Christian and Gay:

A Dialogical Narrative Analysis

of Negotiating Identity

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Abstract

A sea change occurred in the nineteenth century regarding how homosexuality was viewed. Same sex acts were pathologised, criminalised and essentialised. These negative discourses were assimilated by Christian doctrine, mapping these essences back into Scriptural texts and condemning those who call themselves gay and lesbian Christians. This has had profound effects on individuals within the Evangelical tradition with its emphasis on biblicalism, who then have to negotiate their religious and homosexual identities.

The present study examines the processes involved in negotiating Christian and homosexual identities through the use of Dialogical Narrative Analysis. This is a narrative constructionist approach which looks beyond stories themselves, to examine how stories act in the lives of protagonists and the narrative resources protagonists utilise in their stories. Eleven lesbian and gay Evangelical Christians were interviewed about their stories of identity negotiation in Christian settings opposed to homosexuality. These were analysed to identify the underlying typologies of process which lead to a variety of outcomes for gay and lesbian Christians.

Analysis revealed that there are two essentialist narratives at work in a protagonist's story: an assertive monological faith narrative which threatens foreclosure; and same sex attractions which become necessary to story through a gay/lesbian narrative. The proximity of relationship between these narratives determines five typologies of process: Same sex attraction invisibility; inchoate recognition of same sex attraction; narrative identity battles; dormant faith or sexuality; and 'I am what I am'. These

narrative types of process function to help sustain a protagonist's identity, and shed light on the work the protagonist's story does in identity construction.

The study suggests that the loosening of monological faith narratives by opening up narrative space, allows protagonists to remake their identities with authentic fabrications and thereby hold their own, countering the threat of finalisation.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my mum, who breathed life into this absurd idea of studying later in life. She believed that obstacles were challenges to make one stronger. She could not assure me she would see me to the end of this academic journey, but believed without a doubt that I would arrive at my destination. She completed her journey before I finished mine, but her legacy to me was quiet grit. I certainly needed it!

I dedicate this also to my dad, who believed passionately in education and ambition. He would be proud of me to the point of embarrassment. I love you both.

"With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers,

as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies,

as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him.

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould,

but let God re-mould your minds from within,

so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good,

meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity."

Romans 12:1-2 (J.B. Phillips Translation)

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DNA	Dialogical Narrative Analysis
SSA	Same Sex Attraction

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Setting the scene

At the time of writing, it has been reported that the Church of England Synod has passed a motion to support the banning of 'conversion therapy' (Sherwood, 2017a), also known as 'reparative therapy' (Davidson, 2017) . The aim of interventions in this type of therapy *"...will result in reducing, and sometimes eliminating, sexual or romantic attractions toward individuals of the same sex..[and]..developing heterosexual potential."* (Nicolosi, 2016) This 'therapy', and the action to ban it, illustrates the pervasive notion of pathology of people with same sex attraction (SSA) that persists within the church, albeit slowly receding with each positive step towards lesbian/gay, inclusion.

The prevalent discourse that homosexual acts are *"intrinsically disordered"* (Pope Paul VI, 1975) impacts on lesbian and gay individuals who profess a Christian faith, exemplified by those in the limelight. Vicky Beeching, a lesbian Christian singer chose to withdraw from social media because of online abuse. One meme posted on her account reportedly reads, *"You may be gay or you may be a Christian, but you cannot be a gay Christian. Do not be deceived"* (Farley, 2017).

Whilst the negative discourse of homosexuality remains the louder voice, there are dissenting counter voices. One of the first was Reverend Troy Perry, who founded the worldwide Metropolitan Community Church to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Christians, stating that *"I knew I was a Christian.. and I knew that I was gay, and that I could be both"* (Perry, 2015, 0:01). In the UK, the Oasis

Foundation, a Christian LGBT inclusive organisation, published a report highlighting the need to *"change the narrative"* for those LGBT Christians who are *"left to drown"* in a *"sea of negativity"* (Chalke, Sansbury, & Streeter, 2017, p. 2), urging dissenting voices to make themselves heard, and signpost LGBT people to welcoming church environments . The Scottish Episcopal Church is one such place, where Scottish Anglicans voted in June 2017 to allow same sex marriages (Sherwood, 2017b). Another place is the regular meetings of Two:23, a UK umbrella LGBT Christian organisation (Two:23, 2017), and Diverse Church, an online supportive community (Diverse Church, 2017).

If discourses are *"frameworks of understanding that organise the social world"* (Andrews, Day Sclater, Squire, & Treacher, 2004, p. 131) and thereby influence narrative accounts, the question arises, what discourses have shaped the construct of homosexuality and what is the impact on gay and lesbian Christians? These questions will be addressed by presenting relevant literature around the organising concept of 'essence', ontological assumptions which lie at the heart of essentialism.

Essentialism was first proposed through the work of Plato, who claimed that there are underlying true forms or 'essences' to phenomenon. For example, any dimension of triangle remains a triangle, and is discontinuously different from a circle. The phenomena of the natural world has fixed (discontinuous) and unchanging (constant) forms, known as an essences (Delamater & Shibley Hyde, 1998). This is a traditional definition of essence. The modern use of the term 'essence' suggests *"a belief that certain phenomena are natural, inevitable, universal and biologically determined"* (Delamater & Shibley Hyde, 1998 p.10). The assumption of essence is evident in

sexual phenomena such as sexual 'orientation', where it is assumed that this "*reside[s] within the individual in the form of hormones, personality traits, and so on."* (Delamater & Shibley Hyde, 1998). In contrast to Essentialism, the paradigm of Social Constructionism proposes that reality is constructed through social means, emphasising the role of language in interpreting experience.

In concert with these paradigms, there have been several conceptualisations of identity. The study of Christians with SSA is intrinsically concerned with identity in a social context, and therefore social theories of identity will be briefly described, and the added value of utilising narrative identity discussed.

Theories of Identity

The concept of identity has been defined in a variety of ways in psychology, with differing epistemological and ontological positions. Bruner (1990) considers these positions as a struggle broadly between two ways of understanding the world. On the one hand, there is the logico-scientific paradigm, where identity is considered to be "*a universal and timeless core, an 'essence' of the self that is expressed as recognisable representations"* (Benwell & Stokoe, 2010 p.82). Generalisable truth about identity is verified by transparent procedures, logic and hypotheses testing.

On the other hand, the narrative paradigm views identity as a social phenomenon, which is dynamic and fluid, vitally existing in relationship with others, who validate that identity (Benwell & Stokoe, 2010). Selves and identities are continuously and dynamically constructed through talk as storied individuals who tell tales that are connected in some way to wider cultural stories. Identity thus is regarded as a

description, rather than reflecting an essence of the self (Foucault, 1998). The narrative paradigm works towards verisimilitude, gaining *"its credence from engaging fully with the particulars of subjective experience"* (West & Reid, 2015 p.3) generating new insight and meaning as it does so. Hammack (2008) therefore defines narrative identity as *"ideology cognized through the individual engagement with discourse, made manifest in a personal narrative constructed and reconstructed across the life course, and scripted in and through social interaction and social practice"* (p. 222).

Conceptualisations of identity from the logico-scientific paradigm which include the social aspects of identity relevant to this study's research question, are the Social Identity approach, which refers to two separate but related theories, Social Identity Theory, and Self Categorisation Theory. These theories have similar assumptions and methods, and similar ideological and meta-theoretical perspectives (Hornsey, 2008). Identity Process Theory also conceptualises identity in social terms, located in the logico-scientific paradigm.

Social Identity Theory views social identity as *"the individual's knowledge that [they] belong to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to [them] of [their] group membership"* (Tajfel, 1972 p.292). It was found through a series of experiments investigating intergroup dynamics, that participants were manifesting a predictable favourable bias towards their 'ingroup', the group a participant 'belonged' to, in contrast to an 'outgroup'. The laboratory based experiments, although stripped of context and meaningful content, repeatedly demonstrated this bias (Hornsey, 2008). In response, Tajfel (1978) articulated Social Identity Theory (SIT) to account for this phenomenon. SIT proposes that human interaction ranges on a spectrum from

being purely interpersonal where individuals relate to others with no awareness of each other's social categories, to purely intergroup, where an individual's representation as an ingroup member is foregrounded, and their idiosyncratic unique qualities are consequently obscured. Implicit in the process of making an 'us' and 'them' salient by sliding from interpersonal to intergroup, is a change in the way an individual sees themselves and others.

The shift towards intergroup interaction enhances group or category distinctions, and as a consequence, individuals enhance similarities within the group ("we're all much the same"), and accentuate differences among the group ("we're different from them"). The shift towards interpersonal interaction enhances personal identity, which comprises of attitudes, memories, behaviours and emotions.

It is theorised that individuals favour their ingroup in comparison to relevant outgroups in order to maintain a positive and secure self-concept, giving rise to competitive intergroup behaviour. Consequently, group members are influenced to behave and think in ways that establish or maintain a positive distinctiveness between the individuals' ingroup and relevant outgroups, leading to intergroup differentiation and outgroup derogation. If individuals belong to a low status group, there are several options open to them to re-establish positive social identity, including leaving the group, promoting the good aspects of the group whilst downplaying the negative aspects, and engaging in activities to achieve social change. SIT thus acknowledges the hierarchy of status and power that groups are held in, and the means by which this hierarchy can be altered. (Hornsey, 2008).

Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT) is an elaboration by Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell (1987) of the cognitive aspect of SIT, focusing on intragroup processes (as compared with intergroup processes of SIT). It conceptualises three levels of self-categorisation or inclusiveness which are important for the self concept. Firstly, the superordinate level is of self as human being - human identity. Secondly, the intermediate level is self as a member of a social group -social identity. Thirdly, the subordinate level concerns personal self-categorisations based on interpersonal comparisons – personal identity. SCT proposes that as one level becomes salient, the others are backgrounded, termed 'functional antagonism'. For example, if an individual becomes more aware of their unique qualities or aims which foregrounds their personal identity, they will then become less cognisant of the norms and standards of their social groups. (Hornsey, 2008)

There are many social identities that an individual can espouse. SCT seeks to understand what determines which particular identity will become the basis for categorisation in any one context. SCT proposes that this is a function of two factors, accessibility and fit (Oakes & Haslam, 1991). 'Fit' refers to the extent social categories are perceived to mirror social reality. For example, individuals may consider there is a high level of fit if a category distinction magnifies what are regarded as intercategory differences, and diminishes intracategory differences.

A concept central to SCT is 'depersonalization', which refers to a how individuals cognitively represent social groups in prototypes. When a category becomes salient, people regard themselves primarily as examples of their group prototype, and less so as individuals; that is, they perceive all members of the group as interchangeable on some

level, because they assume all in the group share the same underlying values, attitudes, emotions and behaviours. The defining attributes of the prototype fluctuate according to context, as it is a subjective understanding of a social category. The concept of depersonalization is assumed to support a range of group processes (Hornsey, 2008). For example, embodying the prototype of an ingroup maximises influence and increases power, hence leaders manage their rhetoric in this regard to increase their power in a group (Turner, 2005).

Breakwell (2010) critiques the Social Identity approach for making an assumption that individuals seek to achieve a positive social identity, which Breakwell (2010) metaphorically terms the "black box" (p.6.2). Identity Process Theory (IPT) seeks to explain the 'black box' of *"the social, cognitive, conative and oretic processes that comprise identity"* (Breakwell, 2010 p.6.2) through understanding how individuals respond to threats to their identity, and how this drives identity development.

IPT proposes that *"the individual's identity is a dynamic social product of the interaction of the capacities for memory, consciousness and organised construal with the physical and societal structures and influence processes which constitute the social context."* (Breakwell, 2010 p6.3) Within this conception of identity are two aspects: identity processes and identity structures, which operate *"in a principled manner"* (Breakwell, 1986). There are two identity processes proposed: assimilation-accommodation, and evaluation. Assimilation is the absorption of new components into the structure of identity; accommodation is the adjustment which occurs in the structure of identity in order to make way for the new components. Evaluation entails the ascribing of meaning and value to identity contents. In terms of identity structures, IPT

describes two dimensions: content and value. The content dimension refers to the idiosyncratic characteristics of an individual which are open to change, as is their organisation, which is thought of in terms of the salience and centrality of identity components, and their extent of connectedness. The value dimension of identity alludes to the positive or negative evaluations ascribed to identity components on the basis of social and personal value systems, which are also flexible and open to change.

The 'principled manner' of the operation of identity processes interacting over time changing and augmenting the identity structures are described by three principles: the self-esteem principle; the continuity principle and the distinctiveness principle. These principles promote a positive self-concept, thus expounding the 'black box' which Breakwell (2010) refers to.

The 'added value' of utilising a narrative lens on identity

The theories of SIT, SCT and IPT propose explanations for the development of identity in the social context, and there has been a developmental progression starting with SIT, through to IPT, each theory seeking to further clarify differing aspects of social identity. These theories have been widely used and provided profound insights into social identity, and identity conflict.

However, the conceptualisation of narrative identity was adopted in the current study because it extends the ontological focus of the study. Cerulo, (1997) comments that, "*..the social constructionist approach to identity rejects any category that sets forward essential or core features as the unique property of a collective's members. From this perspective, every collective becomes a social artifact – an entity molded, refabricated,*

and mobilized in accord with reigning cultural scripts and centres of power" (p. 387)

Narrative analysis allows for this ontological expansion by recognizing that categories such as gay or straight are socially constructed (Delamater & Shibley Hyde, 1998; Haslam & Levy, 2006) and therefore can be examined and questioned in a narrative framework of identity. This aspect of enquiry is crucial in the present study, in considering how participants story their SSA's and how this identity is understood in the context of faith narratives concerning sexuality,

A further aspect of ontological expansion is illustrated through a study by Jaspal & Cinnirella (2010) using IPT as their interpretive lens. They state in their study of gay Muslims that a realist epistemological approach was adopted in analysing participants' accounts of their sexual identities, regarding these accounts as *"a fairly reliable reflection of their cognitions"* which allows the data analyst to *"theorize motivations, subjective experience, and meaning"* (p. 854). However, this is a mimetic understanding of storied accounts, where these accounts merely imitate a reality independent of these storied accounts, acting as *"surrogate versions of what the story listener would have seen and experienced had [they] been where the storyteller was.."* (Frank, 2010 p.88). The mimetic understanding misses the stories' layering of imagination and realism. In the rejection of mimetic understandings of storied accounts, it allows the possibility to study *"the storyteller's intended or unintended creativity"* and *"the contexts that make particular kinds of creativity seem necessary"* (Frank, 2010 p89). Thus a narrative lens allows the examination of the power of a story, and how it acts on an individual. This is important in the current study because it highlights the processes of identity negotiation cardinal to the study's research question.

The Role of Essence

The organising concept of essence is presented as a progressive narrative account. First, the turn from acts to essence is examined with respect to SSAs. Second, the search for essence is summarised, encompassing biological and psychological theories and the development theories of homosexual essence is explored. Third, the consequence of essence is investigated, and its affect on discourses of homosexuality and faith. Fourth, the challenge to the assumption of essence through the critique of Social Constructionism and queer theory is expounded. Fifth, identity without essence is examined through considering narrative as a means of understanding the constructing of identity, and queer theology as a means of deconstructing the 'gay Christian'. Sixth, the tensions of negotiating essences of homosexuality and faith will be explored, culminating the study's rationale, research question and impact.

The turn from acts to essence

The echoes of history of SSAs are still reverberating. The burning of Portuguese men as a punishment for SSAs in the thirteenth century gives rise to the pejorative term 'faggot' in use today (Vasey, 1995) and is the defining term of an American hate group (God Hates Fags, 2017). The historical roots of what became a gay and lesbian identity is an interwoven history of church, the legal system, society, psychology and the medical model, the detail of which is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, some historical highlights are worth mentioning in order to illustrate the changing nature of how SSAs were regarded over time and why this changed.

SSAs, although similar through time, have been accorded very different meanings

historically (Weeks, 1999). It needs to be acknowledged that much of the focus in accounts of SSAs refers to male rather than female history, although both were connected and followed similar trajectories (Weeks, 1999). The turn in meaning associated with SSAs came in the nineteenth century. Up until 1885 in England, buggery (referring to anal intercourse) was the only statute that referred to SSAs, but buggery was a broad definition that also included anal intercourse with women and animals. The law originated from medieval church law which had been incorporated into state law in the 1530s. Sodomy was a specific term applied to SSAs between men (Weeks, 1999).

It was in the second half of the nineteenth century that the condemned actions of those with same sex desire started to acquire essence: *"[the] inability to whistle; penchant for the colour green, adoration of mother or father..."* (Weeks, 1999, p. 123), and so the person engaging in aberrative SSAs became part of a species, 'homosexuals' (Foucault, 1998). "*The sodomite is a juridical subject, called by law, civil or ecclesial, to confess his (or her) misdeeds. The homosexual, on the other hand, is named through psychological inspection, a person of pathology"* (Loughlin, 2015, p 612). Thus a person who did same sex acts was transferred from the status of sinner to a patient with a sickness (Weeks, 1999). The transition from act to essence regarding same sex attractions, implied that one could *be* a homosexual, and not *act* on this essence (Loughlin, 2015). Perhaps this transformation of discourse can best be summed up by the term 'homosexual' which was first used by Karl Maria Kertbeny in 1869 who maintained that homosexuality was immutable and a normal variation of sexuality (Drescher, 2015). The term was then utilised by others in negative discourses, and increasingly accrued negative essence through its application in medicine because it was

seen as pathology; through law because the homosexual needed be identified for prosecution; and through psychology, because therapeutic interventions would provide an opportunity for a homosexual to flourish into the healthy heterosexual that lay within (Drescher, 2015; Loughlin, 2015; Weeks, 1999).

The search for essence and gay/lesbian identity and faith development

The quest for a 'master narrative' to locate the aetiological and developmental processes of homosexuality has been universally supported by researchers, who have tried to confirm the essences of homosexuality through scientific study (Cohler & Galatzer-Levy, 2000). The hunt to locate and define the essence of the homosexual person has involved both biological and psychological theorising.

Biological theories of the aetiology of homosexuality issue from several bio-scientific disciplines. From an evolutionary standpoint, homosexuality appears to be a puzzle as it reduces the opportunity for reproduction, but explanations proffered include the evolution of homosexual males to be able to give support to their nephews and nieces in bringing up children, thereby propagating copies of their genes, which is termed 'inclusive fitness' (Delamater & Shibley Hyde, 1998); homosexual expression might have evolved to make social relationships stronger; or that gay males might be more attractive to females because they have female traits, a proposition based on Darwin's idea of sexual selection – which suggests that the existence of the phenomenon helps reproduction (Messer, 2015). However, these theories do not explain the complexities of homosexual behaviour (Buss, 2003).

Family and twin studies in genetics suggest that homosexuality clusters in families,

although the role and extent of the influence of environmental factors remains unclear. The term 'environment' in this context refers to *"all causes of variation that are not genetic"* (Dawood, Bailey, & Martin, 2009, p. 276). Studies suggest a moderate heritability for male sexual preference, but less research has been carried out on female sexual preference (Dawood et al., 2009). Molecular genetic studies are the next logical step in establishing genetic causes of sexual preference (Dawood et al., 2009), where it was reported that there was a significant linkage between DNA markers on the X chromosome and male sexual preference, specifically chromosome Xq28 (Hamer, Magnuson, Hu, & Pattatucci, 1993), but not for female sexual preference. These results have failed to be replicated since this finding, hence the big picture remains complex and inconclusive (Messer, 2015). A more recent study has examined how chromosomal chemical changes can affect the way chromosomes interact with androgens (hormones associated with sexual development) during the development of a foetus, changing its sensitivity to androgens, and thereby feminising male foetuses and masculinising female foetuses (Rice, Friberg, & Gavrilets, 2012).

Other areas of investigation for the biological basis of homosexual preference include brain structure and neuropsychological function. With regards to brain structure, Bancroft (1994) concludes that there is unlikely to be direct links between specific brain structures and sexuality, and draws similar conclusions regarding neuropsychological function, except that there is evidence to suggest that gay and lesbian people are more likely to be left handed. Bancroft (1994) concludes that causes of sexual preference are complex with many factors besides biological influences, with psychosocial factors playing a central role.

It is notable that Bancroft (1994), in summing up the data for a biological basis of homosexuality, expressed a hope that it would decrease homophobia, because it forecloses the assumption that homosexuality is a 'lifestyle choice'. He also feared it could be viewed as an opportunity to selectively exclude gay offspring through genetic means. Studies of social outcomes of biological research suggest that gay/lesbian discourse has been influenced over the past two decades, with a new narrative emerging of being 'born gay' (Wilson & Rahman, 2005). Those individuals who espouse liberal views tend to support the biological immutability narrative, whilst those with conservative views tend to dismiss the biological narrative (Garretson & Suhay, 2016; Joslyn & Haider-Markel, 2016).

Psychological theories of aetiology of homosexuality can be organised into a descriptive typology of three categories: pathology, immaturity and normal variation (Drescher, 2015). Theories of pathology view homosexuality as defective in some way. Krafft-Ebing in 1886 regarded homosexuality as psychopathological because it appeared to contradict Darwinian evolutionary theory of procreation, and thus was a congenital disease (Drescher, 2015). In contrast, Freud's theory of immaturity emphasised that homosexuality was a normal phase that arose out of a protean sexual development process in which all individuals are potentially bisexual (Sedgwick, 1991). Homosexuality could thus be construed as the arrested psychosexual development of an individual, for which there was little hope of change (Drescher, 2015) but nonetheless not regarded as morally wrong or an illness (Loughlin, 2015). Theories of normal variation were championed early on by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, who was considered to be the first pioneer of homosexual rights. He spoke publicly in defence of homosexuals in 1867, against anti-homosexuality laws in Germany. He was homosexual, and put

forward an aetiological theory which conceived of homosexuals as being a 'third sex', whereby men were born with women's spirits and vice versa. Two years after this, Kertbeny (who, as mentioned earlier, coined the term 'homosexual') put forward similar essentialist views (Drescher, 2015; Loughlin, 2015; Weeks, 1999). Moving forward to the twentieth century, the sexologists of the 1950s (such as Alfred Kinsey) used largely non-clinical populations of individuals to examine sexuality, and viewed homosexuality as part of normal variance, observed across nature, and carried no greater risk of psychological disturbance than heterosexual individuals (Drescher, 2015). Kinsey's seven point scale (Kinsey Institute, 2017), ranging from exclusively heterosexual behaviour to exclusively homosexual behaviour, was revolutionary at the time of its publication, operationalising the notion of variance of sexual preference. However, this approach is supported by two essences: heterosexuality and homosexuality, which are deemed to be discontinuous distinct categories; and which are unchanging over time (Delamater & Shibley Hyde, 1998). Furthermore, these discontinuous categories are mutually dependent on each other for meaning as one cannot exist without the other, and are therefore inherently unstable. As Sedgwick (1991) noted:

"...the period stretching roughly between Wilde and Proust was prodigally productive of attempts to name, explain, and define this new kind of creature, the homosexual person – a project so urgent that it spawned in its rage of distinction an even newer category, that of the heterosexual person". (Sedgwick, 1991 p.83)

Establishing the aetiology of homosexuality leads to examining the development of homosexual identity, which can be defined as *"the awareness of same-sex sexual attractions and the attempts to acknowledge them as self-relevant and personally*

meaningful and to fit them into an existing identity" (Coyle, 1992).

The stage model of homosexual identity development proposed by Cass, (1979) is the most frequently cited, and is considered an archetype for those that followed (Kenneady & Oswalt, 2014). This essentialist model proposed six stages of identity development, beginning with a pre-stage where an individual assumes they are heteronormative, and views homosexuality as a minority status. At stage 1, there is identity confusion, as individuals gain a conscious perception that homosexuality is relevant to their lives. At stage 2, the individual starts to compare their identity with heteronormative others, and begins to question if they are gay or lesbian, but then denies this. This leads to a sense of alienation, and of difference from heteronormative others around them. At stage 3, the individual ceases to vacillate, and begins to tolerate their emerging self-image as homosexual, which leads to seeking out social contact with other gay and lesbian people which strengthens their homosexual identity, as alienation from heteronormativity increases. At stage 4, there is identity acceptance, where social interactions with other gay and lesbian people increase, and the individual views their gay or lesbian identity with increasing positivity. At stage 5, acceptance transforms into gay or lesbian pride, with strong social identification with a gay and lesbian subculture, and political action against inequality. At stage 6, the individual's gay or lesbian identity is synthesised into other aspects of their identity, enabling their gay or lesbian identity to be viewed as part of a greater whole (Kenneady & Oswalt, 2014).

There have been a number of criticisms of Cass's model, which Kenneady & Oswalt (2014) summarise. Firstly, the model has been criticised for being too simplistic, as the linear model only describes one path of identity, when there are many possible paths

and outcomes. Thus, stages may be missed, experienced simultaneously, repeated or reversed. Differences in lesbian development, or social and environmental influences are not accounted for in the model either. Secondly, it is claimed the model is too narrow in its focus on gay and lesbians and that other categories of sexuality should be included, such as asexuals, bi-omni-pansexuals and heterosexuals. Thirdly, a lack of inclusion of ethnic and race differences fails to reflect identity development for some ethnicities.

Perhaps the most crucial issue in Cass's model underlying its criticism is the assumption of essences: gender and sexual preference is regarded as binary, ahistorical and acultural. For example, the model has been criticised for not addressing issues of fluidity in sexual identity, thus same sex behaviour does not necessarily imply a gay or lesbian identity. Indeed, as young people are increasingly accepting sexual diversity, labels of sexual identity will become defunct (Savin-Williams, 2011).

Stage models have also been proposed in regard to the development of faith. The most utilised model is one proposed by Fowler (1981) who anchored his work in the cognitive development theory of Piaget and Kohlberg (Piper, 2002). He proposed six stages of faith development. Prior to the first stage (considered a 'pre-stage'), there is a period of infancy and undifferentiated faith, where the infant is learning to adapt to the world. Next, the first stage, Intuitive-Projective faith is a time where children are in a phase of imitation and are influenced by adults around them, when they begin to assimilate understandings about faith. Fantasy and reality are often conflated at this stage. The second stage, Mythic-Literal faith is reached in school-age children, who begin to understand and accept faith stories told to them by their faith communities in

very literal ways. The third stage, Synthetic-Conventional faith, occurring during adolescence, sees the individual's world increasing in complexity, as responsibilities grow. There is a need to collate this complexity into a belief system: *"faith must synthesise values and information; it must provide a basis for identity and outlook"* (Fowler, 1981 p. 172). The negative aspect of this is the difficulty the individual has of seeing beyond the faith 'box'. This is a stage in which many people remain in a *"permanent place of equilibrium"* (Fowler, 1981 p. 172) beyond adolescence. The fourth stage, Individuative-Reflective faith occurs in young adulthood, where individuals begin to see other perspectives 'outside the box', and critically examine their beliefs, often becoming disillusioned with their faith. At the fifth stage, Conjunctive Faith, usually around mid-life, the individual starts to realise and accept the paradoxes in life, finding their own voice in the process: *"...there must also be a new reclaiming and reworking of one's past. There must be an opening to the voices of one's "deeper self.""* (Fowler, 1981 p. 197-198) The individual begins to see life as a mystery and returns to the stories of faith but interpreted beyond the confines of their previous theological boundaries. The sixth and final stage, Universalizing Faith, is the point at which an individual lives fearlessly, vividly and to the full in the service of others.

Fowler's (1981) stage model of faith development has been criticised on several fronts. Firstly, empirical evidence for the theory is limited, supporting only the broad outline of the theory (Piper, 2002). Secondly, stages are claimed to be an *"invariant hierarchical sequence"* (Piper, 2002 p. 1) which denotes a vertical model of development where an individual moves from lower to higher levels of development, overlooking the 'horizontal' interpersonal aspects (Piper, 2002). This critique elucidates the effects of a constructivist epistemology which foregrounds intra-psychic phenomena and tends to

minimise the significance of social influences. Piper states: *"Faith develops in an outward as well as upward direction"* (Piper, 2002 p. 8). Thirdly, it has been suggested that for adults, the model would be better described as "styles of faith" (Piper, 2002 p. 8) rather than 'stages of faith', which suggests a more fluid application of the faith development theory, and also denotes the underlying essence of the use of stages: that faith development is unidirectional and universally fixed.

Thus assumptions of essence underlie aetiological, biological and psychological theories of homosexual development and faith development. These have practical consequences for those with SSA and faith. These will be expounded in the next section.

The consequences of essence

The consequences of essence crystallised around a debate in the 1990s concerning Xq28, the 'gay gene' (referred to above). The New Scientist commented: *"...gay rights groups have given the discovery a warm welcome because it supports their long-held view that sexual orientation is not just a matter of choice but has its roots in biology – one Washington DC gay book shop is already selling a T-shirt with the legend: 'Xq28, Thanks Mom'"* (New Scientist, 1993).

Six years later, however, the gay gene was abandoned, and the outcome of essentialization was polarised: *"While religious extremists called for sex tests and said gay foetuses should be aborted, gay rights campaigners welcomed a breakthrough they hoped would stop bigots claiming they only had themselves to blame for 'choosing' to be gay."* (Arlidge, 1999). In the same article, Peter Tatchell, gay rights campaigner commented that being gay was *"... a choice, and we should be glad it's that way and*

celebrate it for ourselves."

The implications for the discourse of homosexuality mediated through essentialist beliefs is a complex issue, resulting in this instance in three discourses: embracing essence, eradicating essence, and dismissing essence, which is a 'queer' response. Haslam & Levy (2006) examined the effect of essentialist beliefs about homosexuality on prejudice, and found several dimensions of essence upon which prejudice or acceptance operates. The belief that most natural phenomena have essences extends to social phenomena, termed psychological essentialism (Medin & Ortony, 1989). It was found that pro-gay discourse was associated with the belief that homosexuality has a biological basis, is immutable, and fixed early in life. Anti-gay discourse was associated with the belief that homosexuality is a discrete category (that is, a binary phenomenon) with defining characteristics, termed *"entitativity"* (Haslam & Levy, 2006 p. 472). These include a uniformity characteristic (members of the category are like each other); an informative characteristic (knowing that an individual is a member of the category conveys substantive information about the individual); an inherence characteristic (features of category members correspond to an underlying reality); and an exclusivity characteristic (if an individual belongs to this category, they cannot be a member of contrasting categories). In short, negative discourse is associated with fundamentality (a gay person is deeply different and binary) and this one descriptor is seen to convey substantive information about that person. Pro-gay discourse was associated with biological aetiology of homosexuality, immutability, and fixity. These findings held true for gay men and lesbians (Haslam & Levy, 2006).

One notable aspect of the findings of this study was that: *"..the greater anti gay*

prejudice of more religious individuals is partially explained by their greater tendency to believe that homosexuality is mutable, culturally specific, and in the case of lesbianism, categorically different from heterosexuality." (Haslam & Levy, 2006, p. 477).

A study with similar findings suggest that religion and choosing to be gay or lesbian are strongly associated factors, to the point that even if a biological basis were proven (thereby excluding the issue of agency), negative views of same sex marriage would persist (Whitehead, 2010).

Another example of essentialist beliefs is the emergence of stereotypes of the gay community of 'dyke' or 'femme' lesbians and effeminate gay men (Cohler & Galatzer-Levy, 2000), echoing the idea of reversal of binary sex roles from nineteenth century essentialism, which, Cohler & Galatzer-Levy claim, are to a large extent, *"shared in the gay community itself, where internalized homophobia plays a significant role as a consequence of a larger social preoccupation with issues of sexuality"* (Cohler & Galatzer-Levy, 2000 p. 29).

If this espousal of essentialism is true for the gay community, it is also true for the church community. Indeed as Milton & Coyle, (2003, p.483) commented: *"The construction of same-sex sexuality as pathalogical and sinful by powerful social institutions - such as the medical profession and the Church – that was accepted for so long is not easily eradicated."* The turn from same sex acts to essence had a profound effect on church doctrine. In order to gain an appreciation of the depth of the problem faced by Christians with SSAs, it is necessary to briefly examine the 'macro' level of the

issue through the lens of Mimetic Theory, proposed by Rene Girard (Vasey-Saunders, 2015). This seeks to explain the role and contagion of violence in human culture, which initiates through a complex process of mimeticism. Human imitation escalates often into rivalry and conflict because both parties within the group want the same object of desire. This conflict has potential for violence as the object cannot or will not be shared. In order for the group to contain the internal conflict, it is projected outwards onto a 'scapegoat', which the community believes is the cause and remedy of their troubles. The expulsion of the scapegoat will however lead to a further mimetic cycle, as the scapegoat in actuality was not the cause of the group's conflict (Vasey-Saunders, 2015).

Using Mimetic Theory, Vasey-Saunders (2015) explores the divisive issue of homosexuality amongst Evangelical Christians. He states that homophobia and fundamentalism are insufficient explanations for the crisis facing the church. Instead, a more profound explanation lies in the mimetic processes that the Evangelical church is snared in - the dialogue with modernity: *"Evangelicals were afraid that their identity was becoming porous, that external influences were leaking in, and their distinctiveness was leaking out"* (Vasey-Saunders, 2015 p. 84).

The distinctiveness can be summarised by a traditional definition of evangelicalism known as 'Bebbington's Quadrilateral' (Bebbington, 2005), consisting of four qualities: activism (through evangelism); biblicism (the bible is the source of authority); conversionism (the need to have a personal experience of conversion); and crucicentrism (a focus on Christ's sacrifice). This traditional version of *"...evangelicalism is locked into a crisis of undifferentiation, in which its very identity is*

under threat" (Vasey-Saunders, 2015 p. 14).

Those who have come to represent modernity in the crisis of undifferentiation – essentialised gay and lesbian Christians, also represent an existential threat to the identity of evangelicalism, and thus have become modernity's scapegoat. As Vasey-Saunders (2015) states, *"homosexuality is a focal point for this crisis, so that debates on homosexuality within evangelical communities are also debates on evangelical identity"* (Vasey-Saunders, 2015 p.14).

These debates often contain the maxim "Love the sinner, hate the sin" which originated in a publication entitled, *"Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition"* (Bailey, 1955), prior to the Wolfenden Report (Wolfenden Committee, 1957) which was commissioned to examine the case for partial decriminalisation of homosexual acts in England and Wales (Vasey-Saunders, 2015). Bailey (1955) drew a distinction between behaviour and identity, or the homosexual condition and homosexual acts. This was seen as a positive distinction at the time (Vasey-Saunders, 2015) but conveyed an essentialist assumption which has since been augmented by discourses which have imputed ever more negative essences on lesbian and gay scapegoats. For example, in two books published by White (1978, 1993) homosexuality was framed in apocalyptic terms: it was a satanic threat, a battleground for 'spiritual' warfare, and linked to witchcraft and idolatry, intent on wrecking the church's mission. Another book entitled, "Straight and Narrow" (Schmidt, 1995) written to UK evangelical Christians maintained that homosexual practice implicitly undermines heterosexual marriage and the family, and that gay sexual practice posed a serious health risk, was promiscuous and linked to paedophilia (Vasey-Saunders, 2015).

These publications contributed to the mimetic responses of factions within the church, namely the progressives and the exclusivists. Hence when progressives voted to appoint a pro-gay Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams in 2002 , the exclusivists regarded this as a betrayal of Evangelicalism, and organised a stand against liberalism, publishing statements affirming their stance, declaring biblical norms of sexuality as first order issues. The mimetic process continued: the attempted appointment of a gay bishop was blocked, and in response 'Anglican Mainstream' was set up to maintain orthodoxy, whilst progressives set up 'Accepting Evangelicals' challenging orthodoxy (Vasey-Saunders, 2015). This mirroring escalated the conflict on the institutional level, and on a personal level, gay and lesbian Christians have had to negotiate their identities and the ascribed negative entitativity by which they are judged. Thus nineteenth century essence is echoed in today's Christian discourse. The response of Christians with SSA has been to group themselves as gay and lesbian Christians assuming essence in their SSAs. There have been pro-gay (Two:23, 2017; One Body One Faith, 2017) and ex-gay Christian social and campaigning groups (True Freedom Trust, 2017; Core Issues Trust, 2017), and ex-gay groups that have reversed their narrative and become pro-gay (Marks, 2011; Marks, 2008). There is also MCC (Metropolitan Community Church, 2017) and increasingly churches that are inclusive, for example, Oasis church in London (Chalke, 2017, 2:15).

However, another consequence of assumed essence for gay and lesbian Christians are psychological 'therapies' which aim to 'love the sinner', and eradicate the sinning through conversion or reparative therapy. This type of therapy was first proposed by Moberly, (1983), who operationalised Bailey's (1955) maxim. She asserts, *"to 'stop*

being a homosexual' means to stop being a person with same-sex psychological deficits" (Moberly, 1983 p.40) and therefore the therapy aims to repair this deficit through *"a good non-sexual relationship with a member of the same sex"* (Moberly, 1983 p.10) to fulfil the *"reparative drive"* of the *"homosexual condition"* (Moberly, 1983 p.10). This type of therapy chimes with the pathological and essentialist psychological approaches dating from the nineteenth century. As Milton & Coyle (2003) remarked, these are not easily eradicated, and for some Christians with SSA, such therapies associated with and supported by 'ex-gay' Christian groups, are perceived as an option to comply with the negative discourses or essences apparently contained in the embodiment of their identities.

Conversion therapy takes many forms, ranging from psychodynamic to behavioural therapies, but their shared ethos is that homosexuality is a developmental adaptation, amenable to change (Karten & Wade, 2010). It seeks to help people with a homosexual 'orientation' who are dissatisfied with their 'orientation' to resist expression in order to live in accord with heteronormativity and thus feel happier about themselves (Byrd, Nicolosi, & Potts, 2008).

For Evangelical Christians with SSA, their first port of call is the bible, biblicism being one of evangelicalism's defining 'quadrilaterals' (Bebbington, 2005). There are a handful of references to same sex behaviour, which are subject to interpretation. In discussing hermeneutics, Troy Perry, founder of MCC states: *"New scientific information, social changes and personal experience are perhaps the greatest forces for change in the way we interpret the Bible and develop our beliefs. Scientific awareness of homosexual orientation did not exist until the nineteenth century"* (Perry, 1990

p.339).

When considering how narratives are constructed, Ricoeur (2005 p.278) wrote: *"the activity of narrating does not consist simply in the adding episodes to one another; it also constructs meaningful totalities out of scattered events."* Therefore, Perry's (1990) implicit essentialist view of 'homosexual orientation' illustrates the manner in which nineteenth century 'scientific' discourses of essences have been absorbed into a faith narrative, which then map 21st century constructs back onto biblical texts. It also illustrates how 'scientific' argumentation has defined the terms of the debate, within the confines of which, gay and lesbian Christians defend themselves, gather together, premise therapy or create supportive therapeutic communities.

For example, Courage, a UK evangelical 'ex-gay' community, was set up in 1988 to support people who were struggling with their SSA's (Marks, 2011) . Following Moberly's (1983) ideas, unconditional love was proffered as a means to aid emotional growth and to achieve heterosexuality. Marks (2011) observed that members benefited from a loving safe space, but also noticed that when members eventually left the community, *"Many lost their faith as a result; some became deeply depressed to the point of despair; some even became suicidal"* (Marks, 2011 p.2). In 2000, after years of observation and re-evaluation of interpretation of the bible, Marks steered the community in an affirmative direction, acknowledging that it was a journey of learning how to negotiate faith and sexuality using new reference points, and abandoning exhausted ex-gay theories (Marks, 2011).

The consequences of essence for Christians with SSAs have been far reaching. The

profound influence and persistence of nineteenth century thought has fed into present day discourses which have created intolerable psychological tensions and a sense for some that their story is over, a process of narrative foreclosure (Freeman, 2004). This can be defined as lacking the narrative resources for living a meaningful life, because the culture in which the individual operates fails to supply them. Such individuals strive to 'square the circle', responding by submitting to the ex-gay narrative and seeking conversion therapies or ex-gay supportive communities to avoid being scapegoated. Alternatively, individuals develop a narrative of theological hermeneutics which refutes the essences thrust on them by exclusivist evangelicals and replace them with positive essences, such as the espousal of civil partnership, which fosters positive essences of commitment and family values, thereby making gay and lesbian Christians more acceptable (Valentine & Waite, 2012). These responses involve thinking 'inside the box', inside the terms of the debate discussed earlier (Billig, 1991). In the next section, a critique of essentialist assumptions will be expounded, giving a glimpse outside the mimetic box.

The challenge to the assumption of essence

The view of homosexuality as pathological began to be challenged in the 1960s through sexology's normalising influence of homosexuality, utilised by gay and lesbian campaigners (Drescher, 2015). Social movements seeking change were crystallised by the Stonewall riots of 1969 (Poindexter, 1997) which galvanised campaigners to make their voices heard at the American Psychological Association, determined to challenge the pathologising discourse of homosexuality, which they regarded as fuelling social stigma. Eventually, serious consideration was given to whether homosexuality should be classified as a mental disorder, and removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical*

Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) (American Psychiatric Association, 1968) . This occurred in 1973, although vestiges of pathologising persisted: the 'Sexual Orientation Disturbance' (SOD) diagnosis was provision for those who rejected their SSAs (thereby justifying the existence of conversion therapies). SOD was superseded by 'Ego Dystonic Homosexuality', but these categories were eventually considered functions of political appeasement rather than disorders, and dropped (Drescher, 2015). Conversely, conversion therapy defenders, such as Joseph Nicolosi, who advocates slogans such as *"if gay doesn't define you, you don't have to be gay"* (Nicolosi, 2017) stated that the removal of homosexuality as a disorder from the DSM was political appeasement of gay rights campaigners (Tozer & McClanahan, 1999) and the practice of conversion therapy has continued. This practice has recently been condemned by the Church of England Synod (Sherwood, 2017a).

The essentialist view of this persistent notion of homosexuality as pathology (where an essence of homosexuality resides within the individual in some way) is critiqued by social constructionism, which postulates that reality is socially constructed, and therefore no essences exist (Delamater & Shibley Hyde, 1998) . The constructionist paradigm maintains that individuals experience an ordered world as an objective reality because they perceive this reality as independent of them. Language is the facilitator of order, and the means of interpreting new experiences. Reality is a product of social interaction because it is shared with others, and this then becomes institutionalised, and then habitualised. The individual thinks about something in one way only, leading to predictable behaviour, which others then anticipate, and attempt to control. Reality is also institutionalised at the level of society, leading to the development of groups, and group conflict. Internal sensations (for example, SSAs) are similarly interpreted by

language, providing structure to make the sensations meaningful (Delamater & Shibley Hyde, 1998). Merleau-Ponty goes further and suggests that the body is a kind of language which is used to interpret meaning (Stoller, 2010). Therefore, in social constructionist terms, sexuality has a material reality (embodied reactions) which is mediated through socially constructed categories.

Queer theory is based on social constructionism, and functions as a critique of what is considered 'normal' or 'natural'. It emphasises the socially constructed nature of identities with respect to sexuality and gender, which is related to social power through language. Sexuality and gender are thus fluid concepts, not prone to the fixity of essentialism. Cheng (2015) describes four characteristics of queer theory: Firstly, 'identity without essence', which challenges the stability and naturalness of lesbian and gay categories rather than confirming them. This is an attempt to 'think outside the box' of essentialist categorisation. Secondly, 'transgression' – to queer something is to deconstruct and question it by cutting across accepted discourses, rather than endorsing it. For example, Queer theory does not support gay marriage, as it is seen as aligning with the norms of heterosexual culture. 'Resisting binaries' is the third characteristic of Queer theory, which challenges the assumptions of gender (male or female); gender identity, where this may not map onto one's biological sex; and the homosexual/heterosexual binary. Fourthly, queer theory argues that gender and sexuality are fluid and constructed by the cultures in which they exist, based on social constructionism.

Applying queer theory to Christianity takes a radical step outside of the terms of the essentialist box. Cheng (2015) explains that when Christian theology is 'queered', a

very different framework of faith emerges. Identity without essence implies that God is queer, because God is above all essence. Transgression in this theological context is about cutting across traditional boundaries or undermining established paradigms. Sin is defined as unthinking conformity, when observing the scapegoating of Christians with SSA, for example. The theology of Jesus Christ, as both fully human and fully divine, dispenses with binary thinking, as Jesus embraces two natures or narratives of himself. Queer theology therefore provides an alternative framework which allows Christians with SSAs to loosen doctrinal fixity and create psychological space in religious discourse (Ganzevoort, van der Laan, & Olsman, 2011).

This alternative view to essentialism gives rise to an entirely different kind of development model of gay and lesbian identity to that of Cass (1979). It can be viewed as a number of tasks and issues that require solutions which affect identity (Milton & Coyle, 2003). One such issue is denial of SSAs, especially in conservative settings where SSAs are put to one side in some way. Acceptance that SSA is relevant to the individual's identity is another task that may occur. A further task involves seeking contact with gay and lesbian people to validate the individual's burgeoning sexual identity. Also, there is the task of 'coming out', the managed disclosure of the individual's sexual identity (Milton & Coyle, 2003).

In the next section, non-essentialist perspectives on identity are explored through the use of narrative studies. These are pertinent to the understanding of gay and lesbian Christian identity negotiation.

Identity without essence: Deconstructing the gay and lesbian Christian

The essentialising of same-sex sexuality and its entwined institutionalised development has provided many negative discourses for Christians with SSA. There are also alternative discourses of successful struggle against oppression and discrimination, and these together coalesce into what Hammack & Cohler (2009) term as a 'master narrative of struggle and success', the struggle of 'coming out', recognition, and enjoying social space to be.

The task of Christians with SSA is to make sense of conflicting essentialist discourses, and to weave together, or fabricate (Frank, 2012) stories from these available discourses to create meaning. This meaning is constructed within the context of the essentialist 'box', as a reaction to the master narrative. Christians with SSA engage with this master narrative in different ways, as illustrated by the debate concerning conversion therapy, and therefore, *"identity is better understood as a process of human development than a 'task' to be 'achieved'"* (Hammack & Cohler, 2009 p.4).

Developing identity is understood by the stories individuals construct and share *"to define who they are for themselves and for others"* (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006 p.4). These become the individuals' stories they live by, or narrative identities (McAdams et al., 2006). In engaging with an essentialist master narrative, Christians with SSAs espouse a 'gay and lesbian Christian' identity. Queer theology deconstructs this by removing the essentialist 'box', constructing instead a 'postgay' (Savin-Williams, 2014) or queer Christian identity, utilising a "narrative of emancipation" (Hammack & Cohler, 2009 p.4) which eschews essentialising labels. Savin-Williams (2014) sums up this evolution of sexual identity: *"What was once a sexual invert became a homosexual,*

who became a gay, who became a queer, and who became [a] man-man or woman-woman loving person today." (Savin-Williams, 2014 p.5) For most Evangelical Christians with SSAs, the terms of sexuality are still defined by the entity 'gay/lesbian', (Vasey-Saunders, 2015) and the entitativity (Haslam & Levy, 2006) associated with it, which exaggerates differences between a 'gay and lesbian Christian' and a 'heterosexual Christian'.

Similar to heterosexual Christians, it is necessary for gay and lesbian Christians to link their life story to narratives of faith to achieve their spiritual identity, and their ongoing sense of communion with God and its implications for eternity (Poll & Smith, 2003). This dialogue of life story with narratives of faith determines the gay and lesbian Christian's life course and has important implications for psychological health (Barnes & Meyer, 2012; Barton, 2010; Beagan & Hattie, 2015; Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris, & Hecker, 2001; Levy & Edmiston, 2014; Schuck & Liddle, 2001; Sherry, Adelman, Whilde, & Quick, 2010).

Frank (2012) understands dialogue as more than a conversation between two or more individuals. It can also be understood as *"hearing how multiple voices find expression within any single voice"* (Frank, 2012 p. 35), co-constructing many fragments of narratives that exist around the individual. For the gay and lesbian Christian, co-construction of their life stories involves using faith narratives of sexuality which have been imbued with essence (Vasey-Saunders, 2015). Interpretations of what have become known as the 'clobber' (Blair, 2017) texts of the bible (Genesis, 19:1–28; Leviticus, 18:22, 20:13; Romans, 1:26-27; I Corinthians, 6:9; I Timothy, 1:10) are proffered through the lens of homosexual entitativity, with the potential of narrative

foreclosure (Freeman, 2004) always present. This can lead to a monologue, defined as "speech that is single voiced" which "asserts rather than engages" (Frank, 2010 p.198). It 'finalises' (Frank, 2010) the individual because they can be nothing other than what the finalising narrative asserts. Tensions are created in the gay and lesbian Christian's story, as their essentialised story of sexual identity clashes with essentialised faith narratives of sexuality. The next section summarises research that has focused on this tension, leading to the rationale and research question of this thesis.

Crisis of essence

The research review is based around the organising concept of the conflict of faith and sexuality (Schuck & Liddle, 2001), in terms of its sources, reactions, effects, resources, resolutions, and finally process.

Sources of identity conflict found in the literature focus on aspects of the faith setting. There are four positions that faith settings hold concerning homosexuality: the Rejecting-Punitive view, which condemns both the person and their SSAs; the Rejecting-Nonpunitive view which adheres to 'hate the sin, love the sinner' (Bailey, 1955); the Qualified Acceptance view, which purports homosexuality as inferior to heterosexuality, but acceptable; and the Full Acceptance view, which accepts homosexuality as an expression of diversity, and equal to heterosexuality (Nugent & Gramick, 1989). Evangelical faith settings hold to the first or second positions (Vasey-Saunders, 2015). Teachings of a faith setting in conjunction with the use of the 'clobber' texts of Scripture, and congregational prejudice present a challenge for a Christian with SSA to develop their identity (Buchanan et al., 2001; Schuck & Liddle, 2001). This results in seven types of spiritual abuse (Ward, 2011; Wood & Conley, 2014). First,

leaders who claim to represent God, denounce Christians with SSA. Second, Christians with SSA are bullied to conform to these denouncements, or are threatened with exposure to the faith community. Third, Christians with SSA are conditionally accepted, leading to concealment of their sexual identity. Fourth, the psychological distress of Christians with SSA is neglected, because the distress is attributed to the consequences of their homosexual 'sin'. Fifth, a strong faith group identity causes Christians with SSA to become overwhelmed and unable to express their sexual identity, leading to compartmentalisation and psychological distress. Sixth, 'internal' states caused by being in an anti-homosexual faith setting manifest as anxiety, depression, suicidality and physical somatic symptoms (Ward, 2011). Finally, there are sexual microaggressions (Wood & Conley, 2014) defined as subtle abuses by institutions and social systems which increase the marginalization of Christians with SSAs. Three types are suggested: Microassaults, which are overt forms of discrimination. A leader asserts negative views of homosexuality which the congregation assents to, but adversely affects a Christian with SSA. Their distress goes unnoticed by the congregation. Microinsults, which are comments that denigrate Christians with SSAs, such as “God still loves you despite your sexuality”, emphasising otherness. Finally, microinvalidations, which are comments that invalidate part the identity of a Christian with SSAs, such as “Love the sinner, hate the sin”.

Reactions to identity conflict include shame, guilt, rejection, isolation, depression, and suicidal ideation (Schuck & Liddle, 2001) and result in complications in coming out (Buchanan et al., 2001; Schuck & Liddle, 2001). Negative attitudes towards Christians with SSAs cause anxiety associated with a fear of hell, low self esteem, and a sense of worthlessness (Barton, 2010).

Effects of identity conflict include its impact on the identity formation of Christians with SSA (Schuck & Liddle, 2001). Delayed sexual activity, a disconnection from the body and rejection of part of the self cause psychological harm (Beagan & Hattie, 2015; Buchanan et al., 2001). Identity conflict is also associated with higher 'internalised homophobia' in non-affirming religious settings (Barnes & Meyer, 2012) which is defined not as a 'individual trait', but as a reflection of interactions with the person's environment (Barnes & Meyer, 2012). Also, identity conflict has an effect on faith development. Sexuality issues act as a catalyst for Christians with SSAs to question their faith that would otherwise remain inchoate, and form new perspectives, thus enabling individuals to reach Fowler's (1981) individuative-reflective stage of faith earlier in their lives. Thus working through conflict leads to a deeper, reasoned faith (Levy & Edmiston, 2014; Schuck & Liddle, 2001; Sherry et al., 2010).

Resources which Christians with SSA utilise to assist them in their experience of conflict included helpful people such as affirming congregations, lesbian and gay Christian social and campaigning groups, and clergy and gay and lesbian peers. Through their positive responses, they enable the Christian with SSA to alter their negative beliefs about their sexuality (Bowland, Foster, & Vosler, 2013; Lease, Horne, & Noffsinger-Frazier, 2005; Schuck & Liddle, 2001). Lesbian and gay affirming religious books, and educational resources help to reframe scripture and tradition (Bowland et al., 2013; Schuck & Liddle, 2001).

Christians with SSA resolve their conflicting identities in various ways. They can choose to integrate their identities through becoming involved in supportive faith

communities, which facilitate a redefining of faith and their sexuality to enable harmonisation. This is done by identifying as spiritual, rather than religious; and by reinterpreting religious teachings on hermeneutic grounds, or rational grounds – God made me gay, therefore God loves me. Also, accepting inconsistencies and making a distinction between God and faith settings. This leads to positive health outcomes (Buchanan et al., 2001; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000; Schuck & Liddle, 2001; Walton, 2006). Alternatively, Christians with SSA may compartmentalise their faith and sexuality, so that in a faith setting their sexual identity is suppressed. This however produces stress in having to constantly manage this, and makes individuals vulnerable to spiritual abuse, causing psychological distress (Buchanan et al., 2001; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000). Another strategy Christians with SSA utilise is concealment and rejection of their sexual identity through seeking conversion/reparative therapy or remaining celibate (Buchanan et al., 2001; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000). A fourth strategy is for individuals to reject their faith identity to develop and maintain their gay or lesbian identity. This apostatising strategy may be a permanent solution, or for a period of time to consolidate sexual identity, after which the individual may return to a gay affirming context when ready (Buchanan et al., 2001; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000; Schuck & Liddle, 2001).

The process of negotiating Christian and sexuality identities has been studied in a variety of ways. A five stage model of negotiation is proposed (Levy & Edmiston, 2014; Levy & Reeves, 2011) based on both Fowler's stages of faith (1981) and Cass's homosexual identity formulation model (1979) which describes aspects of identity negotiation Christians with SSA experience: Firstly, an awareness of the conflict, through negative messages heard in the individual's faith environment, such as 'love the

sinner, hate the sin', or that being gay or lesbian and Christian is incompatible. Secondly, there is an initial response to conflict: a fear of being found out and secrecy; increased religious involvement; depression, and suicidality. Thirdly, there is a catalyst of new knowledge where individuals are able to break free of the cycle of the initial response, through encountering new knowledge. This provides an opportunity to challenge church doctrine. This new knowledge is often acquired through meeting people who are accepting of Christians with SSAs, or through facing doubt because of the loss of a friend through suicide; or by disagreeing with some other aspect of doctrine such as divorce, thereby enabling re-evaluation of SSA. Fourthly, there is a working through of the conflict by seeking information, through reflection and discussion. Individuals engage in new behaviours such as exploring new faith settings, and new ways of blending their identities. For example, Thomas & Olson (2012) describe a Metropolitan Community Church which used a blended approach in its teaching concerning the management of sexual relationships. It expounded ideal evangelical relationship values such as commitment, stability, monogamy, and longevity whilst simultaneously acknowledging a pragmatic view of gay sexual relationships to be worked out between the individual and God. The implicit assumption was that participants of the course would reach conclusions concomitant with evangelical values presented, and thereby promote the church's moral standing within the community. The course was also appealing to its attendees as most were from an Evangelical background, who experienced stress in managing sexual relationships as this typified the tension of being a gay/lesbian Christian. In the fifth stage of negotiation, the Christian with SSA reaches a point of resolution: an acceptance of gay/lesbian identity, and a moving away from organised religion by developing a personalised faith which is open. A study focusing on a conservative group of Christians with SSA (Thumma,

1991) notes in this stage that identity maintenance is achieved through emphasising the experience of being a 'whole' Christian, not denying any part of one's identity. Compensation of felt losses in religious orthodoxy (Evangelical Christianity emphasises doctrine) is addressed by a shift in emphasis to orthopraxy (outward actions of faith), although biblical truths and doctrine are still cherished. The integration of faith and sexuality is viewed as a journey. The 'gay/lesbian Christian' is no longer viewed as a traditional Evangelical, as they do not believe in the inerrancy of the bible, although do not think of themselves as liberal Christians either. They are less affected by moral proscriptions against sex outside marriage and homosexuality, and believe in the immutability of their SSAs. A study of queer Christian women on journeys of acceptance of their sexuality describes similar processes (Murr, 2013).

In another study examining 'ex-gay' and 'ex-ex-gay' experiences, differences in approach to religion were found between those who maintained a stance of rejecting their SSAs, and those who had originally attempted to do this, but went on to embrace their SSAs. Ex-gay Christians regard their faith as the sole solution which is central to their identity, and the only line of defence. In contrast, ex-ex-gay Christians regard their faith as a process. It is an evolving attribute of their identity, and seen as a journey which involves questioning and doubting as part of a mature spirituality. Ex-ex-gay Christians are able to tolerate uncertainty about their beliefs (Weiss, Morehouse, Yeager, & Berry, 2010).

A study which examines further the processes of ex-gay Christians highlights the need for these individuals to repeatedly reconstruct their storied identities consonant with narratives circulated in the faith setting, becoming templates for how they define lived

experiences. Power exerted in the faith setting which encourages this is not a domineering vertical force from leadership, but rather a horizontal net-like structure *"in which individuals simultaneously undergo and exercise power and so control themselves and others"* (McSkimming, 2016 p. 2). Repetitive dominant discourse in the faith setting stating the evils of homosexuality is maintained through horizontal power structures. This leads to a marginalized Christian with SSA accepting this discourse and applying it to themselves, leading to poor mental health. However, if individuals leave the ex-gay faith setting, they may encounter significant psychological problems in making sense of their storied identities as ex-gay discourses cease to have meaning. (McSkimming, 2016).

A narrative research study discerned four religious discourses in operation in Christians with SSA (Ganzevoort et al., 2011). Religious discourses are used to enable individuals to story their experiences of faith and sexuality. Holiness/Victory, and Subjectivity are more prominent discourses in Evangelical narratives. Obedience to God's Law, and Responsibility are more prominent in conservative Protestant narratives.

A Holiness/Victory discourse speaks of life as a struggle against sin and temptation. Homosexuality is a sin to be resisted, whilst focusing on God. By being viewed as 'struggling' with temptation, this discourse enables the Christian with SSA to be acceptable in a faith setting, because it is not viewed as the individual's identity, but a problem they have. A Subjectivity discourse refers to an individual who believes that God approves of their gay or lesbian identity, irrespective of the faith community's teaching, because personal authentic living with God takes precedence over the community's teaching. An Obedience discourse speaks of an individual's story as

legitimised only through and by full alignment with the dominant discourse of the faith community. A Responsibility discourse refers to the importance of an individual to obey God's rule, but there is room for the individual to make choices.

Holiness/Victory, and Obedience discourses are problematic for individuals to story their faith and sexual identities because these are hegemonic discourses which do not allow space for the individual to do so. In comparison, Subjectivity and Responsibility are less hegemonic and therefore allow the Christian with SSA to negotiate their identities through dialogue and integrate. The Responsibility discourse is a subtext to the Obedience discourse, therefore some individuals are able to reframe, to be able to create space. Similarly, the Subjectivity discourse is a subtext of Holiness. Those individuals who are unable to reframe these discourses into less hegemonic alternatives, have no option but to submit to the dominant discourse entirely, or abandon it and their faith identity.

Research findings concerning faith and sexuality appear to be interconnected, akin to spokes on a wheel, yet the hub which orients these spokes is not clear. This is the intention of the current study – to elucidate the 'hub' processes at work as Christians with SSA interact with their faith settings, which takes place within a socially constructed mimetic box of essence. The research question is therefore: How do Christians with SSA negotiate their identities?

As illustrated, the relationship between positive and negative psychological outcomes of religion is especially complex for Christians with SSA. On the one hand, research on religion generally suggests that it is positively associated with a sense of security

concerning the self, the future, relationships and a sense of existential certainty. On the other hand, religion is associated with several negative mental health outcomes including suicide, substance abuse, stress, depression, guilt, shame, rigidity and dependency (Coyle, 2010). For a Christian with SSA, positive outcomes can be reversed into negative ones because of the negative discourses heard (Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015; Sowe, Brown, & Taylor, 2014), thus for example, an existential certainty of heaven can be turned into a fear of hell (Barton, 2010). It is therefore imperative for counselling psychologists to be able to address this significant intersection of faith and sexuality (Schuck & Liddle, 2001) in ways which respect the client's dilemma (Yarhouse & Tan, 2005) in line with counselling psychology's commitment to enter the client's worldview, and stand in the client's 'shoes' (Coyle, 2010). Thus the counselling psychologist engages with the client's storied meaning and sources of narrative.

An example of the need for counselling psychologists to engage with the client's storied meaning concerns the 'coming out' discourse. Implicit in 'coming out' is accepting SSA as an identity, which has social consequences for the individual, possibly the estrangement of family and significant relationships. If the individual cannot reframe their discourses to accept homosexuality, a spiritual loss is suffered as the person sees no other option other than apostasy. Therefore, rather than addressing 'coming out' as an expected trajectory where a counselling psychologist aims at a radical change of discourse, incremental steps are suggested to support the client in creating a space within their discourse to negotiate their SSAs within their faith setting (Ganzevoort et al., 2011).

In conclusion, the current study aims to impact the way in which counselling psychologists are able to listen with greater clarity to their clients, through recognising the narratives weaved through a client's story and thus recognise their significance and thereby calibrate their interventions accordingly (Frank, 2012).

Chapter 2: Method

This chapter explicates the method employed to analyse data towards exploring the research question. This includes choices of epistemological position, and subsequent method of analysis consistent with this. It begins with brief reflections on research paradigms, and qualitative theory applied to Dialogical Narrative Analysis (DNA) (Frank, 2012). It then describes the method of analysis, followed by details of the procedure used.

Brief reflections on research paradigms

When considering the major paradigms which inform counselling psychology research, it is worth noting the wellspring of paradigmatic development, the Enlightenment. Prior to this period, the Church was seen as the sole arbiter of truth, which people passively received. The Enlightenment encouraged people to use their own understanding, moving away from religious dogma, and towards making judgements through scientific understanding. (Burr, 2003; Ponterotto, 2005). Using Ponteretto's adaptation of Guba & Lincoln's (1994) paradigmatic schema, four groups emerge: positivism, post-positivism, constructivism-interpretivism and critical ideological.

Positivism grew out of the Enlightenment period, and has been regarded as the 'default' paradigm (Burr, 2003) in the social sciences, as they aspire to adopt this paradigm from the physical sciences. Its goal is prediction and control of phenomena, establishing cause and effect relationships. It uses a hypothetico-deductive method (testing hypotheses with empirical data) to verify theory; it holds to a naïve realism in terms of its ontology, assuming there is a single, objective external reality, and its output is etic

(identifying universal laws transcending all cultural and national boundaries) and nomothetic (applying to people generally), and its axiology is that of a detached researcher role which is value free and neutral. Broadly speaking, it provides the foundations for quantitative research methods, as it lends itself to etic and nomothetic research outputs (Ponterotto, 2005).

Post-positivism is similar to the positivist paradigm, but uses falsification rather than verification to test hypotheses, a method put forward by philosopher Popper (1968). His method was a solution to the criticism of positivism's method of induction. Induction based general arguments on the accumulated observations of phenomena. However, these can never logically be made generalisable because a future observation may differ. In terms of its ontology, post-positivism also holds to realism, but acknowledges that this can only be apprehended imperfectly – that there is an objective reality which we strive to understand, a critical realism (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Similar to positivism, it is etic, nomethetic and has a detached researcher role.

The rhetorical structure (that is, the language used to present the research) of both positivist and post-positivist research is “scientific” - detached, emotionally neutral, and presented in an objective manner.

In contrast to the above epistemological positions, social constructionism arose as a reaction to positivist thought which offers metanarratives or grand theories of the world. Rather, social constructionism's goals are descriptive – understanding the lived experiences of individuals and the meaning of social phenomena (Burr, 2003).

Social constructionism's ontology is relativist position, stating that there are multiple, equally valid realities; and that reality is held within social relationships, and is not a singular external entity. One cannot partition out an 'objective' reality from the individual who is experiencing and processing the reality. Social constructionism is idiographic (understanding the individual as a unique entity) and emic (behaviours are unique to an individual and not generalisable) in nature. Its method is hermeneutic in its approach – it is about bringing hidden meaning to the surface through deep reflection. The researcher's role is opposite to that of positivist and post-positivist researcher role in that the researcher and the subject's interactions are central to bringing out the meaning; they jointly create or co-construct findings (Ponterotto, 2005).

The critical-ideological paradigm, similarly to constructionism, also states that there are multiple realities, but goes further and states that there is a reality which is shaped by ethnic, cultural, gender, social and political views (Ponterotto, 2005), and has a critical realist ontology (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). In terms of its axiology, the researcher is proactive and value-laden. The goal of this paradigm of research is to use it for the emancipation of oppressed groups. It is ideographic, and emic.

The rhetorical structure of both social constructionist and critical-ideological research, in contrast to the 'scientific' presentations of positivist and post-postivist research, is subjective, and is often personalised, including the researcher's own experience, expectations, biases and values, and the impact of the research process on the researcher (Ponterotto, 2005).

Research Design

This project followed a qualitative methods research design (Lyons & Coyle, 2016) and

in particular Dialogical Narrative Analysis (Frank, 2012) was applied to analyse transcripts from semi-structured interviews. The research question sought an examination of process, which required the provision of in-depth data to draw upon and analyse from a psychological perspective. Therefore a qualitative methodology was deemed the most suitable approach (McLeod, 2014) because this aims to provide rich descriptions of how individuals make sense of their context dependant experiences. Furthermore, Yardley (2000) states that one of the main reasons for using a qualitative methodology is because it is recognised that there is no such thing as an unbiased evaluation of an external reality; instead, it is formed by an individual's viewpoint. Viewpoints are often communicated through an individual's stories, as *"a person is essentially a storytelling animal who naturally constructs stories out of life"* (Sparkes & Smith, 2008, p. 295).

Narratives are resources which stories draw upon that enable lives to be expressed. They are a way of knowing about lives because they help to make sense of experiences and question assumptions, morality and ethics. Thus, an individual's identity is supported over time through the deployment of and adding to their collection of narrative resources (Sparkes & Smith, 2008). Narrative inquiry reflects this by examining unfolding events over time told in stories by individuals and how these stories change over time as they evolve. Stories are kept intact to explore a discourse as a whole, rather than breaking it down into smaller units of analysis (Smith, 2016). Narrative inquiry acknowledges that the researcher is an implicit part of this context of knowledge production (Lyons & Coyle, 2016) who can tell stories of the research in different ways (Sparkes & Smith, 2008). Thus, for the current study, narrative analysis was utilised to capture the process of negotiation and of tensions between gay/lesbian and Christian

identity, which focuses on the power of individuals' stories and the narrative resources they are constructed from (Frank, 2012).

Narrative analysis has a theoretical bricolage with differing epistemological stances. One stance is narrative constructivism, which is focused on the inner world of the individual where the stories told are regarded as mirroring their interiority (Sparkes & Smith, 2008) and thus mimetic in nature (Frank, 2010). Alternatively, narrative constructionism regards narrative as a relational and sociocultural phenomenon, and a form of social action (Sparkes & Smith, 2008). It takes a relativist position where narratives, rather than mirror a reality, construct it within a social context. A narrative is an active phenomenon which performs certain actions, and generates meaning, rather than simply conveying meaning, and its agency is in the performance of a story, which is artfully created. This is the stance espoused in the current study, as the research question requires understanding of the work narratives are doing for individuals who are Christian with same sex attraction (Frank, 2012).

Social constructionism underpins narrative constructionism. Burr (2015) gives a definition of social constructionism which can include one or more of the following key assumptions: a critical stance toward taken-for granted knowledge; all ways of understanding are historically and culturally specific; knowledge is constructed between people through social processes; and that knowledge and social action go together.

Social constructionism acknowledges the intrinsic involvement of the researcher and the part that this plays in the results that are produced (Burr, 2015). In this project, the researcher has experienced the process of integrating his Christian faith with being a

gay man; coming out as gay to the church, and coming out as Christian in the gay community. This stands in stark contrast to positivist and post-positivist paradigms where the researcher role is detached. Social constructionism's recognition of the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge is also important when considering same-sex attraction. An obvious example is the classification of homosexuality as a disease in the DSM-III prior to 1973 (American Psychiatric Association, 1968). Following changes in social attitudes and campaigns by gay activists, it was removed (Drescher, 2015). There is a focus on language in social constructionism. It argues that language is a pre-condition for thought: that the way people understand the world does not come from objective reality, but from other people, past and present (Burr, 2015). Also, that language is a form of social action; it is not a passive vehicle of thoughts and emotions, but rather it has practical consequences for people. It has a function within an interaction, and brings about a certain effect. Finally, social constructionism has a focus on processes, such as the dynamics of interaction (Burr, 2015).

The current research utilised Dialogical Narrative Analysis (DNA hereafter) (Frank, 2012), a form of narrative constructionist inquiry. This is because DNA enables a focus on the multiple narratives or voices (Frank, 2012) gay and lesbian Christians are influenced by and have to negotiate in order to address the tensions experienced in the development of their identities. A methodology which amplifies these voices to ascertain where they merge and where they oppose, helps to make explicit the processes involved in negotiation (Frank, 2012). DNA is suspicious of monologue, as *"two voices is the minimum for life"* (Bakhtin, 1984 p. 252). Monological narratives allow no opportunity for dialogue, pronouncing an outcome which is not negotiable and thus leads to finalisation (Frank, 2010). The finalised individual can only be what the

finalising monological narrative states they can be.

DNA examines the way stories do the work of representing an individual's lived experience, and in so doing, how people make and remake their identities. Frank (2012) defines narrative identity in terms of storytelling. Stories helps a person understand who they are, and who they may become. There is tension in storytelling *"between forces that would finalise lives and the imagination of life as unfinalised"* (Frank, 2012 p. 45). Stories allow a psychological space in which identities can be owned, disowned, and experimented with, but only within the limits of narrative resources. A DNA examines the narrative resources that a story is comprised of, and how these are artfully used (Frank, 2012). It also examines *"the mirroring between what is told in the story – the story's content – and what happens as a result of telling that story – its effects'"* (Frank, 2010 p. 71-72). It focuses on hearing the many voices that are represented in one individual's voice. There may be voices that represent the community which a person interacts with, termed *Heteroglossia* (Frank, 2012 p. 35) concerned with others in a speech community - for example, church fellowships or gay subcultures. Alternatively, there may be voices that chime with specific others, to whom the individual looks up to, termed *polyphony* (Frank, 2012 p. 35). DNA therefore asks questions about these voices. The goal is not to put 'words in the mouths' of the storyteller, but rather to give recognition to voices within the person's story and thereby "letting stories breathe" (Frank, 2010). Whatever acts in a story, Frank (2010) terms as an 'actant'. This can be people or concepts. Narrative identity is viewed as a social performance, shaped through stories (Sparkes & Smith, 2008), thus stories are lived out in social life (Frank, 2010).

Stories are adopted by individuals from pre-existing narratives, from which a person adapts and constructs their identities. Smith (2016) draws out the distinction made between a narrative and a story: narratives are the resources people use to construct their stories. Stories are specific tales that people tell, made out of the building blocks of narratives formed through culture and social relations. In other words, people's tales capture the voices within narratives and make them their own. As Frank (2012, p. 36) puts it, *"Selfhood always trades in borrowed goods"*. An implication of this, is that a person's 'narrative resources' therefore determine how a person forms their stories, and hence their sense of self. The opposite is also true, that the lack of narrative resources leaves the individual with experiences which without a story line, wait for a narrative to give them form (Frank, 2012). Furthermore, if this is the case, it follows that as an individual's narrative resources change over time, so do the stories that an individual constructs and hence their selfhood is never a 'finished product', or as Frank (2012) terms it, there is an "unfinalizability" about individuals.

The kinds of questions asked in DNA are about how multiple voices interact, and how the individual's identity is preserved whilst facing tensions that challenge identity in some way, or as Frank (2012, p. 33) terms it, *"how is the storyteller holding his or her own in the act of storytelling?"* The stories that an individual constructs and tells themselves and others therefore act as negotiators, addressing tensions in an ongoing process of making and remaking of identity.

A vital aspect in considering the stories of gay and lesbian Christians is their embodied experiences of same sex attraction. Merleau-Ponty posits that sexuality *"expresses existence"* through bodily being (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 166); that is, the body

contributes to the production of meaning, as a kind of language, *"insofar as it is able to symbolise existence"* (Stoller, 2010, p. 105). Stoller (2010) is careful to point out however, that this phenomena is not about ex-pressing existence (like squeezing orange juice out of an orange), but that *"the body is responsible for the realisation of existence – it is the very place where existence comes into existence"* (Stoller, 2010, p. 106). This distinguishes Merleau-Ponty's concept of expression from essentialist approaches, which would argue that the experiences of same sex attraction through the body indicates a pre-existing essence which manifests through the body by same sex attraction – analogous to squeezing the pre-existing juice out of an orange, which is the tradition view of expression (Stoller, 2010). To sum up, expression is *"a concept in which meaning is not said to be something prior to its expression but the result of it"* (Stoller, 2010, p. 109). Thus same sex attraction can be viewed through the non-essentialist lens of construction, and is significant in the negotiation of identity in the context of faith, because it forms the basis for individuals to appropriate new stories about their SSAs. Frank (2010 p. 58) terms this *"narrative ambush"*. Stories not previously in the individual's *"inner library"* (Frank, 2010 p. 58) can break through and make themselves heard, *"inspiring listeners to create new sections in their inner library"* (Frank, 2010 p. 59).

Frank (2010) describes a 'subject position' in a story as the position each character takes according to what the story requires, and whose lives are understood by those stories. Other terms that Frank uses included in this study are: 'placeholder', who is defined as someone who occupies a position on behalf of someone else; and 'artificial person' who acts according to what their position requires, rather than on their own authority.

Participants

The research required a sample of gay/lesbian Christians. The term 'Christian' refers to those who have adhered to a tradition within Protestant Christianity emphasizing the authority of the Bible, personal conversion, and the doctrine of salvation by faith in the Atonement, otherwise known as Evangelicalism. Evangelicalism is closely associated with a literal hermeneutic of the bible (Bebbington, 2005) and therefore has a dominant faith narrative which is rigid in its approach to issues such as homosexuality (Vasey-Saunders, 2015). The participants may have journeyed from a variety of Christian denominations, but have come to view their faith primarily from an Evangelical stance, reflected in their choice of association with the LGBT Christian organisation they currently attend.

The inclusion criteria was therefore people who identify both as practising Christians and gay/lesbian, over the age of 30. The latter is hypothesised because recent and rapid changes in homosexual equality provide new narrative resources for younger people to draw upon, and therefore their journeys of faith and sexuality may reflect this. Also, younger people may reject entitative labels such as gay or lesbian (Savin-Williams, 2014). Bisexual and transgender Christians were not included in the sample either, because these raise different issues of identity which is not within the scope of this research.

The sample was drawn from LGBT Christian group Two:23 (Two:23, 2017) which is an umbrella group including all affirming LGBT Christian groups and organisations in the UK. Two:23 has its roots in an Evangelical perspective, evolving from a previous group, 'Courage' (Marks, 2011), which was set up in the 1980s to provide a safe space

for lesbian and gay Christians. Its original emphasis was non-accepting of homosexual practice, but moved to an accepting stance in the late 90s, all framed within the Evangelical stance.

Method of Analysis

The starting point for DNA is defining the researcher's *"animating interest"* (Frank, 2012 p.37) in the study, defined as the orienting point or rationale of the study which arises from the researcher's story, and keeps the study focused and on track. The animating interest originates from a *"standpoint"* (Frank, 2012 p.38). Frank describes this standpoint as formed from the researcher's personal struggles. This enables the researcher to hear the many voices within the stories of the research participants, and bring them to the fore, acknowledging that stories are participants' perceptions, and what they think the researcher is willing to hear. Underpinning this standpoint of the researcher, is *"conscripted fieldwork"* (Frank, 2012 p.39). The latter refers to the embodied experience of the researcher in something which they have no choice but to experience, such as same sex attractions. This leads to various experiences which would otherwise not occur: meeting others with same sex attractions, learning associated discourses, and thus gaining an embodied experience of the 'field'. This enables the researcher to hear and feel the stories of others in a unique way because the researcher has sufficient proximity to the stories. As Frank (2012, p. 40) puts it, *"Dialogical listening is a responsive act of grasping with one's body"*.

According to Frank (2012), a story can be identified as such through two dimensions, the first horizontal, and the second, vertical. The horizontal dimension defines a story as having the following elements: an abstract (heralding the beginning of the story); an

orientation (setting the scene); complicating action (the part of the story where an issue arises, needing attention); a resolution; an evaluation of the resolution; and a coda, which announces the end of the story. The vertical dimension consists of characters, a point of view, genre, suspense and imagination (Frank, 2012), the latter of which Frank (2012) considers the most important, because without this, it would not convey much influence, which is its primary purpose. Having qualified how a story is defined, Frank (2012 p.42) says this definition should remain *"fuzzy at the boundaries"*. The minimum is a complicating event and resolution horizontally, and characters, suspense and imagination vertically.

The next stage of DNA is selecting appropriate stories for analysis, a process which Frank (2012) terms as practicing 'phronesis'. Frank (2012) explains that out of the many stories identified from the data, only a few will be analysed in a study. Phronesis is a term Frank borrows from Flyvbjerg (2001), who defines it as *"practical wisdom gained through analytic experience"* (Frank, 2012, p. 43), which flows from the researcher's animating interest, and conscripted fieldwork (Frank, 2012). Phronesis is the *"analyst's cultivated capacity to hear, from a total collection of stories, those that call out as needing to be written about"* (Frank, 2012, p. 43) and is *"a craft, not a procedure"* (Frank, 2012 p.43). Thus there is an intuitive aspect of choosing stories which are in tune with knowledge gained through conscripted fieldwork. Also, the choice of story depends on the aims and objectives of the study, and how it speaks to the research question. These are iterative processes, where the selection of stories is revised *"as writing develops it arguments*" (Frank, 2012 p.43). The process of analysis acknowledges that stories can be analysed in many different ways, and this is what makes DNA "unfinalizable", corresponding to the "unfinalizability" of a person's

identity (Frank, 2012).

Once appropriate stories have been selected for analysis through Phronesis, the next task is to analyse the stories, using a set of questions which enable each voice in a story to be heard. Frank (2016) suggests several questions: What are the narrative resources being utilised in a story, and how would a story change if different narrative resources were picked, and what is preventing these alternative narrative resources from being used? Who are the story's intended listeners? Who would understand the story straight away? Who would the story be withheld from? What group would the story represent? Who would be the outsiders? How does the story inform the individual of their identity? Or how the individual's identity is changing? How does the story help the individual or the group they belong to maintain their identity in the face of challenges? What work does the story do in negotiation of identity? What are the voices expressed in the story and how do these interact? How is the story situated? The research 'asks' these questions per story.

The analysis of stories help to build a 'typology' (Frank 2012) from the chosen stories. A typology is a cluster of typical solutions to a common problem interviewees have (Frank, 2010). The objective of a typology is to demonstrate through the stories, the narrative resources deployed to create this typical solution, and ask the question, 'does this typology help to understand how an individual's story *"enhance[s] [their] capacity to hold their own in circumstances of vulnerability"*"? (Frank, 2012, p. 49).

Frank (2013) in his book about illness observes, *"people tell their own stories about illness but what seems worth telling, how to format the story, and how others make*

sense of the story all depend on shared ways of narrating illness" (p. xiv). Frank (2013) develops a 'typology' of three illness narratives from the stories of patients he listens to – restitution, chaos and quest. Each is a way of experiencing illness. He comments that each narrative also expressed a period in his own illness experience. Notably, his typologies depend on *shared* narratives, implying a socially constructed typology, rather than a typology based on essentialist assumptions. Frank (2010) further clarifies this by stating, *"Elaboration of types of narratives allows recognising the uniqueness of each individual story, while at the same time, understanding how individuals do not make up stories by themselves"* (p. 119). A typology of narratives therefore recognises that experience follows from the availability of narrative resources, and that the types in a typology *"are of narratives, not people"* (p. 119). Frank (2010) comments that, "experience is understood as residing as much outside persons as inside them; it is borrowed even as it is felt" (p. 119).

Typology building has a reflexive relationship with the chosen stories, such that *"types become identifiable as they are named, and a typology compels or collapses depending on the descriptive force of its names"* (Frank, 2010 p.120). Thus typologies are moved around for best 'fit' with the stories that construct them in an iterative fashion as the typology develops.

Finally, it is important to recognise the 'unfinalizability' of DNA, as the stories individuals tell continue to be remade in response to new tensions and new narrative resources to draw upon. Therefore any analysis is provisional because those individual's stories will continue to evolve, as will the understanding of the researcher.

Procedure

Ethics

Ethical approval (Appendix I) was sought prior to data collection, and was granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology at the University of East London. Potential participants were given an invitation letter (Appendix II), outlining the nature and purpose of the research and their rights, including the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Confidentiality and the anonymising of data was explained also (Appendix IV). They were given time to consider the invitation, and if an individual wished to proceed, they were given a consent form (Appendix III) to sign prior to interview. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis verbatim, including filler sounds such as “oo's” and “umm's”, but no other transcription system (e.g. Jefferson, 2004) was followed, as this was not deemed relevant to the analysis. Interviews took place at participants' homes, church buildings, or if the participant preferred, at a private room at the University of East London (Appendix II). Interviews were conducted following a semi-structured design, which combined a pre-determined list of open ended questions with opportunity for the researcher to prompt the participant to explore particular aspects of interest further (Wengraf, 2001). Each interview lasted approximately an hour to ninety minutes (Appendix IV). Elliott (2005) cites several authors who suggest that an hour and a half is the ideal research interview length to allow respondents to unfold their stories, whilst being mindful of the task of analysis from the wealth of storied data captured during this interview length. At the end of the interview, participants were debriefed, and given information on support they could access should they need it (see Appendix V). With regards to the researcher's safety, his supervisor and friends were informed when and where he would be conducting each interview. For full details of ethical procedures and consent, see

Appendix IV.

Data collection.

Data was collected from face to face interviews with 11 individuals following a pilot interview. The latter was not included in the analysis because the quality of the data was affected by too rigid a structure of the interview schedule. As Koro-Ljungberg (2008, p. 431) states, *"constructionist perspectives of interviewing should shift the focus from mining individual minds to co-construction of (temporary) shared discourses"*. The remaining interviews were much less structured, broadly focused on autobiographical accounts of development of faith and sexuality, with prompts for more detail or to re-focus the interview where necessary. An interview schedule (Appendix VI) was constructed to explore the research question. Participants were recruited through the Two:23 Network of contacts, through announcements at gatherings, and word-of-mouth. Seven lesbians and four gay men were recruited, the details of which are in Table 1 below:

Table 1.
Participant details

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Ethnicity**	**Faith background**
Gill	Female	45	White British	Evangelical
Sheila	Female	58	White British	Baptist
Ember	Female	45	White British	Brethren
Delia	Female	35	White British	Pentecostal
Amanda	Female	35	White British	Evangelical

Jean	Female	67	White British	Catholic
Simone	Female	39	White European	Lutheran
Martin	Male	56	White British	Baptist
Anthony	Male	43	White British	Brethren
Jeff	Male	64	White British	Evangelical
Perry	Male	56	White British	Unitarian

Participants were encouraged to share their autobiographical accounts focusing on their faith and their sexuality. They were informed that they were free to answer or not answer questions put to them, or end the interview, as they wished. Questioning was kept to a minimum in order to allow spontaneous sharing of stories without suppressing them, whilst maintaining focus and prompting for clarity. Mishler (1986) discusses how this empowers the participant, allowing them to speak *"in their own 'voices'"* (Mishler, 1986, p. 118). At the end of the interview, the researcher wrote reflections on the interview and his own embodied responses to the interview.

Data analysis

In this study, the objective of the data analysis is to build a typology of process which would explicate how the stories of being a gay/lesbian Christian works to negotiate the tensions created through essentialist notions of gay/lesbian and Christian identities. Frank (2010 p.119) states that, *"how to develop the specific types in a typology is not easy to specify",* but involves several iterative steps, described below, beginning with the researcher's animating interest.

The researcher's 'animating interest' (Frank, 2012) arises from observations made by peers about his negotiation of faith and same sex attractions, and how this has been accomplished. This has animated the researcher to ask: *"Evangelical Christians with same sex attraction often find it psychologically challenging to express their identities. Why is this, and how can this be addressed?"* The researcher describes the origins of his animating interest.

Animating interest

I was brought up in a Christian context and around the age of 10, I made a personal decision to 'ask Jesus into my heart', or in other words, to make the narrative of faith into my story. On reaching puberty, my mother gave me a Christian sex education book to read entitled "Your New Look" (Buckingham, 1970). It was sex education within the context of an Evangelical Christian viewpoint, setting out the facts of reproduction and the moral framework within sex should take place. I recall my reflexive response to the book: disinterest in the aspects of the opposite sex, whilst noting an attraction to all issues of the same sex. The pencil drawings of men held within them a story of longing for me – a longing to be like these young men, and imagining what it would be like to get to know and be with them. I read through the pages of the book avidly until I came to Chapter 11, *"Special Problems in Sex"* (Buckingham, 1970 p. 107). Lust, masturbation and 'petting'; hidden dangers of disease and pregnancy out of wedlock – all seemed remote from me. However, 'homosexuality' struck a note of horror. There was something about this concept which seemed to point at me, calling me out, and making my hitherto response to the book suspect. The short section on homosexuality was blunt and to the point: *"This is not natural. Not only is it frowned upon by society, but is condemned by God... You may hear men or boys referred to as "fairies" "fruits",*

or "queers", and such women called "dikes" or "lesbians"." (Buckingham, 1970, p. 115)

Buckingham went on to state that homosexuality was a passing circumstantial issue of maturation, but *"Sometimes, however, it is a deep-seated problem that makes a person desire the company of members of the same sex. If such a person is not helped immediately he may grow up to be a confirmed homosexual who is never able to live a normal life."* (Buckingham, 1970, p. 115) Buckingham went on to describe homosexuals as having*"normal physical characteristics but are usually lonely, insecure, and maladjusted."* (Buckingham, 1970, p. 115)

To add to the gravity of his condemnations, Buckingham added scriptural interpretation: *"Most boys and girls grow up with a horror of such practices. This horror is healthy, for God totally disapproves of homosexuality. In the book of Romans, Paul describes a group of people that had departed from God, saying, "so that even their women turned against God's natural plan for them and indulged in sex sin with each other. And the men, instead of having a normal sex relationship with women, burned with lust for each other, men doing shameful things with other men and, as a result, getting paid within their own souls with the wages they so richly deserved" (Romans 1:26-27). "* (Buckingham, 1970, p. 116)

This was my first narrative of sexuality, and my inchoate sexuality was storied by its limitations. As I grew older, I complied with the heteronormative expectations and started dating girls, whilst experiencing an embodied 'disconnect'; I had a desire to talk rather than touch. Simultaneously, I had a longing for male connection, which occurred when I struck up a friendship with a guy who started attending church when I was in my

late teens. I adored our times together, remembered in vivid colour, in comparison to the monochrome memories of girlfriend experiences, which just refused to take on meaning. In comparison, my times with my male friend took on a 'David-Jonathan' bible story form – an intensely close, non-sexual friendship of brotherhood (for example, see 2 Sam 1:26), whilst secretly longing for something more, a craving rather than something voiced.

It was time to leave my home country and go to university in England. A new beginning in a library of new narratives that is London. I was shocked to find that Christians drank alcohol in England. I had a Catholic flatmate, and debated through the night on many occasions how his Catholicism was idolatrous. I was horrified by militant lesbians on campus and the rising tide of the AIDS crisis, which confirmed the warnings given in “Your New Look” many years earlier.

I went through an iterative process of remaking my identity as new narratives gatecrashed my story, expanding my limits. I learned to critique my narrow Evangelical theology through fierce argumentation with my Catholic flatmate whilst drinking wine. I also started to debate homosexuality with a friend at a Baptist church I attended in east London. He eventually came out with it: “You're gay, mate. Accept it”. The label carried such narrative force that I felt dazed. After many tears, I accepted it, but still clung to heteronormative hopes of a wife and family.

I sought counselling through an 'ex-gay' organisation, who proffered a new narrative: my homosexuality was the result of a distant father and overbearing mother. They gave me a book to read: “The Broken Image: Restoring Personal Wholeness Through

Healing Prayer" (Payne, 1981) The book is dedicated, *"To all who have endured or even now suffer the homosexual identity crisis, especially those who have feared there was no help to be found"* (Payne, 1981, p. 5).

Hope was offered in the the form of healing from the 'homosexual identity crisis', that I could be changed and retain my heteronormative story. I struggled on with counselling for two years, seeing no change in my sexual 'orientation', feeling more and more discouraged. I could not identify with the narrative causes of my homosexuality: my parents did not meet the distant and overbearing qualities required to make me gay.

I was involved in a new church, and developed my first gay relationship there. I felt God's acceptance of it, but also a guilt as I was stepping outside of the church's narrative limits. Soon, the relationship was condemned by the leaders of the church, and finished. I went back to a celibate life, until one summer, I was invited to a Christian arts festival, "Greenbelt" (Greenbelt, 2017) by a friend, and began to hear the first alternative Christian narrative since Buckingham's (1970) book was offered to me: that God blessed gay and lesbian relationships, and that God did not condemn my identity. I was dizzy with excitement: I was amongst a family of gay Christians who accepted me as I was. The excitement soon turned to sadness when I was asked to leave my church, as a result of becoming open about my sexuality. I stopped attending church for a while.

I missed worship music and attending church, and so decided to attend a large church anonymously. A few years later, I returned to Greenbelt and met a gay Christian there who became a close friend. He introduced me to a local gay Christian network where I

lived, and I began to develop a solid grounding of my gay identity within the Christian faith. The defining moment was meeting the leader of a supportive Christian gay group. He asked me, “So Mark, what do you want?” I replied, “I want to marry and have children one day”, still conforming to an imagined heteronormative expectation. “And what do you *really* want?” he asked. “A relationship with a man” I responded. “Go and find one then” he said. At that moment, several aspects of my new story coalesced: an acceptance of this pro-gay faith narrative as my story; the embodied experience of God's acceptance years before; and the embracing of being part of a Christian gay community where I could legitimately develop a sexual relationship which exceeded 'David-Jonathan' boundaries.

Coming out is a life long process, and the possibility of rejection keeps me at a cautious distance in many Christian circles, which is an aspect of unfinalizability which Frank (2016) describes. Negotiating the tensions of my gay and Christian identities is an ongoing process.

Through this 'conscripted fieldwork' as Frank (2012) puts it, I had an embodied experience of a process that had taken me from a place of unspoken, non-recognition of my sexuality, to a place where I am free to express my sexual identity within my Christian faith and where both identities are held in partnership and acceptance. In comparing my story of negotiating faith and sexual identities with others, I noted that others, although facing similar hurdles to overcome, told different stories at different points in their experience, leading to outcomes that best resolved the tension at a given point in time. Thus, I pose the question (Frank, 2012), *“How do Christians with same sex attraction negotiate their identities?”*

Familiarisation with data.

The researcher listened to the recordings several times, making reflexive notes of the interviews, before transcribing each interview verbatim. Next, the researcher sketched out a flow diagram of the content of each interview, (see Appendix VII for an example) listening for points of change, where new understandings began to emerge, through embodied experiences or through exposure to new narrative resources. A combined flow diagram of processes was then constructed of all interviews from individual flow diagrams of process, and through this, common processes began to emerge across the data (Appendix VIII).

Identifying stories

After familiarisation with the data, all interview transcripts were re-read to identify stories using the horizontal and vertical definitions of a story (see appendix IX for an example) and shortlisted to be considered for Phronesis. These stories were clustered into processes (using the combined narrative of processes flow diagram), to give some shape to the analysis and assist in the next stage (Appendix X).

Phronesis.

The practice of Phronesis Frank (2012) describes, is operationalised in a set of questions which are asked of the identified stories. The researcher reviewed each story with these questions in mind: Does the story concern both faith and sexuality? Does it depict psychological challenges? Does it describe a point of change in negotiating identities? Is there a strategy the individual uses that stands out? Has the protagonist changed their relationship to the social contexts they describe, in some way? How does the

protagonist view and use the Bible? (See Appendix XI for an example of a story chosen by Phronesis).

Thus, through the use of 'conscripted fieldwork' (Frank, 2012) and focusing on the research question, the researcher chose stories which best illustrated the processes involved in negotiating the tensions between Christian identity and gay/lesbian identity. See Appendix XII for a list of stories chosen by Phronesis, in the context of all the stories identified in clusters of processes.

Analysis of chosen stories.

The researcher considered stories as a whole, in order to stay congruent with Frank's (2012) guidelines. These stories have been summarised with quotations for presentation in this study. The stories were opened up for analysis using questions concerning resources, circulation, affiliation, and identity. The analysis also examined how a story helps the person to sustain their identity. In so doing, a commentary emerged of how individuals negotiate tensions between identities within each story, which is presented in the findings.

Structuring typologies.

The analysis of stories was then reviewed in relation to the clustering of stories (Appendix XII) and it was found that naming each cluster of stories helped to understand the power of the protagonist's story in holding their own. The original clustering of stories was around sexuality processes and faith processes separately, and stories chosen through Phronesis were placed accordingly.

This initial typology was reviewed after the placement of stories chosen by Phronesis, and it was noted that some of these were being split by the demarcation of some typologies, causing a fragmentation in understanding the work of certain stories. For example, in order to identify stories by Phronesis, one of the questions used to operationalise this was, “Does the story concern both faith and sexuality?” Thus it made sense to collapse these types together to increase the typology's usefulness. Typologies were revised three times, at which point, the researcher decided that five typologies adequately described the analysis of stories chosen by Phronesis. (See Table 2).

Credibility

Procedures for establishing validity based on the experimental model, depend on realist assumptions, and as such are not applicable to narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993). However, assessing the validity (or credibility) of narrative analysis remains a crucial consideration. Riessman (1993) suggests four ways to think about validation in narrative analysis. The first is the question of persuasiveness and plausibility: is the analysis convincing, and based upon the data? Secondly, does the outcome of the research correspond to the understanding of the participants? Thirdly, is the analysis coherent, that is to say, is it consistent with the beliefs and goals of the narrator? Or does it go beyond the text in some way (as Frank (2012) mentions). Fourthly, Reissman (1993) suggests a 'future orientated' validation criteria – the amount of times the research study becomes utilised by others in the scientific community. Reissman (1993) states that some of these suggested ways of thinking about validation in narrative analysis may be better for certain narrative research questions than others. Certainly, for the current narrative research, persuasiveness, and coherence are applicable. Correspondence to the understanding of participants is not practicable; however,

inasmuch as the researcher's animating interest and conscripted fieldwork (Frank, 2012) corresponds to the findings of the research, this criterion for validation can be considered. As for future use of this study, it is the researcher's hope that it will give rise to new theoretical insights and understandings for counselling psychology practice.

Yardley (2000) provides further ways to think about assessing the credibility of research, which in some respects cover similar ground to Reissman (1993) but are structured differently and elaborated upon. Yardley (2000) firstly expounds the need for sensitivity to the context of theory, that is, to attempt to link the current work to the work of others, thus theory building in what she terms 'vertical generalization'. Secondly, commitment, rigour and transparency cover thoroughness in data collection, analysis and the reporting of the research. Commitment refers to the deep engagement with the research topic through immersion in the data gathered and what Frank (2012) terms as 'fieldwork', and development of competence of the method used. Rigour refers to the completeness of the data collection and analysis. A third way of assessing credibility is by means of transparency and coherence, that is, presenting argumentation with clarity and persuasiveness. Transparency involves giving details about all aspects of data collection, and research processes. It also encourages the researcher to reflect on his experiences, assumptions, intentions and actions and how these aspects have affected the research outcomes. Coherence refers to the fit between the research question, the epistemological position adopted, and the subsequent method of analysis used. Finally, a fourth way of assessing credibility is through examining the impact and importance of the current research. Questions such as, 'Does the research have utility for counselling psychology?' and 'Are the finding of this research relevant for the gay/lesbian and Christian communities?' and 'Does this research present new ways to

understand the interaction of gay/lesbian and Christian identities?' This research strives to apply each of these aspects of credibility in the presentation, discussion, structure and content of the thesis.

Chapter 3: Findings

The analysis of interview data produced five typologies which emerged out of participants' stories and are positioned along a range of process. The typologies range from gay invisibility, to full recognition of sexuality within Christian communities; from a Christian monological narrative identity of dichotomous certainty, to a Christian narrative identity of nuanced dialogical vulnerability. It is proposed that protagonists' stories are fabricated (Frank, 2010) using these typologies. It is also acknowledged that there is no 'final' destination, as stories are continuously remade along the way (Frank, 2012).

The typologies of process found are identified as, 'gay invisibility', then 'inchoate recognition of gay sexuality', followed by 'narrative battles'. Next, 'respite/withdrawal from faith or sexuality', and finally, 'I am what I am' (Table 2).

Table 2.
Processes of Negotiation Typology

Typology	Process	Holding One's Own (Sustaining Identity)	Stories Used
SSA invisibility	Monological faith narrative compliance.	Maintain identity through adherence to monological faith narrative. SSA ignored; no narrative resources to story SSA.	Gill's Little Theory A Calvanist Faggot? Perfect On Paper
Inchoate recognition	'Them' to 'me': SSA acknowledgement but not storied as an identity.	Avoiding tension by transforming inchoate SSAs into other meanings to avoid narrative ambush.	The Meaning of Subscription Keep Your Mouth Shut

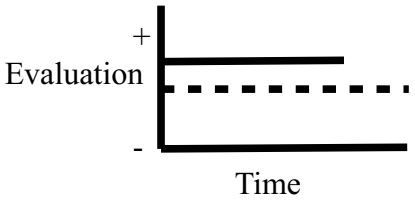
Typology	Process	Holding One's Own (Sustaining Identity)	Stories Used
Narrative identity battles	Narrative ambush: clash of monological faith narrative vs SSAs storied as a gay/lesbian narrative	Struggle to resist finalization or narrative foreclosure by activated monological faith narrative; instability and identity formation problems.	Perry's Mask Pink's Arch
Dormant faith or sexuality	Withdrawal from one of the narrative identities	Storying gay/lesbian identity in the absence of monological faith narrative, or compliance with monological faith narrative and sublimating SSAs	Sacrificing The Sacrament Church Hopping Getting Rid of Being Gay
I am what I am	Remaking of narrative identity; re-imagining the future, replotting the past.	Assimilation of new dialogical faith resources into gay/lesbian identity. New faith settings to support narrative identity performances.	What If It's OK To Be That Way? Married!

Typology 1: SSA invisibility: Pre-recognition of sexuality

This typology is of gay invisibility or a 'pre-recognition'. Its function is to sustain a positive, stable narrative trajectory (Gergen & Gergen, 1983) (Figure 1), where the protagonist 'holds their own' (Frank, 2012) that is, sustain their narrative identity, through actants which inhibit engagement with the protagonist's embodied experiences of same sex attraction. The protagonist's same-sex attractions remain unstoried, or interpreted in some other way, through lack or rejection of narrative resources, in effect rendering the individual's SSAs 'invisible' or hiding in plain sight to the protagonist. Faith and heteronormative narratives are the dominant actants in this typology. Participants shared accounts of total immersion in faith communities and conforming to

heteronormative relational expectations, with no alternative viewpoints. Protagonists are zealous and dichotomous in their thinking: on the one hand faith is the solution to everything, and on the other, rigidity provides assurance, but no room for manoeuvre in the protagonist's narrative identity, as the faith narrative (which encompasses the heteronormative narrative) becomes monological. Bakhtin (1984) described this as the negative of dialogue, where a voice asserts its perspective, to the exclusion of whatever the other might be. The following three stories serve to illustrate their construction of this typology of process.

Figure 1. Stable positive narrative trajectory



Gill's little theory.

Gill described growing up in the context of a family with heteronormative expectations, and a controlling mother. She would not allow her daughter to explore her identity, and also made clear that homosexuality was not acceptable in the family. The family was not religious, but Gill had always felt that there was "*something there"* (112). She was keen to attend different churches to explore Christianity and develop her faith as a teenager. Gill would argue against the homophobic discourse she heard in her family, but nonetheless conformed to her mother's expectations by marrying at 16. She acknowledged at that stage that she was attracted to the same sex, but skilfully used the narrative resources (Frank, 2012) she had available, to create her 'little theory':

"..as I got older, I fancied girls more and more. 'Cause I'd had my children and that biological urge was diminishing. I'd I strongly believe that – that you can be gay, and be attracted to men, because biology takes over. Unless you're absolutely one hundred percent lesbian, and then there's just no interest whatsoever, and you find men

abhorrent sexually... I do think if there's like a 70 percent attraction to same sex, that biology can, and culture can push you towards the opposite sex... Um, that's my little theory [laughs] anyway... (164- 176)

The 'theory' combines narratives about 'biology' which 'takes over'; the influence of 'culture'; and the concept of a heterosexual-homosexual continuum (Kinsey, 1948). This theory, or the actant (Frank, 2012) which Gill fabricated (Frank, 2010) from the narratives she had available, served to enable her to conform to the family heteronormative expectations, whilst allowing an accommodating space for the same sex attractions she was experiencing: being '70%' lesbian would allow this. Through this story, Gill demonstrates that she was 'holding her own' as Frank (2012) describes it – maintaining her narrative identity in a challenging situation. The story helps her to accept her choice to marry a man, whilst acknowledging her embodied same-sex attractions. It also functions as an explanation for her later autobiography, where her same sex attractions strengthen after having her children.

Gill puzzles over her 'disconnect' between same sex attraction and the possibility of a lesbian relationship. Her lack of available narrative resources concerning same-sex relationships, coupled with heteronormative expectations and a homophobic family and Christian monological narrative, *"You couldn't really be a Christian and be gay" (218-219)*, appears to have prevented a dialogical process taking place between the embodied experiences of her same sex attractions and alternative possibilities to heterosexual marriage:

"It never crossed my mind, not once, did it even occur to me, didn't even enter my consciousness, that a relationship with a woman was possible. No, it just didn't, it just didn't exist in my head. It just. I don't, I can't understand that disconnect, knowing I was attracted to women." (178-183)

Thus Gill's 'little theory' functions as a means to uphold her 'disconnect'. Gill went on to

explain her mother's restrictions on her dating, not allowing Gill to discover her identity through relationships. Gill, (who has a son and a daughter), referring to her daughter, wanted the opposite for her:

"lots of boyfriends and or girlfriends, so my daughter knows who she is and what she wants." (200-202)

She concludes the story by saying,

"It's not that I regret being with [my husband], 'cause I've got the children. But I regret where I am now, in the sense of the unhappiness it's caused others... But then, they wouldn't be here if it wasn't as a result of that. So it's all a bit mixed up." (202-208)

Reflecting on her story, Gill expresses a desire to allow her child to be exposed to a wider range of experiences so her child has a wider range of narrative resources and can build their story without the hindrance of monological faith narratives, welcoming the outcome. Gill's story thus continues to act not only on her, but on the future of her child because Gill wishes to furnish opportunities for her child to have a wider range of narrative resources from which to construct her storied identity. Gill finishes the story by defining the narrative tone: 'mixed up'. On the one hand, fabricating her "little theory" enabled her to conform to the monological faith and family narratives, and have children. On the other, her story affected her family in negative ways also.

Martin's story: A Calvinist faggot?

Growing up in the 70's, Martin's only role models were camp men such as John Inman (an actor who played a camp character in "Are you being Served" sitcom (British Classic Comedy, 2017a)) , Larry Grayson (a camp comedian who presented "The Generation Game" TV game show (British Classic Comedy, 2017b)) and Russell Harty (a camp TV talk show host (IMDb, 2017)) , who were seen as comical by the viewing public (Pullen, 2009; Roberts, 2014). During this period, he became a Christian and

attended a strict Evangelical Baptist Calvinist chapel. He described himself as having a *"sheltered upbringing" (131)*. Then, he explained:

"I became aware that I had feelings for men, err, for the boys, other boys, but not that in a way that I could codify as it as being 'I'm a gay man now; I'm emerging as a gay person'. Um, and of course, at that age, you don't know whether or not this is teenage hormones bouncing around everywhere". (135-140)

He described *"a couple of lads in class at school I really had the hots for"*(lines 142-143) although he never went to gay venues to explore further. Instead, he played sport, in keeping with his Christian faith.

"...the bible that we read was a um... the New International Version, which is an Evangelical interpretation... So, you know that the word 'homosexual' crept up and we know that these people were going to go to Hell, and so, but I would never have recognised myself as being gay. ....its was bizarre, because even though I, oh well, but having said that, I did have girlfriends at the time... err, and um, err, and that was because I think it was, that was the expected norm, you know, you, society around you, it's a heterosexual society.." (147-161)

Martin's story drew primarily on an Evangelical narrative of his burgeoning faith. This was supported by a bible translation which reinforced the limits of this narrative with respect to same sex attraction, by using the word 'homosexual', reflecting the Evangelical values of the translators. For Martin, this clearly excluded the possibility of same sex attraction from his narrative identity. Indeed, Calvinism (Religious Tolerance, 2017), a doctrine which emphasises God's agency in salvation, meant that Martin could not therefore be a homosexual, as such people are destined for hell – a narrative foreclosure of the worst kind - and he had been chosen by God for heaven. His faith narrative identity was essentially monological, obscuring his same sex attractions (signified by the inability to *"codify"* them).

Martin continued to date women, conforming to the heteronormative narrative, and attributed his same sex attractions to errant *"teenage hormones" (139-140)*. Thus

Martin held his own (Frank, 2012) through an actant which rejected his embodied same sex attractions as not 'me', as 'me' was a Christian straight boy.

Whilst Martin continued to date girls, he was also sexually aroused by pictures of sportsmen. He said,

"I knew there was something different, but I couldn't really put my finger on what it actually was.. and if somebody had said to me 'well you're..' Well, I always remember being teased... some of the lads I liked to play cricket with, for example, frequently used to call me a faggot... Not aggressively, not pejoratively, it was a joke, but he he knew where I was coming from, more than I did, 'cause I was just naïve and immature, you know and I couldn't, and if you'd said to me, well I don't even think I knew what a faggot was in those days, but if you'd said to me, you know, 'you're gay', I would have just run a mile! I can't can't possibly be going to hell – but I'm not going to hell because I'm a Christian – so you know.." (184-201)

The monological faith narrative appeared to prevent Martin from hearing the dialogue of his peers implying his homosexuality. His story of a sheltered heteronormative upbringing of Christian faith, with no room for dialogical engagement with his same-sex attractions, continued to act throughout his autobiographical account, manifesting in his repeated difficulty to be open about his sexuality. He describes several instances of denial: *"if anybody'd come up to me and suggested that I was I was gay, I would have run a mile. I mean I wasn't camp; I tried to conform." (416-420)* Martin's story distanced him from the joke of 'camp', which he mentions several times in connection with being gay. For example, *"not that I would ever've wanted to come out you you you know, in some sort of great camp way" (544-545).* His conformity seems to demonstrate the monological influence of the faith and heteronormative narratives on him. The monological pronouncement of his identity had finalised him, not allowing his identity to *"breathe"* (Frank, 2010). Further in Martin's account, he states: *"so I so I denied it, and I still in the [decade] denying it, denying it, denying it!" (896-898).* This is frequently evident in the data. Perhaps the power of Martin's story also

manifests in the public role he went on to describe. He sought a work role where his views would be taken seriously as a "fully out" man, countering and resisting the narrative of a camp joker which he so vehemently rejected (1014-1079).

Amanda's story: Perfect on paper.

Amanda became a Christian in her teens. Whilst at secondary school, she had a couple of 'significant crushes' on female teachers and an older girl in her school. She dismissed this as a passing phase:

"because of my Chr Christian faith, which wasn't at all liberal um, I just didn't even countenance that as a possibility and I wouldn't have wanted to... even if I had thought it was.." (428-432)

She described herself as a 'tomboy' at that age, remarking that,

"the signs were there if I if I had chosen to look I suppose.. but even when I was err, at university, err you know, so as far as I was concerned, I just hadn't met the right person yet." (442-447)

When she was younger, Amanda's 'significant crushes' were dismissed, and her 'tomboy' behaviours overlooked, as they did not conform to the monological heteronormative Christian narrative that she was basing her narrative identity on. To have taken notice of these aspects of her embodied experiences would have challenged the fit of her narrative identity (Freeman, 2004). She was aware of other Christian narratives – 'liberal' ones that were undogmatic, and not dependent on Church dogma or creedal doctrine. It constructs the Bible as a 'lamp', not a 'mirror' to reality (Miller, 1981). Liberal narratives would have enabled a dialogical process of engagement with Amanda's same sex attractions, from which she could have created a lesbian story using her earlier experiences. However, her potential alternative story from this liberal Christian narrative would locate her narrative identity beyond the support of her

community's narrative resources, which would destabilise her narrative identity performances.

She then described how she had met her friend David at church, whilst attending university, and how their friendship flourished. After a while, he 'named' his homosexuality, came out to her as gay, but withdrew from church, and from Amanda, as a result. She remarked,

"Actually, in many ways, [David] would have been a marvellous choice [of partner] really, because he was also, um of an age, and um, you know, singleness, when I new him, um, that it it it on paper would have been brilliant, except for the fact that he wasn't in the least interested in me [laughs] and I was not in the least interested in him!" (449-455)

Amanda described how others assumed they were a couple, and how she joked about pretending that they were engaged, even to the point that others were concerned they would "*be tempted into wickedness [laughs hard] which is hilarious because obviously it's so not gonna happen [laughs hard]."* (*469-473)*

Amanda went further than rejecting the potential alternative story from liberal faith narratives referred to earlier; she went on to create a fictitious one, compliant with her monological heteronormative Christian narrative identity. Her platonic male friend, David, is the perfect potential partner – 'on paper'. The theory leaves out the essential part of the equation: the embodied experience of heterosexuality. The actant she fabricates appears to serve her well: they arouse heterosexual suspicions, thereby reinforcing her heteronormative story, and creating distance from the narrative threat of homosexuality. Amanda could also view the possible 'on paper' story of romance with David as 'not quite the right person yet'.

Amanda's lesbian identity remained unstoried, as her heteronormative story remained intact, consonant with her monological faith narrative.

Later in her autobiographical account, Amanda tells a story of her splitting up with her first girlfriend. Her role as church worker defined the limits of her gay relationship. She explained:

"My girlfriend] and I broke up though after Easter... Umm, and it was because she wanted kids, and know actually that's not possible [laughs] born of natural means... and because of my job, I don't think I could've, we could've done any fertility treatment or anything like that... and so the only option probably would have been adoption – even that might have been difficult, and so I I I I was drawing blanks on all of this is what I could offer her. And that was just hugely important to her, and um, it wouldn't go away... and then I just called her and said "Look, this isn't going away. If if that's what you need then we can't be together" and so we broke up..." (1102-1124)

Despite moving forward in her account and expressing her sexuality in a lesbian relationship, her heteronormative "on paper" story continues to act on her gay narrative identity, defining its limits, by insisting that children must be "born of natural means". Later still in her account, she talks about the joy of now finding a new partner, with whom she is having a civil partnership, which raises the question as to why Amanda chose this option as opposed to a marriage. Perhaps it is because her story is still working on her, and the status of marriage is viewed as step too far beyond the narrative boundaries of her faith community.

Summary

The three protagonists presented here express their sexual narrative identities through stories they tell themselves. Each has a different way of expressing how their stories act to distance their narrative identity from their embodied experiences of same sex attraction:

"I can't understand that disconnect, knowing I was attracted to women." (Gill)

"I would never have recognised myself as being gay. ....its was bizarre". (Martin)

"as far as I was concerned, I just hadn't met the right person yet". (Amanda)

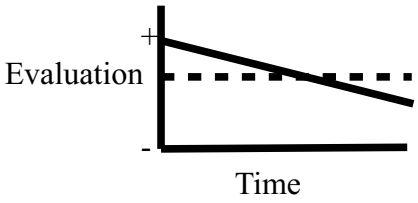
These statements illustrate the artful way in which protagonists use stories to create stability when embodied experiences contradict a monological faith narrative, thus maintaining unstoried SSAs.

Typology 2: Inchoate recognition

In this typology, protagonists' stories appear to show an inchoate recognition of the protagonist's emerging same sex attractions through embodied experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The protagonist is unable to fabricate their story of same sex attraction because the narrative resources required are not supported by their monological faith narrative or affiliated community, meaning that the protagonist cannot sustain their narrative identity performances (Caddick, 2016) as a gay or lesbian Christian. Therefore, SSAs are transformed into other meanings to avoid narrative ambush (Frank, 2010).

Figure 2 illustrates a regressive narrative trajectory (Gergen & Gergen, 1983) where the protagonists' evaluation of their narrative identity begins to face decline in the face of threatening SSAs. The following three stories serve to illustrate their construction of this typology of process.

Figure 2. Regressive narrative trajectory



Anthony's story: The meaning of subscription.

After a strict religious upbringing, where sexuality was taboo, Anthony left home to attend university. His interest in pictures of men which had begun when he was a teenager visiting the local bookshop in his school lunch hour looking at travel books, continued at University. Being away from home, he was able to push his narrative boundaries a bit more, by buying gay male magazines that were not *"overtly sexual" (763),* and putting some pictures on his bedroom wall.

Anthony was allowing his story to 'breathe' (Frank, 2010) perhaps because he was removed from the locus of narrative resources that sustained his Christian narrative identity, lessening its monological influence. He began to seek new narrative resources to support his embodied experiences of same sex attraction, which marks a shift in the plot of his story, enabling him to begin to identify, but not identify *with* a homosexual orientation, exemplified in his words:

"I can't actually remember even consciously going through a process of thinking that I might be gay.. sexually speaking. Except the fact the clearly I was attracted to um, guys. There was no doubt about it." (806-811)

Those not *"overtly sexual"* images in the magazines and on his bedroom wall were perhaps an attempt to comply in part with his Christian narrative, and was also a way of exploring a new narrative. It started a dialogical process between his Christian narrative

identity and same sex attractions, which led to him seek a new narrative to support and explain his sexuality.

"..that's when I started thinking about things, and, and I think particularly for me, um, it was at that stage so I'd started reading around... and I remember hearing and reading about um these kind of 'ex-gay' ministries things and started and eventually um decided to subscribe and support one of these ministries after doing a bit of research" (787-795)

After finding several 'ex-gay' Christian organisations, Anthony decided to support one of them financially, following the principle of tithing (giving ten percent of your income). He described himself at this point as *"..so pious and so patronising and arrogant in some ways" (1119)* and continued:

"..this is this is the bizarre thing, and I still don't quite understand why I was thinking like this, but I was just thinking about it that I was going to support [an ex-gay Christian organisation], which I wasn't.. subscribing to it to try to understand my own sexuality, and come to terms with it; it was more that I didn't put myself in the same camp, as it were [laughs] ... to coin a pun! Um, as [an ex-gay Christian organisation]. You know?" (1135-1143)

Anthony's decision to financially support an 'ex-gay' Christian organisation through tithing seems to have been part of his family Christian narrative, but applied to a new burgeoning 'ex-gay' Christian narrative perhaps to keep his actions within the limits of his faith narrative. Anthony was beginning to dialogue with the 'ex-gay' narrative through his embodied sexual responses, remaining aloof, describing his 'pious', 'patronising' and 'arrogant' frame of reference.

The performance of Anthony's Christian narrative identity was being supported by new 'ex-gay' Christian narrative resources, and so it seems that his subscribing (an action that would help *others*), was a narrative device that both maintained a distance from struggling Christian homosexuals and also acted as a story he told himself to artfully create a narrative 'bridge' between two aspects of his developing narrative identity.

Anthony talked about how he would argue with a *"militant lefty lesbian"* (1150) in his University class about homosexuality, and:

"I just came out with the same cods wallop as as um as you as the church was.. it was all scripted it was rote learned stuff, 'Oh well no, but God doesn't doesn't you know, well sexuality is a sin you know, you know, don't don't get me wrong, I don't think your horrible, you know I'm not judging you but you know.. its just sinful.... so, and that's how I'd been conditioned, you know. To think like that.. and so there I was sort of subscribing you know... even though the true the reality was I was and still was struggling, rather, had struggled with these sorts of issues." (1155-1173)

Anthony's account points to the monological nature of his Christian narrative identity. He repeats the heteroglossic phrase 'love the sinner, hate the sin', in order to maintain a narrative identity performance consonant with his Christian narrative identity, supported by his new narrative resources of 'ex-gay' theology. His account indicates a dynamic aspect of his story, now viewing his narrative identity performance with a lesbian as 'cods wallop'. It also demonstrated how his performance was in relation to the subject position (Frank, 2010) of a person he viewed as outside of his Christian group, whom he anticipated would oppose his Christian narrative identity. His use of the word *"conditioned"* is another heteroglossic term which implies a monological narrative, and loss of agency at that time. In a sense, Anthony was acting as an 'artificial person', (Frank, 2014) being consonant with his actions in subscribing to an 'ex-gay' Christian organisation, and arguing in a manner aligned with the monological Christian narrative. In other words, Anthony's identity towards the lesbian woman is presented as Christian, with his SSAs hidden.

Jeff's story: Keep your mouth shut.

Jeff didn't know what to do with his same sex attractions. His parents had just divorced, and as a teenager he felt he had no-one to turn to. His male friends were developing an interest in girls, whilst Jeff was drawn to other boys. He'd identified a label for his same sex bodily responses, because homosexuality was in the news a lot, as English law had just been changed to partially decriminalise it. He commented that *"people in society generally, thought homosexuality was beneath contempt" (67-68)* and a *"sign of the decline of our civilisation" (196)* and that paedophilia would be acceptable next (200).

His recognition of same sex attractions became apparent through his embodied reactions. He explained:

"I would think I must have been much nearer to my teens, puberty anyway before I realised I was experiencing same sex attractions. I would date that from about the age of 13, and I always remember that seeing this gorgeous looking young man and shirtless, and piloting a boat in a comic book, type thing. And I was so drawn to this, and felt felt un uncomfortable because I thought other people wouldn't understand this. Also, later on, err, I don't know exactly the years it ran, but I used to watch Dr Kildare on TV, with Richard Chamberlin, ha and he definitely was so [laughs] so very attractive!" (41-52)

Jeff had an awareness that his inchoate acknowledgement of his sexual identity lay outside the narrative support of "other people", arguably creating a narrative problem of lack of resources with which to support his identity performance. Framed in a period of significant societal change, there were loud conflicting voices concerning homosexuality.

Jeff's recognition of his embodied same sex attractions urged dialogical action, where his inchoate same sex attractions could be storied by assimilating a gay Christian narrative. His first port of call was a Christian book with a chapter on homosexuality

with which he could dialogue silently:

"*the author had said how we should feel so sorry for these poor people who experience same sex attractions, err, and you know, we should be compassionate and understanding 'cause the couldn't help it, but, of course it would be quite wrong for them to act on this" (112-121)*

The narrative was a softening of the rhetoric around him, but nonetheless, negative, confirming his anxiety that there was something "fundamentally wrong" (line 162) with him that deserved pity. Jeff felt it might be good to approach his vicar about it, or find someone else to talk to, but chose not to do either. His desire to continue this dialogical process was squeezed into a straight jacket of a monological faith narrative; decriminalisation had served to name his story but not liberate the story.

In his first job, he worked alongside a man who was openly gay.

"*He was... incredibly attractive... I.. felt a mixture of great curiosity, um and im immense fear of being exposed myself... Didn't know how to deal with any of that! And I think I also, because of my lack of confidence, was very much a people pleaser, and I would go to endless err efforts to get things right in every regard, so that I wouldn't be disapproved of in any way... For some reason, I think, if they criticised me, I felt that it confirmed what I feared about myself, that there was something fundamentally wrong. So up until that point it was, it was society's attitude towards homosexuality that was the, um, corrosive and damaging thing, because in those days, there was nobody anywhere who would have shown the remotest bit of sympathy within my social milieu". (146-167)*

Jeff was aware of his social milieu and the intolerance of this change and lack of affiliation to support his narrative identity as a gay man in his Christian social circles. So whilst decriminalisation delivered narrative resources which allowed Jeff to name his same sex embodied experiences, he was deeply anxious about owning this as his story because of the negative counter narrative, which conflated homosexuals with

paedophiles, who together were contemptuous.

Jeff then talked about other people's reactions to the openly gay man at work:

"he probably didn't know what people said behind back his back, but I did, [laughs] because I thought 'I'm gonna keep my mouth shut!' [laughs]" (214-216)

This is a story of a new opportunity to gain affiliation with and connection to support a new narrative identity performance through dialogue with a gay man at Jeff's new job. Here, the realities of a decriminalised homosexual narrative were being lived out: an openly gay man, by whom Jeff potentially could sustain a new narrative identity. This gay man would have wider narrative resources to share with Jeff, and empower his story, supporting the decriminalisation narrative by being the embodiment of a positive gay narrative identity performance.

However, with a monological faith narrative associated with Jeff's social milieu, rather than develop his own story, Jeff was unable to reach out to his work colleague, and on hearing the gossip about him, it shut down Jeff's desire to communicate.

Jeff's story is one of wanting to find a group affiliation to support his inchoate sexual narrative identity, as his recognition as a gay Christian man was limited by the expectations and condemnations of others. He wanted to avoid at all costs, being grouped with those who were 'beneath contempt'. So Jeff held his own (Frank, 2012), by keeping quiet.

Summary

The typology of inchoate recognition illustrates the way protagonists' embodied same

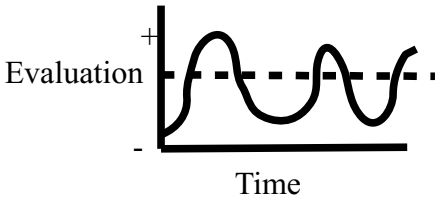
sex responses are recognised but not enacted as their sexual narrative identity, because of questions of affiliation. For Anthony, he found affiliation in a Christian 'ex-gay' organisation, which provided him the narrative resources to acknowledge gay sexuality whilst simultaneously resisting its application personally. For Jeff, the narratives associated with homosexuality amongst his social milieu led to fears of rejection and being 'tarred with the same brush' as paedophiles. Thus the lack of support in appropriate narrative resources to sustain a gay narrative identity has a destabilising effect on the protagonists' narrative trajectory.

Typology 3: Narrative identity battles

In this typology, protagonists' stories depict a narrative crisis, where conforming to familiar monological faith narrative boundaries proves to be no longer possible, as embodied experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) of same-sex attraction demand to be storied by appropriating a gay/lesbian narrative within protagonists' narrative identities. This has the possibility of 'ambushing' (Frank, 2010) the protagonist. Tension grows as the inchoate gay/lesbian narrative identity begins to take root in the storied lives of individuals. There is lack of narrative fit, (Freeman, 2004), where emplotment of sexuality proves extremely challenging, at which point there is a trigger event, where Christian narrative identity and sexual narrative identity collide within the protagonist's story, posing a threat to their narrative identity. A variety of psychological responses come to the fore - depression, loneliness, anxiety, and intrusive thoughts. The protagonist questions their narrative faith identity further, which has seemingly no room for homosexual expression, leading to the possibility of narrative foreclosure (for example, celibacy, loneliness, the threat of hell) (Freeman, 2004), or alternatively, a remaking of the participant's story.

Figure 3 illustrates an unstable narrative trajectory, or what is also termed as the "romantic saga" narrative, where actants cause a series of progressive-regressive phases (Gergen & Gergen, 1983). The following two stories serve to illustrate their construction of this typology of process.

Figure 3: Unstable narrative trajectory ("Romantic Saga")



Perry's mask

Around puberty, Perry became a Christian, and got involved in a church community:

"Then from that, as I said, I was going to the open gospel hall youth centre errr um um church, 'cause it had the youth club. And I said, I started getting more involved with them, and then going along to, well, basically, I was going along to every meeting going...that would be the Sunday morning one, the Sunday evening one, um, that be it came to be later on, p'raps, p'raps it was a couple of years after. Then going to the Wednesday bible study and prayer meetings." (214-224)

He was developing and sustaining his Christian narrative identity through his church community and narrative resources, which was *"Calvinistic in its approach, in literalist um biblical readings" (241-242).* This approach seems to have set up a monological faith narrative which was strongly reinforced by his participation in the faith community, restricting dialogical engagement with other perspectives, or other voices.

Around this time, Perry explained that he had been molested, which set up a complication in the narration of his identity, because it *"..obviously opens up something*

within you.. coming into puberty" (266-267) He went on to remark:

"...unfortunately my first sexual experience is not a positive one. Erm, and I certainly does not do not say as that is why I'm gay, I think... Unfortunately that's been used by people who think 'cure' what have you. They've used that as a very good convenient excuse... But what it did is then opened up my err err err myself becoming sexually aroused, sexually known, I suppose." (269-279)

Perry links his experience of being sexually abused to an awakening of sexuality through the embodied experience of being aroused. His premature arousal led to the discovery of his SSAs at puberty, and in his storytelling Perry uses polyphonic language (Frank, 2012) to make reference to a pathological discourse of homosexuality which Perry is also trying to resist.

There was no sex education at school, and Perry didn't want to talk about his molestation experience. The lack of sex education suggests that there was no counter narrative to utilise in understanding the sexual abuse he had experienced, or his lack of agency in the experience. This emphasised further the monological nature of his faith narrative encouraging him to have girlfriends, in an attempt to comply with the heteronormative narrative which his faith community would endorse. However, there remained a nagging confusion as he became increasingly drawn to 'cottaging' (soliciting gay sex in public toilets):

"Of course, in those days you hid everything. Of course, those days it would always be classed either from, yes and of course the confusion equally was that what's going on in me, is there something wrong with me? But yet I'm attracted to this. Um, which then brings you into a certain sense of guilt, shame, that you end up fighting against. You don't know what's going on, 'cause you don't have the maturity to know what's going on." (315-323)

Perry had discovered his gay sexuality through his embodied experience of arousal, but in a manner which was storied as abusive. It seems that both his discovery, and the way

he discovered it formed a narrative of sexual abuse (endorsed by those *"people who think cure", 273-274*) and perhaps his cottaging behaviour was the power of his story to conform to this abusive narrative of his sexuality. In sharp contrast, his faith narrative was getting stronger and so was his ability to put on a *"mask" (343-344)*, to hide his sexuality from his family and church. It is notable that in telling his story, Perry shows compassion towards himself (speaking of "maturity"), reflecting the dialogical nature of his narrative identity currently. He remarked:

"I think three things your battling with in tho, that I remember: you're battling society; you're battling religion – churches; and you're battling with yourself. So there's there's there in many respects, one lives to live a split personality, or develop a split personality even... perhaps, um, because you've got nowhere to take it." (347-355)

Perry describes a crisis of narrative fit, which could potentially lead to narrative foreclosure (Freeman, 2004). He mentions three factors: religion's monological narrative; 'society', by which perhaps he means a heteronormative narrative, and the threat to his narrative identity. His description of 'split personality' is perhaps understood as a collision of narratives in his story of identity, unable to hear or dialogue with each other. His response to this threat was to hide his sexuality with a monological mask of his Calvinistic faith narrative, to project a story observed by others of a church-going teenager who dated girls. The unobserved story was a teenager struggling with the emplotment of his sexuality, given the pathological narrative of his homosexuality, opened up prematurely by an experience of molestation.

The mask functioned to avert narrative foreclosure, until it all came to a head one Sunday in church. Gay issues were prominent in the news in the mid Seventies, and this came up in the sermon.

"And all I remember sitting there in the congregation, at the back, going that all homosexuals were going to go to hell, um and they're all evil, um and I was sat there going 'Oh my God! I'm going to hell!' which then started to make, I started, as I realise now, probably going into depression." (371-377)

Perry continues: *"..when I.. got home and I asked God to kill me. You know. I felt I was no good to my parents, I was no good to the church, I was no good to God. And that God must hate me for being gay."* (*388-391)*

This sermon was received by Perry in a monological manner – there was no doubt, he was going to hell. This narrative foreclosure brought panic and depression, as his story acted in dangerous ways. He tried to study scripture, but through the only lens he had - of the Brethren church - which just confirmed what Perry had heard in the pulpit.

"And basically, I ended up being very negative about myself and obviously again, still learning err, to in a sense, have a split personality about these things. Hide behind masks, if we look at it." (398-401)

Perry's depression intensified, as he struggled with the monological faith narrative that excluded other possible narrative identities. At the time, he was still dating women, trying still to create his story from his faith narrative, and avoid narrative foreclosure. This meant a future married to a woman and having children. But,

"Basically, everything about me was being taken away, and it became a thing of, 'Who am I? And who am I in this re religion? Who am I in life itself? And it was getting to the stage where I was probably becoming either going for a nervous breakdown or contemplating suicide." (414-419)

Perry's expectations of family life were *"....the norm of how a Christian should be. Err, so again it's coming from this literalist position that I was caught up in, Calvinistic position I was caught in" (465-467)*

The monological dominance of Perry's deterministic faith position led to a narrative foreclosure of an imagined future, and precipitating suicidal ideation. His eventual response was a decision to leave home and join the army, in an effort to resolve his

narrative identity crisis of foreclosure. *"I remember saying to someone, "Oh I need to work out if I'm Arthur or Martha". (492-493)*

This story acts for Perry in bringing meaning to his struggle between a monological faith narrative, and condemned sexual experiences in the process of fabricating his authentic self. It is notable that his autobiographical account goes on to describe his quest to explore other religions and belief systems:

"..it was interesting because, though I wasn't going to church, for some reason I started studying Buddhism. I started studying Hinduism. I studied other faiths. Um, and it's not until I I now look back and think, 'this was part of a journey' you know..." (1094-1099)

His story thus continues to act on him as he seeks to remake his faith identity in broader terms, avoiding the foreclosure of his previously held Calvinistic deterministic monological faith narrative.

Ember's story: Pink's arch.

Ember couldn't settle in her marriage. She had a *"fantastic man who's gorgeous" (199)*, but felt that his job was changing him into a ruthless person. She also felt rootless after moving away from her home area with his job. Ember explained that she came to view him as a platonic friend early in their marriage, but occasionally had dutiful sex. Eventually they divorced. However, in all this time, she commented that, *"..to be with a woman, that that just didn't even cross my mind; I just thought I wasn't a sexual individual"(193-195).* Ember says she didn't have an inkling that she was gay, because, *"I was socialised into thinking that you go with a guy, you get married, you have boyfriends." (893-895).*

Ember's described a *"very very strict, very sort of hell fire and brimstone type upbringing, um, which I kind of struggled with" (13-16)* - a monological heteronormative faith narrative, emphasised that the possibility of having anything other than a platonic relationship with a woman was *"completely wrong" (953)*. Contrastingly, she sought to construct a story of her marriage as a platonic friendship, pointing to her husband's negative change of character and borrowing from the narrative of asexuality to explain her avoidance of sexual intimacy. At the same time, she felt the tension of compliance with the marriage narrative and would offer sex occasionally, before it stopped completely. With no lesbian narrative to utilise, as her monological faith narrative foreclosed (Freeman, 2004) that possibility, it led Ember to use the narrative resources she had available to create her story: She understood herself to be asexual. This story acted to enable Ember to 'hold her own' (Frank, 2012) by maintaining her narrative identity within the boundaries of her faith.

She then goes on to describe a process of releasing her dominance in her waning marriage, and the realisation that she was not asexual:

"I was aware that I'd been quite dominating as a wife, and I'd sort of stepped back and looked at that and thought I I didn't really like that side of me, so I I started to actively change and become you know, softer and more giving, which is interesting, the sort of more I did that, the more he drifted away from me... But I remember one day, looking at a picture of Pink [laughs] so cliched! [laughs].. um on a on an album, and um, I could just see the arch of her back, and I just felt incredibly turned on, and I was just thinking, 'What's going on? She's not even a real person!' Like she's real, but you know, she's not somebody.. that I would have could have a relationship with... And I just thought, 'Oh my gosh'." (213-231)

With Ember's loosening of her dominance in her waning marriage, there also seems to be a 'loosening' of the monological heteronormative narrative that Ember had lived by. It allowed two processes to take place – the distancing of her husband, and the

foregrounding of her same-sex attractions, overturning her previous story of asexuality, confirmed by her sexual response to a picture of a female singer. It was the beginnings of release from narrative foreclosure, with the space to dialogue, asking "*What's going on?" (225)* as she noticed her same sex attractions by peering at a picture of Pink. This made salient a collision of narratives occurring in Ember's experience, which she recounts:

"And then I'd sit in church... and any time there was certain things.. songs like, "Let Him have His way with you".. it would immediately bring like sexual innuendo into it to me, and I'd be like, 'Fuck! Get out get out get out!' And then I'd start thinking about women in church, nowhere else, just in church, and... I just thought, 'The devil's really trying to get at me, you know, when I'm supposed to be worshipping'." (231-241)

Ember's account of church worship suggests that her sexual expression had escaped fixity, expressing itself in intrusive sexual narratives occurring in a setting representing her previously monological faith narrative. Her invoking of the devil appears to be an attempt to hold her own – mitigate a threat to her narrative identity by distancing herself from her sexual arousal through placing them in another narrative – of the devil. As a result, Ember decided to *"put [her] bible away" (243)*, and after a while, she withdrew from church (which is a process described in the next typology).

Not long after, she met her soon-to-be female partner at a social group and developed a close friendship as they shared personal issues.

"She shared a lot with me that she was bisexual... And remember just thinking, 'Oh no, oh no, I really don't want to hear that', and there was like like, it's weird, I didn't want to hear it, but there was also this sort of repulsion as well, um, I kind of put it down to probably what my beliefs were telling me about homosexuality. And.. I just thought, 'I just need to stay away from this woman'. I don't even know why I thought that, I just thought, 'Stay away, just stay away'. Um, and I did stay away for a while. But, I just really really missed her. Um, we were such good friends. And um, I thought 'OK, I can do this; I can be her friend, and nothing's gonna happen'." (268-281)

Ember's clash of narratives continue in her story. Her developing female friendship challenged her still dominant heteronormative faith narrative, despite having withdrawn from the narrative resources that supported it. Her *"repulsion"* caused by her heteronormative narrative was countered by invoking once more a platonic (asexual) narrative to give herself permission to continue the relationship. After Ember made this decision,

"We became friends again, and then basically at the same time that I was intimate with her, pretty much the next day [my husband] said, "It's over..." So, technically, I cheated on him, but I knew for a long time and it was just a matter of days... Um, so yeah, yeah so basically [laughs] that's how I came from being pretty heterosexual to now being in a lesbian relationship." (289-299)

The power of Ember's story has moved her from a monological Christian heteronormative narrative position of fixity, in which she was an asexual protagonist, to being in a lesbian relationship. She avoided narrative foreclosure by remaking her story through using narrative resources creatively – a platonic narrative, asexual narrative, and a religious narrative of the devil. She was able to 'hold her own' (Frank, 2012) whilst working through a collision of narratives, and formulate a new narrative identity through dialogue.

Summary

The 'narrative identity battles' typology illustrates the ways in which protagonists negotiate the collision of narratives. It shows how narrative resources defend and support the protagonists' narrative identity from a position of fixity, the threat of narrative foreclosure, and the remaking of the protagonist's narrative identity. It gives rise to the possibility of new futures and illuminating the protagonist's past.

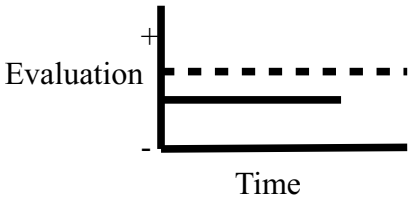
Typology 4: Dormant faith or sexuality

In the struggle against fixity and narrative foreclosure (Freeman, 2004) of the previous typology, a common response amongst participants is to enter a dormant phase of faith or SSA narrative performance.

A withdrawal from the protagonists' faith narrative seems to consolidate their homosexual identity by choosing to leave their faith communities completely, or alternatively become anonymous, on the periphery of church in order to reduce the influence of the monological faith narrative that has no tolerance of their developing gay/lesbian identities. Alternatively, other protagonists sublimate their sexuality in faith-based activities, continuing to conform to the monological narrative and the outcomes of narrative foreclosure. It seems the function of withdrawal or dormancy is to return to a stable narrative trajectory, although from a negative evaluation position (as compared with the first typology, which has a positive stable evaluation), as the protagonist is aware of an aspect of their narrative identity which has been sidelined for the sake of gaining stability.

Figure 4 illustrates a negative stable trajectory (Gergen & Gergen, 1983) where actants affect stability from a low evaluative base. The following three stories serve to illustrate their construction of this typology of process.

Figure 4: Stable negative narrative trajectory



Jean's story: Sacrificing the Sacrament.

Jean had an inchoate understanding of her sexual identity. She recalls a sexual relationship with a woman when she was a student but she did not recognise herself as a lesbian, as she did not appear to associate her same sex attraction and behaviour with a lesbian narrative, as she had no lesbian narrative resources to draw on to emplot her story. She recalls:

"a couple of [my friend's] friends came over [to visit] and it was two women, and they were holding hands and, you know, had a kiss and whatever, um, I just thought, this friend looked at me, and I can still remember her name, [name], and she looked at me and said "[Jean], what's the matter?" I said, "They just kissed!" She said, "Yes, they're gay. They're gay. They're lesbians. Just like you!" Um, "What? Is that who I am?" [laughs]... And that was it. That was it. The penny dropped... And that's my first real encounter of the word 'lesbian', or the word 'gay'. And ff c, you probably don't believe this, I'm 21. I was 21. But when you were saying about coming out, I can honestly say, I have never really come out. I've never actually said to somebody, "I'm gay". "I'm [Jean], I'm gay." Ok. Never. I, to me I've never come out, I've just always been out... 'cause I've always just been [Jean]." (277-299)

Jean reflected further on her narrative identity:

"In the beginning, I.. didn't really think about it [being Christian and gay]. They just seemed to sit – I wasn't consciously thinking 'Oh but I'm gay and I'm a [Christian]. Is that, is that an imbalance or, shouldn't I be gay, should I, you know, go to confession and whatever [mock quivery voice]. Um, and I was actually teaching in [Christian] school at the time. And I was comfortable with it." (334-337)

Initially, it seems that Jean's narrative faith identity had no dialogical process with her same sex attractions, (similar to stories exemplified by the second typology of inchoate recognition of same sex attraction) and *"just seemed to sit"* in a passive manner, in the same way as she received the label 'lesbian'. Perhaps this was because she had not appropriated the narrative resources associated with the label 'lesbian' and therefore perceived no clash of narrative identities.

One day in the school staff room, when Jean was chatting about a programme on TV about homosexuality, it suddenly dawned on people that she was gay:

"And in no uncertain terms, um, I was 'advised' to leave the school, and go to um, a state school where it wouldn't really matter. And I thought, 'Ok. Fine'. So I swapped schools." (334-337)

Through what Jean seemed to perceived as 'innocent' dialogue about homosexuality, her colleagues placed her in a subject position of a lesbian, thereby in opposition to their monological faith or societal attitudes, and forced her to change jobs, which Jean took in her stride.

Jean was heavily involved in her local church at the time, which she had attended for about six years. There was a big discussion around homosexuality in the church at that time, and in discussion with the parish priest about her being gay, he told her,

""[Jean], I love you to bits. I couldn't care less, you know, you are you, gay or not, you are you and that's the person I love... But I also have to go by what the church.. teaches." So I said to him, "What you saying? You know are you saying that um, I can't attend this church any more... just because of what happens in bed? You know, you you've just said you're ok with me loving another woman, as long as I don't do anything about it". So he said, "That's the sum of it" he said. "If I could change it, I would, ..but I can't". So he said, "No, what you can't do is, you cannot receive the sacrament". ...And I just looked at him and I went, "Ok", and ..I picked up my guitar, I walked down the drive, and I never looked back. And I was without a church for 15 years... Never went to church. Never even thought about going to church." (353-377)

Jean described herself as being 'shut down' and 'in shock', commenting that,

"I'd gone from one end of the scale, to the other... in the space of.. a year." (396-398)

The conversation with the priest was a direct challenge to Jean's narrative identity. The prohibition of the sacrament – a symbol and story of radical inclusion, was being used

to exclude Jean. In response, she used heteroglossic dialogue - making a distinction between *"loving another woman"* and *"don't do anything about it"* to demonstrate that she acknowledges the narrative limits of the church (which makes a distinction between sexual orientation and practice of it). The priest responded as an 'artificial person' with monological language, acting as a 'placeholder' (Frank, 2014) for the church. Frank (2014) describes this as someone not acting on their own authority, but rather, on what their position requires. The effect of the story is to shut down any dialogue about Jean's faith and therefore Jean forecloses her story.

She questions how this could have happened:

"it's almost as if I did it deliberately, as if I subconsciously chose that it was more important to be myself, I'm not going to deny myself, who I am as a gay woman.. because of the church.. you know, because basically, do we need a church? I sort of brainwashed myself into that, and um, you know I I still went on being the same person. I just didn't attend a church, didn't have take communion, nothing." (400-410)

Reflecting on her story, Jean's agency is re-established *("I did it deliberately"; "I subconsciously chose"; "I brainwashed myself")* to resist narrative foreclosure and claim that her narrative identity remained the same, despite the loss of her supporting faith community. It is a counter story (Frank, 2010) to the subject position of lesbian she had been assigned by work colleagues and the church priest, to resist and repair her identity. Jean also commented that her faith might have died, but her 'caring attitude' for others remained (417-419). She concluded her story by saying,

"I told God to take a holiday... only to go on holiday for 15 years". (421-423)

Her holiday, or respite from the monological faith narrative, described as being *"in the desert" (500)* acted to strengthen Jean's gay narrative identity. She remarks:

"I suppose, this sou this sounds awful, with each partner, um, there haven't been that many, um, it my identity sort of got stronger... and my fears sort of took a back seat" (516-520)

"...if you like, my strength in being an LGBT person got stronger, um, and it was almost, its as almost embedded in me now is as my faith is." (579-581)

As Jean built her gay narrative identity during this dormant faith period, through the experience of relationships, she was able to "embed" or emplot her sexuality as part of her narrative identity. She concludes:

" my faith has grown stronger, and my identity has grown stronger. And apart from, as I said th t the incidents in the school, the incidents in the church, when I had to leave, or I was 'advised' to leave, I've never really had any conflict inside of me about my faith and my sexuality because.. for those 15 years I didn't have it, I I chucked it, I told it to take a hike. So I wasn't actually dealing with being gay an ag you know a Christian.. I was actually thinking, 'Well, do you know what, I'm gay, and that's it. The rest of the world, get over it!' Um, and I never actually thought about my faith." (589-603)

Jean's story of dormancy and withdrawal from a monological faith narrative that threatened foreclosure in order to strengthen her identity and emplot her sexuality, demonstrates her artful use of narrative resources in creating a story that helps her to 'hold her own' (Frank, 2012).

Sheila's story: Church hopping**.**

Sheila tells a positive story of avoidance of a heteronormative faith narrative to protect her narrative identity, in contrast to Jean's story of a clash of narratives which force her to withdraw to repair and protect her narrative identity. Sheila comments that she *"do[es] not recall a time when I was not in relationship with God" (102-103)* who was an ally against an unsupportive family and a heteronormative church fellowship. Within this context, Sheila talks about her faith narrative in relation to her sexuality at that time:

"...in some respects, looking back, my my sexuality took a more precedence than than than my faith. Um, err, yeah, you know, expressing who I was in in in that way was sort of something which was more um, err, I I guess more open, more active... whereas my faith was something that was far more internal and passive, um err at at that point in time.. ...part of the reason for my my faith becoming something that was more personal, um and and less active from a church-going perspective, um, was because I didn't feel there was a church that um, that that I could fully belong to." (386-402)

Sheila reasoned that her sexual identity was not consonant with the church's narrative on sexuality and therefore could not support her lesbian identity performances.

"...somehow there was something in me that knew that um, being gay was not going to be acceptable within the church...." (263-264).

In order to protect her narrative identity as a Christian with same sex attraction, her solution was to "church hop" - to attend church services, but avoid dialogical encounters:

"I never stayed in church long enough for those questions to get asked and, so never I got heavily involved in any ministries or anything. It was always like I just pop in and in the background and.. just be polite, and um avoid any err any personal questions um..."(271-278).

This strategy avoided revealing her narrative identity which in turn could perhaps reveal boundaries of affiliation:

Interviewer: "So there were kind of unspoken boundaries, if you like?
Sheila: Yes... Yeah, very much so... um an an and I don't know how real they were, because I never tested them. Err, these were very much boundaries that I just implicitly felt were there, um, and because I wanted to maintain what I got, to a certain extent, I didn't risk pushing those boundaries because I didn't want to have to then, um, either know that I couldn't go any further, or have to go somewhere else. Um, so I played along and stayed in within that what I believed to be the safe place." (422-436)

Sheila played it safe, not attempting to test the monological nature of the faith narrative, for fear of being 'finalized' (Frank, 2012) by the response. Despite her expressing a need to avoid contact with imagined narrative boundaries over a 17 year period of "church hopping", Sheila describes it as a beneficial experience, because it introduced

her to a variety of styles of worship and liturgy:

"...when I look back, I I think that was real fertile ground because it gave me the opportunity to worship in so many different ways and um, be able to then bring all of that in now... to err, the worship experience... um, err within my church. Yeah." (290-297)

This fabrication of Sheila's story seems to echo the heteroglossic Christian maxim, "All things work together for good" (Romans 8:28) which acts on her current experience of worship.

Jeff's story: Getting rid of being gay.

Several participants also told stories about their 'dormant' sexuality. For example, Jeff spoke about how he sought refuge in the monological narrative of faith to silence the troubling voice of his same sex attractions:

"I was longing for a life changing experience, and I I wanted to get rid of being gay, and I thought maybe if I became a Christian, that would ff resolve the problem... And my um, interpretation of what was happening, based on their th theological approach was that somehow the devil had corrupted me in some way so that had distorted my developmental processes and lead me away from being heterosexual and normal to being gay which was.. abnormal and deviant and ungodly... So, this is how I interpreted it, and of course it was the way I was taught to interpret it. So if only I could somehow get my mind sorted out and realise that God made me heterosexual and just gotta get the devil off my back, kind of thing, then I would then be one day happily married and um, [laughs] what a myth that is!" (404-423)

Jeff's desire to be 'normal' drove him to seek to be finalised (Frank, 2012) by the monological faith narrative, as this would deliver the 'happily married' outcome the narrative demanded him to seek. He then describes the affect of this monological narrative on his same sex attractions:

"So that brought, that was a big watershed moment in my life within, it changed everything forever really... But it didn't change my sexuality. But it felt as though, for about a year, it did change because I was so taken up with this new found faith... that I simply didn't think about the gay issue." (439-446)

Later in his account, Jeff went on to be married in an heterosexual marriage, still seeking to conform to a monological faith narrative which eradicated the possibility of emplotment of his homosexuality, interpreting this as an act of faith. He eventually got divorced, admitting that. *"I am a gay man and I shouldn't be married to a woman" (1608-1609).* Reflecting on his story, from a position of now being in a gay relationship which is *"the most natural thing that ever happened to me" (1644-1645)* Jeff questions *"how in the world I ever get, pulled in, you know, live a life of such bullshit!" (1647-1648).* The theme of the story is one of regret, that he had not allowed dialogue with his same sex attractions earlier in his life, which continues to act against his faith narrative: *"It makes you realise that most religious teaching practice is pretty well worthless actually. There's very little integrity in most of it" (1652-1654).*

Summary

The typology of dormant faith or sexuality illustrates the ways in which protagonists negotiate their narrative identities in the face of narrative instability. They appear to either move away from their monological faith narrative to allow same sex attraction to be storied through gay narrative resources, or move towards their monological faith narrative to sublimate the SSA and finalise (Frank, 2012) or foreclose (Freeman, 2004) their narrative identity.

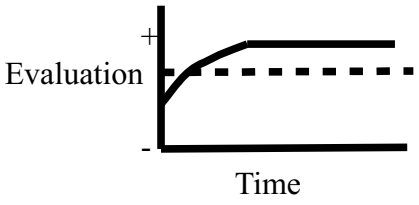
Typology 5: I am what I am

This typology depicts an owning or storying of a gay/lesbian narrative identity within the context of a remade faith narrative identity. This is accomplished working through theological narrative resources and developing a story of God's acceptance within this new context. The fixity of the monological faith narrative has been overcome allowing

dialogical processes to facilitate a gay narrative to be part of the protagonists' story. The protagonists acknowledge, however, that this is a process with ongoing tensions, as they adopt a Christian narrative identity of vulnerability and openness, allowing them flexibility to remake their stories and resist finalisation (Frank, 2012).

Figure 5 illustrates a Progressive and stable narrative trajectory (or "Happily-Ever-After") (Gergen & Gergen, 1983) where actants are incremental and sustain stability. The following two stories serve to illustrate their construction of this typology of process.

Figure 5: Progressive and stable narrative trajectory



Simone's story: What if it's OK to be that way?

Simone tells a progressive story of discovery, as her lesbian narrative identity forms and begins to dialogue with her faith narrative identity. Simone sought Christian-based counselling to address family issues, and told her counsellor *"I just need to find out if I like women or men" (318-319).* This took place as her lesbian identity began to emerge and whilst experiencing powerful emotions of jealousy towards a female friend who had found a partner. Perhaps her choice of Christian-based counselling was her attempt to dialogue about her sexuality with her counsellor who represented a placeholder of the faith-based narrative that had finalised her (Frank, 2012).

Simone also started searching the literature for a gay Christian narrative through which she could story her emerging same sex attractions and loosen the influence of the monological faith narrative she had grown up with. She found a story which resonated with her:

"...it was um, called, 'Letter to Louise' and it's a letter of a Baptist pastor to a friend... um whose his brother is gay and said, 'my brother doesn't come to church because he knows he's condemned to hell', and that um Baptist pastor wanted to, he he looked through it and said, 'Actually no, this is not the case' and made the biblical case for inclusion, went through all the passages..." (340-349)

This story was Simone's ally in her search for a dialogical faith narrative. The story itself is a dialogue about a person who has withdrawn from the monological faith narrative of his church after experiencing its foreclosure (Freeman, 2004). The pastor (representing another placeholder of her faith narrative) presents an alternative outcome to hell, which breaks the monological hold of Simone's faith narrative, allowing the possibility of a different, positive future for her. In her *"counselling diary" (352)*, the day after she had read this story, she is able to engage dialogically: *"What if it's OK to be that way?" (355)*. The liberation from the closed down monological faith narrative is clearly demonstrated in Simone's account:

" I remember distinctly that first Sunday after that, I always feel it was quite sort of Evangelical, little bit charismatic church, and sort of hands up in the air with worship and I never quite sort of gotten carried away in that that respect but that that Sunday I just, I could I could lift my arms and worship! ...And it was almost like, the communication channel to God had been unblocked... ...then I could freely worship God.. and that's sort of I think, that's really when my faith came to fruition... ...a time when, you know, the weight has been lifted almost..." (359-384)

Simone's appropriation of a new narrative trajectory of her lesbian identity had profound dialogical consequences to her experience of faith. She describes her tentative steps that followed:

"I kept it to myself for a few weeks, because I just needed to.. it was just very, I was very fragile, very vulnerable as well as really excited... but it was just so new and so... un unknown, um, so somebody put like it's almost like putting on a jacket and seeing, 'Hmm, this does fit'... but I needed to... still get used to wearing it. (389-402)"

Simone's inchoate dialogical faith narrative, with scant narrative resources to support her lesbian identity performance (Caddick, 2016), was kept hidden initially, whilst her narrative identity assimilated a new dialogical position. Her fragility was perhaps referencing a fear of being foreclosed (Freeman, 2004) once more by a monological (Frank, 2012) faith narrative. Her metaphor of a new jacket perhaps represents her new subject position of 'lesbian Christian', which she was adjusting to.

Over a period of time, Simone took steps to consolidate her narrative identity as a lesbian. She began attending a gay Christian support group, which she described as like "coming home" (718) to a group of people who shared her narrative identity. She viewed the group as those who were *"..determined to keep their faith over their the discussions of their sexuality.." (740-742).* She valued the dialogical engagement, commenting:

"I think so for me, coming out actually sort of lead to a renewal of my faith. So, yeah. That's why it wasn't a trade-off, it was actually both together.. and and I wouldn't have been able to choose one over the other, and I think that by suppressing my sexuality for so long.. I also suppressed my faith.. unknowingly" (748-760).

The authorial intrusions of Simone's faith narrative appeared to lead previously to an experience of finalisation (Frank, 2012). Through dialogical strengthening of her burgeoning narrative identity, her story was allowed to 'breathe' (Frank, 2010) and she experienced a refreshing of her faith as a consequence.

Part of the process was enacting the 'coming out' narrative, which she cautiously

proceeded to do. At first, Simone recalls that she was slow to tell people, and those she told were asked to keep the news to themselves:

"as I really wanted to be in control of the information and so I wrote down who I told and I'd count it and I think I'd stopped counting after 100, and thought, 'OK, that's it', um, and [month] [year] I went back home to my parents for for my mum's 60th, and that's when I told my family, around that time." (469-474)

Simone's mother was broadly supportive, despite her questions. Her father found the news more difficult to accept, asking *"Could you be with a man if you took hormones?" (515-516)* echoing the dominant heteronormative narrative Simone had been raised with and reducing her narrative identity to hormone treatment. Her friends suggested she should have replied to her father, *"Could you?"* to highlight and rebuff his heteronormative 'solution'. However, Simone was forgiving, acknowledging her father was on a journey of understanding. After coming out to her parents, Simone disseminated news of her lesbian identity widely through social media, and started a lesbian relationship, as it became embedded in her story.

Reflecting on the changes in her narrative identity, Simone commented that her earlier narrative

"..was very sort of in a way narrow view of Christianity, and stuff, and I think I've become a lot more accepting... understanding that life's much more complex and it's not black and white, there's a lot of grey and a lot of rainbow colours in-between" (1089-1101)

Simone's narrative identity appears to have become dialogically sensitive, having moved away from the influence of a monological faith narrative. It flourished through dialogue and narrative performances of her lesbian identity within the context of a reframed faith narrative. She comments:

"I think what helped me is a couple of years ago when the [new gay Christian

organisation] team went on on a short retreat, we had um [name of vicar] come to speak to us, and he ta he talked about one article he'd found, um, and it talked about 'category violators', and I found that so helpful because at that point, I, I definitely couldn't identify as an Evangelical Christian." (1118-1125)

Simone's comment indicates that far from being finalised by a monological faith narrative, she is now able to define her identity in her own terms, with the possibility to continuously evolve through dialogue.

Delia's story: Married!

Delia had been through a difficult experience as a young adult after telling her church leadership that she was gay. She had tried to comply with her church's group narrative of *"love the sinner, hate the sin" (451)* by hiding her sexuality. She was grateful to the church for supporting her through a previous crisis. However, her same sex attractions were eventually storied through her embodied experience of a lesbian relationship, which Delia confessed to the leadership. The other young woman involved had been an established church member much longer than Delia, and so Delia was blamed for *"persuading her to become gay" (475-476).* The affiliation that Delia had previously benefited from was withdrawn, as the church fellowship imposed an institutional emplotment (Frank, 2010) on Delia's story of lesbianism: she was demon possessed. *"[They] did lots of praying I would get demons out of my life" (481-482).* Far from supporting her developing lesbian narrative identity, the story of demon possession spoke of a narrative negation, implying her identity had been hijacked by some other entity.

The monological institutional emplotment served as a fabricating mechanism (Frank, 2010) to support the assembling of the fellowship, thus enforcing narrative conformity

of the whole group against Delia. She comments that *"..every Sunday there was guaranteed to be a 'Sodom and Gomorrah' style story.. directed directly completely at me.." (486-489)*

The church members even *"la[id] hands" (492)* on the church building, *"to pray the issue of sexuality away from the church 'cause I was not the only one who'd come out at some point in.. that church." (493-496)* The fellowship used heteroglossic bible narratives of homosexuality (Sodom and Gomorrah) and illness (laying on of hands) associated with the epidemiological narrative of spreading disease. Delia described this as,

"heavy hitting stuff, particularly as a young adult trying to come to terms with being gay" (503-506). The leaders of the church eventually outed Delia publicly to the fellowship and her family. She described the effects of this onslaught on her narrative identity:

"I was re heart broken, I was very upset. I couldn't, I thought they were right and I was wrong, and I and everything, but then it got to a point where I was really angry at the church, um, for a very long time" (855-859)

Delia withdrew from the monological faith narrative after initially assenting to the institutional emplotment, and then trying to counter it with scriptural arguments she had found via the internet.

"I found out some of the scripture they were quoting at me, and come up with a counter argument. Didn't know if I believed it at the time, but I just wanted to get off my back [chuckles]... you know, you you come up with these ideas, I wouldn't I was never sure... because of what I was taught, you know... but it made me think... at least."

Despite trying to present an alternative viewpoint, Delia found it difficult to escape the monological influences of the faith narrative she had assimilated, at which point, she

left the church fellowship. In the absence of faith narrative resources of church affiliation, Delia was able to strengthen her lesbian narrative identity through relationship experiences. She comments that she *"put [faith] totally on the back burner; started dating an atheist, a militant atheist [laughs]. I was with her for 10 years" (780-782).*

Delia then describes a switching of narrative influence, back to faith. She split from her partner, whom she describes as a *"proper militant atheist"*, which suggests that Delia had aligned herself with another monological narrative, in response to her faith narrative identity, as the story of exclusion and rejection continued to work on her.

"...I came back to church because I was heart broken, and I needed something else to take to re rekindle my sense of understanding. I found it difficult at first. I remembered some of the theology I read on the internet, researched a bit more, and started to realising actually, I I can deal with this..."

Delia sought affirmation of her narrative identity through faith once more, by accessing alternative narrative resources, gathered through internet research, attending an LGBT church and developing friendships where alternative theology was discussed. In doing so, she realised that, *"..what I'd been taught was a stupid literal, not even a literal translation of the Bible.."*

She sought to build up a sophisticated, nuanced view of her narrative faith identity through dialogue, research and formal study:

"the things [LGBT church fellowship] were saying, things I'd not heard in other churches... were, all very different and far more, a complex theologies rather than the simple theology of 'You're wrong, this is sinful' you know! And it helped me go 'OK, let's look at that a bit more detail' you know. 'Let's um read around the topic, let's don't just rely on what other people say' an and to see that actually most theologians, particularly since I went to university now, doing theology, um most theologians, even

people who are in um, even people who are preachers and say the, spew the arguments against homosexuality actually don't agree with what they're saying half of it. I think that helps! [laughs] You know what I mean!"

Delia's story has continued to work on her in other positive ways. Notably, she talks about how she now views her previous church fellowship: *"...I no longer hate.. my old church. I now think that they were trying to do it for the right reason, they just had the wrong way of doing it."*

Delia said a leader at her LGBT church explained it this way:

"'You got to remember what they was thinking, you know they weren't being malicious, they were thinking, that they thought they were trying to help save you from hell'. And knowing, thinking reminding myself that that's why they were doing what they were doing, has really turned the whole thing around for me."

Her recall of her story demonstrates that it is not mimetic (Frank, 2010), but rather, dynamic in its reconstruction of the account as a whole, with a re-written future outcome of a dialogical faith narrative, having successfully avoided narrative foreclosure (Freeman, 2004). The story thus furnishes forgiveness, as Delia is able to view the old faith narrative from a liberation perspective.

When asked about how she now views her faith and sexuality, Delia answered:

"Oh, married! [laughs] ...Um, well to the point that I now insisted on being married in a church. You know, not just being married but being married in church before God... and that was a really important part... Everything else is irrelevant. It was being married in church... in front of God, and quite clearly my se sexuality has nothing to do with my faith, apart from supporting other people who have been in that position like I have."

Delia's marriage represented to her the successful negotiation of her Christian lesbian narrative identity. The manner in which it was conducted in church, before God, points

to the way her story accomplished a dialogical breakthrough.

Summary

In this typology, a protagonist moves towards a dialogical narrative, enabling them to story their same sex attractions and remake their futures, unfinalised (Frank, 2012).

Chapter 4: Discussion

The study's findings propose five typologies of process which help to understand the stories of Christians with SSAs in negotiating their faith and gay/lesbian identities. These include a 'SSA invisibility' typology, where monological (Frank, 2010) faith narratives allow no room for SSA to be storied, and provide no narrative resources to give SSAs voice. An 'inchoate recognition' typology describes the acknowledgement of SSAs, but no storied identity emerges as SSAs are transformed into other meanings to avoid *"narrative ambush"* (Frank, 2010). A 'narrative identity battles' typology depicts narrative ambush, where the monological faith narrative is opposed by a burgeoning gay or lesbian narrative (as SSAs become storied through embodied experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 1962)) and a threat of finalization in the protagonist's story looms. A 'dormant faith or sexuality' typology describes the withdrawal of the protagonist either from a monological faith narrative thus avoiding finalization, or from a gay/lesbian narrative by submitting to finalization; and the typology 'I am what I am' represents the remaking of narrative identity in a dialogical manner to assimilate a faith narrative which allows for the fabrication of a gay or lesbian story, allowing the protagonist to give a performance of gay/lesbian Christian identity within an unfinalized supportive faith setting.

Typologies

Within these proposed typologies, there appears to be two essentialist narratives or 'voices' at work, which merge and contest each other (Frank, 2012) in a protagonist's story: a monological faith narrative, which threatens to finalize or foreclose the protagonist's story; and SSA's, which through embodied experiences produces meaning (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) which the protagonist finds necessary to story through available

narratives such as coming out as gay/lesbian. It is proposed that the proximity to a monological faith narrative determines the acknowledgement, acceptance or rejection of SSAs. This is mediated through the social construction of essence, giving rise to the degree of fixity or psychological space available to the protagonist to be able to appraise and create authentic fabrications (Frank, 2010) of Christian gay and lesbian identities. The effect of the proximity of the monological faith narrative is the unifying concept which is supported by findings in research literature.

The 'SSA invisibility' typology features a monological faith narrative which uses a holiness/victory or obedience discourse (Ganzevoort, van der Laan, & Olsman, 2011). This is mediated through a faith setting, which comprises of teaching, leadership, a congregation and a horizontal power structure, where the monological narrative is overwhelmingly enforced (Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris, & Hecker, 2001; McSkimming, 2016; Schuck & Liddle, 2001) alongside other social influences such as family relationships and society where entitative antigay discourses persist (Haslam & Levy, 2006). The monological faith narrative therefore exerts an hegemonic influence upon the protagonist's story, which remains firmly within the heteronormative frame. The protagonist sustains their identity in this setting through using actants which render their SSAs invisible to themselves. The function of this invisibility is to maintain stability through remaining consonant with the faith setting the protagonist operates within, and thus continue to receive what is storied as the psychological benefits of group membership (Coyle, 2010). Gill, Martin and Amanda's stories were expounded using this typology. For Gill, her 'little theory' helped her to uphold her disconnect to her SSAs, but also went on to act on her parenting decisions. For Martin, his monological Calvinist narrative declared him heteronormative, and his story of non-camp,

heterosexual heavenward destiny shut out recognition of his SSAs, but not to his peers, who pejoratively nicknamed him 'faggot'. For Amanda, SSAs were storied as a 'passing phase' in her compliant story to her monological faith narrative.

In the 'inchoate recognition' typology, the protagonist's SSAs begin to heighten awareness of conflict within the faith setting (Levy & Reeves, 2011). The use of 'clobber texts' by leadership, supported by a heteronormative congregation who are incognisant of microaggressions towards Christians with SSA leads to psychological distress and neglect of such individuals (Barret & Barzan, 1996; Ward, 2011; Wood & Conley, 2014). The protagonist stories their SSAs as a struggle against temptation, which maintains their identity within the faith group, conforming to the holiness/victory discourse (Ganzevoort et al., 2011). This discourse is part of an ex-gay narrative, which transforms the threat of narrative ambush (Frank, 2010) into a heteronormative position, because an ex-gay narrative consists of the plot 'I'm a God made heterosexual in essence; this is currently obscured by homosexual desires; this will be repaired through close non-sexual relationships of the same sex; and I will be restored to a phenotypical heterosexual' (Moberly, 1983). The need to transform SSAs into other storied meanings is illustrated by what (Frank, 2010) sees as the difference between narrative identity, and narrative *identifying* (Frank, 2010). In the same way as an administrator in a waiting room 'hails' a person to become a patient, and all that this encompasses (Frank, 2010), so the monological faith narrative 'hails' the Christian with SSA to be a heteronormative Christian. Therefore, the Christian with SSA must recognise themselves in some manner as heteronormative. Thus an 'ex-gay' narrative identity fulfils this function, and going one step further, reparative or conversion therapy, as an ex-gay Christian sees faith-based solutions as the only option (Weiss, Morehouse, Yeager, & Berry, 2010).

Anthony and Jeff's stories were expounded using this typology. Loosening the 'hailing' influences (Frank, 2010) of his monological faith narrative, Anthony was able to give recognition to his SSAs, but mediated this recognition through ex-gay narrative resources, supporting his monological faith narrative and thus his storied identity as a heteronormative Christian with SSAs. For Jeff, his SSAs resisted espousing a homosexual narrative, as this was laden with entitativity opposed to his faith narrative which he could not story.

In the typology 'narrative identity battles', the protagonist is caught between a monological faith narrative hailing the protagonist to heteronormativity, and SSAs which are hailing the protagonist to story these (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) as a gay/lesbian narrative which includes the discourse of 'coming out', an unfamiliar story outside of the faith setting which imposes itself on the protagonist causing "*narrative ambush"* (Frank, 2010). These 'narrative identity battles' occur within the purview of essence. Frank (2010) suggests a useful metaphor to think about this. If stories are windows through which a listener peers to see what the storyteller sees, then this is a mimetic understanding of storytelling. Instead, Frank (2010) proposes that the listener of the story is looking at a *"sketched window"* (Frank, 2010 p. 88), where there is nothing beyond the window to see, except the creativity of the storyteller in their representations of reality. The window frame of the storyteller's sketched window is essentialist, containing scenes imbued with hues of essence concerning faith and sexuality. In the clash of essentialist narratives, the protagonist has a choice in trying to sustain their identity or *"holding their own"* (Frank, 2012 p. 33): to move nearer to the monological faith narrative and be all that it hails the protagonist to be (heteronormative, loving the sinner and hating the sin, celibate or in a 'heterosexual' relationship (Ritter & O'Neill,

1989)), thus surrendering to finalisation and suffering microaggressions (Ward, 2011; Wood & Conley, 2014); or to move away from the monological faith narrative, and enter a time of identity reconstruction (McSkimming, 2016) in response to being ambushed by an entitativity of homosexuality the protagonist believes to be against God, even repulsive. This is because 'coming out' as gay/lesbian contains essentialist values which do not concord with the protagonist's faith identity, and the protagonist fears being finalised by their monological faith narrative as a homosexual. However, being in this position can be a catalyst to seeking new knowledge (Levy & Reeves, 2011), transforming these narratives into inclusive ones through reaching (Fowler, 1981), 'individuative-reflective' stage of faith (Levy & Edmiston, 2014; Ritter & O'Neill, 1989) by having to question their faith discourses. The individual may at this time seek Full Acceptance faith settings (Nugent & Gramick, 1989) allowing them to move out of crisis (Levy & Reeves, 2011). This is also a period of intense tension, giving rise to a range of psychological issues, including negative emotional reactions, problems with identity formation, compartmentalization (Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000), 'internalised homophobia', and susceptibility to spiritual abuse, and can lead to poor mental health and suicidality (Barton, 2010; Beagan & Hattie, 2015; Buchanan et al., 2001; McSkimming, 2016; Schuck & Liddle, 2001). Perry and Ember's stories were expounded using this typology. Perry's story of a mask enabled him to avert a crisis of narrative fit (Freeman, 2004) through compartmentalization, until the monological faith narrative breached this story's effectiveness, leading to finalisation and suicidality. Ember's story of asexuality enabled her to sustain her heteronormative Christian identity, until there was a loosening of this monological narrative which allowed the foregrounding of her SSAs, leading to her remade storied identity as a lesbian.

The 'dormant faith or sexuality' typology enacts a choice arising from narrative ambush (Frank, 2010) and negotiates the protagonist's tension through this choice. The protagonist can make new meanings out of their SSAs through alignment of their storied identity with the monological faith narrative as an ex-gay struggling against the temptation to sin (Ganzevoort et al., 2011; Weiss et al., 2010), or through receiving reparative/conversion therapy and remaining celibate (Buchanan et al., 2001; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000) or by getting married to the opposite sex (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989). The opposite choice the protagonist can make is to apostatise (Barret & Barzan, 1996; Buchanan et al., 2001; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000; Schuck & Liddle, 2001), or compartmentalise (Barret & Barzan, 1996; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000; Wood & Conley, 2014) which creates distance from the monological faith narrative and allows identity reconstruction (McSkimming, 2016) to occur as a gay or lesbian individual, although this may present significant challenges for protagonists who considered themselves ex-gay previously, as the storied meaning of their responses to SSAs no longer makes sense, and since the protagonists' stories are created as meaningful totalities of scattered events (Ricoeur, 2005), there may be a negative psychological implication (McSkimming, 2016). However, there are also positive benefits to apostasy, as it removes the protagonist from the negative faith setting and narrative (Buchanan et al., 2001; McSkimming, 2016), giving space for recovery from these. When utilising an either/or strategy, the short to medium term benefits of this conflict resolution are challenged by the long term effects of rejecting an identity which was once part of the protagonist's story (Buchanan et al., 2001), and as such there is a sense of incompleteness for some protagonists. Jean, Sheila and Jeff's stories were expounded using this typology. Jean withdrew from a monological faith narrative which sought to finalise her, enabling her to consolidate her story of lesbian identity. Sheila's story of

compartmentalization enabled her to still attend faith settings, but consolidate her sexual identity. Jeff's alignment with a monological narrative of faith sought finalisation to achieve heteronormative outcomes, thereby avoiding ambush from a gay narrative.

The 'I am what I am' typology represents protagonists' stories that contain the presence of both a faith narrative identity and a lesbian/gay narrative identity in dialogue and negotiation with one another. The voices of these narratives no longer contest, but merge (Frank, 2012) in negotiations. The faith discourse is one of 'subjectivity' where the fixity of a monological faith narrative is transformed into one of dialogue with God (Ganzevoort et al., 2011), which is the experience of those individuals who are 'ex-ex-gay' (Weiss et al., 2010). Protagonists are able to tell stories of integration, tolerating doubt, and exhibiting the qualities of Fowler's (1981) fifth 'stage' of faith development, 'Conjunctive faith', where there is a reworking of the past (Ricoeur, 2005) and a tolerance of tensions: *"Alive to paradox and the truth in apparent contradictions, this stage strives to unify opposites in mind and experience"* (Fowler, 1981). This is evident through how protagonists reframe scripture and tradition (Bowland, Foster, & Vosler, 2013), by shifting emphasis from orthodoxy to orthopraxy (Thumma, 1991) and shifting from a religious to a spiritual discourse (Sherry, Adelman, Whilde, & Quick, 2010). Protagonists also seek out Full Acceptance faith settings (Barret & Barzan, 1996; Nugent & Gramick, 1989) to be able to perform their remade identities as gay and lesbian Christians. Simone and Delia's stories were expounded using this typology. Simone's story of dialogue enabled her to move beyond the influence of her monological faith narrative and allow a lesbian narrative to define her and reshape her story of faith as a lesbian Christian, enabling both identities to flourish. Delia's story of struggle against a monological faith narrative changed into one of liberation and gay

marriage through dialogical engagement with a lesbian/gay affirming church setting.

The literature supports the typology of process formulated in this study concerning the negotiation of lesbian/gay and Evangelical Christian identities (Ganzevoort et al., 2011; Levy & Reeves, 2011; Thumma, 1991; Walton, 2006; Weiss et al., 2010). Thus the protagonist's stories of negotiations are clarified by viewing them through the refracting lens of this study's typology, highlighting the work the stories are doing in constructing the protagonists' identities, and enabling listeners to discern how the protagonists' stories are fabricated drawing on aspects of all five narrative types (Frank, 2010).

This narrative typology emerged from the data after a resorting and renaming process which brought the typology discussed into being (Frank, 2010). This process has no defined end point, but once types had been identified which aided understanding of the power of stories protagonists told, then these were utilised in analysis. Thus, typology building is not closed and finalised; rather, dialogical listening may facilitate the identification of other types (Frank, 2010). For example, there could be a further typology which encompasses the remaking of narrative identity as a Queer Christian, a 'postgay' identity (Savin-Williams, 2014) beyond the realms of entitativity and essentialist mimetic argumentation, as individuals choose to eschew identities such as gay/lesbian, viewing sexuality and gender in a fluid manner. In acknowledging a practical need to bring the DNA to a conclusion, the five types identified demonstrate vertical generalization (Yardley, 2000) and have potential utility in counselling psychology practice.

Implications for Professional Practice

The research findings provide further evidence of the tensions and obstacles faced when talking about identity. They facilitate the consideration of identity issues in general, and sexuality and faith in particular. The concept of narrative identity highlights the tensions around negotiating identities, especially when there are conflicting monological narratives, which constitutes another way of identifying tensions.

In general, the research findings illustrate the utility of concepts in Dialogical Narrative Analysis in therapeutic work addressing identity issues. There are several suggestions arising from these concepts. Firstly, it is proposed that practitioners can listen out for and become aware of monological narratives in a client's unfolding story, which holds potential to finalise their identity. Secondly, listening to how aspects of a client's story are transformed into other meanings in order to avoid consequent challenges to the status quo would enable the practitioner to understand the proximity, influence and impact of a monological narrative on the client's story. Thirdly, recognising narrative ambush where a narrative is 'breaking in' to the client's story of identity will highlight the changes and challenges to identity the client is facing at that time. A form of withdrawal in a client's story may be one response for a practitioner to look out for, or increasing risk. Fourthly, listening for finalising narratives in a client's story will enable the practitioner to facilitate dialogical thinking to open up the client's story and consider how their story continues to develop. Fifth, the use of dialogical narratives by the client in their story would suggest to the practitioner that the client has been able to negotiate their identity issues, and they are at a place to explore their unfinalised stories and future directions.

Specifically with regards to the negotiation of faith and sexuality, it can be seen from the research finding that the risk of narrative foreclosure is greatest during the Narrative Identity Battles typology, where processes of finalisation are at their peak. This is because an 'inert' monological faith narrative activates finalisation in the presence of SSAs storied as a gay/lesbian identity. Gibbs & Goldbach, (2015) found that suicide ideation was associated with finalising homophobic discourses within faith settings, and suicide attempts were associated with the individual leaving their faith due to conflict, believing their story to be over. The present study proposes that clients who are experiencing SSAs as Evangelical Christians may present stories which are weaved with a combination of the five typologies discussed (Frank, 2010). The explanation of narrative types helps the practitioner to identify these within a client's story, and enable the practitioner to plan interventions which facilitate the creation of narrative space (Ganzevoort, van der Laan, & Olsman, 2011). This allows the client to story their SSAs through newly available narrative resources creating alternative outcomes, and thus avoid being finalised by their stories. As Ganzevoort et al., (2011) comment, this needs to be addressed in a gradual step by step negotiation, in order to avoid triggering further finalisation or narrative foreclosure.

Appendix XIII collates suggestions identified from research literature which facilitate the distancing of the protagonist from monological faith narrative influences, decreasing risk and creating space to explore alternative outcomes previously foreclosed by clients. These suggestions derive from several aspects of faith experiences. They include: reframing of Scripture (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989), emphasising instances of intimate same sex relationships in the Bible to illustrate how these can be an example of divine love; the use of alternative faith discourses (Ganzevoort et al., 2011) which facilitate

dialogical engagement with an individual's faith; emphasising orthopraxy (Thumma, 1991) which shifts the focus from expression of faith through adherence to doctrine (orthodoxy), to practice and action; the reframing of church rejection to be regarded as a springboard to transformation (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989); engaging in a Full Acceptance faith setting (Nugent & Gramick, 1989) which facilitates, and strengthens gay/lesbian identity performances in a spiritual path; the recasting of negative gay/lesbian entitativity with positive entitativity enabling an individual to story their gay/lesbian narrative alongside their Christian narrative (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989); the recasting the 'ex-gay' narrative (conforming to heteronormativity) as an 'ex-ex-gay' narrative (where faith is regarded as a journey and questioning and critical thinking is acceptable); questioning the entitativity of SSA and considering queer theology by moving towards a post-gay position (Cheng, 2015; Savin-Williams, 2011); and identifying and rejecting microaggressions which undermine gay/lesbian Christian identity, by embracing a concept of a God who accepts all (Sherry, Adelman, Whilde, & Quick, 2010) fostering a secure self-acceptance.

When considering the use of typologies, Frank (2010) cautions against using them to put stories into 'boxes' and thus making them monological (imposing themselves) by limiting the story to its types. Rather, a typology helps to illuminate narratives from which a story is constructed, and their associated functions and psychological risks (such as suicidality). This is part of foregrounding an awareness of the client's perspective where, for example a 'coming out' narrative needs careful usage so as not to be seen as finalising, as it would define the client as a gay/lesbian with all its associated entitativity the client may hold. Also the practitioner's use of a 'coming out' narrative could be regarded as antagonistic to the client's beliefs, and the practitioner placed

outside of the client's circle of trust. Therefore, the practitioner's awareness of their own essentialist assumptions of gay/lesbian and faith identity is important to facilitate listening and appropriate interventions.

Limitations of the study

It is acknowledged that the relative paucity of literature concerning faith and sexuality required conflating studies with different combinations of sexual minority individuals within various epistemological positions, age ranges, and geographical locations. Literature relating to this specific discourse and analytic position was scarce. Another limitation concerned the age of inclusion of participants, which was chosen based on the assumption that younger people would have a greater range of narrative resources to draw upon, reflecting changes in society. Considering this further, the age of 30 years was rather arbitrary, as there are other influences besides age which affect a person's response to SSAs, irrespective of societal changes, such as the person's adoption of a queer theology. A third limitation concerns the conflating of gay and lesbian findings (Murr, 2013): on the one hand, whilst there are many similarities between both groups in terms of the finalising narratives faced, on the other, there may be subtle differences missed in this study by treating them as one group. The researcher is also aware of the Western context within which the study is situated. Finally, Frank (2012) describes *"about two years of revising"* (Frank, 2012 p. 47) which enabled him to identify core narratives of illness that most illness stories depend on. In comparison, this study had less time resources for this task but iterative revisions have yielded a useful typology of process in the time available.

Future research

It would be useful to examine the utility of typologies of process for younger participants of sexual minority groups who perhaps are influenced to a greater degree by queer theology and regard their sexuality in a more fluid manner, beyond the boundaries of entitativity (Hammack & Cohler, 2009; Savin-Williams, 2014) by applying DNA. Such people have grown up with established changes in the law to allow civil partnership in 2004 (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2004), and same sex marriage in 2013 (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2013), for example. It would also be useful to investigate the narratives of gay and lesbian Christians in non-religious settings of the gay and lesbian community, who *"harbour strong anti-religion sentiments"* (Rodriguez, 2009 p. 11). This has the potential to significantly affect the identity performances of such individuals, who are not accepted in their monological faith settings either, and can lead to narrative foreclosure and psychological difficulties in negotiating identities.

Further research into the links between suicidality and the typology of narrative identity battles is needed to address in greater depth the links between monological faith narratives, finalisation and suicide ideation. Researchers claim to have produced the *"first known study to explore how religious identity conflict impacts suicidal behaviors among... LGBT young adults"* (Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015 p.472). This is an area of largely unexplored enquiry, which narrative research has much to offer.

A further research focus on inclusive Christian faith settings would illuminate how they have established a dialogical faith narrative, to facilitate the inclusion of gay/lesbian Christians. This could be achieved through discourse analysis of interviews and focus

groups with church attenders and church leaders, asking their views on sexual identity development. Written material could also be analysed as part of the study.

Conclusion

This study found that the proximity to a monological faith narrative determines the acceptance or rejection of SSAs by protagonists and how these are storied. These are mediated through the social construction of essence, giving rise to the degree of fixity and psychological space available to appraise discourses of faith and sexuality. The relationship between a monological faith narrative and SSAs can be expounded through five typologies of process, which express various ways in which the protagonist 'holds their own' (Frank, 2012) in the face of monological forces. The loosening of monological faith narratives allows the protagonist to remake their storied identities by utilising narrative resources previously beyond reach. The inability to do this leads to psychological difficulties and risk of suicidality, as an authentic fabrication of a protagonist's story is blocked by the monological faith narrative, undermining the protagonist's storied identity and precipitating crisis. Interventions aim to open up narrative space for the protagonist to be able to reconstruct their storied identities and thereby 'hold their own' (Frank, 2012) against diminishing forces.

Chapter 5: Reflexivity

When discussing 'fieldwork', Frank (2012) comments that *"narrative research can enter into dialogue with people's stories only if the researcher has sufficient proximate experience.."* (Frank, 2012 p. 38) of the context of the stories. He explains that *"a standpoint begins with someone's personal troubles"* (Frank, 2012 p. 38).

My journey of negotiating identities has at times been fraught, having travelled through an 'ex-gay' narrative, using discourses along the way, trying to make sense of my experiences. Reflecting upon my interviews with participants, my proximate experience sometimes found me listening to my own story echoed through another's voice, and I had to bracket this and listen to theirs, so that it was their stories and voices that was given prominence in the research. On one occasion, when interviewing Anthony, he used the word *"struggle"* (1172) which brought vivid memories back to me and I found myself emphasising this word in the interview. I had recognised the term "struggle" from the Holiness/Victory discourse (Ganzevoort et al., 2011) and felt an unease afterwards that my story had perhaps been imposed on his account. Through this I recognised the need for a balance between utilising my proximate experience for dialogical listening to engage with the stories of participants, whilst resisting foreclosing dialogue through anticipating what a participant may say.

Considering epistemological reflexivity, I found that in mining deeper into the context and origins of the clash between Evangelical Christianity and homosexuality, I discovered that my own thinking was within the 'box' of essentialist limitations, shaped by mimetic responses: I had adopted a 'gay Christian' standpoint which grew out of my personal troubles (Frank, 2012) and thus my research question was formulated with this implicit assumption of essence. Therefore, the research question has defined and limited the typological construction within this essentialist purview, and I am aware that for those who hold to queer theology (one aspect of which is 'identity without essence' (Cheng, 2015)), the typology would need to be reviewed.

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Appendices

APPENDIX I: ETHICAL APPROVAL

ETHICAL PRACTICE CHECKLIST (Professional Doctorates)

SUPERVISOR: Kendra Gilbert **ASSESSOR:** Amanda Roberts

STUDENT: Timothy Mark Hutin **DATE (sent to assessor):** 17/12/2013

Proposed research topic: MANAGING IDENTITY BEING CHRISTIAN WITH SAME SEX ATTRACTION USING NARRATIVE ANALYSIS.

Course: Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology

1. Will free and informed consent of participants be obtained? YES
2. If there is any deception is it justified? N/A
3. Will information obtained remain confidential? As far as Possible
4. Will participants be made aware of their right to withdraw at any time? YES
5. Will participants be adequately debriefed? YES
6. If this study involves observation does it respect participants' privacy? NA
7. If the proposal involves participants whose free and informed consent may be in question (e.g. for reasons of age, mental or emotional incapacity), are they treated ethically? NA
8. Is procedure that might cause distress to participants ethical? NA
9. If there are inducements to take part in the project is this ethical? NA
10. If there are any other ethical issues involved, are they a problem? NO

APPROVED

YES

Assessor initials: AR Date: 18/12/13

RESEARCHER RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST (BSc/MSc/MA)

SUPERVISOR: Kendra Gilbert **ASSESSOR:** Amanda Roberts

STUDENT: Timothy Mark Hutin **DATE (sent to assessor):** 17/12/2013

Proposed research topic: MANAGING IDENTITY BEING CHRISTIAN WITH SAME SEX ATTRACTION USING NARRATIVE ANALYSIS.

Course: Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology

Would the proposed project expose the researcher to any of the following kinds of hazard?

1	Emotional	NO
2.	Physical	NO
3.	Other (e.g. health & safety issues)	NO

If you've answered YES to any of the above please estimate the chance of the researcher being harmed as: HIGH / MED / LOW

APPROVED

YES

Assessor initials: **AR** Date: 18/12/12

For the attention of the assessor: Please return the completed checklists by e-mail to ethics.applications@uel.ac.uk within 1 week.

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
Dean: Professor Mark N. O. Davies, PhD, CPsychol, CBiol.

UEL
University of East London
www.uel.ac.uk

School of Psychology

Professional Doctorate Programmes

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to confirm that the Professional Doctorate candidate named in the attached ethics approval is conducting research as part of the requirements of the Professional Doctorate programme on which he/she is enrolled.

The Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology, University of East London, has approved this candidate's research ethics application and he/she is therefore covered by the University's indemnity insurance policy while conducting the research. This policy should normally cover for any untoward event. The University does not offer 'no fault' cover, so in the event of an untoward occurrence leading to a claim against the institution, the claimant would be obliged to bring an action against the University and seek compensation through the courts.

As the candidate is a student of the University of East London, the University will act as the sponsor of his/her research. UEL will also fund expenses arising from the research, such as photocopying and postage.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]

Dr. Mark Finn

Chair of the School of Psychology Ethics Sub-Committee

Stratford Campus, Water Lane, Stratford, London E15 4LZ
tel: +44 (0)20 8223 4966 fax: +44 (0)20 8223 4937
e-mail: mno.davies@uel.ac.uk web: www.uel.ac.uk/psychology

APPENDIX II: INVITATION LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology
Stratford Campus
Water Lane
London E15 4LZ

The Principal Investigator
Mark Hutin
Email: u8400042@uel.ac.uk
Tel: 07734-770-592

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in a research study. The study is being conducted as part of my Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology degree at the University of East London.

Project Title:
Managing Identity Being Christian with Same Sex Attraction using Narrative Analysis.

Project Description

The research aims to understand how gay men and lesbians who have a Christian faith understand their gay and Christian identities, and how they manage these identities. The research will gain insight into this process, through examining different influences – such as interpretation of scripture, attitudes within the church and the wider influence of society and changes in the law. The research will also contribute to the development of understanding in helping clients who come for counselling who are both Christian and gay/lesbian.

The research would consist of interview(s) which would aim to capture an account of your life story, the development of your faith, and of your sexuality, and how these have influenced your life story. I anticipate that the interview process would be approximately 1.5 hours. The interview will be audio recorded.

Since the interview will involve recalling life events about being Christian and gay/lesbian, it may highlight difficult or painful experiences. If this is the case, I will give details of organisations that can offer you support to talk you through things, or signpost you to appropriate resources.

Confidentiality of the Data

I will keep your name and contact details in a secure place that I alone have access to, on a password protected computer. I will not be sharing information with anyone else. I will change your name and identifying references in the transcriptions of your interview. My supervisor and examiners will be able to read extracts from the anonymised transcriptions of interviews, and I will keep anonymised transcripts for three years, but delete audio recordings at the end of the study.

Location

I can interview you at your home, or in another location you prefer which is quiet and free from interruption. Alternatively, I can arrange for a room at the University of East London in Stratford, if this is preferable.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study and should not feel coerced. You are free to withdraw at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason.

Please feel free to ask me any questions. If you are happy to continue you will be asked to sign a consent form prior to your participation. Please retain this invitation letter for reference.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study has been conducted, please contact the study's supervisor [Dr Kendra Gilbert, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ. Telephone 020 8223 4993, or email k.s.gilbert@uel.ac.uk]

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr. Mark Finn, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ. (Tel: 020 8223 4493. Email: m.finn@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you in anticipation.
Yours sincerely,
Mark Hutin
9th July 2015

APPENDIX III: CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to participate in a research study

Managing Identity Being Christian with Same Sex Attraction using Narrative Analysis.

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

…….

Participant's Signature

……..

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Mark Hutin.……..

Researcher's Signature

……

Date: ……..…….

APPENDIX IV: ETHICAL PROCEDURE

Recruitment

Recruitment of participants will be through the Two:23 Network, an umbrella group including all affirming LGBT Christian groups and organisations in the UK. The research will be announced at its meetings, promoted on its website, through word-of-mouth, and personal contacts. A poster (see end of this appendix) will be used which can be emailed and handed out at meetings. Permission will be sought from the Two:23 committee prior to commencement of recruiting.

Procedure of research

Potential participants who have shown interest in taking part and contact the researcher either through email, phone or face to face will be sent an invitation letter by email. They will be given time to consider the invitation, and if the participant wishes to proceed, they will be given a consent form to sign prior to interview. Interviews will last approximately 1.5 hours and will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. Interviews will take place either in a church or community building where a room can be used, or if the participant prefers, at a private room at the University of East London. If neither of these arrangements are possible, the participant will be interviewed at a their home, but the researcher will be mindful of his personal safety and will let both his UEL supervisor, and a close friend know about the address, date and time of the interview and who he is meeting, and will make contact with his supervisor and close friend after the interview has ended.

Informed consent

Informed consent will be actioned by following up the invitation letter with a consent form for participants to sign before I interview them. The proposed research involves no deception. Participants will be told that the research aims to understand how gay men and lesbians who have a Christian faith understand their their gay and Christian identities, and how they manage these identities. Participants will be advised of their right to withdraw from the research study at any time without disadvantage to them and without being obliged to give any reason. If a participant withdraws, the data will be destroyed and not used in any way. This will be made clear to participants on the invitation letter sent to them.

Anonymity and confidentiality

The names and contact details of participants will be stored in a secure place that the researcher alone has access to, on a password protected computer. The researcher will not be sharing information with anyone else. The researcher will change the names and identifying references in transcriptions of interviews. The researcher will keep participant contact information separate from interview data. The researcher will inform participants in the invitation letter that his supervisor and examiners will be able to read extracts from the anonymised transcriptions of interviews. The researcher will keep anonymised transcripts for three years, but delete audio recordings at the end of the study – which the researcher will also inform participants of in the invitation letter.

Protection of participants

The researcher will be interviewing participants about their experiences of being both Christian and gay/lesbian, which may be upsetting for some participants. The researcher will be sensitive to the signs of a participant becoming distressed or upset, and ask the participant if they wish to proceed. If not, the researcher will pause the interview, and if the participant does not wish to continue, the researcher will end the interview. The researcher will give participants contact details of the following support organisations for them to access help if required:

- The Albany Trust, www.albanytrust.org which specialises in counselling and psychotherapy for LGBT clients;
- Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, www.lgcm.org.uk, which supports LGBT Christians and signposts them to appropriate resources;
- London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard www.llgs.org.uk, which provides general counselling for LGBT people.

The researcher will provide every participant a de-briefing sheet containing these details.

Protection of the researcher

The researcher will inform his supervisor and a close friend of his whereabouts and time for each interview that will take place in the participant's home, and will contact his supervisor and close friend once each interview session is completed by using my mobile phone.

Debriefing

Participants will be informed about the nature of the research prior to the interview, through the invitation letter. Participants will be given time at the end of each interview session to ask questions, and the researcher will explain what will happen to the interview material – that it will be stored securely, that the researcher alone will have access to it, and that all material will be anonymised for use. The researcher will also confirm that the participant still feels comfortable with their participation in my research.

APPENDIX V: DEBRIEFING INFORMATION

Managing Identity Being Christian With Same Sex Attraction Using Narrative Analysis: Debriefing

Thank you for taking part in this research project. Your interview will be transcribed, with names and identifying references changed. I will keep your name and contact details in a secure place that I alone have access to, on a password protected computer, and separate to the interview data. I will not be sharing information with anyone else. My supervisor and examiners will be able to read extracts from the anonymised transcriptions of interviews, and I will keep anonymised transcripts for three years, but delete audio recordings at the end of the study.

You are free to withdraw at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason.

If you feel you would like to talk to someone as a result of issues raised during the interview, you can contact the following organisations:

The Albany Trust, www.albanytrust.org which specialises in counselling and psychotherapy for LGBT clients;

Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, www.lgcm.org.uk, which supports LGBT Christians and signposts them to appropriate resources;

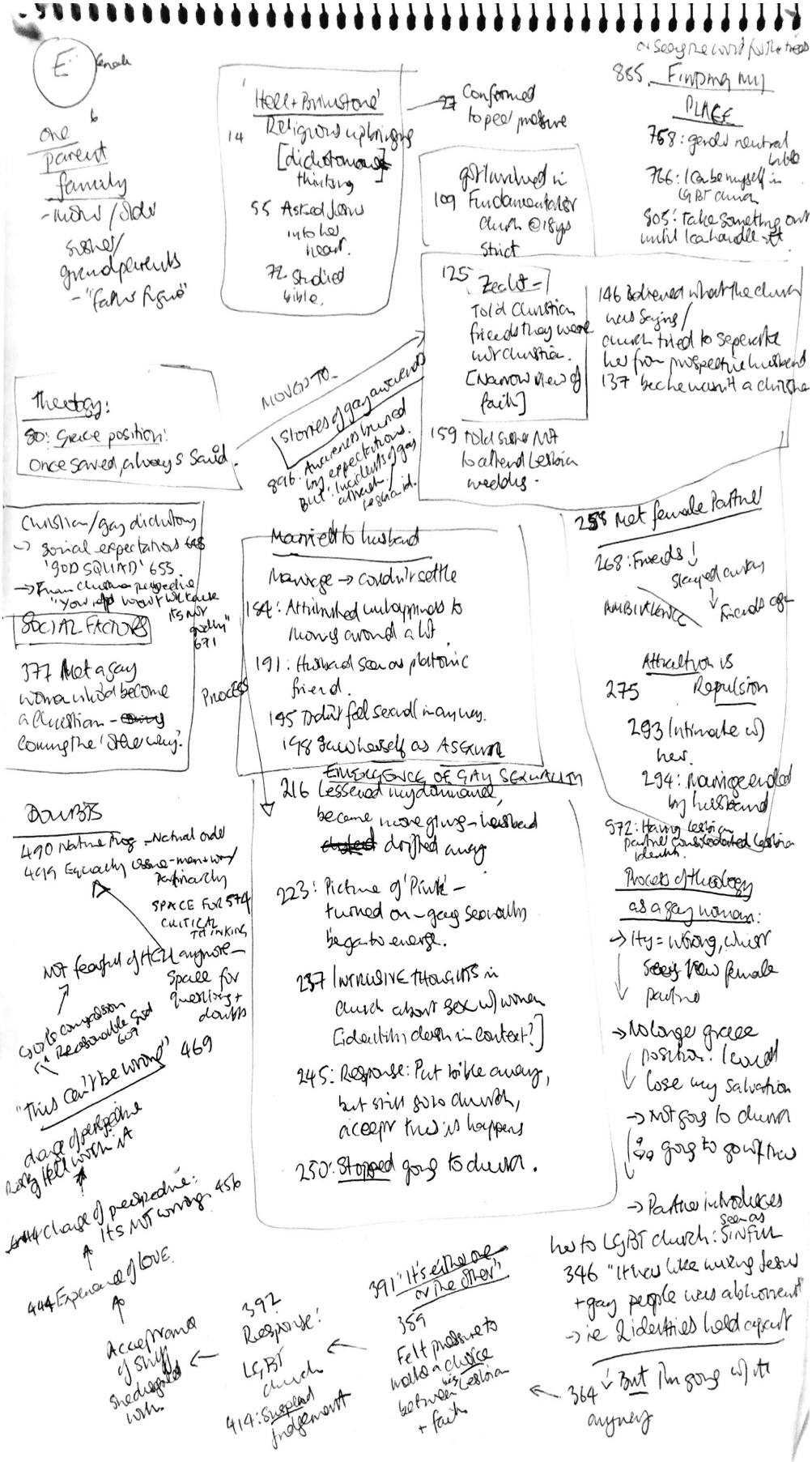
London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard www.llgs.org.uk, which provides general counselling for LGBT people.

If you wish to contact me after interview, my details are:
Mark Hutin
Email: XXX@XXXXX
Tel: XXXXXXXXXXX

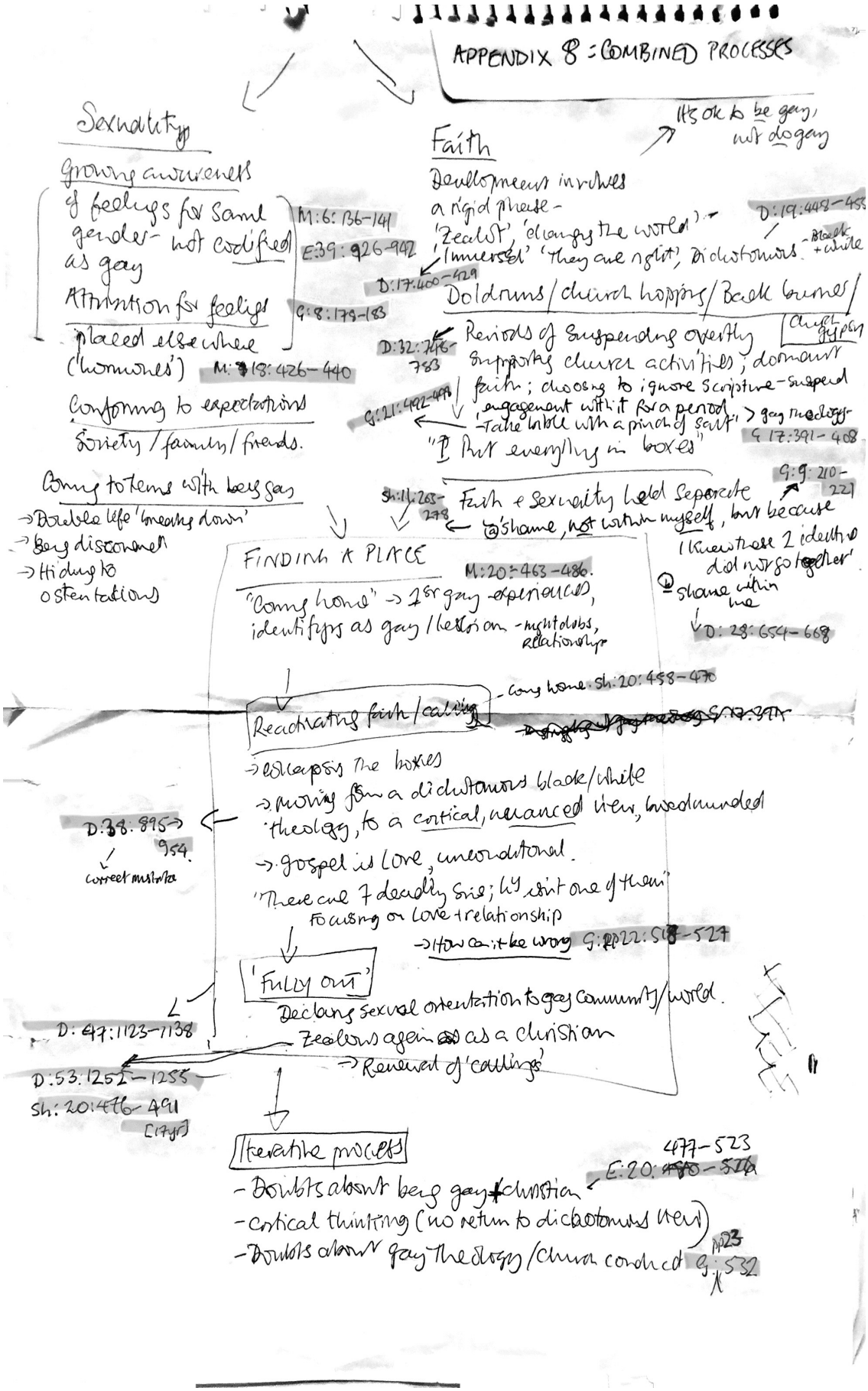
APPENDIX VI: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Could you tell me a bit about growing up and your family?
2. Could you describe the community you grow up in?
3. Could you tell me about your developing awareness of your sexual identity?
4. Could you tell me about your 'coming out' experiences?
5. Could you tell me about how you became a Christian, and your faith journey?
6. What was it like to be both gay/lesbian and Christian?
7. Could you tell me a bit about your experiences of coming out in church.
8. Could you tell me a bit about your experiences of sharing your faith in the LGBT community.
9. What things helped you as you developed as a gay/lesbian Christian?
10. What things did you find difficult as you developed as a gay/lesbian Christian?

APPENDIX VII: FLOW DIAGRAM OF AN INTERVIEW



APPENDIX VIII: COMBINED FLOW DIAGRAM OF PROCESS



APPENDIX IX: IDENTIFYING A STORY THROUGH HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL DIMENSIONS (FRANK, 2012).

Best friends?

Simone recalled a story about meeting a fellow student at boarding school:

"..When I sort of, met this girl in [boarding school], ..I didn't think of myself as lesbian. We didn't become involved in terms of kissing and holding hands, but err, I didn't sss see myself as lesbian and and she felt really shameful or ashamed of what had happened and particularly when there were rumours that we were a couple.. which I err I was just I thought I was just happy that I'd found I'd found a best friend.

Um, but for her, she'd come to the boarding school partly also to share her faith and she felt that she had failed in that because she'd gotten involved with me... When.. I went back.. to visit the following year, I wanted to talk about the whole incident with her, and she didn't. It was like, "No, it's fine. God has forgiven us". And I wanted to talk about how I knew that I might have a tendency towards preferring girls, um but she cut off that conversation, and I'm wondering whether if that conversation.. hadn't been cut off whether my journey would have been.. different or not, but, it meant that I .. left... knowing that that would never happen with another woman again. Um, and that's sort of how I started my degree... Um, but it meant I swept the whole thing under the carpet.. and got involved in the C.U. And yeah." [155-188]

<u>Horizontal dimensions:</u>

Abstract (heralding the beginning of the story):
When I sort of, met this girl in [boarding school], ..I didn't think of myself as lesbian.

An orientation (setting the scene – time, place, central characters):
We didn't become involved in terms of kissing and holding hands, but err, I didn't sss see myself as lesbian and and she felt really shameful or ashamed of what had happened and particularly when there were rumours that we were a couple.. which I err I was just I thought I was just happy that I'd found I'd found a best friend.

Complicating action (the part of the story where an issue arises, needing attention);
Um, but for her, she'd come to the boarding school partly also to share her faith and she felt that she had failed in that because she'd gotten involved with me... When.. I went back.. to visit the following year, I wanted to talk about the whole incident with her, and she didn't. It was like, "No, it's fine. God has forgiven us".

A resolution
And I wanted to talk about how I knew that I might have a tendency towards preferring girls, um but she cut off that conversation, and I'm wondering whether if that conversation.. hadn't been cut off whether my journey would have been.. different or not, but, it meant that I .. left... knowing that that would never happen with another woman again.

An evaluation of the resolution
Um, and that's sort of how I started my degree... Um, but it meant I swept the whole thing under the carpet.. and got involved in the C.U.

A coda, which announces the end of the story and turn taking returns to the listener.
And yeah."

Vertical dimensions:

Characters
The protagonist and girlfriend.

A point of view
The protagonist's fabrication of her reality; the 'sketched window' (Frank, 2010)

Genre
Romance

Suspense
Will the protagonist be able to resolve the problem of how her relationship was framed by others? Will she be able to repair the relationship with her friend? There is tension in the story, which is released with a sense of disappointment.

Imagination
The story prompts images of a boarding school relationship with ambivalence at the heart of the story, and no satisfactory resolve. There is a yearning for what might have been, and a 'putting away' of aspirations, leaving the listener with a heaviness.

APPENDIX 10: STORIES TABLE: IDENTITY NEGOTIATION PROCESSES

Interviewee	Sexuality: Non recognition, N lack	Sexuality: Recognition Boxes, N limitations	Sexuality: Conforming v confirming or N tension	Sexuality: Owning of gay identity or my story	Faith: Bubble phase – total immersion, faith devt, zealot	Faith: Box phase – conforming to evangelical narrative	Faith: Crisis of gay identity or N limitations	Faith: Back burner - dormant, or N pre dialogical strategy	Coming home: new theology, owning gay identity; post dialogical	I'm not quite there yet: Unfinalizability; ongoing N tension.
Gill	1	2, 2b				3, 3b, 4	3c		5	6
Martin	1, 2	3b		6				7	8	
Sheila				3				2	4	
Ember	1, 5		2		7		3		6	4
Delia					1, 1b	2	3, 4,5a	5b		
Amanda	6, 8		14,	15, 16, 17,19	1, 2, 3, 4	5	13		9, 10, 11, 12, 20	18, CP not marriage
Anthony	4	5,6,7	8	8b, 9, 9b	1	2, 3				10
Jeff	1	2,3,4,5, 6,7	12		8	9, 13 14a, 14b 15a,15b,16	10, 11 17		18, 19	
Jean	2		12	3, 8, 9	1		4	5	6,7, 10, 11, 13	
Simone	2	3	3b, 4, 12	9	1	5	6	13, 14	8, 10, 16	
Perry			5	6,7,7b,8	1, 1b, 2, 3	4	9		12,14	11

APPENDIX XI: CHOOSING A STORY THROUGH PHRONESIS

Perry's mask

Around puberty, Perry became a Christian, but also became aware of his same- sex attractions. At around this time he was molested, which *"..obviously opens up something within you.. coming into puberty" [266-267]*

There was no sex education at school, and he didn't want to talk about his experience. He went on to have girlfriends, but there was a nagging confusion as he became increasingly drawn to 'cottaging', a behaviour which he hid as he was ashamed of it. In parallel to this, Perry's faith was getting stronger, and so was his ability to put on a mask, to hide from his family and church. He elaborates: *"I think three things your battling with in tho, that I remember: you're battling society; you're battling religion – churches; and you're battling with yourself. So there's there's there in many respects, one lives to live a split personality, or develop a split personality even... perhaps, um, because you've got nowhere to take it." [347-355]*

It all came to a head one Sunday in church. Gay issues were prominent in the news in the mid Seventies, and this came up in the sermon. *"And all I remember sitting there in the congregation, at the back, going that all homosexuals were going to go to hell, um and they're all evil, um and I was sat there going 'Oh my God! I'm going to hell!' which then started to make, I started, as I realise now, probably going into depression. ..When I.. got home and I asked God to kill me. You know. I felt I was no good to my parents, I was no good to the church, I was no good to God. And that God must hate me for being gay." [371-391]*

Perry tried to study scripture, but through the only lens he had - of the Brethren church - which just confirmed what Perry had heard in the pulpit. *"And basically, I ended up being very negative about myself and obviously again, still learning err, to in a sense, have a split personality about these things. Hide behind masks, if we look at it." [398-401]*

Perry's depression intensified. At the time, he was still dating women. His ideal was to be married to a woman and have children. But, *"Basically, everything about me was being taken away, and it became a thing of, 'Who am I? And who am I in this re religion? Who am I in life itself? And it was getting to the stage where I was probably becoming either going for a nervous breakdown or contemplating suicide." [414-419]*

Perry's expectations of family life were *"....the norm of how a Christian should be. Err, so again it's coming from this literalist position that I was caught up in, Calvinistic position I was caught in..." [465-467]*

Eventually, he decided to leave home and join the army, in an effort to solve his identity crisis.
"I remember saying to someone, "Oh I need to work out if I'm Arthur or Martha". [491-492]

Does the story concern both faith and sexuality?
Yes, Perry talks about his faith, heteronormativity, cottaging and Calvinism.

Does it depict psychological challenges?
Yes, Perry talks about 'battling' with society, religion and oneself.

Does it describe a point of change in negotiating identities?
Yes. Perry's story about microaggression from what he heard preached in church led into a period of chaos and suicidality.

Is there a strategy the individual uses that stands out?
Yes. Perry describes the use of a metaphorical 'mask', a strategy to compartmentalise same sex behaviours from faith behaviours.

Has the protagonist changed their relationship to the social contexts they describe, in some way?
Yes, Perry describes leaving home and joining the army to allow his story of identity to unfurl.

How does the protagonist view and use the Bible?
Perry has a literalist view of the bible in this story, routed in Calvinism.

APPENDIX 12: STORIES CHOSEN BY PHRONESIS

Interviewee	**1 INVISIBLE GAY** Sexuality: Non recognition, N lack	**2 INCHOATE RECOGNITION** Sexuality: Recognition Boxes, N limitations	**3 CRISIS OF FAITH ID** Sexuality: Conforming v confirming or N tension	**4 I AM WHAT I AM** Sexuality: Owning of gay identity or my story	**5 CONFORMING FAITH** Faith: Bubble phase – total immersion, faith devt, zealot	**5 CONFORMING FAITH** Faith: Box phase – conforming to evangelical narrative	**6 CRISIS OF GAY ID** Faith: Crisis of gay identity or N limitations	**7 DORMANT FAITH** Faith: Back burner - dormant, or N pre dialogical strategy	**8 OWNING NEW GAY ID: COMING HOME** New theology, owning gay identity; post dialogical	**8 OWNING NEW GAY ID: COMING HOME** I'm not quite there yet: Unfinalizability; ongoing N tension.
Gill	1 **Gill's Little Theory**	2, 2b				3, 3b, 4	3c		5	6
Martin	1, 2 **A Calvinist faggot?**	3b		6				7	8	
Sheila				3 **Finding Mrs Right**				2	4	
Ember	1, 5 **Platonic dilemmas**		2 **Pink's Arch**		7		3 **Mixing Jesus and gay people**		6	4, 8
Delia					1, 1b **Gay demons**	2	3, 4,5a	5b	10	
Amanda	6, 8 **Perfect on paper**		14,	15, 16, 17,19	1, 2, 3, 4	5	13		9, 10, 11, 12, 20	18, CP not marriage

Interviewee	**1 INVISIBLE GAY** Sexuality: Non recognition, N lack	**2 INCHOATE RECOGNITION** Sexuality: Recognition Boxes, N limitations	**3 CRISIS OF FAITH ID** Sexuality: Conforming v confirming or N tension	**4 I AM WHAT I AM** Sexuality: Owning of gay identity or my story	**5 CONFORMING FAITH** Faith: Bubble phase – total immersion, faith devt, zealot	**5 CONFORMING FAITH** Faith: Box phase – conforming to evangelical narrative	**6 CRISIS OF GAY ID** Faith: Crisis of gay identity or N limitations	**7 DORMANT FAITH** Faith: Back burner - dormant, or N pre dialogical strategy	**8 OWNING NEW GAY ID: COMING HOME** New theology, owning gay identity; post dialogical	**8 OWNING NEW GAY ID: COMING HOME** I'm not quite there yet: Unfinalizability; ongoing N tension.
Anthony	4	5,6,7 **The meaning of subscription**	8	8b, 9, 9b **Get on and be gay!**	1 **The Christian Bubble**	2, 3				10
Jeff	1	2,3,4,5, 6,7 **Keep your mouth shut**	12		8	9, 13 14a, 14b 15a,15b,16	10, 11 17		18, 19	
Jean	2 **Back seat snoggers**		12	3, 8, 9	1		4	5 **Sacrificing the Sacrament**	6,7, 10, 11, 13	
Simone	2	3 **Best friends?**	3b, 4, 12	9	1	5	6	13, 14	8, 10, 16	
Perry			5 **Perry's Mask**	6,7,7b,8, 15	1, 1b, 2, 3	4	9		12,14, 16 **Return to Sodom**	11

APPENDIX XIII: DISTANCING MONOLOGICAL FAITH NARRATIVE

Aspect	**Fixity (monologue); No space for authentic fabrications** (Frank, 2010; Ganzevoort, van der Laan, & Olsman, 2011)	**Fluidity (dialogue); Space for authentic fabrications to be created** (Frank, 2010; Ganzevoort, van der Laan, & Olsman, 2011)	**Effects of fluidity and space**
Scripture	Clobber texts (Blair, 2017): Genesis, 19:1–28; Leviticus, 18:22, 20:13; Romans, 1:26-27; I Corinthians, 6:9; I Timothy, 1:10	Same sex love and friendship texts (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989): Ruth & Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17) David & Jonathan (1 Sam 18:1-3; 20:41; 2 Sam 1:26) Jesus & John (John 13: 23-25)	Scriptural reframing: using same sex intimacy as an example of divine love (as opposed to references used to condemn homosexuality).
Discourses	Holiness/Victory; Obedience (Ganzevoort et al., 2011)	Subjectivity; Responsibility (Ganzevoort et al., 2011)	Subjectivity and Responsibility discourses allow space to story lesbian/gay Christian identity.
Belief and Practice	Orthodoxy (emphasis on doctrine) (Thumma, 1991) Religious (Barret & Barzan, 1996)	Orthopraxy (emphasis on practice/action); less affected by moral proscriptions (Thumma, 1991); Spiritual (Barret & Barzan, 1996)	Creates space for identity reconstruction by emphasising living out faith, rather than focusing on doctrine.
Types of faith setting	Rejecting-Punative; Rejecting-Non-Punative; Qualified Acceptance (Nugent & Gramick, 1989)	Full Acceptance (Nugent & Gramick, 1989)	Enables and strengthens gay/lesbian Christian identity performances. Facilitates a spiritual path (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989)

Aspects	**Fixity (monologue); No space for authentic fabrications** (Frank, 2010; Ganzevoort et al., 2011)	**Fluidity (dialogue); Space for authentic fabrications to be created** (Frank, 2010; Ganzevoort, van der Laan, & Olsman, 2011)	**Effects of fluidity and space**
Consequences of faith setting	Loss of church community/ family/ friends due to sexuality. Heteronormative effects (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989)	Reframe loss as springboard to transformation; spiritual generativity; freeing from negative discourses (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989)	Prevention of narrative foreclosure/ finalisation, suicidality (Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015)
Gay/lesbian entitativity	Negative entitativity of gay/lesbian identity (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989) eschewing 'coming out'.	Recasting of entitativity with positive qualities (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989)	Enables individual to story a gay/lesbian narrative alongside Christian narrative.
Responses to SSAs	Ex-gay narrative: conformity to heteronormativity; conversion/reparative therapy (Weiss, Morehouse, Yeager, & Berry, 2010)	Ex-ex-gay narrative: Faith is a journey; questioning and doubting acceptable; tolerance of uncertainty (Weiss et al., 2010)	Dialogue creation and questioning; critical thinking.
Theological assumptions	Gay/lesbian Christian: Mimetic (Vasey-Saunders, 2015) theology based on entitativity of SSAs	Postgay (Savin-Williams, 2014) Christian: Queer theology without essence (Cheng, 2015)	Allows fluid constructions of Christian queer identity outside essentialist discourses.
Microaggressions	Hate the sin, love the sinner (Bailey, 1955) ; God still loves you despite your sexuality (Wood & Conley, 2014)	Reframed as God is Love; God's grace accepts all (Sherry, Adelman, Whilde, & Quick, 2010)	Secure acceptance and existential certainty beyond conditions and dichotomous discourses.

APPENDIX XIV: SUSPENSION OF STUDIES LETTER

Timothy Mark Hutin
[redacted]

28 January 2015

Student number: 8400042

Dear Timothy

Notification of Approval of a Suspension of the Period of Registration

I am pleased to inform you that the Research Degrees Subcommittee, on behalf of the University's Quality and Standards Committee, has approved the suspension on the period of registration for your research degree.

You have been granted **12** months suspension from **February 2014**.

I have informed Student Records about this and asked them to amend your record accordingly and take off any fees that may be owed on your student account.

I look forward to you returning to UEL in due course to continue your research.

Yours Sincerely

[redacted]

Dr Kenneth Gannon
School Research Degrees Leader
Direct line: 020 8223 4576
Email: k.n.gannon@uel.ac.uk

Cc: Kendra Gilbert

APPENDIX XV: WRITE UP YEAR APPROVAL

Date: 1 July 2016

Student number: u8400042

Dear Timothy

Notification of write up fee status

I am pleased to inform you that the Research Degrees Subcommittee, on behalf of the Quality and Standards Committee, has approved your application to have the enrolment fee reduced to a write up fee status for a period of 12 months only from September 2016.

Please note the following extract from our research degree regulations available online from http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/policies/manual/

3.5 Once the student has finished actively pursuing their research and no supervisory support is being received beyond comments on the drafting of the thesis and/or administrative matters, the student may apply to Research Degrees Subcommittee to transfer to 'write-up' status. The application for write-up can only be made once the minimum registration period has elapsed and is tenable for twelve months only. Where the student fails to submit the final version of the thesis within the write-up period, they will be transferred back to their previous full fee status for a period no longer than twelve months. If submission is still not achieved by the end of this additional period, their registration status with our University will be withdrawn. The Director of Studies will be responsible for providing the necessary confirmation to Research Degrees Subcommittee that the following conditions for transfer to write-up status have been met:

- *confirmation that the minimum registration period has elapsed;*
- *confirmation that a significant number of draft chapters of the thesis are complete or nearing completion;*
- *confirmation that the student no longer requires access to our University's research facilities, laboratories, resources and equipment beyond that required for the writing-up of their research findings;*
- *confirmation that primary data gathering and data analysis activities are complete.*

I wish you well as you work towards your successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Dr Kenneth Gannon
School Research Degrees Leader
Direct line: 020 8223 4576
Email: k.n.gannon@uel.ac.uk

Cc: Kendra Gilbert

APPENDIX XVI: CHANGE OF DIRECTOR OF STUDIES

Change supervisors - Mr Timothy Hutin

Date	11 Jan 2017
Doctoral Researcher	Mr Timothy Hutin
Student ID	8400042
Doctoral Research Project	Christian and gay. A Dialogical Narrative Analysis of negotiating identity.
Project type	DProf
Project mode	Part Time
Project start	12 Sep 2011
School	Psychology

Change request form

Supervisors form

Current team

Dr Kendra Gilbert
Dr Lara Frumkin

Proposed team

Director of Studies
Dr Ioannis Fronimos

Supervisor(s)
Dr Lara Frumkin

Add a new External supervisor

Title	First	Last

Institution

Email

Reason for change and any additional information
Kendra is leaving UEL and so is being replaced as DOS.

Supervisor form

Overall supervisory experience

In the event that the proposed supervisory team does not meet the minimum requirement for collective experience as stipulated in the university's regulations, please provide a brief rationale for why the proposed team is deemed suitable:

Reason for proposed change

Please provide a brief explanation for the proposed change(s). The University's regulations require that a supervisory team will have normally supervised at least two students to successful completion. If the team being proposed does not meet this requirement, a justification for requesting the waiving of this expectation should be included. However, at least one supervisor should have experience of successful supervision to completion of a research degree comparable to that for which the student is registered.

.**Notes**

Supervision team

Dr Ioannis Fronimos (Director of studies)

12 Total **1** Suspended **11** Active

Doctoral Researcher	Type	Role	Mode	Start	End	Status
Miss Shannon Cullerton	DProf	Second (i)	FT	22 Sep 2014	30 Aug 2018	Active
Miss Charlotte Deacon	DProf	Second (i)	PT	16 Sep 2013	01 Sep 2018	Active
Ms Haben Ghezai	DProf	Second (i)	FT	22 Sep 2014	31 Aug 2018	Active
Mr Timothy Hutin	DProf	Director of studies	PT	12 Sep 2011	12 Sep 2016	Active
Miss Adila Mahmood	DProf	Director of studies	FT	21 Sep 2015	20 Sep 2019	Active
Miss Sareena Malik	DProf	Director of studies	PT	17 Sep 2012	01 Sep 2017	Active
Miss Tanya Rajmangal	DProf	Director of studies	PT	16 Sep 2013	01 Sep 2018	Active
Miss Janette Rodriguez	DProf	Director of studies	PT	25 Jan 2016	24 Feb 2021	Active
Miss Rose Spencer	DProf	Second (i)	PT	16 Sep 2013	01 Sep 2018	Active
Miss Charlotte Vaughan	DProf	Second (i)	FT	21 Sep 2015	20 Sep 2019	Active
Ms Erin Marie Vignali	DProf	Second (i)	FT	21 Sep 2015	20 Sep 2019	Active
Miss Nobhelu Zamxaka	DProf	Second (i)	PT	16 Sep 2013	02 Sep 2018	Suspended

Dr Lara Frumkin (Second (i))

15 Total **10** Active

Doctoral Researcher	Type	Role	Mode	Start	End	Status
Ms Emma Agnew	DProf	Second (i)	FT	16 Sep 2013	25 Aug 2017	Active
Mrs Amy Hammon	DProf	Second (i)	PT	12 Sep 2011	12 Sep 2016	Active
Mr Timothy Hutin	DProf	Second (i)	PT	12 Sep 2011	12 Sep 2016	Active
Miss Lynsey Kelly	DProf	Director of studies		01 Oct 2013	03 Sep 2017	Active
Miss Stamatia Lorentzou	DProf	Second (i)	PT	20 Sep 2010	20 Sep 2015	Active
Miss Emma Massey	DProf	Director of studies	FT	26 Sep 2016	26 Sep 2020	Active
Ms Mary Moran	DProf	Second (i)	PT	17 Sep 2012	31 Aug 2017	Active
Miss Laura Opaluwa	PhD	Second (i)	FT	21 Sep 2015	20 Sep 2019	Active

Mr Panayiotis Papahristopoulos	DProf	Second (i)		01 Oct 2010	01 Oct 2015	Active
Miss Aishwarya Pethe-Kulkarni	DProf	Second (i)	FT	22 Sep 2014	30 Aug 2018	Active
Gemma Cody		Director of studies	FT	01 Sep 2012		
Trilby Langton		Director of studies	FT	01 Sep 2010		
Jane O'connor		Second (i)	FT	01 Feb 2012		
Miloni Patel		Director of studies	PT	01 Oct 2010		
Ms Sara Sjoman		Second (i)	PT			

Counselling psychology review group report

Committee report

Comments

The reviewers recommended approval.

Recommendation

Approve

APPENDIX XVII: CHANGE OF THESIS TITLE

Change project title - Mr Timothy Hutin

Date	11 May 2017
Doctoral Researcher	Mr Timothy Hutin
Student ID	8400042
Doctoral Research Project	Christian and gay. A Dialogical Narrative Analysis of negotiating identity.
Project type	DProf
Project mode	Part Time
Project start	12 Sep 2011
School	Psychology

Change request form

Project title form

Proposed new title:
Christian and gay. A Dialogical Narrative Analysis of negotiating identity.

Reason(s) for proposed change:
The change in title adds clarity and better captures the project in its entirety.

Researcher form

Having discussed the proposed change of title with my supervisory team, I am satisfied with the change proposed.
Yes

Supervisor form

Supervisor form

We recommend that the change in the registered title of the thesis progress as requested.
Yes

Notes

Research Degrees Leader form

Research Degrees Leader form

Recommend this application for consideration at the School's Research Degrees Sub-Committee
Yes

Notes
The proposed change in title appears to be appropriate and is supported by the supervisors so I am happy to recommend that the application be approved.

Counselling psychology review group report