensory end organs, including Krause end bulbs, Golgi Mazzoni bodies, genital corpuscles, Meissner's corpuscles, and Pacinian corpuscles. It is important to note, however, that this information was derived from studies performed over 50 years ago, using techniques which may now be regarded as outdated. Few other data are available. (Palit, Lunniss, and Scott 2012, 1451–1452)

While the data are somewhat old, I will still grant here that the anal canal epithelium is lined by highly sensitive nerve endings. What should follow from this scientific observation though? Does it follow that the anus is a sexual organ? Does the innervation of the anal canal indicate that the anus functions as both an excretory organ and a sexual organ? Does the anus function as a sort of “secondary” sex-organ receiver? Or, is it possible that the nerves in the anal canal do not distinguish between *inserted* elongated, cylindrical objects and *released* elongated, cylindrical objects? Feces are often elongated and cylindrical, as they often become semi-solid and form to the shape of the large intestine. It seems the nerve ending in the anus can be stimulated (to result in pleasure) by the friction of an elongated, cylindrical object (semi-solid feces) moving outward or a foreign, elongated, cylindrical object moving inward. There is evidence for this claim.

The fact that *both men and women* engage in anal intercourse and find it pleasurable is extremely important. Carol Royce and her associates note that

Among adolescents, heterosexual anal intercourse (HAI) has become a relatively common sexual behavior, with a prevalence ranging from 16% to 35%. The National Survey of Family Growth reported that 43.5% of males and 36% of

females aged 25 to 44 had engaged in HAI. (Roye, Tolman, and Snowden 2013, 715)

The authors note that both their studies and other studies have discovered that women find anal intercourse pleasurable (Roye, Tolman, and Snowden 2013, 716, 718, 719, 720). Apparently, then, both men and women find anal intercourse pleasurable. Again, though, this does not indicate that the anus is a sex organ, nor does one's finding anal intercourse pleasurable indicate that one "is a homosexual." What is more likely is that the nerves in the anus and surrounding areas function as stimulators of pleasure resulting from the friction of the human excrement being released—the pleasure functions to indicate the human good of excretion.

Unsurprisingly, Freud recognized that at an early age, boys and girls, and presumably then both men and women, find defecation (the excretion of feces) pleasurable (Nairne 2014, 384). This is consistent with the theory that pleasure is indicative of an attained good; removal of bodily wastes through defecation is such an attained good. So, both men and women have anuses, both receive anal pleasure through evacuation of the bowels, and both receive anal pleasure by inserting foreign objects into the anus. This seems to simply indicate that there are pleasure receptors in the anus which can be stimulated naturally by excreting feces (which are elongated and cylindrical) or by inserting elongated, cylindrical foreign objects. It seems that the pleasure receptors can be stimulated through the application of friction in either direction. It does not follow, though, that the anus is a sexual organ.

There is more biological evidence for this claim. It should be evident from experience that the expelling of urine during urination is pleasurable. The

urethra is the "canal through which urine passes from the bladder to outside the body" (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, G-20). The urinary system functions to remove nitrogenous wastes and maintain water, electrolyte, and acid–base balance (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, G-20). This means that here we have a similar situation as that observed during defecation. Remember that defecation is marked by a release of typically semi-solid body wastes through a bodily canal. The release of those wastes causes pleasure, which is likely the result of the friction between a substance (feces) and the surrounding bodily canal (rectum and/or anal canal) that occurs during evacuation. Similarly, during urination, a substance (urine with wastes) passes through a bodily canal (urethra), and pleasure is experienced during that passing—likely as a result of the friction that occurs between the urine and surrounding canal. This should not be surprising since, again, pleasure functions to indicate a human good, and the removal of bodily wastes is a human good.

Just as humans have discovered a way to mimic the pleasure experienced during defecation, so too have human beings found a way to mimic the pleasure experienced during urination. There are individuals who place foreign objects in their urethra to masturbate, and it is not uncommon. It often results in foreign objects becoming lodged in the urinary track, and as Arndt van Ophoven and Jean B. DeKernion note "the most common motive associated with foreign bodies of the genitourinary tract is sexual or erotic in nature, such as masturbation and other forms of sexual gratification or variations" (Van Ophoven and DeKernion 2000, 279). The authors note that the objects often end up in the bladder, and that

The myriad of foreign bodies noted in the bladder encompasses everything

available within the social environment of the self-inserter from nasal mucus and hair, to broom straws, perfume bottles, and toothbrushes. Foreign bodies pushed into the bladder via the urethra may be structured according to their main characteristics in terms of origin and material as animals or parts of animals (a dog penis, ants, snails...). (Van Ophoven and DeKernion 2000, 279)

Furthermore, the authors cite another Richard Kenney in writing:

After reviewing several case reports of self-inserted foreign bodies with patient psychiatric profiles available[,] Kenney noted that serendipitously discovered, pleasurable stimulation of the urethral mucosa may have been the initiating event. (Van Ophoven and DeKernion 2000, 279)

So, human beings have “serendipitously discovered” that the urethra can be pleasurable stimulated. Does this mean that inserting objects into the urethra is also a form of “sex”? Since there are people who may only be stimulated to orgasm by inserting objects into their urethra indicate that we have discovered a new “sexual orientation”? What kind of “-sexual” is a man who sticks a dog’s penis into his own penis for sexual stimulation? Again, this shows how the pleasure related with normal biological processes can be abused, and it provides insight into the abuse of the anal canal pleasure receptors that occurs when inserting objects into the anal canal, that is, in anal intercourse.

It was mentioned previously that the entrance to the vagina becomes lubricated during sexual stimulation. This is an important fact. What could this indicate? A mechanic often lubricates an opening to facilitate the passing of an object that fits through the opening. It seems safe to say, then, that the lubrication of the vagina is in preparation for either the insertion or

release of an object that fits through the opening. Since no object is released “naturally” following the lubrication, one is left to presume that the lubrication is in preparation for the insertion of an object. This natural object is clearly the penis.

Furthermore, female sexual arousal is marked by erection of the clitoris. Sexual arousal tends toward an end—orgasm, which is the quenching of that arousal and relaxation. As Marieb and Hoehn note, “sexual excitement is promoted by touch and physical stimuli” (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 1098). While the stimulation and quenching (orgasm) could be accomplished by oneself (through masturbation), the physiological realities surrounding sexual arousal indicate the tending toward an individual to be quenched by another individual. The female could quench her desires with her fingers through tactile stimulation of the clitoris and vagina, but this is merely a mimicking of the natural penile–vaginal intercourse. The repetitive thrusting action of the male with his penis stimulates all of the sexual pleasure areas of the woman’s vulva and vagina, whereas non-penile thrusting actions require separate actions to stimulate all of the woman’s pleasure areas (what are also known as “genito-pelvic sites”) (Levin 2011, 307). All of the biological realities of the female clearly indicate her to be the proper receiver of the penis. This means that “ordered” or “healthy” functioning of male and female sexual organs is marked by penile–vaginal intercourse (in marriage). Any other use of sexual organs to cause orgasm is not clearly an aspect of their healthy functioning.

In heterosexual intercourse, then, while it may not occur every time, mutual quenching of sexual arousal can occur through the action that biologically makes the two “one-flesh.” This was articulated by Alexander Pruss, and I will return to this idea in a moment. All of these

biological realities of the male and female indicate such a “thing” as heterosexuality, or a “heterosexual person,” as opposed to a homosexual person.

For there to be such a thing as a “gay person” or “homosexual person,” it seems that bodily changes similar to those observed in penile–vaginal intercourse should be observed during “homosexual” arousal and homosexual “sex.” Some claim that “God” made them gay, as Prosen explained in the previously mentioned quote. If these people grant that God creates, then they should grant quite a bit about bodily functions and sexuality. If God created a type of person that is naturally homosexual, would He not create these people to have compatible bodily changes during sexual arousal? For instance, when aroused, the female vagina becomes lubricated, indicating preparation for the reception of a fitting object. The male penis erects during sexual arousal to form an elongated and cylindrical shape, indicating a change in function and tending toward the insertion or penetration into a receptive object.

If there were such a “thing” as a “gay person” or “lesbian,” one would expect similar changes that indicate compatibility that occur during sexual arousal and thereafter. One would expect the anal canal to self-lubricate in “gay” men, and one would expect an object that fits the vagina—elongated and cylindrical to mimic the penis—to be formed in lesbian women. While the anal canal does self-lubricate, it does so in preparation for the passage of feces *out* of the body. Marieb and Hoehn write that “Anal sinuses, recesses between the anal columns, exude mucus when compressed by feces, which aids in emptying the anal canal” (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 925). Scientific observation indicates that the lubricating of the anal canal functions to facilitate the *outward* passage of elongated, cylindrical objects—feces—as

opposed to the *insertion* of an elongated, cylindrical object. This is a stark contrast to the female sexual organ in which the self-lubrication during sexual arousal is not followed by the outward passage of an elongated, cylindrical object. Instead, the lubrication indicates the preparation for reception or the inward movement of an elongated, cylindrical object.

If there were such a natural state as a “lesbian,” one should expect to observe a “match” so to speak, an object on the body of the other “lesbian” that fits and fulfills the longing experienced during sexual arousal. One could reasonably expect “lesbians” to have an elongated, cylindrical object natural to their body that fits and fulfills the desires of both the vagina and the clitoris at the same time. This is not observed, however. Instead, in order to stimulate the woman and quench her arousal in orgasm, the physical contact of the male body (or an imitation of the male body) with the clitoris and the penis (or an imitation of the penis) with the vagina is necessary. Lesbian “sex,” it seems, requires the use of multiple objects to quench all of the “genito-pelvic sites with the possible stimuli that generate the neural afferent sexual arousal inputs to the brain” (Levin 2011, 307).

One final difference between penile–vaginal intercourse and anal intercourse is the fate of the semen. It was mentioned that during female orgasm the uterus contracts. If semen is present during female orgasm, the woman’s uterine contractions “insuck” or “upsuck” the semen (Levin 2011, 302). This contraction is also known as “reverse peristalsis” (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 1115). The reverse peristalsis of the uterus is clearly a mechanism which functions to retain the semen in the woman’s body. This is a stark contrast to the anus and surrounding structures. Peristalsis is observed in the rectum, but not during anal intercourse. Moreover,

the rectal peristalsis does not function to retain rectal or anal contents. Instead, rectal peristalsis functions to expel its contents (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 310) which are usually feces. If semen is present, it is presumably flushed out with the rest of the bodily waste. This means that homosexual anal intercourse is marked by a natural rejection of the male's "seed," while penile-vaginal intercourse is marked by natural receptivity or acceptance and retainment of the male's seed.

If there were such a thing as a "gay person," one would expect human nature/human biological functions and processes to indicate such a sexuality. Instead, scientific observation of human nature and biological functions points to there being such a thing as a "heterosexual" but no such evidence of a "gay person." The study of medicine/health is based on the belief in the existence of proper and improper or ordered and disordered functions of the organs of the human body. The word "disorder" or "disease" presupposes there being a norm. If one grants that there is such a thing as "health" or "medicine," then one would have to grant that there are ordered and disordered functions of human organs. From what has been proposed thus far, one would have to grant that homosexuality is disordered and an abuse of human organs/human biology. During homosexual "sex," the sex organs are diseased. Homosexual behavior is an attempt to mimic heterosexuality through abusing human bodily functions.

Furthermore, if there were "gay people," then one would expect there to be "tree-sexuals," "dog-sexuals," "diaper-sexuals," or "women's-shoes sexuals," because there are some individuals who are sexually aroused only by those objects. Some males masturbate by inserting their penis into whatever opening it will fit including openings in trees (*Scotsman*

2010), and some women masturbate with objects like paint brushes, (family-size) bottles of hair mousse, oranges, cucumbers, and potatoes (Shah, Olah, and Jackson 2003, 221–222). It does not follow, however, that there is such a person who is "gay" or "lesbian," unless the terms are used to describe a homosexual behavior (as opposed to a "natural" or "inborn" disposition). It could be argued that all causes of orgasm that are not penile-vaginal (as well as contracepted penile-vaginal) intercourse are simply different forms of masturbation.

Here a brief discussion of masturbation is necessary. While discussions on masturbation are disturbing, they are easier to approach when one understands the reality behind masturbation. Any non-penile-vaginal instigation of orgasm is merely the induction of an internal biochemical reaction similar to what a heroin user experiences. As was noted previously, the orgasm is a "natural," "inborn," or "biological" similarity to a drug high. Any cause of orgasm that deviates from the norm of penile-vaginal intercourse could be compared with merely pressing a button (call it the "orgasm button") and inducing a drug-like high in the body. The heroin user uses his hand to push the plunger of the syringe which activates the release of a chemical throughout the body. The chemical binds to specific cellular receptors in the body which results in a feeling of euphoria and relaxation. The masturbator uses his or her hand to stimulate his penis or her clitoris and vagina for a period of time which activates the release of chemicals throughout the body. The chemicals are stored in cells prior to their release, and after their release from the cells they bind to receptors on other cells which results in a feeling of euphoria and relaxation. There are obviously major differences between heroin-induced euphoria and masturbation-induced euphoria, but

the biochemical mechanism which causes the euphoria is comparable.

Another way to think about this is the concept of an “orgasmatron,” discussed by Alexander Pruss:

recall the orgasmatron from Woody Allen’s 1973 film *Sleeper*. This is a device that, when entered by one or more persons, rapidly induces orgasms in them. Fairly early on in the film, we see a fully clothed man and woman entering, and then coming out blissfully a few seconds later. (Pruss 2013, 117)

The orgasmatron induces the biochemical reaction that results in the euphoria of orgasm without the use of hands, trees, anuses, dogs’ anuses, cucumbers, or potatoes. The difference between these objects and normal penile–vaginal intercourse is quite obvious and should not need to be elaborated on.

COMPARISON AND APPLICATION TO CURRENT THEORIES OF SSAD

Now, returning to the affective side of SSAD, how does the previous discussion on the passions compare to current theories on same-sex attraction disorder and homosexually inclined individuals? It was mentioned previously that many of the available research has been advocacy studies used in attempt to normalize same-sex behavior and relations. Even so, Gerard van den Aardweg and Richard Fitzgibbons provide some insight into links between homosexuality and one’s environment that can be used here. Fitzgibbons suggests that in men, two of the most common contributing factors of SSAD are weak male identity (which typically includes a weak male body image) and narcissism. In women, he suggests contributing factors of same-sex attraction disorder to be weak feminine identity and

loneliness (Fitzgibbons 1999, 90). Van den Aardweg suggests a causal link between “gender non-conformity” and homosexual tendencies in both boys and girls. This gender non-conformity is marked by deficient manliness and deficient femininity, similar to Fitzgibbons’s suggestion. He writes:

Particularly relevant for the understanding of the development of same-sex tendencies is the universal observation that these gender nonconforming pre-homosexual children and teens very frequently were, and above all, *felt as if they were*, outsiders in their same-sex peer group.... In early adolescence and adolescence, this not belonging fuels a *longing to belong* to the same-sex community. And this may give rise to homo-erotic friendship fantasies. (Van den Aardweg 2011, 337)

I proposed earlier that habits of thought play a role in the formation of homosexual inclinations, and Van den Aardweg acknowledges this:

Un-masculinity, lack of combativeness, “softness,” etc. in boys and a deficient identification with femininity in behavior and/or self-view in girls are *habits* of behavior and thinking which often, not always, originate at home, especially as effects of *upbringing* and *parent-child interactions*. (Van den Aardweg 2011, 337)

Applying the previous discussion on the passions sheds a great deal of light on those theories. A male with a weak gender-identity is going to look at other males habitually or repeatedly from a different perspective than the normal and confident male. If one does not like one’s own gifts (here meaning physical traits), one is more prone to look at other people’s gifts. If I do not like the looks of my 15-year-old car, I am going to be pre-disposed to look at other attractive cars.

Comparing my car to other cars can become habitual, and each time I see a car with the traits I desire, I will experience pleasure. Similarly, the weak-gender-identity male will compare himself to other men, and in doing so he will recognize the men who have features that are “due proportioned.” Simply stated, he will recognize men who are “beautiful” in the Thomistic sense of the word. The natural response to the apprehension of any beauty is pleasure; hence, a male with a weak male identity will receive pleasure from seeing other due-proportioned men. He will habitually and repeatedly seek the pleasure he receives from looking at the due proportions of other men, like someone who habitually looks at the body of a luxury car and receives pleasure. What begins as a simple comparison between himself and other males changes into an obsessive-type disorder where the male habitually looks at other males. The time spent looking at, thinking about, or seeking out other males is time that is *not* spent looking at, thinking about, or seeking out women. When one becomes consciously aware of their fascination with same-gendered individuals, they may misjudge that the cause of their fascination is a “natural sexual inclination” or “connaturalness” for individuals of the same sex. Van den Aardweg explains:

Developmentally, adolescents must first experience that they belong to the world of their own sex, and confidently identify with their own sex, before they (can) become sensitive to the appeal of the opposite sex. Teens look up to same-sex models and want to imitate them. Teenage girls may rave over a charming teacher or—generally somewhat older, already more developed—girls who carry the show (and are popular with boys). Boys look up to (mostly older) boys and young men with a high masculinity status (and who are popular with the girls).

Teens who feel pitiable and inferior as to their masculinity/femininity admire their same-sex idols all the more in proportion to the pain they feel from missing what the others seem to possess. They crave for such a friend and his manly (or her feminine) affection, however, in the way of an unrealizable daydream, like a child living in poverty might dream of becoming rich.... In (pre-puberty) such hankering for warmth gets erotic overtones, and grows even deeper roots if acted out in masturbation fantasies. (Van den Aardweg 2011, 340)

In order for one to determine that they have found a role-model that they like, they will have to receive pleasure when apprehending the appearance of that individual. Contrarily, if a boy or girl is satisfied with their physical traits or “looks” they will not be inclined to look for due proportions in same-gendered individuals (unless they are narcissistic, which will be discussed in a moment).

Fitzgibbons speaks in a similar way to Van den Aardweg:

The “sports wound” will negatively affect the boy’s image of himself, his relationships with peers, his gender identity, and his body image. His negative view of his masculinity and his loneliness can lead him to *crave the masculinity of his male peers*. (Fitzgibbons 1999, 88)

and

Another reason that some men have a weak masculine identity is poor body image. I have found that many active homosexual men are totally obsessed with other men’s bodies. They often express hatred for their own bodies and desire the bodies of other men. (Fitzgibbons 1999, 88)

This “craving” of the masculinity of his male peers is the obsessive-type desiring of the pleasure that the SSAD individual receives from apprehending masculinity,

which is simply “due proportions” or “beauty” of the male body.

Van den Aardweg also cites a study which indicates an “association between SSA and parental factors, in particular in regard to the same-sex parent” (Van den Aardweg 2011, 337). He writes:

The great majority of men with SSA report childhood emotional distance from their father, and/or disturbed father relationships or paternal absence, at any rate, as well as a lack of father-son confidentiality and of positive paternal influences. As a rule, this “psychologically absent” father figure co-occurred with maternal over-influence, likewise in many variants: over-possessiveness, over-anxiousness, over-protection, doting, over-indulgence, over-interference/control, favoring, pampering, infantilizing or babying, clinging to the son, treating him unwittingly as the girl she had preferred in his place.... Parental influences on pre-lesbian girls often discouraged feminine habits, interests, and roles.... In short, the boy was not sufficiently viewed and treated as “a real boy,” the girl not sufficiently valued as “a real girl.” (Van den Aardweg 2011, 338)

He concludes the discussion on parental factors associated with SSAD by noting that not every individual who has a poor relationship with their same-sex parent as a child will become sexually attracted to same-gendered individuals. Still, the parent factor is a major predisposition to SSAD:

Parental (and other) upbringing habits are predisposing insofar as they generate traits of un-manliness (in boys) and un-femininity (in girls). These in turn hamper a child’s coping with the same-sex world, particularly in the critical phase of pre-adolescence. Youngsters compare themselves to others, in the first place with same-age, same-sex peers. (Van den Aardweg 2011, 339)

Van den Aardweg does not mention this, but the poor relationship between the same-sex parent also likely results in an upbringing lacking in normal pleasurable experiences with the same-sex parent. They may go through childhood without experiencing the normal pleasurable (fun) activities with the same-gendered parent or same-gendered sibling for that matter. If later on in life they start experiencing pleasure by engaging in normal fun activities with a same-gendered individual in a society that promotes homosexual inclinations as normal, they might get confused, and start “questioning” things. Adolescence is when sexuality develops, and new experiences of non-sexual pleasures resulting from engaging in activities with same-gendered individuals could easily be mixed in with new experiences of sexual arousal, resulting in confusion.

Again, since pleasure results from the conjunction or union with a good and since conversation or communication is a good, an individual will experience pleasure when conversing or communicating with other same-gendered individuals. When a person engages in good conversation with other people, pleasure will result, regardless of the communicators’ genders. When a person pursues a common goal together with a same-gendered individual—like throwing a football or playing a video game—typically pleasure will result regardless of the genders of those individuals involved in the pursuit of the common goal. The normal response is to recognize the good of pursuing a common goal or communicating with another individual of the same gender, whereas the abnormal response appears to be a disordered affective romantic union in the mind of the same-sex-attracted individual. Just as a romantic bodily union is only natural for a man and woman, so is the romantic emotional union only natural for a man and woman. This is due to the

end that romantic emotional union tends toward, which is real sexual union. Hence, the disordered individual with same-sex attraction will ultimately desire a real biological union with an individual of the same gender, but this real biological union is not physically possible in reality.

Here it is necessary to go on a bit of a tangent on the topic of “unions.” A previously mentioned quote from St. Thomas explains:

The union of lover and beloved is twofold. There is real union, consisting in the conjunction of one with the other. This union belongs to joy or pleasure, which follows desire. There is also an affective union, consisting in an aptitude or proportion, in so far as one thing, from the very fact of its having an aptitude for and an inclination to another, partakes of it: and love betokens such a union. This union precedes the movement of desire. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 25, a. 2, ad. 2)

Applying this concept to natural romantic marital unions, a man and a woman can be united sexually or biologically as well as emotionally. It seems as though those with same-sex attraction disorder are confused. They misjudge that the pleasure they are experiencing from the apprehension of beauty, conversation, pursuing a common goal together, etc. can terminate in a real sexual union like the real sexual union of a man and a woman. This variable is what makes homosexual inclinations *seem* to be unlike other paraphilias; trees, women’s shoes, and diapers cannot talk or pursue a common goal together with a human being. Brotherly or sisterly “love” is exchanged in friendships between same-gendered human individuals, while “love” cannot be exchanged between a human and non-human object. So, when the comparison between two disordered conditions like bestiality and homosexual

inclinations is made, there is often uproar and a claim that the two are dissimilar. The error is made in assuming that there is no such thing as disordered sexual actions between two human beings. This is clearer when appealing to incest—brothers and sisters or parents and children can exchange filial love with each other, but sexual actions between those related individuals are disordered.

Furthermore, real sexual union can only be achieved between a man and a woman, as Pruss notes. He explains that some define bodily unions as merely the contact between or a heap of human flesh (Pruss 2003, 67). As was previously mentioned, men use their penis to penetrate various objects in order to masturbate and cause orgasm. Likewise, women penetrate themselves with various objects to cause orgasm. Is the penetration of a bodily opening in order to cause orgasm a sufficient condition for a sexual union? Or is the penetration of any body opening with another person’s body part the only necessary condition for a real biological union?

Pruss uses the example of sticking one’s finger in another’s ear, and he acknowledges that this is clearly not a physical union (Pruss 2003, 59–60). Instead, a real physical union, including a real sexual union, is defined according to the function of the two human organs involved in the union. In real marital unions, the organs are clearly procreative-type organs. For a sexual unity to be established, both individuals’ organs must be striving for the same end. In sexual intercourse between a male and a female, this is clearly the case. Both the male organ and the female organ are jointly striving towards procreation. Furthermore, and this may or may not be mentioned by Pruss, but appealing to the pleasure experienced in heterosexual sex and homosexual “sex” sheds light on the discussion. In heterosexual sex, as was

mentioned previously, both the man's and the woman's sex organs are "pleased" and "please" the other person's organs. If sexual union is a good to be pursued (in marriage, but that argument is beyond the scope of this paper), and if there is a "uniting act" in which both the man and woman strive for the same good, then the pleasure both experience should indicate this union. The pleasure experienced by both the man and the woman is a special type of pleasure—"orgasm"—and as was mentioned previously in the quote from Marieb and Hoehn, the "orgasm is accompanied by a sensation of intense pleasure and followed by relaxation" in both the man and the woman (Marieb and Hoehn 2007, 1098–1099). It is a different pleasure than what is experienced during urination or defecation. Orgasmic pleasure can only be experienced through the stimulation of the penis and the vulva. Male homosexual anal "intercourse" may cause pleasure in the anus, but this is only because it is the abuse of a pleasure mechanism in the body. One male masturbates with another male's anus, but only one is stimulated to orgasm. One male inserts his sex organ into another male's excretory organ. This is not a union but rather an abuse of body parts. In female homosexual "intercourse," one female's sex organ is stimulated to orgasm by using another woman's non-sex organ (hand or finger), or a foreign object is used to stimulate the other woman to orgasm. This also is an abuse of the organs of the body. Again, this is different from heterosexual sex, where both the man and the woman use their sex organs to unite. (I am not arguing here that all abnormal uses of organs are immoral. Some will say that an endoscopy is an abnormal use of an organ but not immoral. That discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. The functions argument proposed in this paper is to show that there is such a thing as

"heterosexuality" which is marked by sexual union. "Homosexuality" is a farce as there is no such thing as homosexual union. These claims are determined by appealing to the functions of the sexual organs as well as the pleasure observed during orgasm of heterosexual sex and homosexual "sex.")

As Pruss notes, when two individuals of the same gender cause sexual pleasure in the other, they merely experience an *illusion* of union rather than a real sexual union. In the example of the opium-flower-tree-attracted individual, the individual receives orgasm-like pleasure and "feels" as if they had united with the flower sexually but it was only an illusion. Pruss explains this concept in writing:

[I]f sexual union is a physical reality, it might well be the case that someone could think or feel it present when it is absent, or, for that matter, have it present while thinking or feeling it absent. (Pruss 2003, 58)

Likewise, men who engage in sodomy with other men or women who engage in lesbian activity may feel like they are uniting, but in reality they are not.

Now, returning from the tangent, it was mentioned previously that narcissism has been identified as a potential factor predisposing one to homosexual inclinations. Does the theory presented in this paper further explain the connection between narcissism in men and SSAD? The *DSM-5* explains that those with narcissistic personality disorder "are often preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love" (APA 2013, 670); and Drew Pinsky and S. Mark Young acknowledge that "For the narcissist, the whole world is a mirror; life is spent in pursuit of a gratifying reflection, a beautiful self-image to help stave off internal feelings of emptiness" (Pinsky and Young 2010, 88). The

narcissistic male, then, repeatedly receives gratification (pleasure) from apprehending an image of what he believes to be a beautiful male in the mirror. Hence, through habitually viewing himself and his own characteristics, he is disposed to being attracted to the male gender. Furthermore, narcissists compare themselves with their peers. Zlatan Krizan and Brad J. Bushman note that their study revealed that

Narcissists ... perceived themselves as more attractive than their significant others and were generally more likely to compare on attractiveness, confirming that being perceived as more attractive than others is a central component of narcissists' self-views. (Krizan and Bushman 2011, 215)

If "being perceived as more attractive than others is a central component of narcissists' self-views," then they will spend a good proportion of time comparing themselves with same-gendered individuals. In order to compare one's physical features with a same-gendered individual, one must look at and apprehend the physical features of other same-gendered individuals. Again, if one is spending time looking at and observing same-gendered individuals, then at those times one is *not* looking at opposite gendered individuals. The comparing with others of the same-gender was noted to be a trait of those with weak body images or gender non-conformity, and appears to be a factor in narcissists who become homosexually inclined. Habitually apprehending beauty in individuals of the same gender is also a habituation of *not* apprehending beauty in opposite-gender individuals.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

When providing theories for the cause or genesis of a disorder, it is always good to

provide a theoretical solution to the disorder. One preventative measure seems to be a well-functioning intellect which is achieved through proper education on the natural causes and responses to beauty, pleasure, and partaking in human goods. Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung et al. explain:

Aquinas argues that although the passions can and do affect our actions, primarily by affecting our deliberative process and ability to make judgments, still, if an agent possesses a functioning intellect and will, those passions cannot determine the resulting actions. (Konyndyk DeYoung, McCluskey, and Van Dyke 2009, 88)

Since there has been an extreme push for "same-sex attraction" to be recognized as natural or normal, it will be important to educate children (especially those with a weak body image, those males who tend toward narcissism, or others with SSAD predispositions) of what is written in this paper—basically, that there are good and natural responses as well as disordered and unnatural responses to apprehending beauty and participating in human goods. Beauty is due proportions of the features or properties of an individual or thing, and it is normal to experience a feeling of pleasure when apprehending a beautiful person or engaging in a good conversation. The natural response to that pleasure is *not* believing that one is meant for sexual union with the other individual but rather that one should regard the beauty in the other individual as due proportion or harmony between the features or characteristics of that person. Understanding the cause of pleasure associated with the apprehension of beauty and other goods may help heal those who experience what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls a "trial" of homosexual inclinations, and it may relieve many of those who simply do not understand why they feel pleasure when apprehending

beauty in or when conversing with a same-gendered individual.

ENDNOTE

1. The authors discuss the “additive genetic influences” associated with certain behavioral disorders including eating disorders, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder. They define additive genetic influences as providing “a ballpark estimate of a trait’s heritability and refer to the causes of two sibling’s similarity as a result of additive genetic influence” (Ibid., 216).

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