

**EXPLORING MASCULINITY:
A THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Submitted by

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Statement of Authorship and Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees (where required).

Statement of Appreciation and Dedication

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge *my parents*, who have continually supported me in multiple ways. It was they who ensured a sound education for their children and who have always rejoiced in my accomplishments. I thank also and dedicate this work to *my brother*, my only sibling. We shared many things on the masculine journey of life.

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*"To live without a Faith,
without a patrimony to defend,
without a steady struggle for the Truth,
is not living but existing.
We must never exist but live."*

*Bl Pier Giorgio Frassati
Letter to Isidoro Bonini
February 27, 1925*

Abstract

Male or female, the human person provokes a continuing stream of questions and reflection. This investigation concentrates on the theological significance of the male person. It takes into account the historical and cultural setting as well as considers the fields of sociology, psychology, and anthropology.

The theology of the human person is not a new field of endeavour but rather one that has certainly emerged with some urgency alongside the development of existential and phenomenological philosophies in the twentieth century. A theology of the male human person, and thus of masculinity, is a more specific and emerging field.

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the specific discussion of masculinity within the wider conversation of theological anthropology. Contributing to the relevance of this task is the acknowledgment that it is possible that an understanding of the human person can be obscured among the trends and mores of the current cultural and secular context. The notion of the human person has become malleable, flexible and is in need of clarification. The aim of this thesis is to offer a Christian theological perspective towards a clearer, deeper, as well as a contemporary understanding of the male human person.

This investigation proceeds by constructing a framework that uses key theological concepts and indicators so as to highlight the theological character of human masculinity. Such a theological framework permits masculinity's theological quality to emerge clearly and critically. Just as a theology of femininity has emerged within the general field of theology, it is hoped that this research and its framework will make possible a more detailed theological development of masculinity.

The thesis unfolds by first reviewing a body of literature in the area of masculinity, under various themes and groupings. Critical use is then made of Lonergan's four "functions of meaning", providing four perspectives on the topic of investigation.

Firstly, the *cognitive* perspective outlines what the disciplines of sociology and psychology articulate about masculinity. Rather more space is spent on sociology

because it is a wide area in which sexual identity and gender feature prominently. Sociology is divided into its descriptive, analytic and comparative approaches.

Secondly, the *constitutive* perspective on masculinity is described both within culture and the church. It is the more popular literature on masculinity, and most particularly the mythopoetics, that figure prominently in this cultural perspective. Significant ways of being masculine in the church are examined as well. The relative absence of men in the Christian church is also analysed.

The *effective* perspective on masculinity provides the third function of meaning and outlines three contemporary and successful organisations within the Catholic Church that cater for men, and most particularly for their faith and connection with the church.

These three perspectives on masculinity then allow the *communicative* perspective to be considered. This admits a deeper analysis of the identity of the human person, which, in turn, allows an exposition of a theology of the human person. Finally, a theology of the human person is made explicit in reference to the masculine. In doing this, the thesis enumerates seven components of a sustainable framework for understanding a theology of masculinity.

This work argues that it is possible to speak both of a theology of masculinity and also to describe masculinity theologically. There are qualities and characteristics of the male human person that are theological *per se* and there are possibilities and potentials for masculinity that are theological. Then, there are ways of approaching masculinity that are theological as well as significant contributions that theology makes to an understanding of masculinity in accord with the framework that the thesis constructs.

The framework that emerges from this thesis makes more explicit what is implicit in masculinity when viewed through a theological lens. I propose that each component of the structure can be pursued fruitfully towards a more detailed and fuller theology of masculinity. This is one contribution to an ongoing critical re-examination of masculinity today.

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Chapter One - Introduction

Context and Relevance

In our western society, in one form or another, there is a strong interest in what it means to be a human person. Often this is not recognised; or not recognised for what it truly is. One example of this unrecognised phenomenon is the suggested redefinition of relationships necessarily developing from the proposal of same-sex marriage. Alongside this new style of relationship come the twin issues of non-biological parenthood and two people of the same gender raising children. Rare is the mention of an anthropology, an understanding of what it means to be a human person, that might inform the proposal. Rather it seems that the conversation is most usually focused upon personal preferences rather than a substantial understanding of the human person.

More commonly, a cursory survey of 'lifestyle' magazines or the feature sections of weekend newspapers reveals a similar phenomenon. With growing affluence, which is accompanied by an abundance of leisure time, there is interest in how to live to achieve either maximum pleasure or an abundant array of experience. Could this manifest an interest in how to maximise the experience of being human? At a deeper level, could it signal a desire to explore the goal or purpose of human life?

Among all of this, there is a similar occurrence surrounding men and masculinity. This may be less evident in newspapers, but it is not absent. It is more obvious among magazine publications. There are the sports and sex magazines, which have been around for many decades. But now, joining them in the magazine racks are titles that promote bodybuilding, the gym culture, dress and manners, success in business and relationships. Moreover, the general bookstore has on its shelves titles about men's health, men's exercise, and men's issues. In all of this, what could be called the 'man of the 21st century' seems to be promoted. He exhibits the body strength of a warrior, the sophistication of James Bond, the professional success of the corporate high-flyer and the sexual prowess of the romantic hero. Yet at the same time, he understands women and treats them as equals. He is happy being subordinate to a woman in his

profession or work. If married or in a relationship, he shares all domestic tasks. If a father, he spends time with his children and achieves success as a father as well as at work.

So, is this '21st century man' as a man is meant to be? Or is this a cultural and/or an historical phenomenon; a passing fad to be replaced by something else? Is this the complete and authentic answer to what makes a man?

Axiomatically, masculinity is inseparable from maleness and male biology. Masculinity is linked in a complex way with the experience of being a man as well as what society or culture proposes it means to be a man. Masculinity, therefore, is a compound of experiences, perceptions and expectations of and by men.

Yet, this is not the totality of masculinity. It is much more complex than that. Certainly it is about being a man and it is also more than just having a body with identifiable male characteristics. Indeed, trying to define masculinity raises more questions than first appears. Is masculinity about the meanings that are attached to being a man? If so, what are these meanings historically and culturally? Are they redefinable? How does one best describe and explore the quality of masculinity? It is lived by many individual human persons but is there an essential or a universal masculinity? Does each man bring a new, unique and unrepeatable expression of manhood? How too can we speak of manhood and masculinity? Are they interchangeable terms? Are they complementary? Lastly, for the purposes of this work, does masculinity have a metaphysical quality, even a theological one?

At the outset, I claim that masculinity is not an invented or arbitrary term such that anyone is able to choose to use it or not. Neither is it helpful to invent some new terminology. Some have tried. Nor is masculinity simply a convenient term, used since nothing better can be found. Masculinity is both an externally observable phenomenon and an inner experience. It is objective and it is subjective.

Masculinity means living in the world with a personal male experience. This is inclusive of many things and is profoundly influenced by the originating and lasting experience of having a male body. It involves viewing the world through the lens of male experience and interacting with the world from a male perspective. Masculinity influences one's feelings and perceptions, both about others, the world and of self.

This research occurs within the context of recent decades where significant and necessary attention has been given to the feminine. While this has been both valuable and necessary, it could be said that this has led to an inadequate consideration of the masculine and masculinity. At times, masculinity has been overlooked and undervalued. In light of the past, Nelson asks if it is possible, helpful or useful for today's men to accept all the responsibility for the effects of male sexism and patriarchy.¹ Is a fresh start for masculinity desirable and possible? While Nelson's questions may have some merit, it is also helpful to note that the discussion around gender, and in particular masculinity, have occurred within a context where intemperate claims have been made. As well, often these claims and questions recede in intensity and relevance as the years pass. These comments, like those of Nelson, are noted for the purposes of articulating the state of the conversation about masculinity, and indeed, femininity as well.

It is claimed by some that the justifiable focus since the decade of the 1960's upon the role and treatment of women in our society has had an impact upon the welfare and self-understanding of men. Connell notes the higher rates of illness, crime and suicide among men as indicators of such a predicament. If such phenomena are accepted, he says, they signal a need to address men's welfare and health issues. Those who research social trends have also commented upon a confusion of role and identity among men that seems to have accompanied the greater participation of women in the workforce and in public and political life. As women took on activities and roles that were once male dominated there was not only a reconfiguration of what a man does but also of how masculinity might be described.²

While not absent entirely, what has been largely missing from the literature has been a theological understanding of manhood, maleness and masculinity. Those who have ventured near this, particularly the mythopoetic authors, have engaged in seeking to re-establish a masculinity presumed to have been more predictable and sure from a

¹ James B. Nelson, *The Intimate Connection* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988).

² Stephen Tomsen and Mike Donaldson, eds., *Male Trouble: Looking at Australian Masculinities* (North Melbourne: Pluto Press, 2003). Of particular note in this context is the Introduction of this book in which R.W. Connell maps the impact of feminism and gay liberation and how it stirred the debate about Australian men and masculinity. The findings presented in this book come from a detailed social research in the making of masculinities.

former time. They do this by discussing various initiatory processes, which have had a strong connection with ancient or primitive peoples, hoping thereby to reclaim masculinity. On the other hand, other mythopoetic authors have used the archetypal approach to describe how a man comes to maturity in his masculinity.

The Proposal

This thesis seeks to examine contemporary trends concerning masculinity, and those of recent decades. I will use the recent literature in a multi-disciplinary reflection to understand what is being said about masculinity and what men are experiencing. The selection of the literature seeks to map the contours in the landscape of the conversation about masculinity. Then using approaches from theology, particularly theological anthropology, a theological structure will be built by means of which masculinity can be profitably investigated. This structure will use the concepts of man and woman, the created *imago Dei*, the human participation in the divine exchange, as well as humanity's constituent components in regard to matter and spirit, body and soul. To this will be added the masculine experience and the critical contribution of physical difference and how masculinity is portrayed. Moreover, the wounds, needs and indeed failures of men will be noted and the notion of the masculine vocation will be explored.

The change in the self-understanding of men and the perception of masculinity over the last decades, have caused both a refinement of and a change in the meaning of masculinity as well as in the lived experience of men. This thesis attempts to outline the theological framework in which these developments can be better understood. In this respect, the lived experience of masculinity by men informs the theological perspective on masculinity. For this reason much space in this study will be assigned to identifying and noting what this lived experience is, in its many shades of meaning and from its many sources. Furthermore, it is of particular usefulness to adopt this approach in the particular time of history that we find ourselves. Beginning with the masculine experience will not only provide a relevance in what has been called the post-modern era, but also a depth that complements existing theological perspectives on masculinity, albeit they can appear undefined, as well as augment them. Thus the phenomenological and theological approach of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II takes on a particular relevance here.

I will attempt to locate these theological approaches into an overall framework, which will become fully integrated only in the last chapter of this investigation when a number of extra-theological issues will be included.

This research proposes that the theological quality of masculinity resides in the bodily, capacity of a man to initiate and complete the act of self-giving as a participation in the *imago Dei*. In this connection, Pope John Paul II's theology of the body suggests such an understanding even though it needs to be further developed so as to counteract distorted perceptions of masculinity. Furthermore, because of the unity of the human person, this bodily capacity for self-gift necessarily informs the spiritual element of a man, especially in relation to the multidimensional character of fatherhood.

This work, therefore, considers that the male experience, in all its aspects, is not only a worthy area of theological investigation, but is also specially significant when grounded in the lived male experience, which is essential for a theology of masculinity. Hence, this thesis will use sociological, psychological and literary investigations into masculinity in order give a descriptive definition of what is perceived to be masculinity. An experiential approach will make for an effective theological understanding. In this respect, experience and theological reflection are reciprocally related in the lived male experience. This work is not only dependent upon a theological anthropology but also upon a phenomenological approach. In short, masculinity, spoken of theologically, must register the bodily experience of maleness, necessarily inclusive of fatherhood and paternity. This work aims, therefore, to outline a meaningful framework in which to structure a theological exploration of masculinity.

Method and Structure

It is my contention that it is possible to build a theological framework by means of which masculinity can be explored and a contribution can be made towards a genuine Catholic theology of manhood. Elements of this framework either already exist, as in the hylomorphic unity of the human person. Others are to be found in part or incomplete in both the theological tradition of the Catholic Church and recent

developments in theology and the social sciences. Some of these add context to the theological framework while others contribute directly to it.

The methodological work of Bernard Lonergan will provide a key reference in its applicability to methodological issues common to the fields of natural sciences, human sciences, history, aesthetics, economics, philosophy and theology.³ His approach has proved helpful both for organisational purposes and the critical unfolding of this investigation and the structuring and order of its chapters.

Lonergan's understanding of the dynamics of coming to know and the accompanying four imperatives in the formulation of knowledge, will provide a helpful structure for this investigation, both in terms of method and content, into a theological perspective on masculinity.

Lonergan's cognitional theory recognises that we come to know through a succession and accumulation of relevant insights. These insights are themselves acts of understanding within the compound activity of coming to know. Each component of this conscious compound activity can find an appropriate formulation in regard to four types of consciousness: empirical (Be attentive!), intellectual (Be intelligent!), rational (Be reasonable!), and moral (Be responsible!).

Empirical consciousness arises from the data of the senses, anterior to any insight into meaning or rational reflection, hence the first precept, Be attentive! Chapters one and two in the thesis, are, therefore, mainly an exercise of attentiveness by which the ground for the theological framework of masculinity is prepared within an interdisciplinary context.

Intellectual consciousness gives rise to the precept, Be intelligent! This kind of consciousness is focussed in raising questions in regard to the data on the way to some overall sense of what has been presented. The activity of raising questions is mainly the concern of chapters three to six.

³ James Fieser and Bradley Dowden. "Bernard Lonergan." In *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/lonergan> Accessed on 15 August 2016.

As Lonergan puts it, to be reasonable allows the empirical data to be judged and weighed in terms of the emerging evidence, as reason tests what has been accumulated and sifted using the previous precepts. At a deliberative level of consciousness, reason tests what has come to be known. As with the other precepts this occurs at multiple points in the thesis but particularly in chapter seven.

The final precept is Be responsible! thus bringing moral consciousness into play. On this higher level of consciousness, consciousness becomes conscience and the subject becomes a moral agent when insight into the accumulated data leads to action, and even conversion understood as a change of heart. In the final chapter of this thesis, the moral attitudes, judgments, and even conversion, involved in a theological approach to masculinity are articulated.

It is important at this early stage of the thesis, to note that Lonergan's description of the process of coming to know represents both a compound of activities and a continual movement. Lonergan's intentionality analysis of the dynamics of cognitional and moral self-transcendence provides not only a process for the thesis but also a structure for this project, especially in accord with the four functions of meaning as outlined in the chapter on meaning in Lonergan's *Method in Theology*.

Rationale and Scope

Avery Dulles describes theology as a disciplined reflection on faith:

Theology, then, is a methodical effort to articulate the truth implied in Christian faith, the faith of the Church. The method cannot be pursued by the techniques of mathematics or syllogistic logic, but depends upon a kind of connoisseurship derived from personal appropriation of the living faith of the Church.⁴

I propose to engage in a disciplined and structured reflection upon masculinity and thereby to uncover and clarify what theological connections, and implications and consequences may emerge. Dulles also calls theology an ecclesial discipline since it must serve the Church and be accountable to it. I seek to engage in this reflection within the tradition and teaching of the Catholic Church; to articulate the truth about

⁴ Avery Dulles, *The Craft of Theology - from Symbol to System* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 8.

the masculine contained and implied in the Church's teaching on both the human person and the masculine person.

As an academic outcome, I also endeavour to add to the body of work stemming from John Paul II's seminal work, *Theology of the Body*.⁵ His significant contribution to a theological anthropology is a key resource for this project. Nevertheless, in seeking a theological understanding of masculinity I will also engage with other disciplines and the wider literature, namely, sociology, psychology, sexuality and the more popular writings about masculinity.

Lonergan described theology as that which mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of religion in that matrix.⁶ The task of this research could be seen as an attempt to find an adequate theology that mediates between cultural understandings of masculinity and the Christian faith, with its understanding of the human male person.

In seeking to articulate a vision of the masculine and a theological framework for understanding masculinity I do not intend to demean or deny the feminine but acknowledge and rejoice over a difference that I accept as complementary and not competitive. Indeed, the distinctive subjectivities of woman and man are absolutely accepted.

For the purposes of the thesis many voices will be heard about masculinity. The inclusion of each author or comment or proposal is considered necessary for the integrity of the work. Unfortunately, some contributions may be considered intemperate, extreme or even narrow. They are not to be understood as the position of this author but rather they are included for the purposes of achieving the aim of the work, that is, to effectively explore masculinity and then to offer a theological perspective on it.

⁵ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006). All references and quotes to this work cite the page number in this edition. An alternative protocol is to quote the audience and paragraph number. For the sake of consistency with other resources used in this thesis, the practice of citing page numbers was preferred.

⁶ Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), xi.

While needing to be mindful of research in other disciplines and engage with them, it is in the discipline of theology that this thesis is written. Necessarily, the venture into these other disciplines may be somewhat selective, but, I hope not superficial or perfunctory. Even so, I trust that this research will be of service since there has already been much written and explored in these other disciplines about masculinity, but less so emerging from theology.

I also hope through this research to assist in a deeper understanding and a clearer vision of masculinity experienced and located within Scripture and tradition of the faith. I would hope by this to provide some integration between Christian theological anthropology and recent secular reflections upon masculinity.

Autobiographical Background

My own male life experience gives me a stake and an interest in this area. Furthermore, teaching experience, before entering the Seminary, was mainly in the area of the education of boys and young men. In those years, I witnessed the declining academic achievement of boys compared to girls. I followed closely the debate about this, along with developments towards improving the educational standards of boys and their participation in the education process.

My pastoral experience since ordination has impressed upon me the relative absence of men in the congregations of our Church. I have pondered upon the fact that men do not seem to find their place easily in the Church, or at least at Mass.⁷ I have also had the experience of accompanying and advising young men as they respond to the vocation to priesthood, consecrated life and marriage. I have witnessed the growth in self-awareness and understanding that comes with finding one's place in the world as a man. From this I developed some familiarity with the process of discovering what can be called "the male vocation". As well, my activities in youth ministry have allowed me to meet many young men who are committed to their faith and seek to live it authentically as a faithful Catholic man.

⁷ National Church Life Survey, "Gender Profile of Church Attenders," <http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?sitemapid=137>. The National Church Life Survey attests that only 39% of church attenders in Australia are men. This is not the place to examine this. It suffices at this point to note it as a contextual factor.

Literature Review

As stated, the sources accessed for this research crossed the boundaries of academic disciplines.⁸ Resources in sociology, masculine studies, feminism, the broad field of men's literature, philosophy, as well as theology were considered. Printed material and online sources were read. Scholarly works and popular publications, including newspapers, were part of the literature. This wide and eclectic reach of the literature indicates the relevance and prominence of the central question about masculinity, namely: what does it mean to be a man? It also demonstrates that my own particular research is both building upon and hopefully contributing to the extensive and continuing conversation in this topical area.

This literature review will not include all references that were consulted since, as a matter of course, they will be included in the bibliography. Rather, at this point, the more relevant and substantial ones will be considered in subject categories.

Pope John Paul II

Pre-eminent among the works consulted, which were about John Paul II or authored by him, is *Man And Woman He Created Them - A Theology of the Body*.⁹ In this collection of 129 Wednesday audiences delivered between 1979 and 1984, the Pope brings to fruition, in the teaching context of the Papal General Audience, both his years as a student and lecturer in the areas of philosophy and theology and his pastoral activity as priest and bishop. The work is divided into two parts. The first is called "The Words of Christ" and uses Christ's words in the Gospel of Matthew as the source for the catecheses. This is one of the hallmarks of the methodology of *Theology of the Body*. It is both scriptural as well as theological and anthropological.

⁸ It is helpful to recall the approach taken by Kenneth L. Schmitz in his philosophical endeavour. Some critiqued him of bringing too much theology to bear on philosophy. However, he suggested that such a 'critical border-like mentality' that sees disciplines isolated from each other fails to recognise how in human experience they are overlap and interconnect. Drawing on Blondel, Schmitz saw theology and philosophy as a place of encounter. See James Kow, "The Philosophy of Kenneth L. Schmitz - the Recovery and Discovery of Things, Being, and the Person." In *Person, Being, and History: Essays in Honor of Kenneth L. Schmitz*, edited by Michael Baur Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2011, page 4. I would wish that this thesis also be a place of encounter between various disciplines as I propose this is a way in which an understandable and effective theology of masculinity can be developed.

⁹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*.

In this first part, John Paul II examines man in his origin as well as the one who experiences the effects of concupiscence.¹⁰ He also considers the meaning of the resurrection of the body.

The second part deals with “The Sacrament of Marriage”. Here John Paul uses Ephesians 5, the Song of Songs and the marriage of Tobias and Sarah as the scriptural texts from which he explores marriage. He treats marriage first in the context of covenant, grace and sign and then finishes with the ethical regulation of fertility and conjugal spirituality.

At first glance, it would appear that *Theology of the Body* does not deal with masculinity but perhaps more with anthropology, with what it means to be human. This is a correct observation. However, while the Pope does not speak often in a separate manner of the male and the masculine, there are occasional references. Even when not specifically spoken about, his assertions and conclusions about a scriptural and Christian anthropology provide a means to deduce what it means to be male from a theological and an anthropological perspective. However, whatever inferences drawn and conclusions arrived at, they are more than generic ones. The most careful and particular construction of a theology of the body over the course of the audiences leaves the reader in no doubt that specific declarations can be made about man and masculinity.

Reference must also be made to the useful companion and commentary upon John Paul II’s work written by Christopher West.¹¹ While elucidating what is at times dense material, West also places John Paul’s work within the context both of social trends and society’s agenda as well as within the tradition of the Church’s reflection upon sexuality and the human person. A hallmark of this work is the author’s conviction that the pursuit of human fulfilment, a common task of human society as

¹⁰ When speaking of John Paul II and his work I am following his own usage of “man” in the generic sense of mankind. When he does wish to speak separately of each, the Pope uses “male” and “female” as distinguishers. I do this with a sense of caution, but also for consistency, since, as James Nelson counsels, if it is the male experience that is presumed to be the norm for human lives, this is a loss of an understanding not only of women’s experience, but also a loss of knowledge of men’s experience insofar as it is specifically men’s. Nelson, *The Intimate Connection*, 18.

¹¹ Christopher West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2007).

well as the Church, finds an answer in God's plan for human love.¹² West guides the reader through the text of the audiences that comprise the Theology of the Body as well as assembling them into accessible categories. Because of West's great respect and esteem for John Paul II and his passionate interest in Theology of the Body, the commentary is faithful to the original text as well as being both forceful and clear.

This volume on theology of the body was not the only work by Pope John Paul II to be consulted, though it developed into a foundational resource. His book *The Acting Person* is also an important means to understand Karol Wojtyla's phenomenological approach to the philosophy of the human person.¹³ The contention is that a human person reveals and manifests himself in action, as an agent.¹⁴ Wojtyla comes to this contention through an examination of the perspectives of "consciousness, body, imagination, will, moral conscience and creative action."¹⁵ It does not seek primarily to be an ethical work but an anthropological one influenced by the author's analysis of Scheler's work, who in turn had challenged Kant's ethic of pure form and pure duty.¹⁶ While being an intricate and a closely structured unfolding of argument and position, Wojtyla seeks to be practical rather than to present solely a theory about others' theories. Some may say that his work is heavily philosophical, and thus extremely dense, yet he does state that his intention is to "disentangle the intricacies...and to clarify the basic elements of the problems involved."¹⁷

What is the problem then that he investigates? It is the problem, in the philosophical sense, of the human person. Running contrary to Descartes' declaration of cognition defining the human person, Wojtyla proposes that the human person reveals himself

¹² Michael Waldstein in the Foreword to *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*. The assessment of West's commentary in this paragraph is drawn from Waldstein as well as reflecting my own experience of using and reading the commentary.

¹³ Cardinal Karol Wojtyla became Pope John II upon his election to the papacy on October 16th 1978. Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, ed. Analecta Husserliana, trans. Andrzej Potocki, vol. X, The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979).

¹⁴ Since this thesis is written about maleness and masculinity the use of the male personal pronoun is mostly used. Such usage does not seek to exclude the feminine. The same principle that a human person is manifested in action is applicable to women. The usage of the male personal pronoun is more to direct attention upon the predominant focus and purpose of this work, namely, to explore masculinity and maleness, all of which requires a focus upon men.

¹⁵ Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, X, xix.

¹⁶ *The Acting Person*, X, xiii.

¹⁷ *The Acting Person*, X, vii.

in action, “in the actual enacting of his existence”.¹⁸ The strong correspondence between person and action is demonstrated in personal agency. In this enacting of his actual existence there arises an understanding of what is experienced. The consciousness and understanding of one’s action is what makes an experience a human experience. Furthermore, action enables not only a self-understanding for the human person, but also serves as an experience by others of that human person.¹⁹ Wojtyla asserts that there is an essential sameness or unity-in-meaning in a person’s action. It is the same person who is acting and so there is the same person-action relation.

Wojtyla was a member of the Lublin Philosophical School, the initiator of this group being Mieczyslaw Albert Krapiec. These two figures differed, however, in their respective philosophical conceptions of the human person. While Wojtyla favoured an ethical analysis of human action, Krapiec favoured a metaphysical vision of the human person.²⁰ While not mutually exclusive and perhaps somewhat complementary, they do represent different modes of understanding the human person and personal subjectivity. It is beyond the scope of this work to delve into the work of Krapiec rather than to note it. It is the intention of this study to focus on Wojtyla. Yet it is helpful to be aware that both referenced St Thomas Aquinas in their work and built upon it.

At his own admission, John Paul II says that there is a thread of wonderment at the human being throughout this work. He notes that man seems to be forever striving for a new and more mature expression of his nature and must avoid seeing himself as usual and commonplace simply because he is the most frequent object of his own experience. As Crosby notes that even from his early days as a priest, Wojtyla learned to love what he called ‘fair love’ the love between man and woman. But he also

¹⁸ *The Acting Person*, X, vii.

¹⁹ Kenneth Schmitz estimates that Wojtyla’s focusing on the human act does not present an incompatibility with Aquinas’ (and hence the traditional) focus upon being. Schmitz notes that Wojtyla presumes the metaphysical side of human nature but wishes to concentrate upon the phenomenological analysis of the human person. See James Kow, “The Philosophy of Kenneth L. Schmitz - the Recovery and Discovery of Things, Being, and the Person.”, 36.

²⁰ Arkadiusz Gudaniec. “The Foundations of Mieczysław Albert Krapiec's Metaphysical Personalism.” *Forum Philosophicum: International Journal For Philosophy* 19, no. 1 (Spring2014 2014), 63.

possessed an extraordinary ability to reflect on this dimension of human existence, philosophically and theologically.²¹

The personalism central to *Theology of the Body* also informs this project. A specific person is not an individualisation of human nature. Rather, the mode of being that is human is personal. This is what marks out mankind from other modes of being. “No other nature has any real (that is individual) existence as a person - for this pertains to man alone.”²²

The human person has both a bodily aspect, the *soma*, as well as the inward, non-physical aspect, the *psyche*. Wojtyla contends that the relation between them exists in the influence that the total of the bodily functions, and some somatic functions in particular, have over the functions of the psyche. Central to his contention is that the psychophysical entity, which is the human person, presupposes that the inward aspect of the person is manifested in the outward aspect, the action. The body, while not having necessarily a pre-eminence over the *psyche*, is the medium by which a person expresses himself, brings into visibility that aspect of the person that is inward and not visible. At the same time, it is both reasonable and logical to claim that the human person, while having a body is not solely identifiable with his body.

If a human person is revealed in action, what do the actions of a man reveal about masculinity? Wojtyla’s proposition is that one person’s individuality and personhood will be manifest in his or her actions, separating them in the world from other human persons. From this, it appears logical and consistent to claim that masculinity can be deduced from examining the agency of men in a similar way to which femininity can be deduced from the actions of women.

Wojtyla’s other major work, not only for this research but also among his published material, is *Love and Responsibility*. This work is the fruit of his theological and philosophical undertakings, as well as his pastoral experience. It is also a much earlier work, in comparison to his major contribution through the *Theology of the Body*. *Love and Responsibility* made its first appearance in 1960 but, as the introduction to the

²¹ John F. Crosby, “John Paul II’s Vision of Sexuality and Marriage: the Mystery of ‘Fair Love’,” *The Legacy of Pope John Paul II – His Contribution to Catholic Thought* (2000), 53.

²² *The Acting Person*, X, 84.

present edition notes, there is a further pre-history in the experience of many people as well as the author himself. Implied is a clear connection to *The Acting Person*. This work relies upon the lived experience of human persons and indeed seeks to reflect upon that experience as well as to test it by further experience.

The book, as a whole, is an exposition of the personalistic norm that the author proposes and how this norm impinges upon sexuality, love, marriage, chastity and ethics. He proposes this personalistic norm from a lengthy reflection upon human experience. Wojtyla himself describes the book as arising from a “confrontation of doctrine with life”.²³ It is a structured analysis of personhood and sexual morality that leads to a synthesis about the human person and his capacity to give and receive love as well as love’s concomitant responsibility upon the human person.

He begins by examining the human person and the sexual urge. Key here is his philosophical understanding of what it means to use a person. He understands ‘use’ as having two possible meanings. It may be either utilitarianism or may be a use of another that arises from the perceived sexual value of the other. Within the context of the eponymous love and its concomitant responsibility, the use of another for sexual purposes does not have a positive ethical value. Throughout the book, the author has a refreshing attitude to sexuality, speaking plainly but respectfully with none of the prudishness that most associate with religious discourse on sexuality.

Wojtyla examines love in its various forms culminating with betrothed love. Love is also analysed from its psychological aspect and its ethical aspect. The third chapter focuses upon chastity and the metaphysics of shame and shamelessness. He addresses here the practice of sexual continence.

One chapter speaks of marriage, procreation and parenthood. Alongside this he examines virginity, both mystical and physical. Here there is a most insightful section on paternity and maternity in their non-physical sense. The book concludes with some of the psychopathologies surrounding sexuality as well as the psychological dynamics involved in marital intercourse. He also revisits birth control, having touched upon it in the previous chapter.

²³ *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 15.

To return momentarily to *The Acting Person*, a theme of this work is that every person exists in the world as both a subject who acts, as well as an object, that is, an objective ‘something’ or ‘somebody’. Such a description as ‘subject’ and ‘object’ is not sufficient in itself. It does not contain fully the reality of a person. The term ‘person’ is not just a title or another name for a human being, but it is that which allows the possibility of speaking of the rationality and richness that is the human person. This term also distinguishes the human person from the animals; even the most advanced ones.

The inner life of man, his capacity for a spiritual life, his inwardness is not only a distinguishing characteristic of the human person but also the means by which he contacts and relates to other entities within the world, be they objects, animals or other persons. Man possesses free will and is thus *sui juris*, his own master. He possesses a personality that is *alteri incommunicabilis*, not capable of transmission and non transferable.

For Wojtyla, love is the opposite of using because in love two different people “consciously choose a common aim” and this puts them on an equal footing. One is not the subject and the other an object.²⁴ Love does not preclude pleasure for indeed sensuality and pleasure are the raw materials of love. Love though is a unification of persons, not the use of another person.

In these earlier works of Wojtyla, the importance of personhood leads to the personalistic norm, which reappears in *Theology of the Body*. This norm requires, in its negative aspect, that the person is the kind of good that does not admit of use and cannot be treated as an object of use and a means to an end. In its positive form the personalistic norm confirms this: the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love.²⁵

As will become clearer later in this work, the topic of my research into masculinity and what it means to be a man finds relevance by implication in the significant discussion that Wojtyla enters into regarding marriage, sexual relations within

²⁴ *Love and Responsibility*, 28.

²⁵ *Love and Responsibility*, 41.

marriage, procreation and parenthood. It is more clearly present when Wojtyla discusses self-giving or self-donation, which arises from the personalistic norm. Self-donation demands a discussion of sensuality, sexual shame, chastity and maternity or paternity. It is his understanding of the human person through the personalistic norm that makes a most significant contribution to a description of masculinity, central to this research. Most particularly is this seen when Wojtyla speaks of vocation and the concept of justice towards God the Creator, who is also a Personal Being. An acceptance of the order of nature and a correct attitude towards the real world is recognition both of the existence of the Creator as well as His rights over creation as Creator, who is also the creator of the whole personal order. A reflection of this personal nature of God is present in the human person in the inborn need and drive to give himself to another. This need has its deep origin in the sexual nature of the human person. It is also connected with the spiritual nature of the person, which finds its outlet through the body, and thus manifests the integrity of the human person.

Masculinity

This section on masculinity is deliberately placed after remarks on John Paul II since masculinity can be spoken of in a meaningful and theological way, only as related to an adequate notion of what constitutes the human person.

Though a complex notion, masculinity is not entirely abstract or theoretical. There is a concrete reality, experienced, perceived and critically reflected on from within masculinity itself.²⁶ This differs from a situationalist or social-constructionist standpoint at one extreme, and from an essentialist or purely biological outlook at the other. The former tends to favour an historical, cultural or social influence over gender. In addition, it favours the notion that there is no ideal masculinity or a universal masculinity. The latter tends to be trans-historical, cross-cultural and cross-situational.

These polarised and, at times, competing perspectives need to be acknowledged to account for any bias or influence they may have on the discussion of masculinity, but also to map effectively the territory in which the discussion does take place. It must be

²⁶ Nelson, *The Intimate Connection*.

admitted too that masculinity lived by a single man may have multiple contexts in which it is either expressed or experienced. Even for one man he may experience or operate within multiple ways of being a man. This adds to the requirement for concreteness and precision in the discussion. In this respect, John Paul II's notion of the human person is helpful. He understands a person not as an individualisation of human nature but rather as a personal subject, different in this subjectivity from all other modes of being. Thus, the masculine is always going to be personal and not general nor abstract.

Lastly, among the opening remarks in this section on masculinity, I emphasise that the focus of this work on the masculine does not demean the feminine or feminism, even though some of the early literature on masculinity tended in this direction and is strongly biased. This may have resulted from a desire to affirm "the masculine" over and against other considerations. Similarly, in some feminist literature a mistrust and even antipathy to anything that was masculine is apparent. Exploring the masculine was seen as either seeking to return to a patriarchal outlook or to undo the achievements of feminism, or engaging in a quite unnecessary analysis. Harding strikes a balance in her call to male writers, not to seek to overturn feminism but to speak specifically as men in all aspects of their lives, precisely by using feminist insights and methodology.²⁷ She conceded that, though this could be difficult and painful, it was important for men to come to a fresh self-understanding of their experience in a way that women had done in the early stages of the feminist movement. For her part, Irigaray, while a feminist writer and not engaging directly in a discussion of masculinity, provides an interesting observation. She notes that some feminists demand that sex be neutralised:

This neutralisation, if it were possible, would mean the end of the human species. The human species is divided into two genders, which ensure its production and reproduction. To wish to get rid of sexual difference is to call for a genocide more radical than any form of destruction there has ever been in history.²⁸

²⁷ Sandra Harding delivered the paper, "After the End of Philosophy" at Purdue University's Machette Conference in 1989. It is included in Robert Strikwerda, Larry May, and Patrick D. Hopkins, ed. *Rethinking Masculinity - Philosophical Explorations in Light of Feminism*, Second ed., New Feminist Perspective Series (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1996).

²⁸ Luce Irigaray, *Je, Tu, Nous - toward a Culture of Difference*, trans. Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 12. The feminist literature is often helpful in providing a framework for a discussion

She goes on to say that it is important to define the values of belonging to a specific gender; values which are valid for each of the two genders in its own right. Still, she maintains that one of the main obstacles to this recognition of such distinctive gender values is the hold of patriarchy on civilisation. Some cultural values need to be given, or given back, to female sexuality. In a parallel manner, it may be asked whether there are some cultural values that need to be given or given back to masculinity?

After these preliminary remarks on context, I now turn to the literature specifically treating the theme of masculinity, not at this stage to evaluate the claims made by the various authors, but rather allow them to stand as representative of the literature.

Firstly, as already noted, the literature highlights the need for a precision of terms. Confusion results when there is no agreement on how various terms should be defined. Kilmartin provides a relatively simple taxonomy. He says that the term 'gender' "is the social pressure to behave and experience the self in ways that the culture considers appropriate for one's sex."²⁹ Gender is, therefore, a broader term than sex and refers to behaviours, as well as mental and social processes. Gender has its inward and outward aspects. Kilmartin understands 'sex', and thus male and female, as biological terms. Gender, and thus, masculine and feminine, he understands is a social term. He stresses exactness in terms since a statement like 'male aggression' carries the implication that this is something that has its origin in biology, precluding any other cause, namely social.

More broadly, Podles considers that 'gender' is generally accepted, though others would dispute this.³⁰ Consequently, he defines gender as the wide range of qualities and behaviour, including the sexual, which make up the realities called masculine and feminine. He understands maleness as a physical quality, while masculinity is a spiritual and cultural one, albeit connected with the physical realities of being male.

of masculinity. As feminism had to define what it was promoting the terminology became refined. In a similar way, masculinity and the discussion thereof needs precision.

²⁹ Christopher T. Kilmartin, *The Masculine Self*, Third ed. (Cornwall-on-Hudson NY: Sloan Publishing, 2007), 9.

³⁰ Leon J. Podles, *The Church Impotent - the Feminization of Christianity* (Dallas: Spence Publishing Company, 1999).

Others contend that each person is born a generic person and that maleness and femaleness develop through social expectations and social construction.³¹ Clearly, this is the origin of the desire in the early years of life to expose the infant and child to toys, dress and activities that are generic rather than particularly masculine or feminine.³² For some this is an extreme position, even if indicating an interaction between biology and sociology. Such an interaction also allows for the possibility that a man might exhibit some traits that might usually be associated with the feminine and that a woman can demonstrate masculine traits. The literature suggests that interaction and respective influence of biology or sociology is the disputed point.

Kilmartin assembles a useful summary of the different perspectives on the nature of men and masculinity, along with the agenda each perspective has for change or for the future.³³ I include here not the complete list, but rather those I mostly encountered. Conservatives view male dominance and traditional masculinity as natural and desirable. Pro-feminists see traditional masculinity as being destructive to both men and women. They wish to end patriarchy and violence towards women and promote equal rights for women. Men's Rights advocates consider men as the victims of social and legal sexism and advocate a change of divorce law, and child custody regulations as well as an end to the law's perceived favouring of women at men's expense. The mythopoetic writers consider that males are disconnected from deep masculinity and through various processes seek to reclaim this essence of masculinity. The Evangelical Christian perspective is that the crisis in masculinity comes from the diminishing role of Christian religion in men's lives. They advocate a return to traditional families with Christianity as the centre of family life.³⁴

³¹ This is challenged by Anna Krohn in "Celebrating Blessed John Paul II's 'new feminism'." *The Catholic Leader*, December 22 2013. Krohn argues that "‘from the beginning’ human people are not only ‘themselves’ but also shaded in the distinctive hues of male and female – not merely culturally (as ‘gender studies would have it) but also in the depths of their minds, hearts and experiences.’"

³² Angela Shanahan, "A Biological Storm Is Brewing over the West's Genderless Future," *The Weekend Australian*, June 11-12 2011. As well, in the article "A feminist agenda should not emasculate half the population just to empower the other." *The Weekend Australian*, January 4th-5th (2014), Pru Goward insists that post-war feminists were mistaken to view men and women as "essentially the same, just differently perceived and unjustly socialised". While noting that there is a crisis in masculinity, she argues for a balance, insisting that differences between men and women need to be accepted and worked with, not 'papered over'.

³³ The complete list can be found in Kilmartin, *The Masculine Self*, 291.

³⁴ This position, I suggest, is not exclusive to the Evangelical Christian churches but may be found also in the more traditional Christian churches, even in the Catholic Church.

The literature also indicates that the general experience of men, either individually or as a group, does entail a sense of crisis. This crisis manifests in a sense of confusion, somewhat shallow relationships between men, sexism and mistreatment of women, along with fear and distrust of homosexuality.³⁵ Further difficulties boys and men face are a higher death rate in the first six months of life, the extra demands upon boys to learn gender roles in childhood, the sexual misconduct and maladjustment of teenage boys, and a shorter life expectancy for men.

In a more recent work, Seidler examines the lives and experiences of young men.³⁶ He pays particular attention to the impact of the global media and the masculinity, or rather masculinities portrayed therein. Young men, he contends, often feel caught between prevailing masculinities in their struggle for self-definition. Unlike older generations, who responded to the challenges of an earlier feminism, younger men are keenly aware of the contradictions and tensions in their experience as men. He claims that perhaps unlike their fathers they are keen to discuss relationships between men and diverse masculinities rather than the relationship between men and feminism. They seem to desire to engage with what will illuminate men's lives. On the perspective of masculinity in general, Seidler asserts that the experience of men is that masculinity is not something that can be taken for granted, but must be constantly defended. Thereby he infers that masculinity is not static and stable.

In summary, masculinity would appear, at first glance, to be all about what it means to be a man. Yet, due to diverse perspectives, the literature makes the term much harder to grasp than that. It is certainly about being a man and is also more than just having a body with identifiable male characteristics. Writings on masculinity specifically deal with multiple and even conflicting meanings that are attached to being a man. Nevertheless, it emerges from the literature that masculinity is a reality, not a theoretical concept. While sometimes a debated term, it cannot be called arbitrary or convenient. To re-state, masculinity involves living in the world with a particular male experience, an experience that is profoundly influenced by the original

³⁵ This is identified among others by Nelson, *The Intimate Connection*. This is rather dated in its perspective but it can be argued that all of these are still present in the lives of men though now at different intensities than at the time of the writing of the book.

³⁶ Victor J. Seidler, *Young Men and Masculinities: Global Cultures and Intimate Lives* (London: Zed Books, 2006).

experience of a male body. It also involves viewing the world through the lens of male experience and interacting with the world and its expectations from a male perspective. Masculinity also influences one's feelings, both about others, the world and self. It influences one's actions and one's thinking as well as one's perspective on God. The literature suggests that masculinity appears as an amalgam of biology (body), psychology (mind) and spirituality (soul) and the fundamental reality of existence. In the latter, the narrative of faith (theology) is a significant influence and flavour:

Masculinities are neither programmed in our genes, nor fixed by social structures. They come into existence as people act. They are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given social setting.³⁷

From the general, I now turn to sociological perspectives in this review of the literature.

Sociology

To a certain extent there is common ground between the literature with a sociology background and that about masculinity. Some contributors to the conversation about masculinity are sociologists and they have certainly entered into the conversation from the perspective of their discipline.

Some sociology is descriptive in the sense that it seeks to note trends or developments in human social life. This type of sociology records what has happened in the lives of men, such as movements that have formed or issues that men have had to face or deal with. Its contribution lies in describing the situational context for masculinity. Another type of sociology attempts to analyse and to chart a course. Sociology about masculinity also engages in comparison most particularly with feminism, or it uses feminist methods to help to define the issues surrounding masculinity.

All that having been said, sociology is rarely decisive. Most sociologists remain within the bounds of description and most admit of multiple masculinities without a judgement made of any. Sociologists too are reluctant to construct typologies. Understandably, from their discipline, they see typologies as inadequate and of

³⁷ Tomsen and Donaldson, *Male Trouble: Looking at Australian Masculinities*, 16.

limited use. They claim, that boys and men, and presumably girls and women, are complex and dynamic beings. They claim that even gender identity can create a stereotype.³⁸

Over the past forty years, sociologists have identified that the feminist movement as well as the gay liberation movement stirred debate over masculinity and femininity. Resulting from this debate and at times in reaction to it, a perceived crisis of men and boys was noted, as has already been mentioned.³⁹ The literature that arose within this social situation moved outside the boundaries of sociology into what became other academic disciplines, such as masculine studies and men's studies, or into the Men's Movement, the Pro-Feminist Men's Movement, the mythopoetic literature, as well as general works on raising boys, men's health and what could be broadly called men's issues.⁴⁰ A significant contribution from sociology was the development of different models of understanding gender.⁴¹

The *Gender Identity* model was the earliest one developed and describes the importance of displaying appropriate masculine or feminine behaviours. This model understands that gender differences arise from biology and nature. A fundamental development task for every boy is to establish a male role identity mainly through identification with the father or other male role model. Behaving as a boy is produced because a boy has been treated differently from a girl. Such differential treatment causes the gendered behaviour. The prime task of boyhood then is to separate from the feminine and avoid feminine behaviours. If this was not done successfully, an insecure male gender identity might develop and the prognosis is that the boy would become homosexual or over-compensate and become hyper-masculine.

The *Androgyny* model came in the 1970's when some theorists began to question whether masculinity and femininity were opposites. It was thought possible that a

³⁸ Tony Smith, "Which Crisis in Masculinity?," in *Masculinity: Men and Boys*, ed. Justin Healey, Issues in Society (Thirroul NSW: The Spinney Press, 2005). Smith notes that the main male stereotypes are heterosexual and homosexual, but there are also the other more prosaic ones such as macho, camp, nerdy, sporty and so on.

³⁹ These issues are investigated by the contributors of essays in Tomsen and Donaldson, *Male Trouble: Looking at Australian Masculinities*.

⁴⁰ Nancy A. Wootton, "The Men's Movement and Men's Studies: A Study of the Literature," *RQ* 33, no. 2 (1993). Some of these will be dealt with later in the Literature Review.

⁴¹ These models are sourced from Kilmartin, *The Masculine Self*.

person could have both masculine and feminine traits. Additionally, traditional gender roles were considered to be limiting. So this model proposed a schema to understand gender. It consists of a quadrant of two intersecting *continua*, high to low masculinity and high to low femininity. Traditional masculinity sits in the high masculinity and low femininity quadrant while traditional femininity sits in the high femininity and low masculinity quadrant. Undifferentiated gender is the description of the low femininity and low masculinity quadrant. Androgynous gender is the high masculinity and high femininity quadrant. In this model, gender is learned behaviours not naturally occurring tendencies.

The *Gender Role Strain* model was proposed by Joseph Pleck in 1981. He proposed that some gendered behaviour is maladaptive, for example, compulsive dominance or compulsive passivity. Gender role strain is a psychological situation where the demands of a gender role have negative consequences for the person or others. The conflict comes when the demands of the gender role conflict with the person's naturally occurring tendencies. These tendencies are viewed as specific to the person not the gender.

Pleck's development of the *Role-Strain* model can be seen as reactive to, and certainly as a result of the *Gender Role* model that was operative almost universally before the 1960's. Men did male things and women did female things. Sociologists would say this was socially and culturally engendered. The opposite viewpoint, usually not from sociologists, would claim that it contributed to the smooth operation of society. Feminism's reactive stance was against the oppressive and secondary gender role accorded to women. Since the 1960's there has been blurring of the roles of each gender, contributing, as already noted, to some confusion and anguish for men. Forty or so years on from when the *Gender Role* model was dominant Seidler claims:

Men no longer have a shared sense of who they are through the roles they are supposed to perform. It is no longer enough to define themselves as providers and fathers: not only are the expectations that define those roles within contemporary society unclear, but also men and women within postmodern culture tend to need a more individualised and reflective sense of self. This contrasts with earlier generations of men, who just assumed that they would get married and have

children because 'that was the way life was' and you learnt to 'get on with things'. Possibly they learned to ask themselves fewer questions.⁴²

The fact that Seidler notes this change indicates the fluidity that sociology concedes within a constructionist view of masculinity. If no one pattern of masculinity is found universally across cultures and time, then masculinity becomes situationally defined. However, the social structures that define gender are themselves capable of change. Such a perception adds weight to the argument that masculinity is not solely linked to male biology. It also strongly implies that from a sociological viewpoint there is no such thing as a male essence that must be discovered so that authentic masculinity can be expressed in a man's life.

A more recent development in the sociological perspective on gender has been the gender aspect of social relations. This is the interplay between gender and power, race, class and even nationality. Gender, and hence masculinity, can be institutional in the sense that it is an aspect of collective practice.⁴³ In this understanding, the social definition of masculinity finds itself embedded in the dynamics of the state, corporations, unions and families. Masculinity is thus expressed through men's involvement in the social relationships that constitute the social order of a particular grouping or society.

In considering sociology and its understanding of masculinity, it is also helpful to note that some sociologists use an historical perspective, though there is no consistent interpretation of the historical data but rather multiple interpretations of the historical data and trends. In *Unmasking the Masculine*, Petersen uses an historical overview.⁴⁴ To identify significant trends he traces from the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution to the present time many of the current factors and issues affecting masculinity. He sees the roots of today's masculinity developing and evolving from the past.

⁴² Seidler, *Young Men and Masculinities: Global Cultures and Intimate Lives*, 90.

⁴³ Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell, and John Lee, "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity," in *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, ed. Rachel Adams and David Savran (Maldon, Maryland: Blackwell, 2002). This idea is dominant in the first half of the article as the literature is reviewed and social developments of recent decades are charted.

⁴⁴ Alan Petersen, *Unmasking the Masculine: 'Men' and 'Identity' in a Sceptical Age* (London: Sage Publications, 1998).

In focusing upon the present moment, Louw observes the distinctive nature of a post-modern understanding of masculinity.⁴⁵ He maintains that male identity is in a crisis as it labours under the pressure of deconstruction. He observes multiple masculinities which are determined by the market-driven economy within a consumerist society. As a result masculinity is plastic and instant and men are more uncertain of themselves.

Sociobiology

Though even briefly, this strand of sociology needs to be mentioned in the review of literature. Some sociologists do not favour divorcing masculinity from biology completely. It could be said that these sociologists seek a balanced position and would list male biology as one among many of the contributing factors to masculinity. Among the sociobiologists there is a recognition of the importance of the body in the understanding of masculinity and femininity, and thus of the human person. However, they note that the body, and in this case the male body, is subject to social and cultural interpretation. “We see repeatedly how men’s bodies are addressed, trained, given definitions, given outlets and pleasures, by the gender order of society.”⁴⁶ There is an emphasis here upon the external impact of social expectations. The male biology and body, while being considered and not ignored, is still seen as defined by society.

It would seem that neither sociobiology, nor sociology generally, has the capacity to acknowledge the inner self. Neither can they chart the effect of the inner male self upon the perception of the body or on the experience of masculinity. This may be more the realm of psychology. West observes: “...in universities in the last thirty years, the social sciences have emphasised that gender is a social thing. That is why experts like Bob Connell talk about the construction of masculinity. It means that masculinity is made by society rather than in the male body.... The sociologists emphasise nurture, rather than nature”.⁴⁷ While a paediatrician, Eli Newberger captures the middle ground that most sociobiologists inhabit:

⁴⁵ Daniël J. Louw, "'Marketplace Masculinities' within the International Public Arena of Global Media: Towards a Christian Spiritual Approach to Male Embodiment and 'Genital Ensoulment'," *International Journal of Public Theology* 6, no. 2 (2012).

⁴⁶ Tomsen and Donaldson, *Male Trouble: Looking at Australian Masculinities*, 15.

⁴⁷ Peter West, *What Is the Matter with Boys? Showing Boys the Way into Manhood* (Marrickville: Choice Books, 2002), 19.

...heredity bestows a different body and mind on a boy than on a girl. Not totally different, but distinctive enough to provide a unique biological starting point for a boy's development through childhood and adolescence. A boy's environment adds a second powerful influence on his character formation. Ours has been called a gender-polarising society. From the moment of birth we raise boys differently from girls. We have different ways of relating to them, different expectations of them, different goals for them, different roles for them. While these are not totally different from our ways of raising girls, they are distinctive enough to provide a unique cultural environment...⁴⁸

Psychology

Of itself, this was only a small part of the literature that was surveyed. However, interaction between psychology and other disciplines was encountered in the work of some authors. In addition, some authors engaged in multi-disciplinary research, among which was psychology. Among the authors encountered were psychologists who worked from another discipline or used a methodology from another discipline. They incorporated some aspects of psychology alongside their other specialty. It must be noted also that certain psychological elements are to be found among some of the writers in the various groupings which will follow, most notably, the mythopoetics. For all these reasons, psychology deserves to be considered.

An intriguing question is whether psychologists believe that men and women have different brains, not in a medical sense, but in the sense of the way a man thinks, feels and responds. Is there a male psyche? Pinker advances the proposition that men and women do have different minds and thus, by implication, will not only behave differently but function psychologically differently.⁴⁹ His opinion is by no means held widely. Some hold the opinion that the differentiation of masculinity is psychological because it bears on the kind of people that men are. What contributes to the distinctiveness of a person must contain a psychological aspect.⁵⁰

Kilmartin is one whose work crosses disciplines and some of his contribution to the conversation about masculinity has already been noted.⁵¹ As a psychologist, rather

⁴⁸ Eli H. Newberger, *Bringing up a Boy - the Nature and Nurture of Male Character* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 1-2.

⁴⁹ Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate - the Modern Denial of Human Nature* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2002).

⁵⁰ Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity.", 591.

⁵¹ Kilmartin, *The Masculine Self*.

than as a sociologist, he makes a significant distinction that to be male rather than female is a substantial influence upon a person's life. He accepts the premise that we are not generic human beings but are male or female.

An interaction between the given of *soma* and *psyche* and the impact of social expectations is demonstrated by Newberger, whose field is in medicine.⁵² Newberger speaks of temperament as belonging to a person from even before birth and character as something that develops and is influenced by external forces or circumstances. If even the internal aspects of a person's psychology indicate a dual influence of inner and outer forces, might this indicate the inherent difficulty of placing solitary emphasis upon one?

Within the field of psychology there exist two opposites in interpretation of masculinity. The essentialists argue that behaviours, attitudes and social activities are 'hard wired' into a man through biology. Thus masculinity is something that belongs both to the body and the psyche. It transcends the social. Social constructionists argue that masculinity is constructed through relationships with others and the world. Though it is rarely as tidy as that, most scholars show a tendency to place themselves towards one or the other polarity.⁵³

Essentialism's understanding of a male essence can be helpful, though not in adopting from it a sense of a universal masculinity. Rather, like Kilmartin, with a male body and mind, a boy, and then later a man, engages in the world through an interaction of his biology and his environment. Both contribute to the development of his masculinity, which he shares in common with, though not in complete replication of, all others born male.

Mention must also be made of psychoanalysis. This is based on the interaction of childhood psychological history with biological and psychological instincts. Thus the deep underlying sense of the masculine self in the adult man is based on his childhood

⁵² Newberger, *Bringing up a Boy - the Nature and Nurture of Male Character*.

⁵³ Anne Fausto-Sterling, "How to Build a Man," in *Men's Lives*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel and Michael A. Messner (Boston: Pearson, 2004). Fausto-Sterling uses the work of the 1950's psychologist, John Money, to explore the link between male biology and psychology. While she does not agree totally with Money and favours a greater influence for social influences upon masculinity, her work is an example of the tension between these two strands of psychology.

psychological dramas. Analytic theorists emphasise the importance of the unconscious processes, a developmental and historical approach to understanding behaviour, the importance of biology and body, and the inescapability of internal conflict. Ego psychology theories hold that since boys are raised by their mothers they must put rigid boundaries between themselves and what is feminine in order to develop and maintain a strong sense of masculinity.

History

Like psychology, this area, which comprises a minor section of the literature, nevertheless contributed to the overall context of the research. Historico-sociologists, like Connell and Petersen, have already been mentioned, but some who are historians as well as those who used an historical approach form part of the literature and will be acknowledged in this section.

First must be mentioned Gerda Lerner's two-volume work which encompasses the history of the ancient world (volume one) and from the medieval time to the modern age (volume two). She traces the rise of the male-dominated culture and patriarchy as well as charts the growth of feminist thought. Through historical evidence, she identifies the "development of the leading ideas, symbols, and metaphors by which patriarchal gender relations were incorporated into Western civilization".⁵⁴

Her conclusions are that in a patriarchal society there are assumptions about gender which exist because of the sexual difference between men and women but that these assumptions, which she claims are unproven and unprovable, become part of the cultural context and, being assumptions, society becomes blind to them over the course of centuries. Lerner demonstrates that these gender assumptions create the understanding that men and women are different creatures with different needs, capabilities and functions. This is surprising in itself, though calling each gender a separate creature poses problems for any notion of a shared humanity. As she explicates further assumptions, the balance becomes tipped in favour of men:

⁵⁴ Lerner, Gerda, and American Council of Learned Societies. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. v. 1. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 10.

Men are seen to be [by virtue of masculinity] to be superior, stronger and more rational, therefore designed to be dominant. From this follows that men are political citizens and responsible for and representing the polity. Women are "naturally" weaker, inferior in intellect and rational capacities, unstable emotionally and therefore incapable of political participation. They stand outside of the polity. Men, by their rational minds, explain and order the world. Women by their nurturant function sustain daily life and the continuity of the species. While both functions are essential, that of men is superior to that of women. Another way of saying this is that men are engaged in "transcendent" activities, women, like lower-class people of both sexes, are engaged in "immanent" activities. Men have an inherent right to control the sexuality and the reproductive functions of women, while women have no such right over men. Men mediate between humans and God. Women reach God through the mediation of men.⁵⁵

Both volumes make fascinating reading. Lerner has been meticulous in her historical survey of the rise of feminist consciousness and the embedding of male dominance in the society and culture. She is, however, writing for a specific purpose and for a specific audience, namely that of historians and to expose assumptions surrounding and practices in the way women were located and treated in society. There is not space in this work to critically engage with Lerner's works rather than to acknowledge them and to acknowledge them as groundbreaking works in the continuing discussion surrounding the impact of gender difference, both real and assumed. It must also be noted that her work belongs to the feminist literature compared to our present project concentrating on masculinity.

Brown's book *The Body and Society* shows that questions about gender and sexuality, the body and the human person, are ancient.⁵⁶ Brown outlines the Christian understanding of the person and sexuality across the first four centuries of the Church. He demonstrates that there was a nuance in the theological understandings of the body. The oft-mentioned Christian negativity or ambivalence towards the body is not necessarily straightforward or simple from an historical perspective. To know history is to recognise that some of the ancient questions about gender are still with us.

⁵⁵ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: from the Middle Ages to 1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4.

⁵⁶ Peter Brown, *The Body and Society - Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, Lectures on the History of Religions (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

Bynum's work complements the work of Brown as she examines the medieval period.⁵⁷ She reviews the work of the medievalists while shedding light upon today's understandings and expressions of the body. The medieval connection with the body was usually with suffering, disease and death. Today's connection is with gender and sexuality such that the body has become an all-encompassing term for this. Recent decades have been somewhat preoccupied with either being an essentialist or an anti-essentialist; not only something unknown to the medievalists but very much a post-modern phenomenon.

All of this is useful contextualisation. That is the assistance that history provides. It can inform about former debates around the topic of masculinity and sexuality generally, demonstrate where the roots of some current issues or discussions lie, and enable a comparison between what was relevant then and what is relevant now.

Theology and Embodiment

These are placed together because of an overlap between the two fields of literature. In addition to John Paul II's seminal work, and those allied with or arising from it, there are some others of a theological nature that venture into a body theology. There are also works that could be termed non-theological which deal with the spiritual or inner sense of the body and co-exist with and even penetrate the theological sphere. Indeed, it can be claimed from the theological tradition of the Catholic Church, most notably Aquinas and Augustine and their use of Aristotle and Plato's works, that theology cannot stand alone. "Any Christian theology depends on two sources: God's revelation in Christ as understood in a particular Christian tradition, such as the Catholic faith; and, secondly, some generally philosophical framework within which that revelation is formulated and organised."⁵⁸

Earlier, Petersen's historical overview of the understanding of masculinity was mentioned. In this book he also described three ways in which the male body is used. It can be somewhat like a canvas on which to paint certain conceptions of

⁵⁷ Caroline Bynum, "Why All the Fuss About the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry* 22, no. 1 (1995).

⁵⁸ Edward Malatesta, ed. *A Christian Anthropology*, The Religious Experience Series (Wheatthampstead, Hertfordshire: Anthony Clarke, 1969), vii.

masculinity. It can be the window into the inner reality or inner construction of masculinity. Also, the body can be a means by which to interpret masculinity.

McGuire is an example of a sociologist who sees more than the social construct of gender and recognises the key role of the body. She also ventures into the psychological and the spiritual. "Human bodies matter, because (all) those practices (by which people transform meaningful interpretations of the stories out of which they live into everyday action) involve people's bodies as well as their minds and spirits."⁵⁹ Further on in her article she notes that ordinary material existence, most notably, the human body, is the ingredient for constructing both a meaning for life and a lived religion. She states that bodies matter because humans are not disembodied spirits. Indeed, she claims that we come to an understanding of the human metaphysical quality through the physical body.

This move from the particular to the transcendent, from the experience of the body to what is beyond the physical is also used by Nelson.⁶⁰ He writes from a particularly male perspective and acknowledges the incarnational quality of Christianity. In this he echoes Kelly who states that for the Christian faith the Incarnation is "the singular, constitutive event".⁶¹ It was in a human body that God became physically present in the world. Thus a Christian perspective of the body is that "the body as a human phenomenon cannot be appreciated except as a personal 'somebody' that is organically immersed in a field of communication and relationships with others".⁶²

Nelson neither underplays nor overplays the particular male experience of the male body or the particular male experience of male sexuality or the particular male experience of self-understanding. Rather he calls for an understanding of all the meanings that flow from these experiences mindful that a man exists in the world as a gendered being. This gendered existence impacts not only upon his social relationships but also upon his feelings and attitudes, his psychology, his spirituality

⁵⁹ Meredith B. McGuire, "Why Bodies Matter: A Sociological Reflection on Spirituality and Materiality," in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Elizabeth A. Dreyer & Mark S. Burrows (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 119.

⁶⁰ Nelson, *The Intimate Connection*.

⁶¹ Anthony J. Kelly, ""The Body of Christ: Amen!": The Expanding Incarnation," *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 792.

⁶² ""The Body of Christ: Amen!": The Expanding Incarnation," 801.

and his emotional life. He claims that men are more prone to body-spirit dualism than are women. The male desire to work the body into shape and thus treat it as an object is an indication of this. Yet, he maintains that the body is a focus for masculinity, as a means to understand it as well as to experience it.⁶³

Masculine Spirituality

While positioned at the end of the literature review, the area of spirituality, and the question of a masculine spirituality, was the first phase of my enquiry. Interestingly, over the course of the research a theological anthropology from a masculine perspective emerged as the prime focus. I include this section not only because it was first, but also because there is a substantial body of literature that explores spirituality. In this field there is growing interest in what a masculine spirituality might be.

Among those who investigate a masculine spirituality is James. He summarises a key concern that a particularly masculine spirituality needs to emerge, but one that is not anti-feminine.⁶⁴ This is complicated by what he describes as a suspicion surrounding anything that touches men and spirituality, by conflicting images of masculinity and by the ascendancy of the feminine. Derisive images of men on television and caricatures of men as stupid or inept do not help. He says this is a context in which men seek wholeness and individuation. Furthermore, he recommends that the path of masculine spirituality is best undertaken apart from women but with the aim that men may live in partnership with women and all of creation.

Images of God make an appearance among the key factors contributing to a masculine spirituality. While not answering the question fully, James asks if men need masculine images of God for their specific masculine spirituality. There are some who say that images of God need to be widened rather than run the risk of limiting our appreciation of God and even remaining stuck in a projection of self. Some feminist writers on spirituality would argue that the masculine image of God must be deconstructed to provide freedom to those who find themselves or will find themselves

⁶³ James B. Nelson, *Body Theology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992). These are summary statements from this work.

⁶⁴ David C. James, *What Are They Saying About Masculine Spirituality?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996).

outside the patriarchy. Another trend acknowledges that our understanding of human nature and the socio-political process have expanded and so must our images of God. Yet, a minor group maintains that removing the male images of God does damage to the masculine psyche.⁶⁵ James responds that, rather than remove masculine images of God, there is a need for new understandings of the masculine images of God already in the Christian tradition. In addition, he proposes that the distinctive manner in which men enter into spirituality can be characterised as a questing process, something he says fits with the masculine temperament.⁶⁶

Culbertson exhibits a generalist approach to masculine spirituality.⁶⁷ He is an Episcopalian priest and writes with a pastoral approach and from pastoral experience. His engagement with masculine spirituality prompts him to ask questions such as: Who are men? What drives them? What feeds them emotionally? What is the future of a uniquely masculine spirituality? While not being deep in its coverage of the issue his style is aspirational in nature. For example, Culbertson has three wishes for the future of men: that men would be better at expressing their feelings; that men could change the way they parent so that when boys and girls individuate from their mother there is a father to turn to; that men could learn new ways of relating physically to other men with tenderness and emotional intimacy divorced from homophobia. He also sees the need to break free from the narrow boundaries of what could be called traditional spirituality, to do things differently. He recommends a community of changing men who could more truly reflect the divine.

Mythopoetics

In general terms, this last genre of the literature represents one of the most prolific, in similarity to the first. It also presents a body of literature that any serious entry into a discussion of masculinity will encounter and should address.

⁶⁵ Rohr maintains that men also suffer deprivation from a patriarchal or male-dominated culture. It is healthy wholeness and integration both within a person as well as between men and women that is needed, not the elimination of maleness. See Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos, *From Wild Man to Wise Man - Reflections on Male Spirituality* (Cincinnati: St Anthony Messenger Press, 2005).

⁶⁶ David C. James, *What are they saying about Masculine Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 52.

⁶⁷ Philip Culbertson, *The Future of Male Spirituality - New Adam* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

A classical scholar, Frederick Myers, coined the term 'mythopoetic' at the end of the nineteenth century. In doing so he was describing the autonomous function of the mind to weave fantasies while in a twilight state.⁶⁸ Perhaps another way to describe this state would be being halfway between dream and reality. The mythopoetic men's movement had its origin in the 1980's and its beginning is most usually associated with Robert Bly's publication of *Iron John*. In general terms this body of literature and the movement that arose from it seeks to liberate men from the perceived constraints of where they find themselves in the modern world. This liberation comes from seeking their true masculine self, most usually with the help of myth and legend. There are tributaries from this river of mythopoetic literature and much of the popular and accessible literature on masculinity demonstrates a connection or affinity with this genre.

Iron John is a compelling book, with intricate detail and an impressive quantity of insights and claims about the masculine. In his works, Bly uses mythology extensively. He is familiar with the Germanic, Greek, Roman and Norse mythologies as well as native mythologies from North America, Asia and the Pacific. He also uses poetry to explain and elaborate upon the points he makes, hence the term *mythopoetic*. The title, *Iron John*, refers to the Grimm Brothers' story of the same name. Bly uses this story as an allegory for the development of the male towards physical and psychological maturity. The story carries metaphorical information that directs one's attention to what it means to live the masculine life at a deeper level.

Who is the Wild Man, Iron John? According to Bly, he is spontaneity preserved from childhood. He is the male protector of the earth. He is the one who calls away from a busy life. He is the positive side of male sexuality. His energy is one that is conscious of a wound. The aim for a man is not to be the Wild Man, but to be in touch with him. Indeed, Bly claims that a whole community of interior beings makes up a grown man – Wild Man, King, Warrior, Lover, Trickster, Mythologist (or Cook) and Grief Man.⁶⁹ Bly says that this inner community is like a crystalline underpinning to the soul, that he likens to water. The upper waters of the male soul today are very roiled and

⁶⁸ Douglass Price-Williams, "In Search of Mythopoetic Thought," *Ethos* 27, no. 1 (1999).

⁶⁹ Robert Bly, *Iron John - Men and Masculinity* (London: Rider, 2001), 229.

turbulent, as men have experienced being taken away or separated from what they sensed to be their roles. Yet the structure at the bottom is still firm, and contemporary man only needs help to get down there. The story ends with the freeing of the Wild Man to become the King. Bly says that the task for a man is to free himself and so release the transcendent male being from imprisonment and trance.

Bly does engage in wide and undisciplined reflection and most of his claims are unsubstantiated. It is a conversational style of work and most eclectic. Using mythology and ‘deep story’, to his own satisfaction and to that of many others, he does answer the question “What does it mean to be a man?”

Since this research is in the field of theology, I restricted my reading after Bly to those mythopoetic authors who wrote with a Christian flavour, touching the areas of spirituality or theology. John Eldredge, Gordon Dalbey and Richard Rohr are the most well known in this subset of mythopoetics.

Dalbey’s book, *Healing the Masculine Soul*, begins by pointing out the huge pendulum swing in perceptions of masculinity over the last fifty years.⁷⁰ He notes that not all men are functioning well. He refers to Bly’s book, *Iron John*, as blazing a trail for the secular men’s movement. Dalbey’s search is for something that would portray the real problems and issues of men and, to these problems and issues, would present God and God’s word.

Dalbey proposes that there is a wound or tear in the masculine soul, which manifests itself in pornography, marital problems, confusion in fathering, self-doubts, crime, and the high number of men in prison. His singular question is: Are men in touch with the wonders of their deep masculine selves? Is the discredited macho image, not evil in itself, but a distortion of the true and good nature of authentic manliness?

In seeking to answer this, he personifies authentic manhood as that which seeks men, and is not something a man seeks. He claims that it is God who seeks, God who bestows authentic manhood. It is only in partnership with God that it can eventuate. It

⁷⁰ Gordon Dalbey, *Healing the Masculine Soul - How God Restores Men to Real Manhood* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003).

is “bestowed, not seized, lest it be fabricated.”⁷¹ Authentic manhood, he says, can only eventuate in partnership with the God who is Father and who seeks His purpose in every man. It is God as Father who calls a man into manhood, even to conflict, challenge and risk. Manhood is not to be sought, but revealed through submission to God in whom lies the ultimate destiny of humanity. Dalbey is an advocate of male initiation. He is convinced that, in our western society, a man needs affirmation by a larger community of men.

Inspiring and broad in its coverage, the book is by no means a scholarly text with a philosophical or theological stance. It is meant to inspire men to authentic manhood and the author seeks to show what that is, namely, a submission of one’s masculinity and sexuality to Christ. Dalbey does not have a process for encountering real or true masculinity, but he writes from conviction and to give encouragement in the quest to be fully and really a man.

Eldredge’s books are perhaps the best known among Christian men’s circles. Along with the books, he has begun *Ransomed Heart Ministries*, which seeks primarily to help men discover the heart of God and their own heart.⁷² Eldredge is a prolific writer, blogger and speaker.

His book, *Wild At Heart*, proposes that men are made in God’s image. This is hardly startling, but he contends that the male heart, in its longings and in what inspires it, reflects the wildness of God. This wildness is manifest in risk-taking, setting out on an adventure or quest, and fighting for good and beauty. A man bears the image of God in his strength; not strength of muscle and body, but strength of soul. The basic question that “haunts” a man is does he have what it takes...and when it counts?

Eldredge is certainly an essentialist because he says, “masculinity is an essence that is hard to articulate but that a boy naturally craves as he craves food and water.”⁷³ He notes that there is a ‘father wound’ in some men because their father, through abuse,

⁷¹ *Healing the Masculine Soul - How God Restores Men to Real Manhood*, 2.

⁷² John Eldredge, *Ransomed Heart Ministries*, www.RansomedHeart.com

⁷³ John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart - Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 66.

absence or silence, has not bestowed masculinity on them. The father wound needs healing and it is God who heals it; and only God who can.

He contends that a man has a warrior heart and must have a battle to fight, a great mission in his life that transcends himself, his family and home, and to which he can be devoted. He also needs a beauty to fight for and rescue, whether a woman or a cause.

The Way of the Wild Heart is somewhat of a sequel. It concentrates on what it looks like to become a man and presents a map for those who undertake this journey. The journey moves through the stages of archetypical male roles: Boy, Cowboy, Warrior, Lover, King, Sage. He devotes a chapter on each and describes how to raise a boy so that he will successfully navigate that stage. Each chapter is also applicable to those who are on their own masculine journey.

The same stages are outlined in *Fathered by God*. Here he contends that men are not meant to figure out life on their own.⁷⁴ Men need fathering, by earthly fathers or other key masculine figures in life, who bestow masculinity and help to answer the questions of whether a man has what it takes and whether he is truly a man. He adds that God's fatherhood can initiate men into manhood.

Coming from the wide and diverse area of spirituality, Rohr also figures large in this field. His book, *The Five Promises of Male Initiation*, explores the initiation rites in ancient cultures and he proposes that these rites helped a man for his own benefit as well as for that of the community.⁷⁵ For primitive cultures these rites provided the entry into spiritual as well as into male maturity. They involved some sort of dying; some breakdown, some test, and the boy came out the other side rebuilt into manhood. Rohr suggests that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is a perfect and complete example of this type of initiation. The book is certainly not academic but

⁷⁴ Tim Hawkes, Headmaster of King's School, Parramatta, made similar claims in an article he wrote for *The Australian*. From his experience in the education of boys, as well as his own experience as a father, Hawkes proposes that fathers can influence their sons through modelling of good habits and behaviour and through the quality of sacrifice for the family. Hawkes, Tim. "What every Dad must do if we're to defeat violence." *The Australian*, January 6th (2014).

⁷⁵ Richard Rohr, *Adam's Return - the Five Promises of Male Initiation* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004).

rather inspirational. It is a mixture of the author's musings and what he has learned from his experience with men. Rohr's premise is that some form of initiation, within a Christian context, is going to bring men into a maturity of maleness and spirituality.

In *From Wild Man to Wise Man*, Rohr, in collaboration with Martos, continues the thesis that there is a wildness within the masculine heart, which mirrors the wildness of God.⁷⁶ In speaking of the wildness of God, he means that God is outside human control. He also explores male spirituality noting that there are different paths to God for men and women because men and women pay attention to different things. Male spirituality is not just for men though it's men who are most likely to discover and exemplify it. Women can appreciate it too. It is after all, he says, the other side of feminine energy. This is not a unisex universe, he observes. Gender distinctions are not solely culturally or artificially created. Thus he says that masculine spirituality is necessary; otherwise spirituality would be over-feminised. According to Rohr, modern men have not been initiated into the sacred. Initiation is a move from the boy to man or, in terms of the inner person, from simple consciousness to complex consciousness.

The authors identify father hunger as the single most prevalent absence in the human soul and one of the most painful. A young man will always search for it even unconsciously; if not from his father then he will look for it in other men: coaches, teachers, ministers, scoutmasters and any older man who will offer it to him. Father hunger can become a full-blown wound – the father wound. This wound can be experienced and witnessed both in sexuality and in relationship to authority.

He moves into the depth psychology of Carl Jung to explore two more fundamental archetypes underlying male consciousness, the young boy (inner child) and the old man (inner grandfather). Each man needs both because some parts of a man grow up too soon and some never grow up. The eternal boy, *puer aeternus*, and the old man, *senex*, are both needed. Jung's work also inspires the exploration of the four archetypes and the shadow types.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Rohr and Martos, *From Wild Man to Wise Man - Reflections on Male Spirituality*.

⁷⁷ King – Shadow King, Warrior – The Black Knight/Dark Warrior, Magician – Sorcerer's Apprentice

Mention must also be made here of a sub-strand within the mythopoetic literature. Closely connected, there are certain similarities in this smaller group with the whole mythopoetic body of literature. As an example, I offer Podles' book, *The Church Impotent*.⁷⁸ Some within the mythopoetic men's movements, particularly those of a Christian bent, as well as commentators like Podles have observed that there are more women than men in churches in Western countries. Various reasons and solutions are posed. Common to all is a link made between the diminished masculine presence and both, what is called, the feminised nature of the Church and the ascendancy of the feminine in society. Podles does not restrict this phenomenon to just the second half of the twentieth century, as some do, but he traces its modern beginning in the Industrial Revolution. He co-locates it with social, political and economic change. This is not to say that he discounts any effect from gender. Rather, he sees gender as one contributing factor among many.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the context, both personal as well as societal, for this work. Both the human desire for fulfilment and for human flourishing as well as noteworthy understandings of masculinity were identified in general terms so as to signal developments further in this thesis. It has established the scope and rationale for doing this research and investigated the significant contributors to and themes within the literature around masculinity, both theological as well as secular. Having reviewed the literature I now turn to explore the framework that will assist in the development of this research. In this, I will seek to situate the thesis firmly in theology and theological method, with deference also to spirituality.

Lover – Addict. It is interesting to note that Pope John Paul II also uses the concept of archetype and footnotes Jung's understanding of archetype. When reflecting upon Genesis 4:1 he proposes that the biblical 'knowledge' that Adam and Eve had of each other that led to the birth of Cain, established a kind of personal archetype of human bodiliness and sexuality. (see p 208 *Man and Woman He Created Them*). This personal archetype assists in the search for the meaning of the body.

⁷⁸ Podles, *The Church Impotent - the Feminization of Christianity*.

Chapter Two – A Framework for Exploration

Introduction

The literature review has crossed many disciplines in an effort to capture the current conversations on and around masculinity. Despite the multiplicity of disciplines and the contributions of each, our present focus from this point is on theology and spirituality, which inevitably overlap. The overlap is sometimes intentional in bringing related fields together. It may also result from confusion on the part of the writer, or, for that matter, in an attempt to appeal to a particular target audience...

In the genesis of this project, I began with a deliberate concentration upon spirituality precisely because it coincided with my interests and it appeared to provide what I considered a suitable entry into the area of masculinity. I did not wish to write from a sociological or psychological perspective, but rather from the standpoint of faith and the Church. As the research project developed, spirituality gave ground to theology, although not disappearing entirely. This occurred, I believe, primarily because of theology's greater scope and sturdiness, and also because of theology's academic rigour. I became convinced that a theological framework would serve as a possible and worthwhile contribution to the conversation about masculinity. Not that spirituality is ineffective, but rather, because theology seems to speak more effectively. I will attempt now to explore these two fields, to glean from each its general contribution to masculinity and then to map a framework for further exploration based on some aspects of the work of Bernard Lonergan.

Spirituality

But first, it is helpful to explore spirituality, even if briefly. Definitions of spirituality arise in a particular historical context. While the Holy Spirit and various spirits are certainly mentioned in Scripture, the term spirituality would have been unknown to

many Christians in the centuries of the early Church.⁷⁹ In fact, theology would have been viewed as a seamless whole involving reflection upon Scriptures, ministry, and participation in the sacred liturgy. There was no clear distinction made between knowledge of Christ and God, that is, theology, and the living out of that knowledge in charity. Both were integral dimensions of a theologian's work, joined in the wisdom of faith, intellect and heart.⁸⁰

The medieval ages brought the apogee of monastic theology. Bernard of Clairvaux fostered a prayerful consideration of the Scriptures and its varying levels of meaning. Abelard is usually credited with the shift from this prayerful meditation on Scripture to a reasoned, speculative activity. In an organic way, alongside monasticism came the emergence of the universities. In these universities developed specializations in the area of theology, such as biblical, doctrinal, and ascetical theology.

Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas are significant among the medieval theologians for whom there was no distinction between the spiritual life and the formal systematic study of it. But in their time, the dialectic and dogmatic began to be distanced from the pastoral and spiritual aspects of the theological task. Constant dualistic tendencies surrounding spirit and matter and some theological tensions around intellect and affect caused the spiritual life to be perceived as engaging the will in pursuit of divine goodness, while the academic life engaged the mind in pursuit of divine truth. Increasingly over time it appeared that the spiritual life became interior and private, separated mostly from the public life of the church's liturgy or morality. Reason came to be seen as a surer way than the imagination to encounter and speak about God. There was also a more juridic understanding of what was spiritual over and against

⁷⁹ A concise concordance tallies seventy occurrences of 'spirit' in the New Testament. See William E. May, *Theology of the Body in Context: Genesis and Growth*, (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2010). Kelly points out in that the term 'spiritual' was used to mean any thing or person under the influence of the Holy Spirit since St Paul in 1 Cor 2:14-15 contrasts the spiritual person with the *psychikos anthropos*, the 'natural human being'. See: Tony Kelly, "Reflections on Spirituality and the Church," *Australian eJournal of Theology* 3, August (2004): 3.

⁸⁰ This brief historical overview is referenced from the preface of Elizabeth A. Dryer and Mark S. Burrows, eds., *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

what was temporal. This was evidenced in disagreements, for instance, over the temporal and spiritual power of rulers.⁸¹

In the modern period there occurred further specialisation in theology. Ascetical or mystical theology seems to have been accorded a secondary place due to the growing authority of the scientific method. Spiritual theology came to be linked to the practical everyday spiritual life of Christians because it attended to piety and perfection. Systematic theology became the theology of the academy, perceived as more robust intellectually. Interestingly in our own time, spirituality has found a position in the academy. Despite this meritorious outcome for spirituality and its easy companionship to theology, there remain differences between the two disciplines. One will often be more appropriate and suitable to a project than the other.

In North America and other western societies, the modern, and almost explosive, interest in spirituality can be traced to the 1960s. This was a time of change and upheaval when a significant portion of the population began to experiment with new forms of living, of acting, of social organisation and even of political activity. This phenomenon of spirituality arose within the setting of a desire not only for change, but also to take the inner life seriously. Alongside this it seems there was also an *ennui* with or distrust for all that had gone before.

In the context of such historical changes in perception and understanding as well as where we find ourselves today, an easy and concise definition of spirituality is elusive. Especially in the modern and post-modern era a virtual plethora of understandings exists. The whole area of spirituality has been described as full of din and energy.⁸² The word itself is “a catch-all word. It can mean many things.”⁸³ This is in itself not helpful and a potential weakness.

Another contributing factor to the imprecision in spirituality has been either an inability or an unwillingness to anchor the traditions of the past within a contemporary understanding of spirituality. Sometimes the past is not even admitted

⁸¹ Tony Kelly, "Reflections on Spirituality and the Church," *Australian eJournal of Theology* 3, no. August 2004 (2004).

⁸² From the Preface of Dryer and Burrows, *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*.

⁸³ Kelly, "Reflections on Spirituality and the Church". 3.

into it as it focuses solely on the present. Moreover, spirituality has been linked with, and even equated with, diverse and unrelated matters, such as self-realisation, cosmic connectedness, issues of ecology and the environment.⁸⁴

Among this disparate array of issues and matters into which the term 'spirituality' is inserted, or which become attached to it, there is what some have termed masculine spirituality. This interesting and somewhat enlightening spiritual entry into masculinity can be seen in those who deal with the concept of masculine archetypes, or the masculine identity or the male body.⁸⁵ Those who adopt this course perceive a direct connection between the interior dimensions of male existence and the outward manifestations of masculinity. These proponents claim that the desire or need to emulate one of the mythical archetypes or the generalised experience of being male exerts a decisive influence upon the activity of men. While logical, and not a tenuous link, it is the mention of interiority that seems to be the reason for using the term 'spirituality'. For others it is the use of the term 'masculine identity', indicating an inner self-understanding, which admits the mention of spirituality. It is important also to note that not every mention of masculinity along with spirituality indicates a direct link to the spirituality born out of religious faith. Krondorfer proposes that it is rather evidence of a reinvention of a religious discourse on masculinity that might be more appropriately called a secular spirituality.⁸⁶

With all that having been said, is it possible to define spirituality? Many descriptions exist and many variations are emerging, but is this multiplicity arising from one point or from many? A helpful beginning in seeking definition would be to note that spirituality is both experiential and existential. It is that generic and universal soul-hunger whereby the human person seeks answers, most notably in the face of some sort of crisis. Large-scale crises within a society, such as war or civil unrest, provoke this search for answers. It was noted that this very phenomenon occurred in the USA after the events in New York on September 11th. However, the crisis can be more

⁸⁴ "Reflections on Spirituality and the Church".

⁸⁵ An example of this is Bjorn Krondorfer, ed. *Men's Bodies - Men's Gods: Male Identities in a (Post-) Christian Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

⁸⁶ Krondorfer makes this claim of reinvention of a religious discourse in his Introduction to *Men's Bodies - Men's Gods*, 15. The contributing authors in this book do this particularly with regard to embodiment, intimacy and sexuality.

personal as when one asks what more there is to life apart from the already-achieved success or material security. Likewise, the demands and pressures of work and life can lead to a search for what is beyond the mundane. An urge to reconnect or even escape to the beauty of the natural world and a search for one's deepest desires are also seen as indicators, and even descriptors, of spirituality.

A general definition of spirituality can also include the influence and presence of one's faith commitment on the values and behaviours of life. Spirituality reflects also how one appropriates beliefs about God and the world and the process of conscious integration of these beliefs so that there is a transformation of one's life. Spirituality is a journey of self-transcendence and a dialectic that moves one from the inauthentic to the authentic and from the individual to the communal. It is the depth dimension of all human existence as well as the quest for ultimate meaning.⁸⁷

As a subset of spirituality, though a most important one for this work, Christian spirituality can contain all of the above diverse elements. In addition to all that is mentioned above, a Christian spirituality must comprise a belief in a triune God, a commitment to live life according to the Gospel, a sense of discipleship as well as a love of justice and an active concern for the world. There is also a self-transcendence that leads both to personal and social transformation.⁸⁸ Christian spirituality, and for this author Catholic spirituality, cannot be separated from the expression and practice of faith. Here perhaps is seen the overlap between spirituality and theology. A generalised or even humanistic spirituality will leave little room for a religious faith tradition. In contrast, a Catholic spirituality leaves little room for generalised spirituality and will focus deliberately upon the theological traditions and discourses of the Church.

Principe suggests another perspective, more like a framework, and offers a systematic perspective on Christian spirituality. In this framework there are three tiers of spirituality. The actual lived experience incorporates the attitudes, dispositions and practices of daily Christian living such that the faith professed becomes visible. Secondly, there is a communal aspect to spirituality. This is perhaps most evident

⁸⁷ Dryer and Burrows, *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, XV.

⁸⁸ *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, XIII.

when the spirituality of a religious congregation or Order is spoken of, for example, a Franciscan spirituality. Yet, this communal spirituality is also to be found present both in individual or extended families as well as parishes or congregations. Lastly, there is the third tier of spirituality as it manifests as a formal reflection upon the practice and meaning of the spiritual life.⁸⁹ It is in this latter tier that this work began but moved towards theology. Interestingly, the first tier of the lived experience remains as a significant flavour of the work as will be seen as the experience of masculinity and its theological quality unfolds in later chapters.

A quality of both the study of and the writing about spirituality in recent decades, certainly parallel with the other social movements that marked the second half of the twentieth century, has been an awareness of the political dimensions of spirituality. Issues of politics, race, class, and gender have come to play an increasingly significant role in how spiritual experience is perceived and interpreted. "No longer is it possible to ignore these crucial dimensions of human experience as we attempt to understand where and how human beings experience themselves as touched by the Spirit."⁹⁰ As well as the social aspect of spirituality, there is also the embodied aspect. Ignorance of these aspects of spirituality can diminish a vision of Christian life.

Schneiders is one of the foremost writers in the area of spirituality as an academic discipline. She observes that the object of the study of spirituality occasionally needs clarification. She defines not only the academic aspect of spirituality but also what she calls "lived spirituality".⁹¹ This is life that is intimately connected with spirituality, with the whole project of self-integration through self-transcendence and not with only isolated experiences or episodes. For Christian spirituality this is positioned within the revelation of God in Jesus Christ whose Spirit remains present in the community of faith, the Church. The interaction between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit is the core of the Christian spiritual life and this legitimately becomes an object for study in spirituality. The concrete experience of human persons in social

⁸⁹ Walter Principe suggested this systematic ordering in "Broadening the Focus: Context as a Corrective Lens in Reading Historical Works in Spirituality", in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*.

⁹⁰ Douglas Burton-Christie in "Introduction: Beginnings," in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*.

⁹¹ Sandra M. Schneiders, "The Study of Christian Spirituality," in *Minding the Spirit*, ed. Elizabeth A. Dreyer & Mark S. Burrows (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

and cultural and historical contexts flavours and influences spirituality and can be another object of study. Christian life with its teachings, symbols, rituals, moral expectations and behavioural expressions is also an object of study. As for methodology, Schneiders favours a hermeneutical approach, which involves describing the phenomenon under investigation, critically analysing it and providing a constructive interpretation for understanding.

Rolheiser certainly is also interested in the discovery of meaning but differently from Schneiders, and certainly not in a purely academic way.⁹² He would view spirituality as a way into, not just an experience of God, but an experience of God's own experience; rather a bold claim. He would claim that sexuality, with its potency for generation of new life, is at the centre of the spiritual life because a mature sexuality enables a person to feel as God feels in the divine creative act.

While conceding that the admission of what is carnal and earthy into spirituality may be, for some, stretching it beyond its elastic limits, he does not resile from this. His steadfast resolve opens the possibility for speaking of masculinity in the same context as spirituality. Rolheiser cautions that a popular conflation of sexuality and genitality is not helpful in what he is proposing. "Sexuality is an all-encompassing energy inside of us."⁹³ Genitality is a part of sexuality, not the whole. In the same way, he counsels that masculinity is not to be considered as equivalent to and interchangeable with the male body. There is more than the external to the human person.

The complementarity of the two sexes leads Rolheiser to describe sexuality as overcoming incompleteness. It is located and expressed in the giving of self to others, of which the genital expression of self-donation is one expression among many, albeit a most powerful and symbolic one. Perhaps Rolheiser's most spiritual statement about sexuality is to say that one foundational principle for Christian spirituality is that sexuality is sacred, and is thus located within the realm of what is divine. Returning to the beginning of his argument that spirituality is the way into the experience of God, he claims that sexuality is God's energy within us.⁹⁴

⁹² Ronald Rolheiser, "A Spirituality of Sexuality," in *The Holy Longing* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).

⁹³ "A Spirituality of Sexuality," 194.

⁹⁴ "A Spirituality of Sexuality," 200.

Perhaps what led me first into the area of spirituality was that strand of it that accords the body an important place. This can be termed a corporeal spirituality. It appears to negate, even to bring into accord, any duality of soul and body, spirit and carnal, that does exist in other streams of spirituality; though admittedly this duality does not always operate in a deliberate or conscious way. Within this corporeal spirituality there is a strong masculine thread. Krondorfer speaks of a gender-conscious embodied spirituality, which manifests in masculine archetypes as models for male spirituality.⁹⁵

Having canvassed all these strands, understandings and interpretations of spirituality, some helpful and some not, I need now to explain why this thesis is not in the area of spirituality. I have to admit to a growing frustration in the early years of this research as I attempted to grasp hold of this most slippery concept of spirituality and to join it with masculinity. It is not that some authors did not make this connection. Rather, I found their connection was contingent, serving the argument of the writer. When the claimed connection was examined in an objective way the connection between masculinity and spirituality appeared to be weak and tenuous. Some even conflated the two and made masculinity itself into a spiritual path.⁹⁶ If spirituality could mean many things, and sometimes several things to the one author, I needed something more robust, less subjective and more rigorous to scrutiny. I hasten to add though that I do not abandon spirituality completely nor do I wish to return to that previous position in the Church's life where a severe and strong divide existed between theology and spirituality.

Rahner observes: "the reality of God's self-gift in grace is identical with its presence in our experience, our spirituality."⁹⁷ Thus it is God's working of grace that could be said to bring together theology and spirituality. In light of this, it is my contention that spirituality plays an important role in masculinity because it is the masculine experience that is crucial to an understanding of masculinity; and an experience of masculinity that is imbued with the spiritual. Equally so too does theology, according

⁹⁵ Krondorfer does this in the Introduction which he writes as Editor for Krondorfer, *Men's Bodies - Men's Gods: Male Identities in a (Post-) Christian Culture*.

⁹⁶ Seth Mirsky makes this claim of the mythopoetics in Seth Mirsky, "Three Arguments for the Elimination of Masculinity," in *Men's Bodies - Men's Gods: Male Identities in a (Post-) Christian Culture*, ed. Bjorn Krondorfer (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 34.

⁹⁷ Elizabeth A. Dreyer, "Spirituality as a Resource for Theology", in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, 179.

to Rahner's observation since it is grace operating in nature, in this case masculine human nature, that is the object of theological reflection. Furthermore, I suggest that the discussion on masculinity becomes more manageable and more insightful when spirituality plays its part and is one factor operating within the wider field of theology. It is to that field that I now turn.

Theology

In terms of content and method, theology plays a particular and pervasive role in this investigation. It provides a perspective on masculinity that not only includes but also relies upon the Christian faith and Catholic tradition. Dunn, for instance, observes that theology does not exist in isolation but rather is in dialogue with other disciplines of learning,⁹⁸ while Ashley emphasises theology as a cross-disciplinary reflection.⁹⁹

In seeking to bring together masculinity and faith, I find Lonergan's description of the task of theology helpful and realistic. For him, theology's task is to mediate between a culture and religion.¹⁰⁰ This understanding allows for multiple dimensions of spirituality in relation to religion and faith to emerge, thus inspiring a thorough and structured conversation concerning masculinity, faith and the human search for meaning.

In a special way, the horizon of theological exploration is determined by the mystery of God. Theology is not primarily about the human person but rather the human person's relationship and interaction with God. While being able to address the human issues, in this case masculinity, it is not limited or bound by them. The weakness of spirituality is that it seems to begin with the human issue. Certain branches of it find themselves limited by or remain contained totally within the human experience. My research involvement with some styles of spirituality or spirituality studies has demonstrated that, although at times located within academic faculties, they can lack the disciplined reflection on faith that "attempts to distinguish methodically between truth and illusion and to ground its affirmations on principles

⁹⁸ Edmond J. Dunn, *What Is Theology? Foundational and Moral* (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998).

⁹⁹ J. Matthew Ashley, "The Turn to Spirituality? The Relationship between Theology and Spirituality", in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, 168.

¹⁰⁰ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, xi.

rather than on blind impulses.”¹⁰¹ It is theology, rather than anthropology, or masculinity or spirituality, that allows faith to express its own meaning and to shed its light upon a diversity of subjects and human experience.

Kelly outlines three basic and traditional theological techniques—analogue thinking, the way of interconnection, and eschatological reference—the second of which is most applicable here.¹⁰² Theology makes connections, in this case, connections between faith and masculinity, so that an ordered vision of God’s self-communication in Christ may be achieved. The Christian faith understands that humanity is revealed to itself in Christ. “Only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light.”¹⁰³ The human capacity to share in the divine life, a gift given by God, is pre-eminently and fully realised in Christ. Theology provides then the lens, namely Christ, through whom to view and interpret humanity and indeed masculinity.

Recent developments in theology itself assist in making this argument for using theology. Dulles claims that theology is entering a new age, less deductive and more empirical. Referring to Lonergan, Dulles agrees that the empirical theology of today has as its basis the subjective reality of persons, especially of those engaged in reflection upon their religious experience and the event of conversion.¹⁰⁴ Theology, he proposes, must have both a theological as well as an anthropological component, as this thesis attempts to recognise and as will become clearer as the work unfolds.

Given the complexity of its task and range of reference, theology itself is not monochrome. Kelly uses the visual image of a rainbow to describe the theological spectrum.¹⁰⁵ This is a helpful feature to be acknowledged as this investigation proceeds. Indeed, this very image of a rainbow allows spirituality, among others, to have its influence in the theological discourse.

¹⁰¹ Dulles, *The Craft of Theology - from Symbol to System*, 4.

¹⁰² Tony Kelly, *An Expanding Theology - Faith in a World of Connections* (Newtown NSW: E.J. Dwyer, 1993).

¹⁰³ Vatican Council II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - *Gaudium Et Spes*," in *The Documents of Vatican II with Notes and Index* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana and St Paul's Publications Australia, 1965 and 2009), §22.

¹⁰⁴ Dulles, *The Craft of Theology - from Symbol to System*. This is discussed in Chapter 4 "Fundamental Theology and the Dynamics of Conversion".

¹⁰⁵ Kelly, *An Expanding Theology - Faith in a World of Connections*.

Kelly explains that this theological rainbow allows for the human experience of God to be found in the ethereal indigo of human transcendence and spirituality; in the violet of inexpressible mystery; in the red of the flesh and blood of our humanity and the body, in masculinity and femininity; in the orange and gold of human values and culture; and in the green of ecology and environmentalism. I propose that such a theological view accords a status to masculinity, albeit along with others, as holding a theological quality and capacity.

Particularly valuable too is the role that human experience, in this case the male human experience, plays in theology. Kelly points out that it is through our human experience and through our analogical understanding of the world that we can speak of the mysteries of God.¹⁰⁶ This provides to the conversation about masculinity in terms of self-transcendence, an understanding of an ongoing process of collaboration with others and creative exploration.¹⁰⁷ At the foundation of theological thinking is the religiously converted human person in his or her subjectivity.¹⁰⁸ The genuinely converted subject moves toward the summit of self-transcendence in self-surrendering love. Conversion includes fidelity to the transcendental precepts of being attentive, intelligent, rational and responsible and is shaped by three conversions: commitment to the truth and meaning, beyond illusion and projection; commitment to moral value beyond the bias of selfishness and satisfaction; and surrender to God beyond all idolatrous attachments.

Having noted Rolheiser's comments on sexuality earlier, it is helpful to emphasise that theology is not *per se* blind to sexuality and to gender issues, and can rightly contribute to the investigation of masculinity and the human person in the light of God. Ward calls Christian theologians concerned with gender issues to construct a theological anthropology that recognises the importance of human sexuality and the sexed nature of male and female.¹⁰⁹ He thereby records his recognition of both the need and the possibility of such a theological reflection. Christian theology possesses

¹⁰⁶ *The Range of Faith - Basic Questions for a Living Theology* (Homebush NSW: St Paul Publications, 1986), 9.

¹⁰⁷ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*.

¹⁰⁸ John Bathersby, "The Foundations of Christian Spirituality in Bernard Lonergan S.J." (unpublished STD thesis Pontifical Gregorian University, 1982).

¹⁰⁹ Louw, "'Marketplace Masculinities' within the International Public Arena of Global Media: Towards a Christian Spiritual Approach to Male Embodiment and 'Genital Ensoulment'."

the resources to offer a rounded and critical account of what it means to be a man or woman created in the image of God. Ward implies that other theologians may begin with sexual difference, Scripture, tradition or another perspective and create a theology that includes gender, but he is convinced that the *imago Dei* is the correct principle in the construction of an adequate theological anthropology. Interestingly, in this he agrees with John Paul II.¹¹⁰

This theological concept of the *imago Dei* also allows for a satisfactory theological development of personhood. It is personhood in which not only the capacity for relationship originates, but also in personhood that there is the realization of the divine image. Furthermore, the capacity for and realisation of relationship is expressed visibly through embodiment. Thus, the body, and its attendant masculinity and femininity, becomes an expression of the *imago Dei* and can be thus admitted into theology. Sexuality manifested in masculinity (and also in femininity) can then be viewed as not only intrinsic to the human person, but also a divine gift to the person himself and also, in the action of relation, as a gift to others. As Ward puts it: "I play a part in the telling of God's story, and the part I play has everything to do with the sex I am and the desire that moves me forward, moves me towards others, and toward the future."¹¹¹ Nelson makes the same point when he says that the church is a community of embodied, sexual persons.¹¹² He goes further to point out, echoing John Paul II, that the very fact of the incarnation of the Son of God brings our human embodiment into theology. Having a body, and thus having a male body, is not an obstacle to theology and neither is it incidental to the search for meaning, which informs the whole theological enterprise.

In short, the focus of this theological endeavour is not an abstract notion, but the human person in his masculinity. The words of John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, the first of his encyclicals, wherein he states that the human person is not incidental to theology, but rather central to it, are particularly relevant at this point:

¹¹⁰ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 179.

¹¹¹ Graham Ward, "Theology and Masculinity," *Journal of Men's Studies* January, no. 7.2 (1999): 3.

¹¹² J. B. Nelson, "On Doing Body Theology," *Theology and Sexuality* Vol.1, no. 2 (1995).

Man is the principal route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ Himself, the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the incarnation and the redemption.¹¹³

While, as Avery Dulles points out, theology must begin with wonder and unanswered questions, it can also be a methodical effort to articulate the truth contained and implied in the Christian faith, the faith of the Church.¹¹⁴ Theology, with its history of different kinds of data, different kinds of logic and moral persuasion is capable of embracing the empirical and the existential, even if always in the process of formulating more adequately its foundations and methodological procedures, sometimes in contrast to the procedures of previous generations. Following Lonergan, Dulles endorsed the need for some patterns of recurrent and related operations that would lead to cumulative and progressive results.¹¹⁵ He points to Lonergan as the theologian who provides an empirical theology wherein the subjective reality of persons is constitutive of the method. For Lonergan, the processes of conversion operating within the human person and within his personal experience compellingly shape the subject of theology.¹¹⁶

I will be referring to Lonergan's *Method* as a basic resource in the conduct of this research into the theological understanding of masculinity.¹¹⁷ For Lonergan, the subject is a dynamic unity who is driven by the underlying *eros* of the spirit towards self-transcendence.¹¹⁸ At this foundation point of self-transcendence, theology and spirituality meet and find their unity in the one personal, self-transcending consciousness. As was mentioned above, the transcendental imperatives are expressed as being attentive, being intelligent, being reasonable and being responsible. Even though these imperatives are formulated in the utmost generality, they already indicate something of the authentic self-transcendence that a critical theological understanding of masculinity demands. The imperative, Be Attentive, draws attention

¹¹³ John Paul II, "Redemptor Hominis," (1979), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis_en.html.

¹¹⁴ Dulles, *The Craft of Theology - from Symbol to System*.

¹¹⁵ Chapter 4 in *The Craft of Theology - from Symbol to System*.

¹¹⁶ There is a radical nature to conversion not simply a logical progression. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 338.

¹¹⁷ What follows comes from Lonergan's *Method in Theology*.

¹¹⁸ Bathersby, "The Foundations of Christian Spirituality in Bernard Lonergan S.J.."

to the kinds of data that needs to be considered if a refreshed notion of masculinity is to emerge and differ from the fixed essentialisms of the past. The imperative, Be Intelligent, prompts that new questions that need be asked and expresses a discontent with previously unexamined positions. The imperative, Be reasonable, leads to appropriate discernment of what has emerged and what kind of evidence most counts in a theological understanding of masculinity. Finally, the imperative, Be responsible, necessarily causes one to face that appropriate response to what has as been freshly perceived, understood and pondered, and the decisions, either personal or communal, that must be made. I shall return to these basic imperatives at the conclusion of the investigation.

More specifically, Lonergan treats of at least three different kinds of conversion affecting theology at its foundations: intellectual, moral and religious.¹¹⁹ The presence or absence of such conversions will affect those conclusions that can be reached in this research. Though such conversions do not constitute a temporal sequence, radical self-transcendence is not possible if any of them is lacking. For instance, if there is no commitment, beyond any subjective feeling or disposition, to the objective, to the true, the meaningful and the real, any understanding of masculinity could degenerate into a rigid ideology and incapacity in terms of dialogue with the other. Further, there is the event of moral conversion: if there is no capacity to transcend subjective satisfactions and the bias of self-centred pleasures or aspirations, any notion of masculinity would be at best a defensive self-referential projection. Thirdly, without the religious dimension of conversion, there would be no underlying capacity for any kind of masculinity to get beyond all idolatrous attachments and surrender to God and love our neighbour in God. Needless to say, this project must exhibit the character of intellectual, moral and religious conversion if it is to succeed in presenting a theological understanding of masculinity. The concluding section of this thesis will be dedicated to such a consideration.

In commenting upon these conversions, Meynell observes that the concreteness of Lonergan's method lies in these events of conversion. They lead to a noted change of

¹¹⁹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 267ff.

horizon or perspective.¹²⁰ Hence they shape the horizon in which a theological notion of masculinity can be developed.

The human person as the concrete, converted, and existing subject belong, both for Lonergan and John Paul II, to the foundation for theology. Each in his own way understood that there is an incarnate meaning to the human body and a theological quality about the human person. Lonergan lists incarnate meaning as one of the six carriers of meaning.¹²¹ Thus, in the male human person, the body is not a purely physiological entity, but can be an incarnate and personal theological reality.

Lonergan's exceptionally broad field of endeavour, especially as he examines the human desire to know, does not dilute his view of theology.¹²² He sees not only a strong connection between theology and all human knowledge but also that theology brings its unique enrichment to human knowledge. For him, theology provides a fuller viewpoint that reinforces and does not contradict any other viewpoint, such as that of the scientist, the scholar or the artist. He takes the viewpoint of Aquinas that grace perfects nature in two senses: "it adds a perfection beyond nature and...it confers on nature the effective freedom to attain its own perfection."¹²³

As this chapter comes to its conclusion, I wish to outline the structure of this thesis. Lonergan understands theology as serving the Christian message in its task to "announce[s] what Christians are to believe, what they are to become, what they are to do."¹²⁴ He notes then that meaning of the Christian message is cognitive in that it tells what is to be believed. It is also constitutive because it crystallises the hidden inner gift of love into overt behavior and personal identity. It is communicative in its community-forming capacities to build up the Church in its mission to the world. It is effective as it directs Christian activity to bring about the kingdom of God. These four

¹²⁰ Hugo A. Meynell, *The Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, American Academy of Religion - Studies in Religion (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1986), 10.

¹²¹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 73.

¹²² In Mary Ann Glendon, "Searching for Bernard Lonergan: The Man Behind Insight," *America* 197, no. 9 (2007). Glendon observes that people working in fields other than theology have credited Lonergan with helping them to make breakthroughs in their particular field because he sought to bring theology into conversation with other disciplines. In fact, he described himself as a methodologist not a theologian.

¹²³ Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), 746.

¹²⁴ *Method in Theology*, 362.

functions of meaning inform the organising structure of the chapters of this thesis. They provide the skeleton of a method for this enquiry. Equally, since he names them as characteristic of what theology provides to the Christian message, it is proposed that they provide a valuable link between theology and masculinity, illuminating how it is possible to view masculinity from a theological viewpoint. Hence, these perspectives will round out a theological understanding of masculinity.

There is clearly a cognitive perspective on masculinity. Masculinity can be described using intellectual techniques of expression and research to offer an objective and intellectual understanding of masculinity, not only in theology, but also in such disciplines as sociology and psychology.

Then, there is also a constitutive perspective on masculinity. This informs male identity, male aspirations and expectations, as well as difficulties and struggles of a psychological and affective kind. The reality of masculinity as lived by men today “from the inside”, as it were, constitutes a subjective dimension of meaning that goes beyond any purely objective analysis. The constitutive dimension of the meaning of masculinity is most evident in the realities of marriage and family, and overflows into the associations by which society and culture are formed.

Finally, there is an effective perspective on masculinity. How can and is the male experience directed towards human well-being? How might it bring about the flourishing of human relationships and promote cultural and religious values?

The next three chapters will focus on cognitive, constitutive and effective perspectives on masculinity, yet primarily from a theological viewpoint while being conscious of the contribution of other disciplines.

Conclusion

As a final word in this chapter, I cannot overlook what Lonergan calls the fourth function of meaning, that of a communicative meaning. When meaning is communicated intersubjectively there arises common meaning. When the constitutive and communicative dimensions of meaning join together there develops community,

existence and history.¹²⁵ So it is that the common search for meaning is enhanced and further inspired, in the hope that, by exploring the deeper and theological meaning of masculinity, a more integrated and humane community of human persons can emerge. The communicative function of meaning will be most significant after the other three functions have performed their roles in chapters three to six. It is in chapters seven and eight as the theological anthropology of the human person is explored that the communicative dimension of meaning will be operative.

¹²⁵ *Method in Theology*, 79.

Chapter Three – A Cognitive Perspective on Masculinity

Introduction

Using Lonergan's perspectives on meaning, I turn now in this chapter to a cognitive perspective on masculinity. What meaning about masculinity can be obtained from a cognitive perspective? As mentioned previously, this is not about the cognitive activity of men. That is not the intention of this thesis. I will leave that to others and to other projects. Rather, here I wish to explore masculinity using the cognitive achievements of various disciplines. Later in the thesis, I will appeal to the theological viewpoint and content to inform the conversation about masculinity. I believe that masculinity is capable of this approach in the same way that femininity is through the lenses of feminism and feminist theology. I will not in this one thesis begin to replicate or even summarise the extent of those endeavours in the area of femininity but I do hope to contribute something of worth to an emerging and continuing conversation I see already beginning in the area of masculinity and theology. The focus of this chapter though is an overview of the sociological and psychological views on masculinity as well as some other current understandings of masculinity.

Sociology

The literature review provided the broad contribution of sociology over the last forty years or so. In this examination of sociology from a cognitive perspective on masculinity I shall examine the contribution that sociology has made to an understanding of masculinity according to three modes: the descriptive, the analytical and the comparative.

Descriptive Sociology

Perhaps the most helpful contribution sociology makes to an understanding about masculinity is to describe what has been or is happening with and around masculinity. This examination of descriptive sociology will include the sociological interpretation of physical difference, the discipline of sociobiology, contemporary portrayals of

masculinity particularly of the male body, perceptions of male attributes and the phenomenon of popular literature on masculinity.

Physical Difference

Now, while not a universally held opinion among sociologists, it is primarily the obvious physical differences between men and women that begin the conversation. Here we find three different positions.

It is noteworthy that some scientists, fewer sociologists though, propose that differences between men and women, obviously physical but also in gender characteristics are the result of the sexual difference.¹ This is a body-focused approach. Then, secondly, there are others who, while admitting to the obvious physical differences, do not accept that biology is the sole cause of gender related roles or gender related behaviours or characteristics. They maintain that other factors, in addition to physiology, have a part to play in the gender difference. The third position denies even the physical differences between male and female. It is possible that this position may be strengthened by what could be called the phenomenon of 'pop-sociology'. Something similar has happened to other academic disciplines. A body of popular literature arises espousing aspects of academic research or academic enquiry and making it accessible to the general public.

Pinker calls this proposition of denying any efficacy to the physical differences as the Blank Slate: "if nothing is innate, differences between the sexes cannot be innate".² According to this theory, a person is born like a blank slate on which family, society, expectations and gender role can be written; and all this irrespective of physical sexual identifiers. Pinker does not agree with this position. He maintains that to ignore gender would be to ignore a major part of the human condition. He notes that sexual difference does not imply inequality, nor that one gender is superior to the other.

Angela Shanahan, writing in *The Weekend Australian*, speaks of this 'blank slate notion'. She has experienced it and identifies what she calls social movements

¹ James A. Doyle, *The Male Experience* (Madison, Wisconsin: Brown & Benchmark Publishers, 1995). This is dealt with in chapters three to five.

² Pinker, *The Blank Slate - the Modern Denial of Human Nature*, 339.

towards a genderless future.³ The catalyst for her article was the decision of a Canadian couple, reported in the same newspaper a few days before, to keep the gender of their third child only to themselves and not to alert family and friends as to whether they had a boy or a girl. The parents named their child, Storm, and decided to raise the child in a genderless way for as long as possible. The gender-neutral name was to be matched by gender-neutral clothing and gender-neutral toys and activities. The purpose of doing so was as “a tribute to freedom and choice in place of limitation, a stand up to [sic] what the world could become in Storm’s lifetime, a more progressive place.”⁴ They wanted to allow their child to grow up unrestrained by what is expected of males and females so that the child could make meaningful decisions. This family understood their decision as deconstructing strict gender expectations, which they say, had led to gender-based bullying in society.

Further in her article, Shanahan cites the case of Canadian provinces which have legislated for genderless parent terminology, for example Quebec was the first not to use the term “mother” and “father” but rather “parent A” and “parent B” on school records and other provinces have adopted the same practice. The 2005 Civil Marriage Act in Canada, which legalised same-sex marriage, also changed the terminology to be used in certain legal documents from “natural parent” to “legal parent”. Shanahan quotes from the Canadian Labor Congress which, in turn, was quoted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. “One of the great myths of our culture is that at birth each infant can be identified as distinctly ‘male’ or ‘female’ (biological sex), will grow up to have correspondingly ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ behaviour (public gender), live as a man or a woman (social gender) and marry a woman or a man (heterosexual affective orientation). That is not so.”

Her own experience in this regard was to be on the panel on the ABC’s *Q&A* in 2008, near to World Youth Day in Sydney. She found herself, as a Catholic, asked for Pope Benedict’s view on those who identify as same-sex attracted. She began her remarks with the simple declaration that we are all born male or female, which was greeted with derision by some in the audience.

³ Shanahan, "A Biological Storm Is Brewing over the West's Genderless Future."

⁴ Jayme Poisson, "The 'Genderless Baby' Who Caused a Storm of Controversy in 2011," *The Star*, 26 December 2011.

Shanahan's reporting and experience signals that there are some who promote a genderless future as well as those who disagree with it. Moreover there is a social phenomenon that favours a rainbow of gender options, away from the binary division of male and female. DeMarco notes that Facebook gives its users the option of fifty different terms to identify their gender.⁵ DeMarco calls this a revolution away from the binary division of the sexes. Interestingly, Shanahan noted a shift also away from the traditional binary division; away from male and female towards the binary division of homosexual and heterosexual. DeMarco sees the roots of this rejection of the male-female binary distinction in a neo-Marxism that perceives not complementarity, but rather oppression in the sexual difference. This theory maintains that once liberated from such stereotypes and artificial categories, people would no longer feel trapped. Their freedom would be accomplished because freedom means having no restrictions at all. In addition to this, gender, according to the neo-Marxist theory, is entirely socially constructed and can equally be reconstructed or deconstructed.

Whether it is amplifying gender descriptors to fifty or reconstructing the binary division, such redefinition is only part of the sociological spectrum on gender. There is also the middle ground of sociobiology. Doyle outlines the basic position of sociobiology as being a "systematic study of the biological basis of all forms of social behaviour."⁶ Herein lies the ground of contention. The sociobiologists see the genetic makeup of a man programming his gender related roles in society. An opposite opinion sees genes alone as inadequate to explain what they see as the complexities of social behaviour and gender roles. The vast middle ground of this sociological landscape is to be found in the notion that biological factors are not imperatives but a perspective. Male biology with its particular chemical and hormonal constituents is different from female biology. Differences are going to be noticeable both in external physical features as well as preferences and styles of behaviour. These bodily differences are contributing factors along with the family and the cultural context in which the man or woman lives.

⁵ Don DeMarco, "Gender in Fifty Different Flavours," *Truth and Charity Forum* (2014), <http://www.truthandcharityforum.org/gender-in-50-different-flavors/>.

⁶ Doyle, *The Male Experience*, 44.

An important descriptive element would be missing if it were not inserted now, the relational nature of gender. Connell asserts that gender is inherently relational.⁷ This will be a key component later in the thesis of a theological view of masculinity and femininity. Even though it has a physical component, gender not only brings people into relation with each other, as male or as female, it contributes to the social order and the political and power order of society. Gender provides a way in which social practice is ordered. An important perspective of this social ordering is to mention that advantages usually flow to men from the gender relations in society. Some have called this a patriarchal dividend, that is, historically men have enjoyed dominance over women economically, socially and politically.⁸ The simplest and clearest example of this is the discrepancy that sometimes exists in wages between men and women. Gender difference can have a direct economic impact on the daily life of human persons.

Contemporary portrayals of masculinity

I turn now to some contemporary portrayals of masculinity and in doing so obtain a snapshot of perceptions of masculinity of recent times. Once more, this is social information, which also claims a place in sociology. Collins draws together some examples of how masculinity is portrayed.⁹ The examples he has chosen come from the print and visual media, a most powerful contemporary tool for changing opinion and perspective.

Firstly, he uses the *Dieux de Stade* calendar published by the French rugby team *Stade Français*.¹⁰ Here men's bodies are portrayed both as objects of beauty and desire. The target audience is vague since there are qualities about the pictures that would be appealing both to men and women. Collins claims that the naked bodies of the players, with strategically placed footballs or towels, sometimes alone and sometimes with others, and the serious expression on the faces, give to the masculine body a

⁷ R.W. Connell, "Studying Men and Masculinity," *Resources for Feminist Research* Winter, no. 1/2 (2001).

⁸ "Studying Men and Masculinity."

⁹ Paul M. Collins, "Constructing Masculinity: De Utero Patris (from the Womb of the Father)," *Journal of Men, Masculinities & Spirituality* 4, no. 2 (2010).

¹⁰ http://boutique.stade.fr/boutique/fiche_produit.cfm?ref=DDS2014&type=13&code_lg=lg_fr&num=2

message and a meaning. In this case, it would seem that the message is the strength and muscularity of the male body allied with a touch of vulnerability, most notably seen in the eyes of the player who looks directly at the viewer. Being a man then, from this source, is to be fit and healthy, to have a muscular and lean body, to be comfortable with your own naked body and the bodies of other men. This calendar draws attention for many reasons and it does subtly challenge something of the stereotype of men. It does this in a clever and perhaps purposeful way. It takes the masculine love of rugby and teamwork and adds to it the notions of beauty and body.

David Beckham in his appearances for the Armani underwear photographs gives another portrayal of what it means to be a man.¹¹ There are some similarities with the *Dieux de Stade* calendar in the shared context of sport. Beckham's reputation and football history is conjured by his mere appearance as there are few direct sporting references in the photographs though there are hints of physical strength and outdoor pastimes. It could be argued that the construal of masculinity here is perhaps a narcissistic one or even a hyper-masculinity. The interpretation given by Giorgio Armani himself of these photographs is one of representing modern masculinity exuding from a man whose identity is known not only in sport but also as a husband and father as well as a man of fashion.¹² The narrative is that modern man is like Beckham. He is good at sport, good at being a father and a husband. The quest to be good, not mediocre and certainly not a failure, is another message about what it means to be a man. It could be said that the deconstruction of whatever previous stereotype of manhood and manliness this seeks occurs almost instantaneously by the visual images of Beckham in his underwear.

From the movie *Casino Royale* comes another descriptor of being a man. Daniel Craig, who plays James Bond, appears in his swimming shorts, coming out of the ocean.¹³ This caused some comment at the time because this portrayal of Bond was different from previous Bond characters. Collins explains that his coming out of the water alone, not with a beautiful 'Bond girl', fills a space for both genders. Both men

¹¹ <http://www.underwearexpert.com/2012/02/david-beckham-emporio-armani-then-hm-now/>

¹² Giorgio Armani notes this in Collins, "Constructing Masculinity: De Utero Patris (from the Womb of the Father)," 88.

¹³ <http://citizenshift.org/blogs/masculinity/2009/03/26/oh-james-looking-a-the-new-bond/>

and women can gaze upon his rugged and muscular body. When we see him later in the film in a wheelchair recovering after having had his genitals tortured there is a touch of realism in his vulnerability. Craig portrays manliness in physical strength, physical beauty and vulnerability.

Another portrayal of masculinity has been called the Adonis complex.¹⁴ This male image and its attendant masculinity are marked by a preoccupation and interest in building muscles and a lean body, most usually as part of the gym sub-culture. Yet it widens into an interest in good looks and appearance, clothing and grooming, and often in terms of penis size as a mark of sexual prowess and proclivity. In this Adonis complex male narcissism can be said to be the norm and human perfectibility as the creed.

It can be observed also that the male body has become almost an idol of health and recreation. "The fitness gymnasium and the football field act as temples for worshipping the six-pack muscular body and the performing scoring hero."¹⁵ The greater use of the usually shirtless male body in advertising makes the male body both an object of desire and admiration, but has also led to the use of the body as a social text upon which and through which prevailing messages can be transmitted. This has also led to a segmentation of the body into its constituent parts particularly the genitals. It is not always the whole man who is viewed but parts of the body, the part that suits the message. Such instrumentality of the body denies the body's integrity and wholeness as well as its place in the structure of the person.

Admittedly, these examples are not exhaustive. They are purely indicative of some recent and contemporary social descriptions of being male. These examples indicate an understanding that being male is closely linked with the male body. This is hardly surprising since this is an enduring male stereotype and a regular male experience. It does challenge the view of the gender reconstructionists or, at least, demonstrates that their position does not hold a place among the popular perceptions of masculinity. Furthermore, if the male body is such an influential indicator for masculinity, it also

¹⁴ Louw, "'Marketplace Masculinities' within the International Public Arena of Global Media: Towards a Christian Spiritual Approach to Male Embodiment and 'Genital Ensoulment'," 167.

¹⁵ "'Marketplace Masculinities' within the International Public Arena of Global Media: Towards a Christian Spiritual Approach to Male Embodiment and 'Genital Ensoulment'," 176.

suggests a symbolic meaning for the male body. The male body can carry a message whether in an unconscious and archetypical way or in the conscious use of it, such as in advertising, to portray masculinity in a particular way. The wide reach of these understandings of masculinity through the media indicates that the meaning of masculinity is a socially prominent issue.

Male Attributes

In this descriptive task, it is also what society portrays as male attributes that must be considered. It is admittedly a mammoth task to describe in sufficient detail the attributes of being male in such a way that it convincingly accounts for all men. An attempt to do so is necessary at least to describe the landscape in which a discussion of masculinity may occur. An essential part of this is to address the connection between being male and masculinity. Semantically, and in general understanding, there seems to be a sure connection such that it would be understood by most people that being a man *per se* implies a possession of masculinity. Some sociologists though do question this connection.

Mirsky, for example, sees masculinity as “politically implicated in the patriarchal structuring of the gender order”.¹⁶ In this he relies on an approach found in feminism, which rejects femininity as being a sure descriptor of the lives of women. By direct implication then, he sees masculinity as a flawed insight into the lives of men. Whether this is reliable or not, valid or not, it does allow, even if for a moment, the observation that one defining attribute of being male, and thus one descriptor of masculinity, is not to be female. In the light of the ascendancy of the feminine in the last decades this may be helpful, even if as a base line from which to begin. Mirsky adds that masculinity also means having more power than that which is feminine. This descriptor of masculinity is contentious. However, it does support Mirsky’s premise that masculinity and being male can be separated, since it is not a universal truth that all men have more social power than all women. It also is useful to note that some sociologists will limit their discussion of masculinity to the sphere of power.

¹⁶ Mirsky, "Three Arguments for the Elimination of Masculinity," 31.

Masculinity, while not wholly unrelated to being male, can be, in part, a social reality that sits alongside or even above, the general experience of being male. I would suggest that it is impossible to talk about men and being male without talking about masculinity.

There are certain natural and automatic occurrences that almost always bestow the quality of maleness, most notably, the male body. These are the physical characteristics of being born as a boy. These are outside the control of the particular subject and thus can be termed automatic in the same sense that the automatic nervous system of the human body can be so named. One's masculinity then is "natural and healthy and innate".¹⁷ It has been observed that the rise of feminism and the homosexual movement has, for men, meant two possible threats to masculinity. The first is, as already mentioned, the task of maintaining masculinity as over and against feminism; and this has led to what has been called hyper-masculinity. The second is what some have called a fear of homosexuality particularly between men, a homophobia, such that heterosexual masculinity is valued and even valourised. Staying masculine then becomes an outcome, and perhaps a highly prized one, of masculinity.

The male body and male biology are unavoidable in the discussion of male attributes. The question then becomes, what leverage does it hold in the discussion of masculinity? One approach is to hold that having a male body is not a superficial quality in the same way that hair or eye colour is. In fact, in many social situations, it is whether the person we meet is a male or female that remains in the memory as a distinguishing feature and his/her eye colour may not. Gender pervades our personal identities to the degree that a trained biologist can distinguish whether any cell or tissue comes from a male body or a female body.¹⁸ Having a male body and male physiology is the primary male attribute and a defining one.

Other attributes then are either ways of behaving, preferred activities, goals or ambitions. This becomes the matter about which there is latitude for discussion, and

¹⁷ Patrick D. Hopkins quoted on p.32 of "Three Arguments for the Elimination of Masculinity."

¹⁸ Mary Rousseau, "Eucharist and Gender," *Catholic Dossier* (1996), <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-religion/715401/posts>.

there is much discussion among sociologists. Do any of these come from having a male biology such that one causes the other? Or, is the male biology a factor of varying degrees of influence? There are hard opinions and scholarly research at both ends of the spectrum. As seen in the discussion on gender difference, some will seek to deny the influence of the male body and attempt to remove its influence on the development of personal traits and attributes. The view at the other end of the continuum would seek to promote the male body as the sole determinant of male attributes.

Irrespective of the position along the continuum of the role and influence of the male body there are some attributes that are mostly associated with men. There are the physical ones of greater strength. Men are allowed more calorie intake in diets and in exercise regimens for men that aim at building greater muscle mass. In the area of work and commerce, men are usually expected to be self-reliant and outcome oriented, pursuing advancement and greater responsibility. Male values are identified as reliability and honesty, being ready to rise to a challenge and an enjoyment of competition. Men are expected to uphold honour and the law and to think logically. Boys engage in chasing, rough and tumble play, enjoy contact sports and manipulating objects and like doing things together. They are expected to be brave.¹⁹ “In all cultures men are more aggressive, more prone to stealing, more prone to lethal violence (including war), and more likely to woo, seduce, and trade favours for sex.”²⁰

However, men also can value learning and research. They can be good at music and art and cooking. At times, they can be vulnerable and talk about their mistakes and weaknesses. A man can be at the same time both externally driven towards success and interested in the cultural and the spiritual. The male human person is able to keep in peaceful co-existence seemingly contradictory attributes.

All of this demonstrates that while there are similarities among men such that it can be said that a particular attribute or activity is noticed in the life of men, there is a

¹⁹ These are assembled from many sources and are intended as examples of what is found in the literature about what boys and men mostly do.

²⁰ Pinker, *The Blank Slate - the Modern Denial of Human Nature*, 346.

multiplicity of ways of being male. Sociologists speak of multiple masculinities rather than masculinity. Indeed, some suggest that there are as many masculinities as there are men. While it is tempting, as well as helpful, to speak of usual male attributes, it must be recognised that no one man will demonstrate these at all times and to the same degree as others. To rely too heavily on male attributes is to move towards male stereotypes. I contend that it is possible to hold this position of multiple masculinities and not to hold the view of those who wish to deny or remove the influence of gender or of male physiology.

Popular Masculinity

In this section of what I am calling descriptive sociology I am attempting to convey what is happening around masculinity specifically from a social perspective, either academic or anecdotal. I turn now to a phenomenon that is not unique to the conversation on masculinity since it has occurred in other areas as well. It has proved to be a most significant feature concerning masculinity. This is the popular literature on masculinity.

Due to the digital and internet age, this popular conversation on masculinity is not confined to print material. Simply typing the term 'masculinity' into a search engine will give over three million hits in twenty seconds, an indication of the popularity of the term in seeking information or knowledge.²¹ There are blogs and websites to carry on a conversation about masculinity, maleness and manliness. Two of these will give a flavour of what is occurring.

The Art of Manliness describes itself as a blog for discovering the lost art of manliness.²² It offers to its readers the skills, manners and principles that, the authors say, every man should know. Topics as widely diverse as food, grooming and exercise are covered; as are the areas of relationships and parenting. One of the authors, Brett McKay, observes that the blog grew out of his desire to enable men to enjoy being men at a time when they had become confused about what being a man meant, particularly in the wake of the rise of feminism. He observed that this lack of

²¹ Google. Accessed on 10 March 2014. www.google.com.au

²² Brett and Kate McKay, "The Art of Manliness," <http://www.artofmanliness.com>.

confidence was present alongside a lack of effective male influence from fathers and older men. This was evident even in not knowing some of the personal grooming skills, such as shaving well and effectively, as well as being unable to do some of the household maintenance tasks that previous generations knew how to do. The web pages, video clips and articles are presented in a distinctively masculine way, with directness and masculine colours. Its presence in the “blogosphere” and its increasing popularity demonstrates an interest in, and perhaps even a thirst for masculinity.

Those Catholic Men contains articles and information assembled from many contributors in an effort to “embolden, enlighten, and engage Catholic men for the renewal of masculine character and spirituality.”²³ In a similar vein to *The Art of Manliness* it is directed towards men living their lives in the Catholic faith. It also seeks to deepen their understanding of the Faith as well as their own masculine character. There are thirty-six categories under which articles are grouped. They range from the Catholic faith, to workplace issues, to marriage and vocation, and to service in the world, particularly of the poor. “The Catholic Toolbox” is most interesting, and appealingly presented in a very masculine manner. It has articles on what the author calls the four pillars of Catholic manhood: namely, faith, prayer, the Church, and character. Once more, the very existence of this website demonstrates that there is a readership for it and thus an interest in its content and purpose. It is difficult to determine how long the website has been active though some articles are over a year old at the time of writing. So, it is not its longevity that can be an indicator of its value or place in the conversation about masculinity, but rather its significant presence on the web and through its social media connections.

As an example of the popular sociology contributing to the conversation about masculinity through printed media I offer some of the books authored by Steve Biddulph. It was in the late nineties that Biddulph became well known for his writing and speaking in the area of masculinity, particularly in the area of raising boys, which happens to be the title of his first book. *Raising Boys* was published at a time when the particular needs of boys was receiving attention in educational circles as their performance was being overtaken by girls. While the desire to enable girls to expand

²³ Brian Doerr, “Those Catholic Men,” <http://thosecatholicmen.com>.

their learning and achievement into courses of study that had previously been perceived as more suitable for boys was praiseworthy, it did appear that the pursuit of this goal had caused a decline in the academic achievement of boys. Programs and strategies were implemented that catered for girls. Biddulph's premise is that boys are different from girls and need different learning techniques as well as different parenting techniques. He spends one chapter describing the difference between boys' brains and girls' brains and how that impacts on their preferred style and rate of learning.

In terms of development, Biddulph speaks of three timeless and universal stages of boyhood, thus charting the points and ages of transition for parents. It's not a smooth and even development he notes. "You can't just shovel in cereal, provide clean T-shirts, and have them one day wake up as a man."²⁴ The chronological stages are birth to six, six to fourteen, and fourteen to adult. In the first stage the presence and influence of his mother is strong though his father will also play a large role. Around the age of six onwards, the boy will begin to want to learn to be male and will consequently look more to his father for interest and activity. It is throughout this stage that the boy will want to achieve competence and skill. From fourteen onwards the boy will need more than just his father since a wider group of male mentors enable the boy to take his place in the adult community as a man.

Other chapters in the book speak about the particular role of mother and father in the development of a boy and what each can and should contribute and in what ways. Sexuality and sexual development are also examined as is the role and influence of testosterone, providing some reasons for particular boyish behaviour. The role and value of sport in a boy's life is also investigated.²⁵

Two of his other works that capture the flavour of his work, deserve mention and are relevant to this investigation, *Manhood* and *Stories of Manhood*. It could be said that both provide fitting accompanying volumes to *Raising Boys*. The readership of these two volumes might be the fathers of boys. They could read with attention not only to

²⁴ Steve Biddulph, *Raising Boys : Why Boys Are Different--and How to Help Them Become Happy and Well-Balanced Men* (Berkeley, Calif.: CelestialArts, 1998), 5.

²⁵ It is interesting to note that Biddulph went on to write a book on how to raise girls as well.

the development of their sons but also as a critique of their own raising as boys by their parents.

In *Manhood* he offers seven steps to manhood: repairing relations with one's father; finding sacredness in sexuality; meeting one's partner on equal terms; engaging actively with one's children; having real male friends; finding your heart in your work; and freeing one's wild spirit. It is not a developmental framework that is completed necessarily in chronological order but rather more like a set of tasks to mindfully apply oneself to and achieve with reasonable success. They are not lock step, nor are they circular, but they can be operative at the same time. The book takes each of these tasks of the male life and expands upon them. It concludes with some anticipation of the effects and good that will come from men helping each other, possibly in men's groups, so that men become their best selves and help other men to do the same.

Stories of Manhood complements *Manhood* with a collection of essays and opinion pieces written by men from a variety of experiences and perspectives. They include memories of boyhood, and being the son of ageing and dependent parents, relating to women and being a father figure as well as employment, work and career issues. The book is an assortment of issues and situations encountered by men and it carries the mark of authenticity and the authority of experience.

Biddulph's style is easy and engaging and he intends his work to be digested and used by ordinary parents who are seeking to raise their sons well and ordinary men seeking ways of being male that are authentic. In this he succeeds. However, like all 'pop-literature' there is at times an over-simplification not only of content but also of causal connections and consequences. Subtle nuances that might be part of academic pursuits must be left out in an effort to provide what is helpful for those outside academia. Nevertheless, Biddulph has responded to an interest in or a desire to be masculine. Perhaps it is both.

Analytical Sociology

Thus far, the descriptive capacity of sociology to provide a cognitive perspective on masculinity has been the focus. While being a distinct academic discipline, sociology is wider than simply what might be studied at a university. In fact, the area of

sociology is a growing and expanding field including, I would suggest, any reasoned comment upon social phenomena.

Given such a wide scope for sociology, it obviously occupies a large portion of this chapter on what people are thinking and saying about masculinity. An equally rigorous and lengthy conversation is also going on around other issues of gender and sexuality. This work, however, is containing itself to masculinity.

Attention now turns to the analytical side of sociology. This is manifested when the question at the forefront is on what masculinity means rather than what is happening in the area of masculinity. Disclosing what masculinity means will be done both through an historical and a contemporary perspective, treating hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy, gender theory and some contemporary analysis of masculinity.

Historical Perspective

One of the significant contributions of analytical sociology is to demonstrate that masculinity is variable and that there are and have been differences among men; differences arising from class, religion, ethnicity and even sexual preferences. Often in a discussion as intense and even fraught as this one where perspectives and opinions are not only divided, but closely and hotly defended, the more objective view that analytical sociology offers allows not only a cooling of the temperature of the debate, but also a contextualisation of the conversation and the opinions being contributed to it.

Many of the contributors to the exchange about masculinity keep in their sights only the developments of the last fifty years or so, and of those last decades marked by the weighty influence of feminism, the sexual revolution, and the same-sex movements. For some, the discussion about masculinity is a means to provide a reaction to these. Within the context of the historical perspective of sociology, it is worthwhile to know what happened before recent decades and even how the developments of the last fifty years have a place in history. Albeit brief, this historical overview contributes a context for analytical sociology to operate in the present.

Perhaps one of the most significant features of the last three centuries, and one which has had a lasting impact upon Western society, is the Enlightenment. The philosophical work of Descartes, who proposed the principle *cogito, ergo sum*, had a most significant influence in European philosophy. Wider than Descartes, the Enlightenment also had an influence on the understanding of the human person. Once the act of cognition, *cogito*, was separated from being, *essere*, then, it has been noted, that the human person with his cognitive potency became the ground from which to philosophise, rather than from the very nature of being, natural or supernatural.²⁶ It has also been observed that the Enlightenment was the change of western European society from an overtly Christian one to a secular one.²⁷

In this growing secular atmosphere where the human person became the locus of meaning, and alongside a growing scientific body of knowledge, a scrutiny of the human body became a way of revealing the essential features of masculinity.²⁸ From anatomy and physiology it became possible to chart sexual differences between male and female, both internal and external. These differences were perceived as natural and complementary. Darwin's theory of evolution in the nineteenth century, with its idea of survival of the fittest, provided a context for thinking about differences including the sexual ones. What was particularly masculine, not only in physiology and sexuality, but also in attributes and activities, came to be acknowledged. Furthermore, the rise of education for boys, especially in England with the sons of the upper classes attending the Public Schools, fostered the development and hallowing of what was considered masculine qualities, such as competitiveness, valour, assertiveness and bodily strength. Male activities became located in sport, public schools, scouting, clubs and other societies. These became places to cultivate the male body and build manly characters. At the same time a muscular body came to be regarded as evidence of sexual potency and power. Once more, in Britain and its Empire, these same masculine qualities, attributes and values were fostered and

²⁶ This observation is from John Paul II, *Memory and Identity : Personal Reflections* (London: Phoenix, 2005). He notes that this is a significant break from the past way of doing philosophy, particularly that of St Thomas Aquinas. Under previous methods God as the fully self-sufficient Being provided the necessary ground for all created beings, including man.

²⁷ John McManners, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 267.

²⁸ This historical overview comes from Petersen, *Unmasking the Masculine: 'Men' and 'Identity' in a Sceptical Age*.

enshrined in the military and its structures and training. Military training played a part in the development of the concept of the idealised, male, heterosexual body.

Another socially significant phenomenon somewhat contemporaneous with the Enlightenment was the Industrial Revolution. At the same time that machinery was revolutionising the way of production and the way of life of the people of Europe the fruits of the age of exploration were occurring in the new societies of Australia and North America in particular. As new lands were opened up for settlement and development, almost universally through the activity of men, and factories became the norm of production, the advances obtained thereby caused a change in the structure of the family and in the role of men. From being generally the provider for the family through his own labour on the land, he became a worker in the cycle of factory production and distribution. The stereotype of the man as the breadwinner for his family arose. This new style of work took the man away from his family and separated for men the tasks of providing and nurturing. It seems that this had a particular impact upon the rearing of boys as they became separated from their fathers through his work and their being sent to school.²⁹

In the twentieth century, competitiveness, toughness and desire to control became dominant male characteristics, and even values. These became enshrined in the military, in competitive sports and organisational life. Consequently, aggression was considered as natural and normal for men. The idea that men are biologically predisposed to fight, both as a survival mechanism and in defence of their property has been an enduring one. It gained credence with the development of Darwinian-inspired instinct theory in the late nineteenth century and thus fighting and hunting are seen as a natural part of masculinity.

The post-modern period for masculinity is marked by the powerlessness of men, anguish over dominant mothers and absent fathers, the restrictions of the male sex role, and the search for the 'lost warrior'. There is also more scrutiny of what it means to be a human person and a deconstruction of previous notions of masculinity. "Males

²⁹ From Robert Bly, quoted in J. Brian Bransfield, *The Human Person According to John Paul II* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2010), 21.

are...becoming more exposed to public criticism, which results in an existential crisis and uncertain self-esteem.”³⁰

Questions of identity and the purpose of life can reveal a spiritual emptiness and confusion. Petersen notes that in a time of rapid social change, like the last forty years, maintaining a norm of manhood cannot be taken for granted but rather must be an intentional task. On a slightly pessimistic note, he observes that the avenues for post-modern men are few and probably restricted only to proving that they are not women. In addition, the post-modern social outlook is that there is no single truth defining personal identity. Rather the prevailing notion is that there is a multiplicity of potential subject positions that a person may assume. The postmodernisation of sex and gender involves “recognition of the existence of a plurality of possible sexualities and the capacity for the self to revise one's own sexual history and the meaning of any sexual episode.”³¹

This necessarily brief overview illustrates that masculinity has not been an unchanging social phenomenon. It has varied according to social, intellectual and even commercial developments. Within these developments, not all was happening in a neat or tidy progression but rather more organically. The sociological map of masculinity could be more akin to a scattergram than a reasonably coherent graph.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Maybe because of the human desire to obtain meaning or through a Darwinian survival of the fittest notion, there has always been a perception of masculinity that is dominant. This is what sociologists term ‘hegemonic masculinity’. In other words, the dominant understanding of masculinity is that which most members of a society say would be what masculinity is.

For much of the last three centuries it has been the white European male and his masculinity that has enjoyed hegemony. Sociologists have called this dominant

³⁰ Louw, "'Marketplace Masculinities' within the International Public Arena of Global Media: Towards a Christian Spiritual Approach to Male Embodiment and 'Genital Ensoulment'," 165.

³¹ Petersen, *Unmasking the Masculine: 'Men' and 'Identity' in a Sceptical Age*.

paradigm the Western paradigm of masculinity.³² The athletic male body is the dominant image among those who populate this paradigm: the white, middle-class heterosexuals. It is connected with a power paradigm of masculinity. If men are meant to be in charge and to possess power, then a strong and powerful body is not only what is needed but it is also a necessary ingredient.

However, this is not the only hegemonic masculinity operative in the world. For example, in Islamic countries there would be a different perception about what is considered manly and how men should behave as well as what gender roles are considered appropriately male. Likewise, in Asian cultures and Pacific Island cultures there would be differences. To state that a certain style of masculinity enjoys hegemony in a particular culture or era testifies to the variability of what is considered masculine. In a social analysis this is important.

It should be noted that while conclusive literature is scant, some sociologists and social commentators note that a particular male body becomes symbolic of an ideal or hegemonic masculinity. This is difficult to assess but even a brief review of print and digital media would support this proposition. As already mentioned, at the time of the philosophical Enlightenment there occurred the identification of manly virtues of will, power, honour and courage.³³ In an effort to make these abstract virtues present in the tangible, the male human body became portrayed in idealised form so as to present these manly characteristics. Some of the ancient and classical forms were reinterpreted and reconstructed to assist in this. Admittedly, this idealised male body developed over the next centuries in various ways in Western countries reaching a chilling crescendo in the Nazi and Stalinist regimes of the twentieth century. This demonstrates the power of the male body to depict masculinity; something that will prove to be significant theologically as well. It also demonstrates how masculinity is variable in its construction, deconstruction and even reconstruction.

³² Collins, "Constructing Masculinity: De Utero Patris (from the Womb of the Father)," 83.

³³ "Constructing Masculinity: De Utero Patris (from the Womb of the Father)," 90.

This is not just theoretical. There is a human tendency to construct an image of self through looking at others.³⁴ Hence a man will develop a self-image through the medium of cultural norms of masculinity. The visual images of manhood will be of a significant influence, either consciously or not. This may explain the power and attraction of male sport upon men. In sport it is in part the super-fit and super-strong male body that becomes an object of gaze and admiration. These bodies are sometimes portrayed as an object of beauty and grace and often as an instrument of dominance. Embedded in the admiration is the desire to be like these sportsmen. Most likely, it is never as simple as that. Male sport along with its attraction to and effect upon men is undoubtedly more complex than that, but its effects in creating a hegemonic masculinity is real. Moreover, a brief look at the way sportsmen were portrayed even twenty years ago would reveal subtle and not so subtle variations in what style of man was portrayed.

“Different masculinities do not sit side-by-side like dishes in a smorgasbord; there are definite relations between them...Some are more honoured than others...Some may be actively dishonoured...Some are socially marginalized...Some are exemplary.”³⁵

Patriarchy

It could be said that male sport and its dominant place in social fabric gives a regular glimpse of a patriarchal system, a social system organised around the interests of men.³⁶ Such a system is the product of four interlocking premises. The first is that men are more physically powerful and that this greater male strength is part of the natural law. The second supposes that families are naturally based upon procreation, and that the role of the man is to protect spouse and child. The third proposes that the public sphere of production, goods and property is naturally the realm of the male. Lastly, there is also the premise that the dominance of men has a religious significance.

³⁴ "Constructing Masculinity: De Utero Patris (from the Womb of the Father)". Collins refers to R. Horrocks *Male myths and icons: Masculinity in popular culture* (1995).

³⁵ Connell, "Studying Men and Masculinity," 46.

³⁶ Mirsky calls masculinity a patriarchal discourse and sport, among other masculine activities, achieves male bonding and affiliation thus sustaining and enlarging masculine energy. Mirsky, "Three Arguments for the Elimination of Masculinity.", 28, 35.

Mirsky observes that patriarchy aligns with the interests of the hegemonic masculinity. He argues that hegemonic masculinity has often been marked by action, violence and militarism. If the patriarchal concept of masculinity is socially endorsed, then it lends credence to the social construction not only of masculinity, but also of the type of femininity that patriarchy assigns to women. The latter has most usually been experienced historically in an oppressive way. Patriarchy leads to assumptions both about masculinity as well as femininity.

Patriarchy enshrines a certain version of masculinity as the hegemonic one. It sees that leadership is a particularly male phenomenon and that there is a natural pre-eminence of men. The style of masculinity that becomes the patriarchal structure for the social order becomes influential but also divisive. Men become defined by not being feminine. Masculinity becomes a performative task.

Contemporary Masculinity

Those who examine and reflect upon masculinity in the post-modern period observe that what is considered masculine has been marked by instability and contingency.³⁷ An examination of the popular media, most particularly the lifestyle magazines, points to a variety of messages about, and versions of, masculinity. Multiple voices and multiple masculinities abound. Among them there is even contradiction. This multiplicity and contradiction leads to uncertainty and confusion especially for men.

Another outcome of this multiplicity of masculinities demonstrates a further post-modern characteristic. Since there is not a hegemonic masculinity (or if there is one, many variations upon it) then a type of self-construction becomes possible. I become the man I want to be. One version or interpretation of masculinity is as valid as another. Such fluidity adds to an ambiguity and a confusing complexity about masculinity. Some commentators will also conclude, especially from an examination of the media, that the heteronormative understanding of masculinity is also being challenged.³⁸ This has been called a “queering” of masculinity and of the masculine stereotype. Alongside this is the notion of metrosexuality, “where the male is in

³⁷ Collins, "Constructing Masculinity: De Utero Patris (from the Womb of the Father).", 92.

³⁸ "Constructing Masculinity: De Utero Patris (from the Womb of the Father).", 93.

contact with the female component of his being, but free from the strict categories and classifications of masculinities of the past.”³⁹

A recent study into Australian men, and thus most certainly a post-modern endeavour, was undertaken by M&C Saatchi of Australasia. While approaching it from an advertising background, the study was also a most useful analytical tool to determine in a contemporary context the defining characteristics of Australian men. What is even more helpful about this study is that it asked men about their perceptions of Australian masculinity. It was not an interpretation of already existing sociological data. It was quite a specific and focused undertaking. Seven characteristics were evident in all men who were interviewed, though to differing degrees in each man.

Post-modern masculinity in Australia, according to this study, reveals that:

Men have a wide net of engagement with other men and this is often done at high-speed levels. Friendships develop when men do things together. Men need physical activity and enjoyment of sport and outdoor adventures whether this is done literally or passively. Men use humour with each other to provide the social glue among them. They place great importance upon nurturing their children. Their children are their most important endeavour in life. Men do enjoy shopping and retail activity though in a particularly masculine way. They are not impervious to feelings though often do not share thoughts or feelings about gender issues for fear of being labelled sexist. Men do treasure being in relationships and being romantic though not in an overly flamboyant or contrived way.⁴⁰

Gender Theory

In this discussion of the analytical aspect of sociology mention must be made of gender theory. This theory arises from social custom and conformity to social expectations and it focuses upon the roles that men and women perform. Gender theory analyses what men and women do and what they are expected to do. At its simplest, this theory attributes to each gender a role that is learned much like an actor learns his role. The male gender role theory explains why men behave in a certain way by highlighting that this is the socially accepted way for them to behave. Proper

³⁹ Louw, "'Marketplace Masculinities' within the International Public Arena of Global Media: Towards a Christian Spiritual Approach to Male Embodiment and 'Genital Ensoulment'," 167.

⁴⁰ M&C Saatchi, "The Modern [Aussie] Man," (Sydney2013), 6. The inclusion of the quality of enjoying shopping and retail activity may be of particular interest to an advertising agency like Saatchi. This was reworded from a dot-point list to a paragraph. It is an accurate quote from the report.

masculine behaviour is conveyed to boys as they grow up by family, school, peer groups and the mass media. They adopt role models or heroes from the sporting world, from movies and from literature, who demonstrate to them the masculine way to behave.

Comparative Sociology

A thesis on masculinity cannot ignore the phenomenon of feminism. A necessarily short overview of feminism assists in an understanding of masculinity through a comparative lens.

Feminism has many voices and feminist thought comprises many positions. That having been said, Sommers identifies two schools of thought that have distilled since the first wave of feminism.⁴¹ *Equity feminism* opposes discrimination on the basis of gender and seeks to rectify this. It has a similar distaste for any form of unfairness to women. This school of thought finds a neat fit in the liberal, humanist traditions and schools of thought. The same cannot be said for *gender feminism*, which perceives an enslavement of women by male dominance and the gender system. *Gender feminism* finds its home in social constructionism and post-modernism. It sees gender as a social construct and biology as irrelevant. From a rather jaundiced view of humanity, even a hermeneutic of suspicion, gender feminism sees power as the single motive for human endeavour.

Apart from challenging that men are normative when speaking of being human, the lasting effect of feminism is felt in the opening up of the whole terrain and landscape of gender for “exploration, activism and transformation”.⁴² That some did accept Simone de Beauvoir’s declaration that one is not born a woman but becomes one, implies that there could also be a similar separability for men. It raised the possibility that one is not born a man but becomes one.⁴³ This raises questions about what being male is and what being a man is. If feminism generally rejected femininity as an

⁴¹ Christine Hoff Summers referenced in Pinker, *The Blank Slate - the Modern Denial of Human Nature*, 341.

⁴² Mirsky, "Three Arguments for the Elimination of Masculinity," 27.

⁴³ This quote is usually attributed to de Beauvoir’s book *The Second Sex* published in 1949.

adequate descriptor of women's lives, does masculinity adequately describe the life and experience of men?

In response to these questions, various strands of the men's movements sought to answer and to explain what being male was and how one becomes a man. It could be argued that the hold which masculinity has upon the imaginations of men was heightened by the activities of feminism, if only in a sense of a focus upon the feminine begs the question of what is the masculine.

The rise of feminism and the ascendancy of the feminine, which has been a characteristic of the last fifty years of social history, have certainly been in response to the long-standing ascendancy of the masculine. In introducing the report on Australian men, Jaimes Leggett, CEO of M&C Saatchi, has noted, "We acknowledge that men have never lacked gender privilege or rights, but they still have the right to a voice and an opinion."⁴⁴ His company's investigation into the defining characteristics of Australian men and how they perceive themselves owes much to feminism. In a sense, it is in response to feminism; not in the combative sense as some other strands of masculinity studies and men's movements have been. Rather, it is a response to a perceived need to give men the voice to express their experiences, hopes, self-perceptions and self-knowledge. Quite possibly if women had not done it earlier, this for men may not have happened as well. The finest of responses to feminism is to seek mutual respect, equality and understanding. It can also be argued that feminism allowed or even elicited a masculinity that is gender specific and not gender neutral. In the search for meaning about masculinity there has grown an understanding that equality does not mean gender neutrality. Equality and difference can co-exist.⁴⁵ Feminism has also allowed women's perception of men to be heard and, as women have explored and rejoiced in their femininity in various ways, so too this has permitted men to celebrate openly their masculinity. There are many positives from feminism.

In seeking to differentiate masculinity from femininity, it is observable once more that the male body holds a crucial place for men. Noting what has been said earlier about

⁴⁴ Saatchi, "The Modern [Aussie] Man," 3.

⁴⁵ "The Modern [Aussie] Man," 40.

the body, a comparative outlook on sociology cannot overlook the influence of the body on masculinity. Hopkins notes that: “The logic of masculinity is demanding – protect and maintain what you are intrinsically, or you could lose it, mutate, become something else.”⁴⁶ Though written for a different context this observation about a logic of masculinity is most fitting when it comes to the male body, which is both an external manifestation of masculinity as well as its usually defining feature. That having been said, variance in perception by men of the male body must be acknowledged and even a certain pursuit of androgyny by some men. This is particularly noticeable in experimentation around gender variance. The question remains though about the significance of the male body most particularly to men. It is to be asked whether the perception of the male body is that of an idealised archetypal body or closely aligned to the real experience of the male body. Indeed, particular male bodies and the extraordinary variety of them either create a distance between men and reality in the pursuit of an idealised form, with the attendant stress caused by disparity, or it provides a wealth of possibilities.

Psychology

While sociology covers a wide spectrum of understanding of masculinity, it is through psychology that an inner understanding of the male human person may be acquired.

A psychological understanding of masculinity is partially informed by how the male brain works but it is also more than that. It is seeking to understand male behaviour and also the reasons for it. In addition, the differences in behaviour between men and women are of interest. Psychology takes account of difference and looks for reasons for it as a complement to the social context that contributes to it. Any intellectual differences or differences/preferences in verbal or visual-spatial capacities lie within the sphere of psychology. There is sometimes a fine line between what is psychological and what is sociological. Indeed, at times one informs and forms the other. Psychology does assist in an understanding of masculinity by also revealing the ambiguities about, and the complexities of being male.

⁴⁶ Patrick D Hopkins from *Gender Treachery: Homophobia, Masculinity, and Threatened Identities* quoted in Mirsky, "Three Arguments for the Elimination of Masculinity," 36.

The conclusions about the inner psychological make-up of men and attendant perceptions of masculinity lie between two extremes: positive perceptions or negative ones. For example, masculine traits of strength, virility and sexual prowess can induce what might be called a virtuous masculinity marked by bravery, courage, altruism, and protection of the weak. The reverse is also possible. The same traits can prompt bravado, pretentiousness and boasting, selfishness, abusiveness and control.⁴⁷ Such perceptions and presumptions signal a particular psychology surrounding masculinity, which in turn informs a particular sociology. If men are deemed to have the desire and potential for particular physical attributes, such as strength, then a corresponding non-physical quality, such as resilience, accompanies it. This then translates into social action and gender roles or expectations.

But is there a pure psychology or a singular psychology of masculinity? Or are there multiple psychologies surrounding masculinity? Pinker notes that: "Neuroscience, genetics, psychology and ethnography are documenting sex differences that almost certainly originate in human biology."⁴⁸ He asks that if bodies are not interchangeable then might minds also not be interchangeable? To put it another way, if the male body is different from the female body, it seems a logical step to assert that the male brain is different from the female brain. If the brain cells and the sex hormones that are present in them are gender-specific, then are the basic brain activities of seeing, touching and hearing gender-specific? If this is so, then perceptions of reality might be gender specific. A man's psychological life is built on such perceptions, as is a woman's. He will perceive, think, choose and love differently.⁴⁹ This implies that there might be a male psychology.

The particularly male nature of the consumer base for prostitution and the male tendency towards pornography indicates there exists a difference in this area compared to female psychology. Struthers, quoted by Kleponis, demonstrates that the male brain in its structure and chemistry reacts differently to the visual stimulus of

⁴⁷ Louw, "'Marketplace Masculinities' within the International Public Arena of Global Media: Towards a Christian Spiritual Approach to Male Embodiment and 'Genital Ensoulment'," 173.

⁴⁸ Pinker, *The Blank Slate - the Modern Denial of Human Nature*, 341.

⁴⁹ Rousseau, "Eucharist and Gender". 2.

pornography.⁵⁰ While partly biological, in the interaction between dopamine and testosterone creating a sense of euphoria, it is also psychological as neural pathways are created that activate the desire for more of the same experience. As this desire to re-experience the euphoria is satisfied, perhaps multiple times, the prerequisites for addiction become operative.

Likewise the male tendency to compete and to engage in physical contact activities highlights not only a preference, but also possibly a different ‘wiring’ of the brain. Moreover, a man is most usually able to rotate objects and maps mentally better than a woman. He is more likely to engage in risky activities. Pinker suggests that all of these are not learned behaviours, but rather arise from a different psychology.

Further support for this proposition comes from Brown who notes that these differences are not just cultural. He observes that across cultures men are “more aggressive, more prone to stealing, more prone to lethal violence...and more likely to woo, seduce, and trade favours for sex. And in all cultures, one finds rape, as well as proscriptions against rape.”⁵¹

Among other psychological concepts, essentialism needs to be mentioned. Essentialism springs from the generalising principle that there is a male essence and it is each man’s task to discover and appropriate this masculine essence personally. The mythopoetic writers, who will be examined in depth later, express this through archetypes, which capture and express a deep masculinity much like the collective unconscious of Jung. As a corollary, the faults or unpleasant aspects of masculinity are seen as an absence of real masculinity or that the masculine essence has not been fully appropriated.

Anti-essentialism can manifest as the desire not to be contained by categorisation. It resists assuming not only a personal categorisation of masculinity, but also a common perception or group position on masculinity. In its simplistic form, anti-essentialists

⁵⁰ Peter C. Kleponis, *The Pornography Epidemic* (Oldsmar, Florida: Simon Peter Press Inc., 2012), 22.

⁵¹ From D.E. Brown *Human Universals*, McGraw & Hill, quoted in Pinker, *The Blank Slate - the Modern Denial of Human Nature*, 346.

maintain that one becomes what one is through living as what one chooses.⁵² For example, a person becomes a man through living as a man. There is no essence of manhood that one receives by the very fact of being born with a male body.

Essential bodiliness is a progression of essentialism that seems to be generally rejected.⁵³ This idea suggests that bodiliness is somehow prior to the individual characteristics of the human person, which come later in time and developmental stages. Such a notion has inherent dangers in that it can lead to an objectification of the body such that the body becomes a thing a person can modify and refurbish according to a fashion or style, in much the same way as clothing.

Of necessity, this is a brief foray into psychology and masculinity. It is by no means exhaustive but I seek firstly to acknowledge its place in the conversation and to name some of the major threads of its complex tapestry. Psychology does provide an easy and uninterrupted movement into theology. Moving from the outer world, so to speak, of sociology through to the more interior space investigated by psychology provides a readiness for the metaphysical.

Conclusion

In proposing a cognitive perspective on masculinity I have attempted to relay the various interpretations of masculinity from sociology and psychology. These have been necessarily generalised, thematic rather than exhaustive. Yet, for the purposes of building a theological anthropology later in the thesis, a satisfactory understanding of the shape of the sociological discussions about gender, physical difference and male attributes has been outlined. Equally important is the course of development of masculinity over time with its accompanying hegemonic manifestations and the exercise of patriarchy. In an effort to expand upon this, the self-understanding and self-perceptions of men within the psychosomatic existence of all human persons was drawn from psychology.

⁵² Caroline Bynum, *Bodies that Matter*, 4. Bynum notes that this concept can be seen in a view of the body that is performative. The body, and thus the person, becomes what they are by performing what they choose or must choose.

⁵³ Bynum, "Why All the Fuss About the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective.", 2.

The cognitive perspective which theology offers to an understanding of masculinity will be presented later in this work, in chapters seven and eight. Now, it is to the masculine experience, the constitutive perspective, that chapter four turns.

Chapter Four – A Constitutive Perspective on Masculinity in Culture

Introduction

Lonergan's four functions of meaning are its cognitive, constitutive, effective and communicative elements. Using this typology, I now concentrate on the constitutive meaning of masculinity.

When speaking of the Christian message, Lonergan notes: "it is constitutive inasmuch as it crystallises the hidden inner gift of love into overt Christian fellowship".¹ How does this apply to masculinity? I suggest that it is when what is inner becomes expressed externally; when what is interior moves to the exterior; when what is invisible becomes visible. I aim therefore to examine circumstances, situations and ways in which masculinity becomes observable and obvious, when its intrinsic components are expressed. For example I will refer to three situations in culture or society each of which give a window into what it is that constitutes masculinity. These situations are a discussion of different paradigms of masculinity, a survey of the men's movements and a more detailed exploration of the mythopoetic genre. Somewhat in contrast to the more theoretical treatment in the last chapter, these situations will be on a more practical, lived and experiential level. Hence I hope to contribute to a deeper reflection upon the experience of the male human person and in doing so reveal constitutive elements of masculinity.

Paradigms of Masculinity

Louw in his article *Marketplace Masculinities* argues that masculinity is in a crisis.² He cites particularly the influence of deconstruction, specific criticism of men, and the fading of traditional male roles. At the same time, it seems that the mass media has claimed a larger place and stronger influence in determining the shape and character of masculinity. He observes that as a public issue, what it means to be male has

¹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 362.

² Louw, "'Marketplace Masculinities' within the International Public Arena of Global Media: Towards a Christian Spiritual Approach to Male Embodiment and 'Genital Ensoulment'"., 162.

become plastic, and thus changeable, instant, and subject to reinvention. In the framing of masculinities he offers three paradigms of masculinity that shape both the perceptions of and experience of masculinity at this time.

Before exploring Louw's suggestions, let me clarify the meaning of a somewhat overused term 'paradigm'. The Macquarie Dictionary defines paradigm as a pattern or an example.³ In more detail, the Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy offers that a paradigm is a pattern of thinking, a set of background assumptions taken for granted, or a set of attitudes present in a culture or society.⁴ A paradigm can be operative yet mostly undetected since its assumptions are so much interwoven with the culture or society's mode of life that it takes a degree of detachment and effort to name and recognise what the operative paradigm is. On the other hand, a conscious use of a paradigm can enable effective change. It brings a clear assessment of the patterns of thinking and how meaning is derived.

In this context, Louw proposes that the plastic and instant masculinity of today is shaped by three dominant paradigms, namely: the phallus, the post-modern Zeus and the playboy.

The phallic paradigm is centred upon the image of the erect penis and suggests the male as conqueror. While obviously connected to the male organ, the image of the phallus connotes a range of ideas rather than simply referring to a particular detail of male anatomy.

Since the erect penis implies superiority, energy, generation, penetration and possession, the phallus also connotes virility, potency, domination, authority and even aggression. It suggests the man at the height of procreativity and becomes the symbol of his manhood. Societal norms usually contain what might be destructive from this paradigm, for example wanton and unnecessary aggression, yet its influence is seen in a benign version of masculinity that favours the sculpted and muscled male body as in advertising and sporting contexts. Furthermore, this paradigm includes male hormonal

³ *The Macquarie Dictionary*, ed. Arthur Delbridge (North Ryde, N.S.W.: Macquarie Library.), 1254.

⁴ *The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Mautner (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 408.

levels, also a mark and an indicator of masculinity. The sporting and gym culture tend to channel the pumped masculine body towards socially acceptable limits.

Despite its immediate physiological significance, the phallic paradigm explains assumptions about masculinity that are certainly founded upon the male body, but are not limited by it. The phallus symbolises masculinity that is outer-directed, that of a man who makes his mark in the world, who struggles and wins, who conquers all. It is not a masculinity of vulnerability or weakness, nor is it a masculinity of interpersonal engagement with others or the world. Phallic masculinity is epitomised by the sole conquering hero who competes and wins against all odds. Youth, vitality and accomplishment are components of this masculinity. This masculinity carries strong overtones of the epic male of the ancient Greek and Roman periods and which is seen in the works of Homer and Virgil.⁵ Such a man was a fighter and a leader who showed prowess and skill in battle. He possessed physical strength, courage and loyalty. This may partly explain the success and popularity of movies like *Troy* and *300*, which are set in these ancient times. While the paradigm of the phallus may stimulate men to dream of what they might be, it does seem to strike a basic chord in the male psyche.

The second paradigm is that of the post-modern Zeus. It shares characteristics and is linked with the phallic paradigm. Zeus, the god of the sky and ruler of the gods of Mt Olympus, denotes power and authority with concomitant submission and subordination of others. The connotations of physical strength and fitness that belong to the phallus paradigm are not irrelevant to this paradigm of the ruler of the gods. Here the worst qualities of historical patriarchy are located. Louw names the men who exhibit the post-modern Zeus paradigm as “macho-patriarchs still spell-bound by power”.⁶ He further cites interpretations from the Bible as well as cultural manifestations of Islam, all of which require that women submit to men and that males dominate women.

⁵ Doyle, *The Male Experience*.

⁶ Louw, "'Marketplace Masculinities' within the International Public Arena of Global Media: Towards a Christian Spiritual Approach to Male Embodiment and 'Genital Ensoulment'," 172.

Zeus had an enormous and pervading influence in the mythology of the Greek world and in the life of its citizens. “Zeus, the great presiding deity of the universe, the ruler of heaven and earth, was regarded by the Greeks, first, as the god of all aerial phenomena; secondly, as the personification of the laws of nature; thirdly, as lord of state-life; and fourthly, as the father of gods and men.”⁷ While capable of awful heavenly visitations such as storm and tempests, he was also the father-protector of the state and of its rulers. His power was both protective and menacing.

The connotation here is of both the positive and destructive nature of male power that arises from male dominance. There is the paternal power that brings about growth and desirable results through affection, loyalty and relationship. At the same time, there is kingly power that contains danger and threat and which is linked to performance and control. The masculinity of this paradigm is constituted in both such that the same male person could possess power and influence.

Within this paradigm also is the so-called macho male, marked by virility, heightened masculinity and sex appeal. Positively, this type of masculinity is demonstrated in courage and bravery, protection of the weak and altruism towards others. This is the kingly father. From a negative perspective, this is a boasting, self-centred, abusive, controlling masculinity of the tyrant. The paradigm of Zeus signals a masculinity of power, physical and social, that has intricate connections to the male body as well as to the male psyche.

The third paradigm is that of the playboy. This is the arena of pleasure and recreation and the euphoria of performance.⁸ In this paradigm there are strong connections with sport and the performance of a healthy and fit body as well as the scoring of points and of winning. The playboy however denotes the man who plays, and thus sporting heroes, who are boys of play. Here also is the playboy who can be the sophisticated man of leisure and sensual indulgence. The hard-working man who puts duty before pleasure finds his opposite in the playboy. Hence, in this paradigm male narcissism becomes the norm. The acceptable male image is one of a tall, lean, tanned and firm-muscled man whose body has been perfected by his own efforts and who displays

⁷ *Greek Mythology*. Accessed 14 April, 2014. <http://www.greekmythology.com>

⁸ {Louw, 2012 #126@175}

social achievement of a high degree. In terms of Greek mythology, the playboy is not Zeus but Adonis.

This paradigmatic masculinity favours an external and a not necessarily mature masculinity. The focus is upon physical beauty and prowess. Like the other two paradigms there is a strong bodily component such that physical attributes constitute a significant aspect of masculinity. The social interaction of the playboy also lends itself to a focus upon self-indulgence and gratification. It is also a masculinity of youth though the aging playboy is not unknown. This masculinity carries connotations of unreliability and self-centredness. It is not the masculinity of leadership but rather of pleasure seeking.

The Men's Movements

While necessarily generalisations, Louw's paradigms provide a helpful entry into what is shaping contemporary understandings of masculinity. In addition to these paradigms, a recent and influential phenomenon in masculinity has been the men's movements. These provide another view into what constitutes masculinity.⁹ While these include sociological phenomena and public involvement, these movements also touched the actual and private life of men. They had a broad impact upon the understanding of masculinity.

The decade of the 1960's saw the beginning of the women's movements and what later came to be termed 'feminism'. This movement allowed women to call into question their traditional gender-based behaviours and attitudes and to effect change within them. At the same time, men were engaged in the Vietnam War and this probably deferred or delayed any similar masculine self-critique, especially in North America and other English-speaking countries. So it was that the feminist movements gathered steam and, in a very real sense, men were left behind.

Generally in a positive reaction to feminism, men began to see the need for something similar for the masculine as women had done for the feminine. However, it was not a

⁹ Here I rely mostly on James A. Doyle's excellent overview of this contained in his book *The Male Experience*. Admittedly, he describes events in the USA, however, since our society shares much in common with the USA, his observations are helpful nevertheless, particularly in providing an historical context.

simple matter of balance. Some men had experienced stress in their relationships with women. They had sought to change their role and behaviours to accommodate the changes that feminism had wrought. With the growth in divorce some also began to experience the difficulty and pain of child custody battles. From the mid-seventies to the mid-eighties, the fledgling men's movements were marked by a desire similar to that of the women's groups, namely, to eradicate sexism, a view where one sex was superior to the other. Thus many of the early men's groups were pro-feminist.¹⁰

Towards the end of the eighties there arose publicity for cases of men being discriminated against in employment and their being unfairly dealt with in child custody cases before the courts. In other words, men rather than women became the victims. There arose men's groups that were termed pro-masculinists rather than pro-feminists. These groups were in a response against feminism. The stress was on "men's considerable pain (primarily psychological in nature) and their need for personal growth [and they] argued that the women's movement, or more precisely its more radical proponents, had only served to increase tensions and conflict between women and men."¹¹ The split served to highlight the emerging entrenched attitudes of each side. The feminist side argued against male privilege while the pro-masculinist identified the need to heal men's pain. At this point there was no longer one single men's movement. There was no longer an ideological unity in existence.

Clatterbaugh analysed what happened. He categorised the fragmentation of the men's movement into six groups, each adopting a different perspective.¹² The *pro-feminists* remained as they were, so to speak, supporting the feminist perspective as had been done until the split. A significant and large group arose of those who sought a more spiritual understanding of masculinity, the *mythopoeists*. Other groups became focused upon the *rights of men* under the law and in social institutions. These three became prominent due to various factors, most usually because their particular focus and ideology attracted not only followers, but also publicity. There were also *the socialist* groups, which saw social class and economic structures as the shapers of masculine identity. *Conservative* groups tended to stress biology as the major

¹⁰ Doyle, *The Male Experience*, 8.

¹¹ *The Male Experience*, 9.

¹² See p. 9ff of *The Male Experience*.

influence in male roles and identity. As for the other perspectives and theories, Clatterbaugh calls them *group-specific*. He uses this term as a place to locate any other group whose dominant perspective does not find a fit in the other five groups.

Parallel to this divergence in the men's movement occurred also the arrival of men's studies in universities and faculties of higher learning. In the late seventies and early eighties graduate students and professors began to ask the same questions that had been asked by women just over a decade before. Now from an academic angle the question of masculinity, male gender behaviour and roles, and the social forces that influenced them began to be explored. Courses and research began in men's issues in an effort to understand and articulate what is unique to men. The tools of various academic disciplines were used, most usually sociology and psychology though also the study of history and literature. Associations promoting men's studies began to emerge, for example, the American Men's Studies Association. Publications also commenced. One of the most notable is *The Journal of Men's Studies*.

This overview is interesting historically and it situates the antecedents to what is occurring in the area of masculinity at the present time and precedes the research conducted in this thesis. However, it also charts the changes and developments in an understanding of what constitutes masculinity. These changes and developments are not even or linear but, like most sociological phenomena, at times somewhat messy and muddy. What can be stated is that something has been happening. The notion of masculinity today is different from what was considered masculinity in the 1950's. No value judgement is made here about today's multiple versions of masculinity and what some call a monochrome version of the 1950's. Let it simply be noted that it is different. The present task is to describe what is constitutive of masculinity in an effort to determine what may contribute to a theological understanding of masculinity. To continue to do this I now turn to one of the three major categories of Clatterbaugh's categorisation, the mythopoetics.

Mythopoetics

This is a unique phenomenon operative in masculinity. I have not encountered anything similar in the rather brief foray into feminism and feminist theology.

The depth psychology of Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell's work on universal myths provides the basis for the mythopoetic movement.¹³ Jung's perception is that below the conscious surface in the human person lies the depth of one's experience, a place where the imagination is activated by the types and archetypes of mythology and literature. Robert Bly took this up first in his book *Iron John* that is usually hailed as the beginning of the mythopoetic movement.¹⁴ Bly also echoes Campbell's love of European mythology. Campbell ascribes to myth the power to influence human behaviour. Of particular resonance is his first authored book, rather than the other edited works. It is called *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In it he studies the myth of the hero and proposes a pattern that is universal to heroic tales of every culture, which he calls a mythic cycle.¹⁵ Campbell and Bly concur in claiming that the journey of the hero is a metaphor operative in the life of every person. Bly narrows that to the life of every man, to the masculine journey.

Iron John contains two of the most important themes in mythopoetic literature, the deep masculine and the 'Wild Man'.

The deep masculine lies at the bedrock of the personality of every man. It is essential to maleness. In the mythopoetic view the deep masculine has become overlaid and hidden by civilisation, and some would say, further suppressed by the ascendancy of the feminine. It remains there only needing to be found and brought upwards to the surface. The means to do this is for men to acknowledge their wounds, most notably the father-wound caused by the breakdown of male connection between generations, and in acknowledging these wounds, seek healing. It is in the acknowledgment and healing that the essential deep masculine is uncovered.

The 'Wild Man' represents the basic male energy present in every man. This energy must be accessed in order that a man is fulfilled in his masculinity. This appears to be an expression of a latent essence of masculinity. Some mythopoetic literature focuses on the 'Wild Man' and others on the deep masculine. Both concepts depend on a masculine essence such that men are men, always and everywhere, and are different

¹³ *The Male Experience*.

¹⁴ Bly, *Iron John - Men and Masculinity*.

¹⁵ *Joseph Campbell Foundation*. Accessed 15 April, 2014. <http://www.jcf.org>.

from women. The claim that the mythopoetics make is that when a man is not in connection with his essential masculine nature, then the ultimate result is unhappiness and a feeling of dislocation. Two examples will suffice. If men are required or encouraged to become 'soft', that is to be gentle, in touch with feelings, more feminine, they become confused and even dysfunctional. Likewise, in the absence of what has been the traditional fathering of young men into manhood, young males engage in addictive behaviour, aggression or risk-taking to validate their manhood.

I now turn to *Iron John* to examine its message. It is a compelling and complex book. The book is called *Iron John* because Bly uses the Grimm Brothers' story of the same name as an allegory for the development of the male towards physical and psychological maturity.

Iron John is the wild man from the forest who is uncovered when a lake within the forest is drained because a hunter's dog has been snatched down into the deep by a hand coming out of the water of the lake. At the bottom of the lake there is found a hairy man who is taken to the king's castle and locked in a cage in the forecourt. The King places the key to the cage under the pillow of the Queen, but when the young prince's golden ball falls into the cage, the Wild Man persuades the young prince to steal the key and release him and in that way the prince gets his ball back. When this happens, so as to escape punishment from his parents, the prince goes off into the forest on the shoulders of the Wild Man.

In the forest the boy is given a task by Iron John to sit beside the spring and make sure nothing falls into it. In the water he sees a golden snake or a golden fish and he places his finger, hurt from undoing the lock on the cage, into the water to soothe it and it turns golden. The next day a hair from his head falls in the water and also turns golden. The next day he leans close to the water so that his long hair falls forward and touches the water and his whole head of hair turns golden.

This prompts the Wild Man to send the boy out into the world because he did not succeed in the trial of watching over the water. He comes to a castle and is given a job by the cook. One day he is sent to serve at the royal table, but he keeps his head covered to hide the golden hair. This angers the King because the boy refuses to

remove the cap at the King's command. The King orders the cook to fire the boy but she takes pity on him and exchanges him with the gardener's boy.

Working in the garden one day the sunlight's reflection upon his golden hair draws the princess to look out the window and she sees his golden hair. She orders him to bring her some flowers from the garden and asks him to remove his head covering. When he refuses, she yanks it off and sees the golden hair.

War comes to the kingdom soon after and the boy seeks to fight, but the other men make fun of him and so, when the others have gone, he takes a lame horse from the barn and goes to the edge of the forest and calls for Iron John. He comes and from his power gives the boy a warhorse, armour and fighting men. They charge off to battle and defeat everyone who comes against them. Instead of returning to the King, they take the long way round and the boy exchanges everything with the Wild Man for his lame horse and returns to the castle. Back at the castle, they all make fun of his claim to have played a decisive part in the battle.

Soon after the King holds a festival to entice the mysterious knight from the battle to return. The Wild Man helps the boy to appear as the knight, each day wearing different coloured armour and on a horse of matching colour. Each day the boy catches the golden apple the princess throws, but, instead of going to the King to reveal his identity, he gallops away. On the third day, other knights pursue him and give him a gash on his thigh. He gets back to the forest and makes the switch from knight to boy.

The next day the princess enquires about the gardener's boy and is told he has been to the festival and has shown the gardener's children three golden apples he had won. The King sends for the boy. In the King's presence the boy reveals the apples and the thigh wound as well as his royal status. The King is grateful and the prince asks for the princess' hand in marriage. The prince's parents are among the audience and are joyous to see their son again.

During the meal at the marriage feast another king enters and is revealed as Iron John who because of an enchantment had become the Wild Man. The boy prince, now a man, has released Iron John from that enchantment in a reverse and complementary

way to which Iron John has initiated the Prince to manhood. As a mark of gratitude, Iron John shares all his wealth and treasure with the young man-prince.

What interpretations does Bly draw from this fairy story?¹⁶ At the beginning of the book Bly proposes a third way for men; not the macho/John Wayne type of man nor the soft male who looks to the feminine for his energy. The third way is found in the *deep masculine* – hence the Wild Man under the water. This involves separating from the feminine as all boys must do to become men and going off into a metaphorical wilderness. Manhood does not just happen. It has to be initiated or called out of a boy.

In the story, the boy's wounded finger stands for the inner wounds that affect coming to manhood, for example, a father's lack of blessing, a remote, absent, workaholic, abusive father, or having no soul union with other men. The finger becoming golden means that where the wound is, that is where there is the source of genius for a man.

The hair represents sexual energy, animal hot bloodedness, and excess, as well as because it is on the head, thoughts and intuitions. All of these become golden. Golden hair signifies the young man has descended into his own wounds. He has entered the realm of his psychic twin who was his reflection in the water and he has moved into consciousness of trees, animals and water.

Going out into the world is a descent from king's son to being a cook's helper. This can take the form of lowliness, the ashes of suffering, learning to feel, and moving to the father's world from the mother's.

The ascent to see the king is symbolic of the male need to be approved of and recognised by a significant male person other than the man's own father. There is often a second king, not the father-king, in fairy stories who adopts and sets the hero a task. One must be called into the presence of the king not arrive on one's own or come too early.

¹⁶ Bly observes in the preface to *Iron John* that most of the 236 Grimm Brothers stories have women as their main character. Six concentrate on male dangers and triumphs. *Iron John* was among the first he found.

In the princess, the boy meets the woman who loves gold and he is sent to work in the garden. The work of love is introduced to him, a process like gardening from seed to flower. Warriorhood then follows the garden. In a man, there is an inner and outer warrior and the sphere of the warrior is the battlefield, whether physical, psychological or spiritual.

Bly outlines a linear view of male initiation, a view that he claims fits the story. There are five stages of male initiation: bonding with the mother and separation from the mother; bonding with the father and separation from the father; the arrival of the male 'mother' or mentor; apprenticeship to a 'hurricane energy'; and finally, marriage with the Holy Woman or Queen.¹⁷

The appearance of the boy at the festival each day in a different colour and on a matching coloured horse has significance for the male journey. The male sequence is to move from red knight (of Mars, of war, of anger) to white knight (gleaming, shining, fighting for good) to black knight (marked by humanity and understanding). It is only when he is the black knight that he can receive a wound that allows the spirit or soul to enter in. This is the initiatory wound, a wound that brings life.

Who or what does the wild man represent in this story? He is spontaneity preserved from childhood. He is the male protector of the earth. He is the one who calls away from a busy life. He is the positive side of male sexuality. His energy is one that is conscious of a wound:

We need to build a body, not on the parallel bars, but an activated, emotional body strong enough to contain our own superfluous desires. The Wild Man can only come to full life inside when the man has gone through the serious disciplines suggested by taking the first wound, doing kitchen and ashes work, creating a garden, bringing wild flowers to the Holy Woman, experiencing the warrior, riding the red, white and black horses, learning to create art, and receiving the second heart.¹⁸

The story ends with the freeing of the Wild Man to become the King. Bly says that the work as a man is to free oneself from family cages and collective mind-sets. In a

¹⁷ Bly, *Iron John - Men and Masculinity*, 182.

¹⁸ *Iron John - Men and Masculinity*, 225.

man's heart "there is a low string that makes his whole chest tremble when the qualities of the masculine are spoken of in the right way".¹⁹

In general, the constitutive qualities of the masculine that the mythopoetic writers explore tend to be similar. This could be explained by their common ancestry, so to speak, with Bly's *Iron John*. However, it is also found in their mutual reliance upon the Jungian understanding of the common unconscious. I wish now to explore three of the mythopoetic themes: male initiation, archetypes and the father-wound. Each of the major writers in this genre deals with these aspects of masculinity and as they do so they build a very clear and robust proposition that these are definitive aspects of masculinity.

Male Initiation

Rohr in *Adam's Return* claims that it is men who must interpret masculinity.²⁰ It is not, he says, a task for which women have the capacity. Historically, he notes that masculinity has usually been defined and interpreted by the hegemonic grouping at any one time. In investigation of the traditional initiation rites practised among primitive peoples, he notes that it was the older men who transmitted to the initiates the interpretation of masculinity. By these rites and under the direction of the older men, the younger men were brought to an entry into masculine maturity.

Some writers note that this coming to maturity in a ritual way is more necessary for males. Women have the physical and dramatic changes of menstruation that mark for them the coming into womanhood. Young males do not have a corresponding physical change that signals a capacity to take responsibility for another life. Podles notes that what women possess by nature men must achieve through initiation.²¹ Initiation signals maturity and "the creative use of instinctual male energies. Like any good use of an energy source, it requires maturity."²² Maturity also fosters a move from self-centredness to concern for others. Initiation rites used ceremony to ritualise

¹⁹ *Iron John - Men and Masculinity*, 235.

²⁰ Rohr, *Adam's Return - the Five Promises of Male Initiation*.

²¹ Podles, *The Church Impotent - the Feminization of Christianity*.

²² W. Merle Longwood Stephen B. Boyd, Mark W. Muesse, ed. *Redeeming Men - Religion and Masculinities* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 189.

what was occurring as well as to make it public. Ritual also clarifies to the initiate that there was a reality bigger than his own self.

These initiation rites involved a separation from the ordinary pattern of life. They required that the boy step outside of all that had been familiar to him up to this point of his life. Prominent among that which was left behind was the influence and presence of the feminine, most notably his mother. Separation from the feminine was crucial to an effective initiation into the masculine. It was also a time and process of a spiritual nature. This was a connection with the spiritual traditions of the tribe or group. It may even have been an encounter with the transcendent and the divine.

After the initiation, the boy returned to the community as a young man, ready to take his place among men. He had not only a new identity but also a new matured responsibility to contribute to the group as the man he had become. Rohr notes that the message to the young man of the initiation rites was that he was not the focus of existence but rather he was meant and called to contribute to the good of the community. He also learned the value of suffering and of enduring a loss of control over his life. Most usually, when the initiation involved personal danger, the boy learned the value of life and the reality of death.

In his other book, *From Wild Man to Wise Man* Rohr notes that the initiation rites also held a significant component that dealt with male sexuality.²³ This cannot be understood without being explicitly mindful of male physicality. Some will say that this is a purely biologist or essentialist stance. Rohr believes that “our meaning is partly encoded in our body, our genes, our shape and our physicality”.²⁴ Sexuality is a most focused example of this and for men, their sexuality is marked by, as he puts it, carrying and planting seeds. “The deepest inscription in the masculine soul is to generate life in others.”²⁵ Men are also capable of nurture and protection yet it remains a particular masculine quality to generate and implant rather than to receive and give birth. Masculine sexuality with its specific emphasis was brought to maturity for the good of the community through the initiation rites in which there was either a

²³ Rohr and Martos, *From Wild Man to Wise Man - Reflections on Male Spirituality*.

²⁴ *From Wild Man to Wise Man - Reflections on Male Spirituality*, 120.

²⁵ *From Wild Man to Wise Man - Reflections on Male Spirituality*, 120.

blessing of the male genitalia or even a wounding of them. This communicated to the boy that he was meant to father not just to impregnate and that along with the pleasure went also both pain and responsibility. Rohr makes particular mention of the Jewish practice of circumcision, the ritual, sacred wounding and marking of the penis, which made the boy a son of the Covenant and a man of the Judaic Law.²⁶

Dalbey is another author who advocates male initiation.²⁷ He rather eloquently and evocatively describes the initiation rites of the Ibo people of Nigeria. The boy is called out of the mother's house to join the company of men. The mother's desire to keep her son close is ritualised in the first response of closing the door on the masked man of the village who represents the spirit. Remaining outside the house calling the boy forth ritualises the men's insistence. They stay until their request is agreed to and the boy comes forth for the initiation. Dalbey notes that boys will be unable to feel like men until they have been called forth to undertake the masculine tasks to lead, to protect and to serve. He asks what does Western culture offer as a validation of manhood? "The driver's licence...freedom at eighteen to join the army, attend pornographic movies, and to buy cigarettes and beer. The message is clear: becoming a man means operating a powerful machine, killing other men, masturbating, destroying your lungs and getting drunk."²⁸ Perhaps this is hyperbole. He emphasises that the need for initiation into the world of men and manhood is not something that only primitive peoples or tribal societies need. Rather, it is a universal masculine need for the good of the society.

Furthermore, the calling forth of the boy through the initiation process is the work of men, not solely the father. Dalbey notes that in Western society, it devolves usually upon the father. But the origin of manhood cannot lie in the father solely. It must reside within male fellowship of men. Tribal culture understands this. This becomes even more crucial if a boy does not have a father, an absent father or a father who did not call him forth into manhood. In noting this, Dalbey names an element of masculinity that the mythopoetic writers suggest is key, namely, the need for male

²⁶ Richard Rohr, *Adam's Return – The Five Promises of Male Initiation* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004), 47.

²⁷ Dalbey, *Healing the Masculine Soul - How God Restores Men to Real Manhood*.

²⁸ *Healing the Masculine Soul - How God Restores Men to Real Manhood*, 33.

affirmation. A boy and a young man need the affirmation of older men. They need their masculinity to be acknowledged by other men. Just as Rohr contends that masculinity cannot be interpreted or conferred by women so too a man needs affirmation by the larger community of men. The mythopoetic writers argue that for psychological health, maturity and for the achieving of masculinity, initiation rites provide a transition from the 'given' identification with mother and maternal society to the 'acquired' identification with the father and paternal society.

Archetypes

As mentioned earlier, it is the psychology of Carl Jung with his emphasis upon primordial images or archetypes that has been significant in the mythopoetic literature. Jung recognised patterns and symbols recurring in individual dreams and imagery and found also that among religions and myths from around the world there were common elements and amazing similarities.²⁹ Jung's theory is that at the very core of personality, located within the essence of masculinity, there are ancient types of manhood, the residue of ancestral masculine memory. These images are ancient because they have been long within humanity, yet they are timeless in their influence upon the life of each man. Anecdotally these archetypes seem powerfully attractive to men. The mythopoetic writers are convinced that these archetypes are significant and powerful in their appeal to men. They seem to speak strongly to the desires and aspirations of men.

To speak of archetypes is also to speak necessarily of the inner life of a man, his soul; though not strictly in a theological sense. Indeed, not all the mythopoetic writers accept or operate out of a Christian theological perspective. Rohr is one such who also seems comfortable to speak of the Jungian-style archetypes. He makes an interesting observation about the inner life of a man, the masculine soul. He speaks of the "grand nature of the male soul" as being self-evident and enduring despite "feminist denials, despite the anger at maleness" and "despite men's doubts about themselves".³⁰ Perhaps the grandness of masculinity, as Rohr sees it, is in the enduring attraction and

²⁹ Thomas Mautner, ed., *The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy* (London: Penguin Books, 1997) s.v. "archetypes."

³⁰ Rohr, *Adam's Return - the Five Promises of Male Initiation*, 108.

effectiveness of the images, which appeal to men from legend, myth and story. Following other researchers he notes that the images tend to constellate around four ruling or primary images – king, warrior, lover, and magician or wise man.³¹ These images “seem to be four parts of every man, his primary fascinations, the major quadrants of his soul...They challenge him, they fascinate him, they threaten him, and he seems unable to totally ignore them.”³² It seems to Rohr that the four archetypes or ruling images together provide balance and integrity to a man. Admittedly there are times when a man focuses more upon one than the other. A mature man is one who honours and integrates all four into his inner self. From a Christian perspective, Rohr proposes that Jesus Christ is the epitome of male integrity since he displays all four male archetypes in balance of each other.

Just as each archetype speaks to the masculine soul, so too it is possible for the opposite of each image to be operative. This is the dark and shadow opposite to the light and integration. This concept is also Jungian.

The warrior is allied to male passion and the challenge of the knight is to do good and protect the weak. The dark warrior is testosterone out of control; the uncivilised and selfish knight who wreaks havoc rather than building up the kingdom. The wise man’s opposite is the accumulator of facts and information whereas the true wise man is the intellectual male, cultured and educated. The lover is the sensual, pleasure-loving and erotic side of a man. Its opposite and shadow can be seen in those whose lives become controlled by pleasure, indulgence and excess, whether sexual or sensual. Finally, the king is not only leader but also father. His alter ego is the man of self-interest who excludes others and eliminates opposition.³³

The journey of integration and maturity for a young man, according to Rohr, includes incorporating the positive aspects of each image or archetype. A man does this through the influence and example of other men, that is, through an initiation process.

A young prince needs some models along the way to become a king. If he meets some good passionate lovers, great wise men, and inner-outer warriors, he will be

³¹ Rohr refers to Falzon Moore and Doug Gillette.

³² Rohr, *Adam's Return - the Five Promises of Male Initiation*, 109.

³³ *Adam's Return - the Five Promises of Male Initiation*.

well prepared to hold together the whole human realm. He will be a king, even if it is just a king of his limited area of competence. You can be king of the cobbler shop, believe it or not, and the people will come to your court, not so much to have you fix their shoes as to have you fix their souls. And they will not even know that is why they came.³⁴

Dalbey notes that the power and usefulness of male initiation rites or processes is to be found in fostering “creative and productive ways for men to demonstrate the essential qualities of manhood”.³⁵ To illustrate his point he uses the archetype of the warrior. He notes that there have been occasions in the last few decades where there have been occasional and sometimes organised efforts to make males less violent, less warrior-like, through removing or diluting their masculinity so as to make them more feminine. There is great danger in viewing masculinity through feminine perceptions or feminine qualities. Even these efforts seemed to verify that the warrior spirit is intrinsic to males. When attempts are made to suppress or eliminate the warrior-type it only leads to it being driven underground only to break out in its worst forms, such as inner-city gangs of un-fathered young males. However, if it is acknowledged and integrated, the warrior within a man is capable of self-donation to a cause and he demonstrates loyalty, patience, intensity, calmness, compassion and will.³⁶

Eldredge takes a slightly different perspective upon the archetypes as well as on male initiation. He proposes stages on a masculine journey – from Boyhood to Cowboy to Warrior to Lover to King to Sage.³⁷ The stages are not lockstep but rather overlap and aspects of one can be found in each of the others. However the process of the masculine journey involves them all and spans the lifetime of a man. Each stage must be experienced and successfully navigated. It is both cruel and dangerous, according to Eldredge, to move beyond where one finds oneself. For example, a boy can be robbed of his boyhood if he is asked to act as king too early. This inflicts a wound upon the boy and a curse upon those around him.

³⁴ *Adam's Return - the Five Promises of Male Initiation*, 133.

³⁵ Dalbey, *Healing the Masculine Soul - How God Restores Men to Real Manhood*, 121.

³⁶ These qualities were offered by men who belonged to the Green Berets of the US military. See *Healing the Masculine Soul - How God Restores Men to Real Manhood*, 118.

³⁷ John Eldredge, *Fathered by God* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009).

Eldredge has added Boyhood and Cowboy to the four classical Jungian archetypes that Rohr uses. It is useful to explore each of these stages briefly as they uncover qualities that constitute masculinity.

Boyhood is a time of wonder and exploration. It is a period in a male's life when he is the beloved son, of father and of mother, but most particularly of the father, and this experience is for the development of his masculine spirit. This is the time of affirmation, to know that he is prized and delighted in.

The Cowboy stage equates roughly with adolescence into the early twenties. The emerging young man learns the lessons of living and he becomes involved in great adventures, some of which involve testing and hard work. It is a time of opening horizons and peer companionship. He learns that he does really have what it takes to be a man.

Towards the end of the Cowboy stage emerges the Warrior. The young man is the warrior until his thirties. In this stage, the young man finds a cause to fight for and in the battle learns discipline. He enjoys finding something to fight for and to fight against. Here is the clear time of life when passivity and masculinity show themselves to be mutually exclusive.

The Lover can emerge whenever the beauty of the feminine is encountered. If it is met too soon, before the young man has been the Cowboy and the Warrior, difficulties and disaster can result. As the Lover, the young man comes, not to draw his strength from the woman, but to offer it to her. This is the stage of the heart as well as of the encounter with the feminine. The young man is awakened to a beauty as well as to beauty and to life. This is the time of romance, of music and literature.

Only after this stage of Lover can the man become King and exercise leadership. To be King is to be tested in character because the good King exercises leadership in service and with humility; not for his own benefit or comfort. This is the stage too where a man draws around him a company of young warriors because now he can be a father to younger men.

The last is the stage of wisdom and grey hair, the Sage. The wealth and knowledge gained through life allows the man now to be able to counsel others. Instead of

disappearing from the scene of life, this can be the time of a man's greatest contribution when he can mentor other males, no matter what stage they may be experiencing. The Sage is most helpful to those who are at the stage of King.

Eldredge proposes that this is the quest of the masculine life. It is not quick since it is life-long; something irksome perhaps in our world of the instantaneous. What is appealing about Eldredge's interpretation of the archetypes is that it seems to align with the progress and unfolding of a man's life. It also explains what is appealing or distinctive in each stage of the male life. This identifies a task for each stage of life. He also makes the archetypes concrete in life, which Jung seemed unable to do. The archetypes exist, because of Eldredge, not in the shadowy world of dreams or the unconscious, but rather in the light and energy of life lived as a boy and as a man.

The Father Wound

This is a recurring theme in much of the mythopoetic literature. Some call it a wound; others call it a tear in the masculine soul.³⁸ Most usually it is considered to be inflicted by an absence of fathering, hence, the term 'father wound'. Dalbey observes that the effects of this wound are manifest in pornography, marital problems, confusion in fathering, self-doubts, crime, and the high number of men in prison.

While not expressing comment or critique of this phenomenon at this stage, it will be helpful to explore one writer's presentation of this. For this exploration, I rely upon Eldredge's chapter on the father wound in *Wild At Heart*.

In some respects, this wound goes to the very heart of Eldredge's understanding of masculinity. He puts it this way: each boy and man needs to have masculinity bestowed upon him and in this way he grows into it. Central to this growing into masculinity is that a young male not only feels, but also knows that he has what it takes and that he is powerful. He must come to realise this himself, but in an equal measure he must also have this affirmed by another man, and most crucially, by his own father. "Dad would be the first man in his life, and forever the most important

³⁸ Ted Dobson is quoted as using this term "tear" in Dalbey, *Healing the Masculine Soul - How God Restores Men to Real Manhood*.

man.”³⁹ In a similar way to the rituals of male initiation, the role of the father is to take the boy away from femininity towards masculinity; not as a dead-end journey, but so that the boy returns as a young man to engage both with his mother and with femininity generally. He is then capable of seeking femininity as a complement to his own masculinity.

When the father directly uses words of condemnation, especially in regard to the growing masculinity of his son, the damage is such that it can take years to heal. The wound can also be inflicted through neglect. A father who is absent because of work or a father who chooses not to be involved with his son harms him in a similarly significant way. The death of a father inflicts its own kind of wound. However, the worst wound is inflicted through physical, sexual or verbal abuse. Eldredge maintains that the obvious wounds, for example the wounds of assault, are more readily recognisable. It is the more subtle ones that are not always known and diagnosed, which become more difficult to heal and can be quietly pernicious in their effects.

The presence of the wound is certainly significant, but so too is the reaction of the man to his wounds. In some men, this will be reaction to the unrecognised. But some form of reaction is predictable whether conscious or not. A man’s behaviour will show it. It may be the drive to become fiercely independent since an absent father left him alone. Rebellion and trouble with the law could be a cry for engagement with other men, where there was none with his father. It could also manifest as a withdrawal from life into isolation. Eldredge notes that it could be seen in seeking masculine love and strength in homosexuality. Indeed, the homosexual orientation can be genuine for a wounded man even if the sexualising of it does not bring an effective solution. He notes that there seems to be either some over-compensation for the wound or some passivity in the face of it. Both are rooted in a loss of direction in the masculine journey, at least, in that direction towards an integrated manhood. A man must find validation of his masculinity, but the wounded man may look for validation of himself and his manhood in wrong or inappropriate places. From his Christian perspective, Eldredge positions the possibility of finding this masculine validation firmly and ultimately in God as Father.

³⁹ Eldredge, *Wild at Heart - Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul*, 62.

To complement Eldredge's exploration of the father-wound I turn also to Rohr.⁴⁰ He uses the term 'father-hunger' and his experience leads him to say that this unsatisfied need for fathering is to be found both in women and men, though he admits it is felt more keenly and more regularly by men. He claims it is the most prevalent deficiency as well as the most painful one in the human soul. For a man to grow up without the love of a good man and without a father's affirmation and understanding causes the hunger. Consequently a man begins to look for it in other men. In many ways these men who are searching for male affirmation can become the epitome of a good team player and a good soldier. They are obedient and malleable because they seek the approval of the man-in-charge, the father figure, whom they seek to please in the same way a boy would seek to please his father to win his admiration and approval.

In this, Rohr sees a strong connection to the particular quality of father love. Mother-love is foundational and present from the very start of life. It is predictable and reliable. Father-love is not instinctive and present in the same way. Without the months of gestation and the physical bond of pregnancy and birth, father-love comes from 'the outside' and it arises because there is a conscious choice to give it. Father-love brings with it the feeling of being chosen. "That is the uniquely transformative experience of male love."⁴¹

Yet, the trajectory of father-hunger can be destructive, but also constructive. In its destructive version, it becomes the unsatisfied hunger lashing out against authority or replicating the hunger in others by abusive or destructive behaviour. The same longing though can lead a man to ensure other men do not experience the same hunger. These men become good coaches and mentors. In doing so they even nurture themselves.

The hunger for the father can become a deep wound. Here Rohr finds common ground with Eldredge. Coming from a Catholic background, Rohr agrees with Eldredge that God as Father is the source of healing of the wound, but he also suggests ways in which men can act in partnership with God in this healing. Forgiveness of one's own father or father-figures for their misdeeds or failings is the

⁴⁰ Rohr and Martos, *From Wild Man to Wise Man - Reflections on Male Spirituality*.

⁴¹ *From Wild Man to Wise Man - Reflections on Male Spirituality*, 69.

beginning. Each man must consciously re-parent the boy who lingers within him, and he does this through male relationships and the inner spiritual work of prayer and/or counselling or therapy. Rohr suggests that this is the way to a healthy masculinity.

Critique and Evaluation

Walking into any sizeable bookstore and inspecting the shelves that house the books on men's issues one can easily assess the popularity of the mythopoetic writers. Among the books the mythopoetic genre will be well represented. Indeed, the genre has developed into a second generation of authors. Others have taken up the work of Bly, Eldredge, Dalbey and Rohr. The popularity, reach and influence of this genre cannot be overstated.

However, the mythopoetic style and approach certainly has its critics. Some see the mythopoetic message as harbouring anti-woman sentiments, even to the point of styling it as an attack on women.⁴² Others, while not entering into the feminist-masculinist dichotomy, accuse the mythopoetic genre of being overly focused on the personal, that is, the authenticity of the individual man. These critics argue that the mythopoetic style ignores the social and public side of masculinity as men are "luxuriating in perfumed gardens" while the world with its messiness is outside the garden walls and beyond sight.⁴³ Opponents of this view observe that what is personal eventually becomes public since the actions of an individual carry repercussions for the group. They claim that there is no division, but interplay between private and public.

The mythopoetic writers have given birth to men's groups, organisations, and movements. Given that there is an array of positions on masculinity, it would be inaccurate to claim a mythopoetic influence on each and every one. The mythopoetic genre is a most significant and influential presence in recent history, a time that has seen groups identified with men's rights, fatherhood issues and even anti-feminism.

⁴² Doyle, *The Male Experience*, 11. Here Doyle quotes "Mythopoetic foundations of new age patriarchy", Chapter 2, *Masculinities*, K. Clatterbaugh, 1993.

⁴³ Dash, *Betwixt and between in the mens [sic] movement*, quoted in *The Male Experience*, 13.

Krondorfer provides an insightful critique of the mythopoetic men's movement.⁴⁴ His assessment is that its success can be traced to its inherent spiritual nature, which strangely appeals to men at this time who often feel estranged from religion in its usual expressions. Krondorfer claims that the greatest appeal of the mythopoetic literature is that it contains the key to a new masculine spirituality. Indeed the appeal is for men to return to the ancient sources of masculinity: myth, legend and archetype. Krondorfer's critique is directed less towards this than towards the particular representation of men and masculinity contained within the mythopoetic literature. While space does not permit a foray into the work of Arnold, he can provide a biblical, and thus Christian, counterpoint to the mythopoetic use of archetypes.⁴⁵ It is likely too that since he draws upon the Jewish and Christian biblical tradition and history, it could answer Krondorfer's critique of the mythopoetic movement and bring men from an estrangement to religion through finding the male archetypes in the Bible.

Further critics see the mythopoetic movement as seeking to entrench male domination, being intrinsically and harmfully conservative, posing a danger to women and being a backlash, essentialist movement. Such criticisms cannot be equally directed at each mythopoetic author. There is a spectrum of positions among them; equally so among the mythopoetic groups.

Some positions certainly are strongly ideological, however, those considered for my research belong more to the middle ground. These are not revisionist in the extreme, but rather are seeking, one could say, to connect men to the age-old narrative of masculinity. They are not anti-feminist, but are critically pro-masculine. They recognise the wounds men have suffered, but do not overlook the wounds of others. However, the criticism that Krondorfer makes that "by uncritically reappropriating androcentric myths and traditions, they play into the hands of a conservative gender ideology and policy" is fair.⁴⁶ Whatever position one takes on the mythopoetic

⁴⁴ Krondorfer, *Men's Bodies - Men's Gods: Male Identities in a (Post-) Christian Culture*.

⁴⁵ The work of Patrick M. Arnold, *Wildmen, Warriors and Kings: Masculine Spirituality and the Bible*. New York: Crossroad, 1991 was consulted in the research for this work but it was considered that, while his work was valuable and interesting, it could not easily be incorporated due to its location within the area of spirituality.

⁴⁶ See *Introduction* in *Men's Bodies - Men's Gods: Male Identities in a (Post-) Christian Culture*, 14.

authors, theirs is a significant contribution towards an understanding of what constitutes masculinity.

Conclusion

In this chapter some constitutive elements of masculinity in society have been examined. These elements are operative across and within a range of social groupings. It is this somewhat pervasive quality that makes them worthy of investigation. It also makes them noteworthy in articulating what it is that constitutes masculinity.

While not all-inclusive of that which constitutes masculinity, nevertheless, the significant feature of recent times, the mythopoetic literature, featured in this chapter. This genre has been a major influence not only in literature but also in the organisation of men towards achieving either redress or advancement. It also addresses many of the inner and spiritual needs of men. Equally so, the paradigms that operate in communal or individual understanding of masculinity were explored. Some of these themes will reappear in chapter six as some real experiences of Catholic men are outlined.

Since this thesis is situated within the field of theology it is appropriate to extend this investigation into the area of the Christian life. Therefore, what is constitutive of masculinity within the experience of the Christian faith forms the next chapter.

Chapter Five – A Constitutive Perspective on Masculinity in the Christian Life

Introduction

In order to investigate further what constitutes masculinity within the church I shall examine four states of life. These are four sets of circumstances, four situations, where men find themselves, and in which they live their lives as men within the church. In each state men not only express masculinity but also discover it and refine it. The first state of life will be in the Christian faith, with some particular reference to the Catholic Church. Then what constitutes masculinity in marriage, in celibacy and in fatherhood will be considered.

The Church

Statistics bear out the easily observed situation that there are usually more women attending church services than there are men. In the literature review the statistic contained in the 2013 National Church Life Survey in Australia was quoted, namely, only thirty-nine per cent of church attenders were men. Does this say something about masculinity and, more pointedly, something about masculinity and the Christian faith?

Podles has examined this phenomenon in his book *The Church Impotent*. He claims that it is not just a recent phenomenon of the last decades of the twentieth century. He believes that a barrier seems to exist now between western Christianity and men, and that this barrier has arisen over some considerable time. One of his central claims is that an ideology of masculinity has replaced Christianity as the true religion of men. A dichotomy is operative between masculinity and Christianity.

We live in a society with a female religion and a male religion: Christianity of various sorts, for women and non-masculine men; and masculinity, especially in the forms of competition and violence that culminate in war, for men.¹

¹ Podles, *The Church Impotent - the Feminization of Christianity*, xii.

This is an interesting and far-reaching claim because, when taken to its conclusion, it would mean that what constitutes masculinity cannot be found in Christianity. Such a claim would not be born out by the facts since men are present, even if only thirty-nine per cent of them. Podles argues against this observation. The type of man who is attracted to Christianity, he believes, is one whose masculinity is somewhat doubtful. Not necessarily homosexual, though that is possible, but a man who seeks safety and a refuge from the challenges of life and who is fearful of making the break with the secure world of childhood dominated by women.

He acknowledges that there is no generally accepted theory as to why men are absent from church and seem to be less religious than women. Some explanations from historians and sociologists cite reasons that are of a particular time and place. For Podles such situational descriptions are unconvincing. Some theologians and philosophers seek deeper explanations into the nature of males to explain the lack of religious observance. Podles is also dissatisfied with this because they tend to explain more than just the phenomenon of absent men. To add to the dilemma, it seems to be only western Christianity that has this phenomenon. Islam and Judaism have predominant and strong male memberships. The Orthodox churches have a higher ratio of men. Indeed there seems to be no comment for the first millennia about the lack of men in Western Christianity. So, Podles seeks an answer.

He identifies political and economic changes as having had an effect. The industrial revolution separated home and work. Whereas, in a pre-industrial society, women and men worked alongside each other on the farm or in household workshops, the industrial revolution took men to work that was outside the home in the sphere of politics, economics and industry. Since this happened, the context of the Christian churches was effectively separated from the sphere of commerce. There was no place for religion in these new industries. Religion came to be connected to the home and therefore to the realm of children and women. Another explanation offered is that women became interested in religion to compensate for their inferior social position. In a variation to this, Podles observes that religion gave women a sphere of influence and an outlet for their somewhat frustrated talents. These proposals are not palatable to the susceptibilities of this time but let them stand as observations of and possibilities for an earlier period.

Sociological issues were also in play. Compared to men, women were perceived as weaker in strength, more sensitive, and more in touch with feelings. They were prone to the dangers of childbirth. In the estimation of the time, the rearing of children cast them as more humble and tender, less selfish and less egoistic than men. Podles describes the Christianity of the age as that which valued women's passivity more than man's activity. This feminine passivity was expressed in receptivity, whereas men usually have a strong drive towards separation, autonomy and independence. The unscripted message was that only if men become like women could they be Christian. Such a feminine-like surrender of self in an act of faith was viewed to be counter-masculine. Podles observes that these perceptions of masculinity and femininity did not disappear with the passing of the nineteenth century.

Podles' assessment is that masculinity is marked fundamentally by separation, in particular, separation from the mother. However, this separation must also be matched by identification with the father. His theory of masculinity is that the masculine pattern is one of initial union with the feminine, followed by separation and an entry into masculinity with an eventual return to union with the feminine. As noted, this same theory is found in many other writers about masculinity, particularly the mythopoeists. Male initiation rites not only ritualise this, but assist in its happening.

The rejection of patriarchy, which is itself so intimately woven into Judaism and Christianity, has contributed to the diminishing presence of men in church. Podles maintains that patriarchy is not simply an affirmation of masculinity, nor is it a synonym for male dominance. Neither is it necessarily exploitative and dominating. "Patriarchy is a system in which fathers care for their families and find their emotional centres in their offspring"² He infers that the rejection of patriarchy has allowed an inaccurate perception of masculinity to appear in Christianity. It was not always so, he says.

Patriarchy was a great achievement for the Jewish culture in the face of the male tendency towards promiscuity and alienation from women and offspring. This male and paternal responsibility was not universal in the cultures surrounding Israel. Unlike

² *The Church Impotent - the Feminization of Christianity*, 67.

the gods of other cultures, Israel's God was an all-powerful and all-good Father-God. Other cultures needed the female gods and son or daughter deities to balance the male gods and sometimes rectify the damage they did. The God of the Hebrews was not like the irresponsible masculine gods of the surrounding pagan cultures, because he did not abandon the children he begot, but cared for them.³

The Hebrew religion taught men that they are not to be assertive, aggressive and violent males, but fathers who were transformed by responsibility and who would manifest devotion, gentleness and concern for their wives and offspring. Podles notes that this is a rounded masculinity, reunited with the feminine in the realm of the family, yet maintaining a separation from the feminine in the exercise of authority. As Christianity moved out of and away from Judaism with its benign view of patriarchy, Podles observes that Christianity with its male Saviour, is even more capable of demonstrating a potential to welcome and validate masculinity. Even more in the New Testament, Jesus has no wife. His spouse is the Church for whom he sacrifices himself. Thus, Christ can become the model for men and husbands, that they might imitate the Divine Bridegroom.

Alongside this, Podles claims that masculinity in itself is a natural religion. A man wants to become a god. He wants to be a saviour, protecting all those in his care, giving his own life to save theirs. He wants to transcend the limits of mere humanity. The danger for masculinity, Podles notes, is that the further masculinity consciously distances itself from Christianity, the greater the danger that it will make men agents of destruction, even self-destruction. Dangerous activities among the young, sportsmen using drugs, and the male tendency towards violence and risky behaviour are relevant examples. It seems that men seek a form of transcendence in such activities. Moreover, the lure of the sexual seems also to be a constitutive element of masculinity. Young men throughout the ages have always shown great interest and enthusiasm for sexual intercourse, not only for the pleasure it is, but also for the self-validation it is of their manhood and maleness. Podles claims that male sexuality has been given a semi-divine status. Its particular offer of transcendence has made sex the religion of the Western world; the only hope of encountering something truly 'other'

³ *The Church Impotent - the Feminization of Christianity*, 67.

as well as fulfilling that need and desire for the other. Yet, male sexuality with its capacity for self-sacrifice gives masculinity its nobility, for in sexual intercourse men experience separation and self-giving. They are the source of the seed not being receivers of insemination.

Furthermore, Podles notes that sports are the emotional centre for many men in the modern world and a means to attain masculinity. Modern men usually experience sport as more transforming than religion since it is an experience of escape from the self. They obtain this sense of transcendence either through participation or vicariously as a spectator. He describes bodybuilding with religious terms as a means to die to the old weak self and be reborn as a new, strong self. Even brotherhoods, the Masons and other similar groups, provide men with an escape from shallowness and help men to realise the seriousness of life. He cites also the Boy Scouts, military re-enactors and paramilitarism as appealing to men and satisfying the need for brotherhood and for an experience of self-sacrifice. War too can be the ultimate initiation into the mysteries of life and death. It seems that women experience the power of life and death at childbirth; men at the edge of death. For men war is an experience of *comradeship*, a focus upon another and a fusion of personality in the ecstasy of self-sacrifice.

After listing what is attractive to the masculine heart and soul, Podles asks if Christianity and the Church hold anything that can attract men. He concludes in the affirmative with the condition that what is distinctively masculine is acknowledged in the Church. He proposes that this can be done through three means and in each of these there is a masculine and Christian flavour.

Men have a natural understanding of the process of conversion and the need for it. He claims that they know from their childhood experiences and their introduction into the ideology of masculinity that there is a dying to the old self and a rebirth as a new self. Conversion can lead men to the Church, but the Church they enter must be where they can be real men and real Christians. Podles favours the male initiation rituals, but with a distinctively Christian character. Such Christian rituals will acknowledge that a truly masculine spirituality must involve struggle. Such struggle is agonistic and can be in imitation of Jesus, who, he claims, is the epitome of masculinity. It is a struggle with Satan, with self and with God. Furthermore, he understands that every man knows

that life is full of sorrow. He recommends that in the Church each man can be shown how to accept this in a manly way.

There is also a need to 'masculinise' the *eros* of the Church, which has often been expressed in bridal or mother-child love. There is also an *eros* between men that is comradeship, shared danger and the willingness to die for each other. The love of the Christian for Christ can also be expressed in this masculine way: the sharing of danger and hardship. This perception can help men to realise that they are blood brothers with Christ. If the deepest brotherhood is based on shared suffering, then a man who has suffered with Christ becomes his brother.

He suggests also the need for modern, accessible models of saintly, lay masculinity.⁴ Men need to see that holiness is not the negation of masculinity, but its fulfilment. Saints who are dedicated to holiness by the work of the Holy Spirit and who are fully masculine can do this, and they are a powerful inspiration.

He also suggests a development of the effective use of metaphor and a means of evaluating it so that the message of the Gospel will not be distorted or prove to be an obstacle for men. For example, the metaphors of Son, Bride, spiritual warfare and friendship with God can be expressed in ways that will have the power to attract men and enable men to appropriate them.

Marriage

Attention now turns to three states of life or vocations that are entered into by men in the church. It is appropriate that these be explored so as to explicate how each reveals what is constitutive of masculinity. The approach taken here will not be sociological. Neither will it focus on the sexual identity contained in each for men. Rather the approach will be that of a theological anthropology. Central to this approach is to demonstrate that which each form of life makes explicit about masculinity, not only an understanding of the male human person in himself, but also in relation to the female human person. It is the experience of being a man that is the point of departure as well as the arrival.

⁴ This is happening especially in someone like Bl Pier Giorgio Frassati who will be mentioned in the next chapter.

To understand masculinity in marriage, it requires a concrete understanding of the body as a starting point. Such a beginning with the body will also be key to the further sections of this chapter. The man and his body can be the doorway into who a man is from other perspectives. The male human person is enabled to understand himself through the experience of his own incarnate personhood.⁵ This is contrary to the usual understanding of the human person because in general terms modern man has been abstracted from his body so that the body is reduced to a subhuman category or nature. Thus when viewed as purely biological, the body discloses neither the nature of person, nor the nature of human relationships. In addition the prevailing perception is that the body has nothing to say about theology and God.

This separation of person and body places them in opposition. “Modern man owns his body like a thing, and as such, he believes he can do anything he wants with it.”⁶ Thus the body and sexuality can become the means to selfish pleasure, an instrument of self-gratification rather than the revelation of the person. The body though is capable of speaking the truth about the male human person.

What does the male body represent concerning being a man and masculinity within marriage?

In addition to what has already been written in chapter three on “Masculinity and the *Imago Dei*” a grounding principle for masculinity in marriage is its orientation towards sexual union. Masculinity is intricately directed towards the giving of oneself to the female other in this act of personal communion. To be a person is to stand in relation to the gift of self and the possibility of realising this self-donation through the body. “To be a human person is to live as a body that offers a rich natural expression for the gift of self in spousal love.”⁷ John Paul II calls this ‘the spousal meaning of the body’ signifying that the body carries within its masculine construction and masculine quality the means and design by which it is possible for a man to give himself as a gift to the woman in ‘the one flesh union’, to use another expression favoured by John

⁵ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*. Marriage is dealt with in Part Two.

⁶ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 379.

⁷ Michael Waldstein in “Introduction”, John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 95.

Paul II. He does not deduce this from an anthropological or biological perspective solely but, relying on Genesis, he suggests that this has been inscribed into the body from the very act of creation and is within the divine design and intention. From Genesis 2:23-25, he reads that the duality of male and female and their conjugal unity is within a context of nakedness devoid of reciprocal shame. This, he claims, is the discovery by the man and the woman of their bodies with the body's capacity for unity and procreation.

There is a particular masculine quality about the way that a man enters into the sexual union. With woman there is complementarity but also difference. First of all, there is a reciprocal giving and receiving contained within the gift of self. It is a reciprocal interpenetration of these two fundamental features of self-donation, as John Paul II expresses it. He says that the particular masculine quality is manifested through the reality of the man's body and his sexuality. He initiates the gift of himself to the woman in the sexual act, which, in itself, is self-giving and self-possession. Through sexual intercourse the man in his most obvious masculinity gives his body and its potentiality to the woman. In being received by her, he is not only accepted as a gift but is also enabled to accept her self-donation. It is in giving that the man receives. "It is here that the specific essence, as it were, of his masculinity is manifested, which, through the reality of the body and of its sex, reaches the innermost depth of "self-possession".⁸ There is an enrichment of the man and his masculinity in this duality of gift and reception.

This is not to be interpreted as a beautiful theory. John Paul II for his part speaks of the potentiality for self-donation that the man has in his masculinity. He speaks not of a possibility rarely actualised. Neither is he speaking of an attribute or characteristic. Since masculinity is constitutive of the person, a man's sexuality explains both his personal nature, his being created in the image of God, as well as his capacity for self-donation. The whole man is imagined as a gift in the body, an embodied gift. Furthermore, the human person is always a differentiated and individual personal nature as a particular and historical man or woman. John Paul II, as Pope and as Karol

⁸ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 197.

Wojtyla, brings a philosophical personalism and the Thomist tradition together in his understanding of the human person.⁹

From the personalist perspective John Paul II understands a dynamic integration of person and act such that action discloses the one who acts. This does not occur in any automatic or predetermined way making the person a slave to the action. Rather, all happens within the abiding context of the dignity of the person as an embodied and sexual subject. This is to suggest that the male human person not only reveals himself in the act of personal self-giving to the other but is self-possessed as well, with both his dignity and his masculinity enhanced.

From the mutual self-donation of man and woman is created the communion of persons. In a similar way this also reveals what constitutes masculinity. To this communion of persons, John Paul II ascribes an equal, but often overlooked aspect of the *imago Dei*. "Man became the image of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons".¹⁰ Cautiously he adds that this image, which the human person carries, is never the reality but an image as in a mirror, a reproduction of the prototype. He does ascribe a greater capacity for this to the communion of persons: "Man becomes an image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion."¹¹ This reveals a further aspect of the personal existence of the man. He is complete in his personhood and in his masculinity, needing nothing more to determine that he is and has a personal existence in the image of God. However, he does not completely realise his essential personhood until he exists with someone and for someone. This is fundamental to John Paul II's view.

The communion of persons created in marriage is unique because it is brought into being through the complete gift of self in the sexual union. Other relationships and communions of persons will not be able to match the intensity and depth of this union. They will enable the man to realise his essential personhood in differing ways. The *communio personarum* in marriage is unique because it is not an existing side-by-side

⁹ Nigel K. Zimmermann, "Karol Wojtyla and Emmanuel Levinas on the Embodied Self: The Forming of the Other as Moral Self-Disclosure," *The Heythrop Journal* 50, no. 6 (2009).

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 163.

¹¹ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 163.

but rather existing for another person. This personal communion discloses masculinity as capable of this intense and deeply personal expression.

There are additional constitutive elements of masculinity revealed in the communion of persons in marriage. John Paul II acknowledges that this union is directed towards procreation and the transformation of the man and the woman into father and mother, and that will be dealt with in another section of this chapter. In addition to that, the conjugal union is also an act of a human person. Since there is a primary correlation between person and act, then the act of this union, entered into as a male human person, has an effect upon the man in his personhood. It enables the man to discover his masculinity anew and to confirm its whole meaning.¹² The communion of persons does not obliterate nor lessen the masculinity of the man (nor the femininity of the woman). He must stand as a man, in his own solitude as a person, to use the biblical notion that arises from John Paul II's reading of Genesis, before he enters into the communion of persons of the one-flesh union. Without appropriating his individual and personal existence in his male body there cannot be the reciprocity of the communion of persons. The communion of persons not only overcomes solitude but it also affirms the solitude that is essential to a human person. Thus, masculinity is not found *in* the communion of persons but it is *expressed* through the communion of persons. A man does not become a man through sexual intercourse with a woman. He must be a man in the fullness of manhood and masculinity before entering the communion of persons. This is demanded both for his own psychic and spiritual welfare and also for the benefit of the communion created through the one-flesh union. A man's complete welfare is contained in the development of a masculine personality. Marriage and the communion of persons is a most significant contributing factor in this masculine task.

Celibacy

Marriage is not the only way by which a man constitutes, discovers and affirms his masculinity. Some men do not marry for a variety of reasons. Here I will concentrate

¹² *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 97.

on the celibate masculinity lived by those in Holy Orders and in a religious or consecrated life approved by the Church.¹³

Marriage and the one-flesh union allows a man to discover and also express his masculinity, as was mentioned in the previous section. But the lived experience of masculinity can take other forms. Marriage is the most regular way in which men live their masculinity, but it is not the universal way of doing so.

Consecrated celibacy directs attention to masculine virginity. Virginity is not popular terminology in secular spheres at this time. I would suggest that a man being a virgin is even less mentioned or understood. Yet in Scripture, there are the male virgins of Revelation 14:4. In the lived tradition of the church, men have renounced the good of marriage for the cause of following Christ, who, according to the evidence of Scripture was himself virginal and unmarried. I shall argue that there is a connection between the state of conjugal existence and that of consecrated virginity. Again to cite John Paul II:

In Church communion the states of life, by being ordered one to the other, are thus bound together among themselves. They all share in a deeply basic meaning: that of being the manner of living out the commonly shared Christian dignity and the universal call to holiness in the perfection of love. They are different but complementary, in the sense that each of them has a basic and unmistakable character which sets each apart, while at the same time each of them is seen in relation to the other and placed at each other's service.¹⁴

Given such a connection and complementarity between the states of life, just as marriage was able to shed light upon masculinity, so too the lived experience of male celibacy also demonstrates what constitutes masculinity. Though different and constituting masculinity in different ways, both states of life inform the discussion about masculinity.

A clarification of terms is useful at this point. While often used in an interchangeable way, celibacy and virginity are not necessarily synonymous. Celibacy means to

¹³ Masculinity in same-sex unions, in teenage and early adult years before vocational choices, as well as after the death of a spouse or other unmarried states, I deliberately exclude from this section. This will make the task more manageable and enable greater clarity.

¹⁴ John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* quoted in Angelo Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, Ressourcement & Renewal: Ressourcement in Catholic Thought (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2005), 271.

refrain from marriage, although it often appears in normal parlance as abstaining from sexual intercourse. Celibacy may be pursued for a number of reasons and motives. The form of celibacy being considered here is one that is combined also with a spiritual virginity, that is abstention from marriage out of a desire to give oneself entirely and without reservation to God. Without this desire to give oneself to God, renunciation of marriage would be a negative and would contradict the inherent need that resides in a human person, namely in this case, to give himself to another.¹⁵

Here is the first quality of masculinity revealed by consecrated celibacy. It is revealed along with marriage, namely, that a man has, through his humanity, a need to make a gift of himself. Wojtyla proposes that this need for self-donation is not a fruit of sexuality but resides in the very spiritual nature of the human person such that both man and woman have this desire and need because they are human, not because they are male or female.¹⁶ Here an important distinction must be made to preclude the false inference that there is no difference then between men and women. That would contradict all that has been said about marriage in the previous section. The yearning for self-donation belongs to the nature of being human. However, it is expressed, experienced and lived in the physical condition and existence of the body. Thus the male expression, experience and reality of the act of giving oneself are different, but complementary to that of the female expression, experience and reality. Since it is not purely physical, but also belongs to the spiritual nature of the man (and of the woman) then it can be argued that the physical aspect of union with another person does not completely satisfy the desire to give of oneself to another. In this light, consecrated celibacy, lived in virginity, can be validly viewed as another way in which to express self-donation. While marriage draws attention to the physical expression of self-donation, consecrated celibacy emphasises the spiritual expression of self-donation.

Consecrated celibacy, because of its clearer spiritual character, points towards the eschatological future of mankind.¹⁷ Marriage and procreation belong exclusively to

¹⁵ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 253.

¹⁶ *Love and Responsibility*. This can be found in his understanding of 'right use' contained in the personalistic norm as well as his notion of the person and love.

¹⁷ John Paul II deals with this in Chapter 3 of Part One of *Man and Woman He Created Them* otherwise known as *Theology of the Body*. This chapter is concerning the resurrection and the resurrection of the body.

this world. It is a temporal icon, as West expresses, of the eternal reality of the beatific vision and eternal union with Christ.¹⁸ Masculinity lived within consecrated celibacy not only points towards but also suggests the reality of masculinity lived in the resurrection of the body. Now, while not something yet experienced, the experience of masculinity in the temporal sphere is capable of providing insight into this future reality. I suggest that male consecrated celibacy provides just such insight into the eschatological existence. The male existence in the resurrection of the body will be dealt with in chapter eight.

The centrality of Christ to male consecrated celibacy cannot be overstated. To the first disciples of Jesus, it was his own celibacy, embraced for the work of redemption, that made it something possible to understand, and for some, to embrace. Christ, himself male, introduced a way of being male that indicated in the earthly reality the eschatological virginity revealed through union with God. Thus the way of being male in consecrated celibacy not only finds an exemplar in Christ, but also finds its quality and explanation. The solitude of consecrated celibacy echoes the original solitude of Adam and draws attention to the personal and masculine dimension of human nature. The gift of self, so easily perceived in marriage and the one-flesh union, is not absent from male consecrated celibacy but rather expressed without the conjugal union. It is expressed within the dual and complementary human nature of male and female. In consecrated celibacy, the intersubjectivity of communion with others is lived through and by means of male sexuality and a male body in a different and spiritually explicit way. Indeed, the sincere gift of self, of being for another, can only be founded on and formed by love. This is the basis of both marriage and consecrated celibacy. Each is the result of personal choice totally within the subjectivity of a man to choose cognisant of what is foregone to make the choice. This reveals a richness in masculinity and a profundity for manhood.

Fatherhood

The key contribution of fatherhood to the wellbeing of men is a theme of the mythopoetic literature and has been addressed in that section. Here the perspective is

¹⁸ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 302 and 26.

to discuss and describe how fatherhood itself is constitutive of masculinity. At the outset, it is important to clarify that fatherhood can be both physical and non-biological or spiritual. Spiritual fatherhood can arise in all men by virtue of their masculinity and according to their state in life.

The starting point for discussion of fatherhood is the male body. John Paul II noted that the body is the primary expression of masculinity and femininity. The male body reveals the inner masculine self. With its exterior manifestation of masculinity and male sexuality, the body signals the capacity to enter into the conjugal union. This visibly points to the biological capacity not only for fatherhood but also the very donation of self through the one-flesh union. “Through the body, the human person is ‘husband’ and ‘wife’; at the same time, in this particular act of ‘knowledge’ [that is, the conjugal union] mediated by personal masculinity and femininity, one seems to reach also the discovery of the ‘pure’ subjectivity of the gift: that is, mutual self-realization in the gift.”¹⁹ Fathering, which biologically begins the state of fatherhood, is thus in its essence a gift of self. This reveals not only one of the characteristics and constituents of fatherhood, but also of masculinity. In fact, they are so closely aligned that fatherhood can be expressed as a self-donation rather than a task or role.

The particular quality of masculinity and the act of fathering is signalled in the male body’s external structure. Yet, the physical aspect of fatherhood is a passing and somewhat fleeting moment. Paternity is more enduring. It springs from the act of fathering and then becomes an engagement through conscious and unconscious decisions in the development of paternal feelings and acts that provide “a certain natural perfection of man’s being”.²⁰ Thus a man has intrinsic value because he is capable of giving life to another human being. Equally a man’s desire for a child becomes comprehensible and fitting within this aspect of his masculinity.

In a discussion of fatherhood the notion of patriarchy must be addressed. Usually this term carries negative connotations due to the abuses that have been propagated historically by men. These abuses of power and of sexuality have rightly been decried and the victims, women and children, have sought to escape from such abusive

¹⁹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 21.3.

²⁰ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 259.

patriarchy. These abuses are of domination and do not arise from the self-giving that this discussion offers as the characteristic of the male human person. Yet, the indelible thread of masculinity connects fatherhood, paternity and patriarchy. If the capacity for fatherhood resides by nature within a man, then what is of paternity and patriarchy can be said to belong to man by virtue of his masculinity. Dilsaver argues that the term 'patriarchy' needs to be redeemed and it needs to be replaced by a Christian patriarchy that is characterised by loving service and sacrificial leadership.²¹ It appears that a masculinity lived from the very best of what is of man can be one of self-giving and nurturance. This could be most effective in reforming patriarchy and, while that term may not be used as regularly as fatherhood, it might begin to lose the connection to what was historically, and has been rightly rejected. Patriarchy might then be able to reclaim an equal resonance with matriarchy and its accompanying quality of motherhood.

In conclusion, fatherhood reveals that constitutive element of masculinity, which is generativity. Masculinity, as demonstrated in marriage and celibacy, can be defined by its particular male expression of the gift of self. Fatherhood is that specific masculine expression of self-giving that is generativity. John Paul II observes the unbreakable link between masculinity and fatherhood in his reflection upon Genesis 4:1-2, the conception and birth of Cain.

This is the precise threshold of man's history. It is his 'beginning' on the earth. On this threshold, man stands, as male...with the consciousness of the generative meaning of his own body: masculinity contains in a hidden way the meaning of fatherhood...²²

Conclusion

This chapter does not contain an exhaustive investigation into the constitutive elements of masculinity within Christian life. Obviously, that is a mammoth task in its own right and would involve the complexities of comparative historical investigation as well as sociological, psychological and theological activity. What I have desired to

²¹ G. C. Dilsaver, *The Three Marks of Manhood* (Charlotte, North Carolina: TAN Books, 2010).

²² John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 217. He also speaks of the woman and femininity in this same passage. They have been omitted simply to focus on the topic of this work: man and masculinity.

achieve in this chapter is to identify and explore some of the key constitutive aspects of masculinity, namely the relative absence of men from the Christian church, masculinity lived in marriage and celibacy, as well as the singular quality and experience of fatherhood. This leads to the construction of a theological framework for understanding masculinity. The elements examined here, when studied carefully, provide the scaffolding material for such a framework. The final framework will become visible more clearly as this thesis unfolds. Let these stand for the moment and await their assembly. Next in the process of construction is to turn to the effective meaning of masculinity.

Chapter Six – An Effective Perspective on Masculinity

Introduction

Having explored the cognitive and constitutive dimensions of the meaning of masculinity, I now turn to the effective dimension.

As mentioned earlier, this threefold differentiation of meaning is one that Lonergan uses when speaking of the Christian message and its effective communication. I am using Lonergan's structure as a useful framework for investigating and speaking about masculinity. Lonergan's third perspective entails the practicing of the Christian message; the living out of what one possesses. As Lonergan observes: "...actions speak louder than words, while preaching what one does not practise recalls sounding brass and tinkling cymbals".¹

How does one express this effective perspective of masculinity? Is it possible to describe the living out of masculinity in any real and meaningful way such that it can move out of generalities and into meaningful specifics? Having observed something of what can be known about masculinity in chapter three, and some of the intrinsic components of masculinity in chapters four and five, this chapter will examine three scenarios or three groups in which the living of masculinity can be said to take on something of an exemplary quality. In its own way each group will direct attention to qualities of masculinity and the needs of men.

None of these groups would claim perfection or that they have a proven or winning formula for masculinity. Rather, these three groups have simply taken masculinity and the needs and issues of men seriously in the contemporary context of Australia. They not only seek to address, and perhaps redress, issues confronting men, but they also seek to chart a new course for masculinity.

Each has arisen within the Catholic Church at different times and in two different locations within the first decade of this century. This time frame may be significant. It

¹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 362.

could be said that the very establishment of three separate groups, with some similarities, within the same decade bears testimony to a perceived need to address issues surrounding masculinity at this time. There is also a theological and an ecclesiological reality to these three groups; something which assists the general thrust of this thesis.

The information that follows was obtained through a face-to-face interview with a key representative of each group. Each one was either the founder of the group or among the 'founding fathers' so to speak. Further studies need to be made of these three groups. It would be particularly useful that this happen in some years' time. With further experience in each group's chosen area, comparisons could be made with the present and conclusions drawn. At this time what is presented here is mainly anecdotal. However, this 'on the ground' interviewing provides a practical and effective focus on what is happening and what is needed for men, their faith, and their masculinity. Each person interviewed has given permission for his comments to be used for the purposes of this work and the comments recorded belong to the one interviewed. These interviews are in no way intended to turn this research into empirical research. Others may need to take that up in masculinity and theology, and this would be a useful contribution.

These interviews provide an effective perspective of masculinity as well as describing the effective living of masculinity with a theological flavour. They also provide a window into current movements and developments. Each person interviewed was asked the following common matrix of questions:

Why and how did the group begin? What is the general area of concern about men and masculinity that motivates you? What is your inspiration? What techniques do you use? What influence are you having? What questions do you raise for the future?

Frassati Australia

The beginning of *Frassati Australia* was in the individual inner movements of mind and spirit of five young men who eventually came together to begin the group. While being an individual experience at first, they subsequently found there was much they

had in common.² This information came from interviewing David Powick, one of the founders of *Frassati Australia*.

Frassati Australia arose from their experience of being a young Catholic man at this time. Each young man among the founding group was brought up in a Catholic family. Not each family was committed to their faith, and could be termed ‘culturally Catholic’ or even minimally Catholic. Nevertheless the Catholic faith and practice was a recurring experience for each in their family life.

Each of the young men had a ‘conversion’ to the faith of their baptism through World Youth Day in Sydney 2008, particularly through the Sacrament of Penance. From that point they had a strong and regular practice of the faith. They each went on to join NET (National Evangelisation Teams) and this is where they met each other.³

In the experience of NET and their NET ministry in schools, colleges and parishes, over their two-year commitment, they came to evaluate the style of Catholic faith that was being offered to and expected of young men. One of them describes this style of Catholic faith as extravagant and eccentric, one that was not appealing to young men. It was almost unmasculine. They judged that to appeal to young men it needed to be more practical and more challenging. Then it would help young men to follow Christ, not merely as a ‘mate’, but as an inspiring leader. It also needed to be flavoured by both human values and spiritual virtues alongside a solid morality.

These five young men understood simultaneously the experience of being a young Catholic man. They each felt a strong desire to do something for other young men. This desire was a compelling force and so they resolved to band together to do what they could.

They chose Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati as their patron. These young men maintain that Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati is a saint for the modern world. He is a model in whose footsteps young Catholic men can realistically follow. In other words, his sanctity is both exemplary and achievable. The privileges of family and wealth that he

² David Powick, interview by Paul Chandler, 15 August 2013.

³ NET Ministries is located within the Archdiocese of Brisbane and has been operative for twenty years. <http://www.netministries.com.au>

had growing up in a wealthy Italian upper class family in early twentieth century Turin are similar to the benefits a young man living in our age and society enjoys. While few may have the monetary wealth of the Frassati family, today's young man has the benefits of education, health and opportunity open to him. Pier Giorgio's choice of the faith above all, and in the midst of all, is the challenge Frassati Australia offers to the young men of today. For these young men, Pier Giorgio has emerged as an authoritative role model.

The story of Pier Giorgio shows him to be attractive, inspiring and fascinating. He was born in 1901 in Turin, Italy, and while his life on earth was short, only 24 years, it was animated with a passionate Christian dedication. Pier Giorgio was a model of virtue, a "man of the beatitudes," as Pope John Paul II called him. The future Pope first described Pier Giorgio in these words when, as Cardinal Wojtyla he attended an exhibit of photographs about Pier Giorgio in Krakow, Poland in 1977. He said, "Go and look at these photographs. Behold the man of the eight beatitudes who bears in himself the grace of the Gospel, the Good News, the joy of salvation offered to us by Christ..."⁴

His father, Alfredo Frassati was the owner of the newspaper, *La Stampa*, as well as being appointed Italy's ambassador to Germany. The great German theologian, Karl Rahner, knew Frassati. When he came to Germany on vacation he stayed with the Rahner family. Rahner said of Frassati:

[He] represented the pure, happy, handsome Christian youth, devoted to prayer, enthusiastic about everything that is free and beautiful, interested in social problems, who had the Church and its future at heart, and a serene and manly spontaneity...Here we have someone who lived his Christianity with a naturalness that is almost awe-inspiring, surprisingly unproblematic and inviting. In fact, his problems, often bathed in silent tears, were immersed in the grace of his faith: in prayer, Holy Communion, and in loving his neighbour.⁵

To the young men of *Frassati Australia*, Pier Giorgio's life offers a brilliant and compelling contrast to the world in which they live their faith and their masculinity.

⁴ Frassati USA, "To the Top with Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati," <http://www.frassatiusa.org>.

⁵ Maria Di Lorenzo, *Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati - an Ordinary Christian*, trans. Robert Ventresca (Pauline Books and Media, 2004), 128-9.

He placed Christ first in all that he did. He prayed daily. Sometimes he passed whole nights in Eucharistic adoration.

At the same time, he was handsome, vibrant, and natural; and these attractive human characteristics drew people to him. Pier Giorgio also loved sports. He was an avid outdoorsman and loved nature, hiking, riding horses, skiing, and mountain climbing. He had many good friends and he shared his faith with them with ease and openness. He engaged himself in many different apostolates; in his own words, “the apostolate of good example, the apostolate of charity and the apostolate of persuasion”.⁶ Social and political engagement in the life of his nation and of Catholic university students was also a priority for him. He did not avoid political activism but saw the cause of justice, goodness and truth as part of his faith.

Pier Giorgio’s faith was also expressed through his service to the poorest of Turin through his membership of the St Vincent de Paul Society. He hid this aspect of his life while freely giving away food, money, or anything that anyone asked of him. Many of the underprivileged whom he helped knew him as Br Girolamo, the name he took when he became a Dominican tertiary. It is suspected that he contracted the polio that would kill him from the very people to whom he was ministering in the slums of Turin.

Even as Pier Giorgio lay dying, his final week of rapid physical deterioration was an exercise in heroic virtue. It was not just the suffering caused by the disease but also the fact that in the midst of his own suffering his attention was turned outward toward the needs of others and he never drew attention to his anguish. When news of Pier Giorgio’s death on July 4, 1925 reached the neighbourhood and city, his parents, who had little idea about the generous dedication of their son, were astonished by the sight of thousands of people crowded outside their stately home on the day of their son’s funeral Mass and burial. The poor, the lonely, and those who had been touched by Pier Giorgio’s love and faithful example had come to pay homage to this young man who had helped them and who was a model of Christian living.

⁶ From an address by Pier Giorgio to the members of the “Catholic Youth” of Pollone, July 29th 1923; included in Timothy Deeter, *Pier Giorgio Frassati - Letters to His Friends and Family* (New York: St Paul's Publications, 2009), 128-9.

Pier Giorgio's mortal remains were found incorrupt in 1981 when the official exhumation and identification took place as part of the cause for beatification. On May 20th 1990 Pier Giorgio was beatified in St Peter's Square. In a break with custom, he was the only one beatified on that day. Before his beatification his incorrupt body was transferred from the family tomb in the cemetery at Pollone and placed beneath a side altar in the Cathedral of Turin. "Entirely immersed in the mystery of God and totally dedicated to the constant service of his neighbor – thus we can sum up his earthly life."⁷

Following their patron, in the early days, the young Frassati founders engaged in many activities, relying heavily upon the skills and techniques they had learned in NET. At the same time, there was an abiding energy among them to rebuild the culture of young men. Their own assessment is that young men of today live in a world marked by promiscuity and distorted by misleading ideas about masculinity. They want to restore a balance to manhood through the Catholic faith and its authentic practice, that is, through the sacraments and robust catechesis. *Frassati Australia* endeavours to enable a young man to develop a strong relationship with God, 'to be his own man', to be counter-cultural, and to have the capacity to be a true and integral leader at work, in his family, in his circle of influence and, hopefully for some, in the priesthood.

These Frassati founders have witnessed that young men generally do not find a place in the Church. They attribute this to there being no challenge in belonging to the Church. They are adamant that a young man needs the challenge to be both a man and a man of faith. While not denigrating the necessary focus upon femininity, both in society and the Church, at the same time, they sense that a balance has been lost and that the ascendancy of the feminine has been to the detriment of the masculine. They make it plain that in focusing upon the masculine, it is not to ignore the feminine, but rather to seek a redress and a balance, for the good of their apostolate and of young men.

⁷ From the homily of Pope John Paul II at the Mass of Beatification for Pier Giorgio Frassati, May 20th 1990, Lorenzo, *Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati - an Ordinary Christian*, 124-5.

The faith of a young Catholic man is identified by *Frassati Australia* as needing structure, which provides to the young man a sense of progress in the spiritual life. Important too is the ability to talk in a trusting and respectful way with other young men, and older men too, who can act in the role of mentor.

Integral too is the sacramental life provided by the Church, particularly Confession, something they stress is most usually absent from the life of young people today. This sacrament, they are convinced, helps the young man to deal with sin, sexual struggles and temptations, particularly pornography. As this sacrament also provides the possibility of spiritual direction, it also allows guidance from a spiritual mentor or spiritual father.

Also key to their apostolate is gathering young men together, not only in brotherhood and support, but also into a space where the issues and difficulties that young men face can be spoken of clearly and openly within the context of the Catholic faith. A prime example of where this is needed is in relationships with young women. Often young men chart these waters of relationships solo whereas fellow navigators provide immense support and assist the young man to remain true to both his faith and to an authentic manly way of action.

The Frassati Houses provide the experience of brotherhood. When a young man asks to join a Frassati House he commits not only to sharing the running of the household in the usual way but also to a spiritual contribution to the household. Each man commits to Sunday Mass and to at least one daily Mass per week, to monthly Confession, to a weekly hour of Eucharistic Adoration, to daily personal prayer and to regular communal prayer in the House, and to supporting the activities of *Frassati Australia*. Furthermore, he undertakes to invest in the brotherhood of the House, to spend time together and to maintain the Catholic atmosphere of the House.

Each month all the young men who live in the Houses and a group of young men, committed to Frassati Australia but who, for various reasons do not live in a House,

gather together for *Milites Mariae*.⁸ This takes the form of a dinner, followed by a talk and concludes with Compline. The camaraderie and conversation of the evening is integral to the sense of brotherhood and support. Those who participate speak of the appealing and rather unique opportunity *Milites Mariae* provides to be with other like-minded young men. These evenings also provide a way to invite other young men to experience the Frassati spirit and, if they choose, to draw them into the group.

On a weekly basis, the young men of Frassati gather for *Verso L'Alto*. This is named from Pier Giorgio's own motto, meaning "to the heights". Pier Giorgio wrote it on a photograph taken of him climbing the mountains outside of Turin only a few months before his death. It not only summarises his sporting motto but also his spiritual one. These evenings begin with Mass and are followed by social time and catechesis or formation in the faith. *Verso L'Alto* attracts other young men not formally part of Frassati as well as young women. There is also the annual *Juventus Weekend* when the young men go to the country for a retreat that is mixed also with outdoors adventure and the masculine pursuits of companionship and competition in sports.

Friendships and personal invitation are the prime instruments of *Frassati Australia*. As one young man encounters Christ and experiences the change this brings to his life, he is encouraged to draw others into the same experience. Those already in the Frassati group are encouraged to be the type of man that other young men would aspire to be like. This personal witness and friendly, even brotherly, outreach is immensely appealing to young men. It carries an authority in its integrity and its masculine character. In a society that validates a homosexual relationship, *Frassati Australia* seeks to promote the brotherly camaraderie of former times before relationships became sexualised, when men could be intimate as brothers, deeply concerned with and for each other.

The influence of *Frassati Australia* is hard to gauge given its short history. Yet, those who have been there since the beginning are convinced that everything they are doing is making a difference in the lives of young men, and others connected with them.

⁸ This title comes from Pier Giorgio's own idea. He gave this name to a youth group that he began at his parish church, *La Crocetta*, in Turin. Deeter, *Pier Giorgio Frassati - Letters to His Friends and Family*, 256.

There has been a growth in faith, a growth in stability of life, and the flowering of vocations to marriage and priesthood. They are greatly encouraged to continue, having been witness to the change in their own lives and in each of the young men belonging to or connected with *Frassati Australia*.

While the future cannot be predicted, like many young people who are passionate about their cause, the leaders of Frassati Australia have a dream. They see immense possibilities and many young men still needing to be reached. However, the formation of a renewed Catholic masculinity cannot be hurried or mass-produced.

Since the sacramental life of the Church is so important to the mission and character of Frassati, it is the presence of priests who will have a key influence on the future and development of Frassati Australia. At the moment, there is one Spiritual Director and three priests associated with Frassati on an occasional basis. It is hoped that the number of priests who are active and regular spiritual directors will increase. The link between Frassati Australia and the proposed Brisbane Oratory could be a significant resource.

The next group of young men who come to join Frassati Australia in the near future will have a decisive impact on the group's development. In the estimation of the founding group it will be they who will take up the responsibility and leadership that will shape the organisation towards the end of this decade and cement its foundations firmly for the future. The current leaders sometimes dream of the time ahead when their sons join Frassati and become the heirs to their work now in progress. They look forward also to the *Frassati Australia* claiming its place in the Catholic network of Brisbane, contributing to the growth of the Church in this place and time. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." (1 Cor 3:6)

The particular contribution that Frassati Australia can make to the effective perspective on masculinity is precisely in its living of masculinity informed by faith and a theological understanding. Each group or movement must necessarily propose a style of manhood that springs forth from its particular perception of masculinity and whatever accompanying philosophy or ideal informs it. *Frassati Australia* unashamedly situates itself within the faith, discipline and ethos of the Catholic Church and so its understanding of masculinity reflects this position. So it is that

Frassati Australia proposes to those who join the group and, indeed displays openly, a Catholic understanding of manhood.⁹ What does a Catholic understanding of manhood entail according to *Frassati Australia*?

Firstly, they hold up to young men a challenge and a goal, the real possibility of manhood alongside holiness. The exemplar of this is the life of their patron, Pier Giorgio Frassati. He is the model of a young man of sanctity who was also firmly grounded in the life of this world. He enjoyed the life of a normal young man, encountering the issues and problems that young men face, even today. He witnessed that masculinity is something to be embraced and lived with enthusiasm, but also that being a man is a path to fulfilment and an encounter with God. This imbues masculinity with a purpose and a dignity that can uplift a young man and also cause him to pursue eagerly the challenge of living his masculinity with a faith dimension rather than succumb to contrary ideas and understandings of manhood. Striving to be like Bl Pier Giorgio is emerging as an attractive challenge for the young men who belong to this group.

Frassati Australia also appears to be meeting the needs of young Catholic men to understand their faith through catechesis, discussion and retreats. It also seems that these young men are motivated by a desire to defend the Catholic faith. Knowing it enables them to appropriate it more deeply and then to explain it to others. It could be said that for these young men it is faith informing masculinity, and masculinity finding its most positive form in faith.

The value of brotherhood cannot be overstated for these young men. It is the key to their continuing perseverance in practising the Catholic faith and growing towards the authentic Catholic manhood to which they aspire. In this they keep Bl Pier Giorgio before their eyes as well as other masculine saints and the teachings of the Church. Since it is very much a mission of reaching many young men, usually one man at a time, the image of spiritual battle as well as drawing others into the team, appeals to these young men in a way that inspires them and challenges them.

⁹ See *Frassati Australia* website on the home page for a description of the mission of the group: <http://www.frassatiaustralia.org>

Young Men of God

The second of three initiatives whereby men seek to live masculinity in an effective way is also for young men and has its origin in Canberra. It shares some similarities with *Frassati Australia* but has its own flavour and characteristics. The interview that contributed to this information about Young Men of God was conducted with Fr Ken Barker MGL, the founder and Moderator of the *Missionaries of God's Love*.¹⁰

The inspiration for the beginning of *Young Men of God (YMG)* came to Barker in 2000, during a time of prayer, while he was praying at Santa Maria degli Angeli, near to Assisi, the basilica where the Porziuncola of St Francis is housed. During this experience of prayer Barker had a sense that God wanted to minister in a particular way to young men and especially to young men in Australia. There seemed to be three aspects of this divine desire that was communicated to Barker. Firstly, there was the desire that young men would grow in faith. Secondly, that they would grow in virtue, character and the qualities of a man. Then, thirdly that they would grow in leadership. These three aspects seemed to go together. Asked why young men in Australia and yet the seed of the idea was planted in his mind and heart in Assisi in Italy, Barker believes that Australia, and in particular young men in Australia, are in such a desperate spiritual state. This is evident in that life and the demands of study, occupation and career seem to effectively distract a young man from pursuing what is of real and lasting value in life, almost as if there is no time for it. He points to issues surrounding fatherhood also having a negative impact upon young men in Australia.

Coming home to Australia from this experience in Assisi, Barker was convinced of the authenticity of the call. However he did nothing to act upon the experience. He felt he was too busy to take it any further.

Some time later, also in an experience of prayer, but here in Australia, he found himself being reminded of what was communicated to him in Assisi. He was once more being convinced that God wanted him to do something about young men. Once more, he became reluctant due his demanding commitments in other areas. However, this time in response to the objection of too many pressures from other things, he

¹⁰ Fr Ken Barker, interview by Paul Chandler, August 26th 2013, 26 August 2013.

heard God say that he did not need to do it all but rather that the young men would do it. He simply needed to be there.

In Canberra there was already a group of young men connected with the *Missionaries of God's Love* and to whom Barker was a spiritual mentor. They had already been talking of the idea of doing something for young men. So, with them, in 2004 Fr Barker decided to put on a conference for young men, which seemed a reasonable and achievable goal.

Quite a number of young men came to the conference and it was very successful. This gave an impetus to forming groups under the banner of *YMG* and so the movement began from there. *YMG* speaks of a co-founding of their movement, the inspiration given to Barker and that first and foundational group of young men in Canberra.

It was decided not to connect *YMG* with the Missionaries or to put it under the *MGL* authority. Nor was it thought best to place *YMG* under the authority or formally connected with the *Disciples of Jesus* communities, which were also under Barker's patronage and direction. The desire was that *YMG* have its own identity and be a separate entity, even if it shares many similarities with both groups, is supported by them and linked with them. This gave the young men the opportunity to engage in leadership of their own group themselves; something which was integral to the original experience and vision. Thus *YMG* has its own loose principles and practices of operation. At the moment, it has not drawn up constitutions nor is it seeking recognition under Canon Law.

At the beginning, there was a local leadership group in Canberra, which sponsored and looked after other *YMG* groups, as they began in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. After a time, it was considered that if the movement were to be national then it would be best to have a national leadership team. The current national leadership team comprises representatives from each *YMG* group in Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide.

The local groups do not have high numbers of members but there are regular activities and meetings in each centre. Like all young people today, the members find it hard to commit to attending, maybe because of youth but also because of the very full and sometimes hectic lives they lead. Barker acknowledges that the youth demographic is

usually judged to be one where new ventures can fail quite easily or at least struggle. For *YMG*, this is seen in the fluid membership of the groups. Some young men will attend but then miss the next few occasions and then reappear. This is an ongoing part of the struggle for the leadership: how to meet the needs of these young men when they choose to or are able to attend.

The structure of *YMG* is itself somewhat fluid. National Team meetings take place through Skype and there is an annual conference, which gives an impetus to the work of the movement. In 2012 there were 180 young men who came along to the annual conference.

The age bracket of those who belong or who attend is 18-35 years, but that has been extended to include the last two years of high school. This is done to encourage this age group to join *YMG*. A number of the *YMG* members are teachers in Catholic high schools. They have had the capacity to invite these school-age young men to come along to the annual conference.

The national team allows each local group to tailor the formation experience to their own capacities, circumstances and needs. Each local *YMG* group hosts formation weekends, usually once a year, where there are talks and sharing groups as the main strategy. Small monthly groups also function. These gatherings would be for a few hours for a talk, a meal or barbeque and maybe some recreation or games. This allows a flexible 'brand' for *YMG* to respond to each locale.

Formation in the faith is the key component of whatever structure or mode is adopted. Barker sees that *YMG* is an evangelising movement for young men. It takes them deeper into God and into the life of the Church. This means bringing the young men into practice of the basics of our faith: prayer, reading the Scriptures, and knowing the Church's teaching.

Barker would agree that *YMG* is reacting to a void, something missing in the lives of young men. He says that they seem to be existing, living without any purpose in their lives. Their lives are marked by disorder and disaster. Moreover, he observes that there is a void in the Church of young men. The absence of young men and of men is noticeable and young men are not connected with the Church.

The big issues for young men that *YMG* address is first of all the issue of sexuality and the effect of pornography. Then there is the father relationship manifest in that most young men have not been well fathered. Barker agrees with the existence of a father hunger in young men that writers like Eldridge have explored and discussed.

Barker would sum up all the techniques and activities of *YMG* as drawing a young man to appropriate faith in Christ. Indeed, he proposes that *YMG* offers a view of manhood that is synonymous with Christ-likeness, in that Christ is the perfect man. To call a man into Christ means that his manhood will by that very fact develop into an integrated and authentic masculinity.

This is connected with the pursuit of virtue about which Barker wrote the book *Young Men Rise Up*, in which he developed the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity as well as the moral virtues of prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude.¹¹ Barker's premise for the book is that the virtues are the product of the Holy Spirit's action allowed and welcomed by the human person into the woundedness of mind, will and imagination. These wounds are the result of original sin. The Spirit begins an ongoing restoration such that new qualities can develop and be manifest in the heart, the inner self, and in habitual patterns of behaviour. In the Catholic tradition these new qualities and new patterns of behaviour are called growing in virtue. This growth strengthens the will and builds character. Moreover, growth in virtue is also growth in Christ-likeness and it accompanies and presumes growth in prayer. This is really the heart of the call that Barker experienced about ten years ago in Assisi.

When asked about a masculine way of living the virtues, he notes that the etymology of virtue is the Latin word, *vir*, meaning *man*. It could be said then, he notes, that to be manly is synonymous with being virtuous. Barker proposes that looking at a true image of Jesus, where there is gentleness and compassion combined with a preparedness to stand for truth and to face whatever adversity might come, is a true image of manhood. He admits that this view of manly strength is counter-cultural, not what young men have had offered to them in their usual experience of life.

¹¹ Ken Barker, *Young Men Rise Up* (Ballan, Victoria: Connor Court Publishing Pty Ltd, 2008).

In the absence of effective fatherhood, *YMG* draws upon the literature about manhood in the conviction that grace builds on nature to bring about the mature masculine Christian personality. In commenting upon the cultural ascendancy of the feminine, Barker declares the genuine need for promotion of the feminine and he alludes to John Paul II's writing in this regard. However, he does accept that the necessary rise of the feminine entails the diminishment of the masculine.

He remarked that in the *Disciples of Jesus* communities there was one movement advocating strong male leadership and only male leadership. The reasoning behind this was that admitting women to leadership seemed to bring about an unequal representation because of a subsequent withdrawal of men from leadership and involvement. Indeed it produced a feminised structure in place of what was perceived as a masculine one. Barker opposed such "social engineering". In order not to produce a diminishment of men, and to affirm masculine identity, Barker promoted the idea of men discovering their contribution to leadership alongside and with feminine leadership. It has been an interesting journey, he notes.

While hard to quantify, the ongoing connection between the *MGL* brothers and priests and *YMG* provides a solid base for the building up of young men. The male branch of the *Missionaries* "disciples" the young men, as Barker calls it. This is a form of mentoring by a fatherly figure. He believes that in this lies a great power for the Church. From his own experience, he testifies that a young man who is guided, mentored, "disciplined", irrespective of what his vocation choice might turn out to be, becomes an immense power for good in the Church. He may also take on positions of responsibility and/or influence in the Church. In their turn, they too may then take on a similar task for other young men, and so the task of "disciplining" continues.

Having been operating for almost ten years, *YMG* is beginning to face the relative ageing of its members, in that some are now approaching thirty-five years of age. Regeneration and succession planning is important. Barker and his priests and brothers are conscious of calling forth this 'graduating' demographic of *YMG* to the mentoring of the younger men. In addition, they are seeking to engage *menAlive*, with which they have close connections and with whom they share similar spiritual and pastoral qualities so as to provide an easy progress from one to the other.

There are still many things to be developed. Barker views *YMG* as being still in its early years. Mentoring is an important and ongoing task, which is developing but still has much to be done. Among the young men and the leaders, finding time in the midst of a busy life, in the midst of the growth of young families and in the midst of professional demands are the regular obstacles and frustrations in responding to what needs to happen for young men. Perhaps this is why there is the feeling that it is still early days.

One area in which he says they could do better is in developing the “*YMG* package”. He confesses to resisting this at times but realises that its time may have come. If a new group were to begin in another location, it would be helpful to be able to hand over ‘a package’ of materials that effectively describes what *YMG* is and what it does. Realistic considerations come into play here in that there is no full time staff assigned to *YMG*. It is done by volunteers who also have other, usually paid occupations. As well, there is not an income stream providing money for necessary or desired expenditure.

In conclusion to quote the description of *YMG* on their own webpage:

Young Men of God (*YMG*) is a Catholic movement of young men witnessing to the world. We’re regular guys: students, young professionals, tradies, teachers. We come from many different cultures and walks of life but we’re good mates because we believe in the power of brotherhood and the value of sharing ideas, talents, resources and time to support and strengthen one another on the journey. This is who we are, and empowered by the truth our mission is to witness genuine strength and goodness to the world. “If you are who you are meant to be, you will set the whole world ablaze.”¹²

The sense of vocation felt by the five young men of *Frassati Australia* finds parallels in the experience of Barker and the beginning of *YMG*. Yet, the outreach and operations of *YMG* differ markedly from *Frassati Australia*. *YMG* pursues a loose organisation and membership while *Frassati Australia* pursues a much more formal and tighter structure. For both organisations, there appears not to be the desire to inscribe too much to words or official documents or constitution-like arrangements. Whether this is one aspect of a practical masculinity or a way of deferring what must

¹² St Catherine of Siena, *YMG Homepage*, accessed on 3 September 2013. <http://www.ymgmovement.org>

eventually happen is yet to be known. For the sake of survival and succession planning it may be needed in the future. Both groups also share a priority for the formation in the faith of young men. Both are responding to a perceived need and seeking to fill a significant gap in the life of young male Christians. In both movements faith formation is accompanied by a variety of activities and recreation events that appeal to young men.

menAlive Ministry

This is the third of the three groups proposed as effectively living masculinity within a theological and ecclesiological context. The interview for this section involved Robert Falzon, one of the founders and current leaders of *menAlive*.¹³ It was an interesting and lengthy interview, fruitful and wide-ranging, including both the ministry of this group and also the notion of masculinity and its place within the Church. Falzon shared not only about his work with *menAlive* but his own experience as a man in the Catholic Church.

menAlive came into existence in 2003 in Brisbane.¹⁴ That year was the birth of this particular ministry or apostolate in the Church. However, Falzon traced the threads of its beginning, in his own life, from the time when he was sixteen or seventeen and he felt the presence of a vocation to ministry in the Church, and to share in the rebuilding of the Church.¹⁵

In 1973, there was not the possibility of a lay ministry for a young man by which he might serve the Church. Falzon was particularly drawn to a style of lay ministry that had a preaching component and one that could move easily around from place to place rather than be centrally located. There certainly was lay service ministry but nothing that satisfied his sense of vocation. Neither the St Vincent de Paul groups nor the Knights of the Southern Cross, nor the fledgling Cursillo or Charismatic Renewal offered what he felt called to do.

¹³ Robert Falzon, interview by Paul Chandler, 1 October 2013.

¹⁴ The way the name of this organisation appears in written form is not an error in typing or spelling. This ministry prefers its name to be thus printed emphasising not 'men' but the 'alive'. They take their inspiration from St Irenaeus' saying: "The glory of God is man fully alive".

¹⁵ Falzon quotes de Lubac in saying that the Church is a constant construction site.

After three years in the seminary of a religious order (the Redemptorists), he realised that he was not called to celibacy. He describes this as a shock and a disappointment since he did feel a strong call to serve the Church. Thus he left the seminary, married and established a family and spent thirty successful years in the business world.

At age forty-seven, he experienced discontent. He wrestled with an inner turmoil in the realisation that although he had achieved much, he had not yet found his true calling, his vocation. He describes what he had discovered as his task, his job. Although he acknowledges that a particular task can become one's vocation, it did not happen with him. Following a retreat and conference in the USA, he arrived at some clarity, but still did not know the specific detail of what he was to do.

In telling this part of the story, Falzon identifies that it is critical for a man's self-understanding to know who he is. Uncertainty about what he can do or what he is called to do can weaken his masculine self-image. A man needs to know what he can do, for what he is needed, and to what he can commit himself.

After these experiences Falzon describes sitting in Sunday Mass in 2003 and listening to a homily, that was not riveting. Looking around, it all of a sudden occurred to him that he had to do something about the absence of men in church.

His business background taught him to find the facts and so he investigated whether this relative absence of men was a factor in other parishes as well, rather than just his own parish church. To his surprise, it was. Women outnumbered men at Mass by two to one and in some places three to one. So, it became for him three questions: where are all the men, where are all the young men, and where are all the men in the 35-50 age bracket, the men of the high-energy, high-impact, 'change-the-world' time of a man's life?¹⁶

He felt that this was a tragedy. Not because of a numbers' game, but because the Church was missing the masculine presence and that this lack of men was widespread and general.

¹⁶ Falzon checked the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Census data to discover that there were about 800,000 practising Catholics in Australia and of that 200,000 were men.

This situation inspired his vocation and the *raison d'être* for *menAlive*, namely, to go to where the men are and to reach them with a message of the Good News that was aimed specifically at the masculine soul. He observes that most of the opportunities that men had to gather together in the Church were essentially liturgical and at what he felt was a liturgy that had a feminine feel. For example, the ministers of Holy Communion, altar servers and readers were mostly women and girls. He adds that there is nothing wrong with feminine spirituality but for men it does not work. This extended also, he found, to the groups, committees and structures of the parish where it was mostly women who serve, with the exception of the Finance Committee. Thus the work of *menAlive* became to engage men in the life of and in service of the Church.

Another significant person whom Falzon encountered in the early days of the ministry was Peter Shakhovskoy. Falzon shared his call with Shakhovskoy, who had a different professional background, and was amazed to discover that he had had a similar experience. Shakhovskoy had experienced the call as an imperative to 'awaken the sleeping giant' of men and manhood, although he had initially thought the 'sleeping giant' was the laity. Over time Shakhovskoy became convinced that he was called to be a literal fisher of men.

These two developed a vision for the ministry and wrote some initial documents attempting to state the objectives of their ministry. They went in search of other men who would join them. The founding team that ran the first event was Falzon and Shakhovskoy and they were joined by Peter Gebauer, Mark Lysaght, and Andrew Buchanan. Over the ten years of the ministry they have been joined by others who wished to help and contribute in various ways. At the time of writing there were over seventy men involved in the ministry, all volunteers.¹⁷ All contributed according to their ability and interests, and cooperated as a genuine team. Falzon notes that teamwork appeals to men and it also provides flexibility and adaptability.

In searching for an effective mode of ministry, the founding team went to the USA and discovered the predominant ministry model was conference-based. This included

¹⁷ This volunteer status removes one of the biggest limiting factors in resourcing a ministry.

large events for large numbers after which the attendees were sent home to filter into their respective situations what they had encountered at the conference. *menAlive* did not feel called to this model but to smaller events by going out to find the men, where they were, and meeting them on their territory and in their parishes.

So far, over the ten years of its ministry, *menAlive* has conducted 124 events in 24 dioceses for 11,000 men. The underlying principle is LAMP – Life, Application, Ministry, Principle. Hence, the activities that *menAlive* offers have to be applied to life. It is a praxis based and outcome directed ministry.

The principal means that *menAlive* uses is parish weekends, called *menAlive Weekends*. These are not live-in weekends even though that was the initial *modus operandi*. Through feedback from participants it was discovered that the reality of life for men is that they cannot easily be away from family and home from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. So, rather early in the ministry these weekends became events hosted within a parish, usually in a parish hall and church and the participants would go home each night. The age of men who attend these weekends is usually in the forties and fifties and older. *menAlive* is not focused on any particular age range so these parish events are open to men of all ages, although it does seem that younger men do not usually come. Perhaps this is because of their general absence from Mass where they would hear about the weekends. When young men do come they like what happens and they are surprised and excited in finding a way to live their life in God. Even more so are they surprised to discover that this is possible.

Following the principle of ‘going to where the men are’ *menAlive in the City* has been happening for a while. This is targeted at businessmen who work in the CBD. It is held from after the daily 5:10pm Mass at the Cathedral until about 7pm. Its structure includes both input and information and is followed by conversation among the participants. Though younger businessmen are coming, it still tends to be mainly older men.

Growing Good Men is an event for fathers and sons. Through partnership with boys’ Colleges this live-in weekend, usually at the college’s campsite, is aimed at boys in Years 9 & 10 and their fathers. This reaches the men in the age range that often is missing at other events, namely men in their thirties. During the weekend there are

separate events for the fathers and for the boys as well as time for the father and son to be together. A style of an initiation-into-manhood ritual is the highlight of the weekend. Each man makes or carves a staff for his son and calls him towards manhood by summoning him from the boys' side of a huge bonfire across to the men's side. As he does so, he affirms his son and expresses his delight in and love for him. Falzon notes that it is a powerful moment for both father and son.

The *Catholic Man's Breakfast Series* is another regular event conducted in the CBD, before business hours, with an engaging guest speaker. Once more the key strategies are both listening to the speaker as well as engaging in conversation with others at the table; a conversation that is moderated and summarised by a competent MC. This event attracts and is aimed at the whole spectrum of men from businessmen, to students and churchmen.

menAlive Extreme is a weekend away for Year 11 and 12 boys, which involves high-energy outdoor activities that are aimed at developing teamwork and cooperation among the young men. The activities are 'debriefed' afterwards to present and explore the virtues and qualities that will help a young man lay the foundations for a life of faith lived in an authentic and masculine way.

In all these events the fundamental strategy is story-telling and narrative. Falzon relates that when a man tells his story and a skilful MC weaves it into the theme of the particular session, not only can men relate to another's story but they also begin to realise that their own particular masculine journey shares many commonalities. A man does not need to be alone on this journey into manhood.

The dual strategies of creating gatherings and enabling conversation, that is, men talking to men, addresses one of the crippling aspects of a man's life: isolation. Falzon has experienced that, for one reason or another, men tend to believe that they are happier when they are on their own. He is unsure whether men unconsciously adopt this principle or if they learn it from other men. Nevertheless the *dictum* seems to be that a real man will tough it out and he has to get on with his task in life. For this reason, personal reflection or the sharing of life experiences seems foreign to men. This can lead to loneliness and isolation, which makes a man spiritually impotent. Yet

the Gospel maxim is that to share one's life and give it away is the key to finding one's life and keeping it.

Falzon, and each of the men who formed that original team, came with his own needs and questions along with the intention to serve in the ministry. However, in their serving their interiority was deeply affected by this ministry. This has been a common experience also among those who volunteer to work in the ministry.

Falzon identifies among these inner needs are the father-wound, which arises from the experience of an absent or disengaged father who did not affirm his son's masculinity and call him on to masculine achievement. Men also struggle with a false notion of masculinity, for example, always being the 'nice guy'. Falzon calls this a tame, lukewarm, insipid masculinity. He says that this is the opposite of what he has experienced lies within the masculine heart or soul, namely, a wild, untamed, unsophisticated, and undomesticated, energy. An authentic Catholic man, says Falzon, is not intimidated by guilt and sin, but recognises the greatness to which God calls him. At the same time, Falzon acknowledges that there is no one version of manhood, but his experience has taught him that in speaking to men about manhood, and about faith and the Church, that there is a necessity to try to use language that provokes the masculine in each of these domains. There has been benefit too in men experiencing Catholic men acting in service of the Church.

It seems then that the change and transformation in men's lives that arise from the activities and events that *menAlive* run are real. Notable too is what has happened in the lives of the leadership group. They have been captured and challenged by the vision and the message. As a result, they have been empowered to bring others to it as well as to develop new approaches and ideas along the way. In this respect no one man 'owns' *menAlive*. There is vision, direction and leadership, but no rigid hierarchy. If someone comes up with a good idea, he is encouraged to pursue that idea and develop it into a possible new venture in the ministry.

After ten years, they still ask where the men are in the Church. Maintaining the drive to venture forth and find men, they tailor their events to the locations where men are to be found, to the likely places where men will easily gather together.

While they have been successful with some endeavours and fruits have been seen, some questions remain. In searching for ways to contact men where they are and to provoke meaningful conversation, there is a continual search for how to communicate an effective message.

While being mindful of 'succession' in leadership, Falzon sees those issues as factors for the next decade of the ministry. One area of concern that is emerging is the role of grandfathers particularly in the area of faith. Some men have seen their children's connection with and practice of the faith diminish. There is now a real possibility that the next generation will not even have the faith handed on to them. This raises the question of what a grandfather can do and *menAlive* is exploring through their new program *Grand Plan for Grandfathers* what a man in the later stage of his life can offer as a wise elder or patriarch in his family and in the Church, and so rediscover the unique contribution of the older man.

The cost to the men who prepare and present the events is a real concern. Since many of the events are weekend events it places a demand on the leaders and on their families. Nevertheless Falzon sees in this the very masculine 'spending of self', the self-sacrifice for others that appeals to and enlarges the masculine heart. He testifies that as he has engaged in the ministry, while being away many weekends, his family says that he is a better husband and father than before he undertook the ministry. This may indicate an interior personal fulfillment for him. It may suggest also an enhancement of his masculinity in its interior essence that others can recognise and from which they benefit.

menAlive is seeking to respond also to the issue of pornography. They are developing a new venture called *Quit Porn*. Pornography destroys intimacy and potency, and corrodes masculine identity. Falzon is convinced that it is vital for the Church to have a voice in the public place about this issue, and that *menAlive* may be better able to do this since, it seems at the moment that ordained men may have lost credibility on an issue like this.

There are practical matters that concern the future of *menAlive*. There is a need for more volunteers, more office administration and development in technology. A smartphone app has just been launched. National and international internet

communication is being developed further. In addition, *menAlive* would like to develop an event for fathers and daughters. At the time of writing it is unclear what format that might be.

Falzon envisages that *menAlive* will continue to be unconditionally within and for the Church, but also provoking in the Church a renewed masculine mission. *menAlive* seeks to change the world one man at a time. It is convinced that when the masculine spirit comes to the fore, a man is able to find something to which he can give himself unreservedly. Authentic manhood, as God made a man to be, means thinking less of self and giving oneself for others. *menAlive* wants to assist men to bring their wildness to God and the Church for the sake of its renewal. *menAlive* is about redemption, restoration, and release in Christ. It is also vital that the ministry stays close to the edge so as to remain effective and not to veer towards institutionalisation.

The vision of manhood that *menAlive* promotes conflicts with a society which has lost the traditional and even a uniform concept of manhood. It is true that whatever problems society has will be present in the Church as well. In this regard, *menAlive* recognises that men generally do not know what it is to be a man and this affects men in the Church. Falzon believes that almost five generations have been touched by a loss of men and masculinity through war and its aftermath, and through feminism with its negative message about masculinity. A man has to discover his masculine identity not by what he does, but by who he is. In a secularised and sexualised world this is virtually impossible because of the loss of a faith perspective.

The founding vision and the foundation process for *menAlive* bear similarities to those of *YMG* and *Frassati Australia*. The singular experience of one man is discovered to be present in some other significant men in his life. In all three groups, the man interviewed relayed his individual experience of a divine working upon his own heart and in his life. This led to an awakening to a need among men. This occurred in him but was found also in the men who came to join the founding of the group.

Both *YMG* and *menAlive* have arisen within a Catholic Charismatic group with its attendant spirituality whereas *Frassati Australia* positions itself in a more traditional Catholic way of life. The launch for *menAlive* and *YMG* was an event organised to ‘test the waters’ against the experience of the founders and the needs they perceived.

Frassati Australia adopted a different approach. Rather than an event, it chose a lifestyle as its starting point.

All three groups recognise the value of the example that one man's life can have upon another, particularly a friend or colleague. Indeed, the prime strategy for reaching new members or participants is through personal outreach. Perhaps this resembles the brotherly connection that seems to both attract men and proves effective among them.

A difference in emphasis is noticeable in *menAlive*. Unlike the groups for young men, *menAlive* stresses self-sacrifice, the liberating and fulfilling experience that comes to a man when he gives himself for others, most particularly for those he loves. The presence of this among the older age group of men in *menAlive* may indicate that this quality and virtue of sacrifice is more applicable to men at an older age than youth. Young men probably have other issues at their time of life, such as, proficiency, ability and vocational choices. Older men have lived through those early adult years and most usually have developed competencies and realised career achievements. Self-sacrifice is not restricted to middle age and older, but rather, it may be that at this phase of life a man is more self-assured and accomplished and is thus able to forget himself for the sake of others.

Conclusion

Each of these three groups seeks to engage men in experiences that enhance masculinity. What has been described in this chapter is effective masculinity in two ways. Firstly, because the various activities of each group have been successful then what each group is doing is effective in realising the stated aims of the group. Secondly, those who participate have an experience of a mode of masculinity that enhances and augments what they have known before. Sometimes it is radically different from previous experiences. In response to perceived needs, each group has translated a concept of manhood into a manner of living as a man. To re-phrase Lonergan from the beginning of this chapter, each group has put words into actions and has practised what they have preached. Ideas and concepts about masculinity have moved into the practical level of living. While always open to new possibilities, each group offers a proven formula for addressing the issues surrounding men and their lives, which were noted in the earlier sections of this research. Furthermore,

these three groups refer to a theological outlook on masculinity, something also which is in harmony with the purpose of this research.

All three groups rely upon an understanding of masculinity informed by the Catholic faith. The absence of men from the Church, something noted by Podles and others, and the observed weak connection between masculinity and faith became a major impetus to action for these groups. Each of them, in their own way, has sought to assist men to find their place in the Church and to grow in their faith. To different degrees and with a different emphasis, each presents Christ as the model of masculinity and an exemplar for manhood. At the core, all embrace the notion that masculinity can only be authentically achieved through a theological understanding lived by means of an active and lively Catholic faith.

Conscious of it or not, they share much in common with the mythopoetic writers. They identify a void or something missing in the lives of men in terms of a lack of purpose, a disorder in life, disarray and confusion in sexuality, and a widespread involvement in pornography. Fatherhood also finds a place among the burning issues for these groups and is a recurring theme; whether that be the lack of it, and the wounds from it, and hunger for it that results, or its true place in the lives of men. The influence of brotherhood, teamwork and the common endeavours of a masculine life figure prominently in each group and testify to the power of men to help other men.

While no group claims to have solved whatever might be termed the problems and issues of men, and each admits that the mission has far to go, they are unashamedly masculine in their appeal, their style of operation and their focus. Perhaps this is crucial and demonstrates the wisdom of Lonergan that was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Actions, he says, speak louder than words. Unless something is done, and in this case for men and by men, unless actions and words collaborate, then it may only be the sound of brass and tinkling cymbals that will be heard. What is cognitive and constitutive must become effective.

Having now explored the cognitive, constitutive, and effective perspectives on masculinity the construction of a theological framework for masculinity becomes possible in a two-step process. First, it is necessary to focus upon the human person and her or his theological identity. Then it is possible to particularise that into the

masculine. This belongs to the communicative function of meaning, as named by Lonergan. What has already been said about masculinity may now be deepened and enriched through the lens of theology.

Chapter Seven – The Communicative Perspective on Masculinity in the Identity of the Human Person

Introduction

To arrive at a theological expression of masculinity it is necessary to first lay some foundations arising from the identity of the human person. In doing this, each of these foundational identifiers of the human person is capable of providing its specific theological contribution to the conversation about masculinity. When they are placed together they offer what I propose is a secure foundation for an effective framework for a theology of masculinity.

To this point, this research has examined both sociological and psychological understanding of masculinity. It has surveyed various contemporary movements that engage men. Significant issues for men have also been investigated. It is the intention that all that has preceded this chapter will have contributed to an established meaning for masculinity, so that a theological perspective may emerge.¹ To add to what has already been discussed, for the foundation upon which the theological framework will be constructed, it will be helpful to engage in a systematic assembly of meaning about the human person. This will include gathering another set of shared understandings drawn from anthropology, the body, and sexuality, to arrive finally at the framework for masculinity in the next chapter. This chapter's examination entails, what Lonergan would call, a differentiation of consciousness about the human person. It will possess a theological flavour so as to arrive securely at a creditable framework for a theology of masculinity.²

¹ Lonergan notes that common meaning arises within a common field of experience and becomes formal when there is common understanding. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 79. It is hoped at this point that a clear description of masculinity has emerged which, in itself, approximates what Lonergan describes as common meaning.

² Lonergan's differentiation of consciousness will form an introduction to the following chapter. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*.

An Anthropology

On June 24th 2014, ABC television broadcast a show called “Enigma Man”. This show followed the work of an Australian palaeontologist, Darren Curnoe and his Chinese colleague, Ji Xueping, in their discovery of the fossilised remains of humans in southwest China. The remains of these people show some dramatic differences from other human remains found in other parts of the world. These remains show characteristics of appearance and bone structure not seen before by scientists. The television programme and the coverage of it in the associated media asked the question if these remains might represent a new human species.³ What made these remains so significant is that they challenge the accepted scientific view of who was present on earth 11,000 to 14,000 years ago.

This thesis has to leave aside the question of human evolution and whether ancient peoples were human-like or human. Similarly, there is not the capacity here to investigate the connection between humans today and those of remote times, like these Red Deer People of southwest China, as they have been called.⁴ However, what this discovery and the questions asked in the television program do highlight is, as David Curnoe puts it, how these ancient people relate to us and, more importantly for this thesis, “how we think of ourselves as humans in relation to nature”.⁵

This is precisely the question I ask at this point as an anthropological question, though this is more than a scientific question. What is it that makes a human distinguishable from the rest of the animal kingdom? What is human nature? Who is human?

Simplistically, the first answer has to be appearance, in the same way as one is able to distinguish a cat from a dog. Even if one were to meet a new breed of dog, there is usually enough visual information, as well as previous experience of dogs, to be sure that this new creature is a dog. The question about the Red Deer Cave people was not

³ Clare Rigden, "'Enigma Man' May Be New Human Species That Lived until 11,000 Years Ago," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, no. 19 June 2014 (2014), <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tv-and-radio/enigma-man-may-be-new-human-species-that-lived-until-11000-years-ago-20140616-zs9dz.html>.

⁴ These remains were named after the cave in which they were found.

⁵ David Curnoe quoted in Rigden, "'Enigma Man' May Be New Human Species That Lived until 11,000 Years Ago".

whether they were human, but rather, how did they have a place in relation to other known human or human-like species?

To determine human status, scientific anthropology focuses on the physical or biological attributes of the person or the skeletal remains. The word ‘anthropology’ is not used in this research with the same meaning as anthropologists may use it. This is not a study of cultural differences between historical eras or primitive peoples. I use anthropology here without those cultural meanings, though not unmindful that cultural mores may influence the understanding of the human person. Furthermore, as this thesis does not situate itself within a scientific field but rather in theology, it is both the physical and the spiritual that is of interest when considering the human person. The anthropology favoured in this thesis is multi-faceted and complex, more than physical or biological. Many disciplines are interested in and concerned with human nature and the person. However, this work is primarily theological.

So who is the human person for the means of this thesis? What understanding or vision of human nature provides the foundation for the following proposals?

Hylomorphism

Before proposing the particular anthropological and theological thrust of this thesis and developing its alignment with that of Karol Wojtyla, both before and during his papacy, it is necessary to examine, albeit briefly, the long tradition in the Church dealing with the understanding of the human person. Indeed, the works of both Karol Wojtyla and Pope John Paul II remain solidly within the trajectory of this Catholic anthropological tradition, indeed influenced by it, even though he added a particular phenomenological development to it. Indeed, as West puts it, John Paul II brings to the theology of the body both the qualities of practicality and speculation, as identified by St Thomas Aquinas as hallmarks of theology.⁶

Karol Wojtyla was formed in the Thomist school in his seminary studies, as were his generation and many before. His understanding and use of Aquinas continued in his later studies and doctoral work. His work in the popularly named *Theology of the*

⁶ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them.*, xxvii.

Body does not abandon the Scholastic tradition but uses it to engage in serious reflection upon modern philosophical and anthropological concepts, and to speak in a creative way of the human person in the modern world through the lens of personal experience.

The pre-Christian understanding of man as a composite being of soul and body, that is a hylomorphic view of man, is dominated by the work of Plato and Aristotle while the Christian anthropological heritage finds its classic work in that of St Thomas Aquinas. Each of these great minds was interested in form and matter and the connection between the two.

Plato held that the forms of natural things were separate from matter and thus, from this separation, they were intelligible. Intelligibility came from the immateriality of the thing.⁷ Aristotle disagreed and held that the forms of natural things do not exist apart from matter. The Platonic view of matter and form created an anthropology that considered that there was a temporary linkage between the soul and the body. While united, the body was viewed variously as the earthly prison of the soul or its receptacle.⁸

Aquinas drew from Aristotle's view of the soul united with the body by the very reason of the soul's nature. In fact, it belongs to the soul to be united with a body because of "a natural fitness and inclination for union with the body".⁹

John Paul II notes that Aquinas accepted Aristotle's anthropology in the light of the resurrection in that the resurrection as an eschatological state includes not only the state of the soul but also that of the body. The perfection and happiness of the human person in the eschaton can only be understood as that which is shared by both the body and the soul in a "definitively and perfectly 'integrated' state" of union.¹⁰ Such a pivotal role for the resurrection in understanding the hylomorphic nature of man leads

⁷ Thomas Petri, *Aquinas and the Theology of the Body - the Thomistic Foundations of John Paul II's Anthropology* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 210.

⁸ John Paul II refers to Plato from *Gorgias* 493a, *Phaedo* 66b and *Cratylus* 400c in footnote 77 on pg 360 of *Man and Woman He Created Them*. The usage among these three varies from the body being described as a 'prison', a 'tomb' and 'an enclosure where [the body] is kept safe'.

⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Great Books of the Western World (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 1.76.1 ad. 6.

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 390.

John Paul II to speak of an “anthropology of the resurrection”, which he uses extensively in his reflection titled *Christ Appeals to the Resurrection*.¹¹

Behind such approaches is the distinction drawn between ontology and phenomenology. Anthropology can be informed by both even though this thesis is less ontological and more phenomenological. In its initial approach, it begins with the concrete reality and experience of the person rather than a theoretical notion of the human person. The question then is not what is the objective reality or ontological being of a person, but is, rather, focused on the question, what is the experience of being a person?

In answering this question, this thesis calls on the phenomenological approach of John Paul II, especially in regard to the theology of the body. He noted that the experience of the human person is not the antithesis of, or in conflict with what is abstract, but rather is in relation to it.¹² In this connection, Buttiglione notes that Wojtyla’s *Love and Responsibility* was his first attempt to construct a synthesis of ontology and phenomenology.¹³ In his theology of the body, John Paul II did not dispense with ontology, but rather brought phenomenology into play as a foundational approach and presupposition in relation to the ontological reality.

In an ecclesiological vein, Schmitz notes that Wojtyla’s Christian personalism recognised the human person as a cell of the Church. Such belonging did not, however, negate nor detract from the dignity or integrity of the human person, but rather reveals him or her as called to act in communion with others for the realisation of his or her possibilities.¹⁴

We argue, then, that human experience leads into a theological anthropology in which action and being are united within the human person.¹⁵ Attending to the practical and

¹¹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, Part One, Chapter Three.

¹² John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 146 fn8.

¹³ Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla - the Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997). 83.

¹⁴ Schmitz quoted from *At The Centre of the Human Drama* by James Kow "The Philosophy of Kenneth L. Schmitz - the Recovery and Discovery of Things, Being, and the Person.", 35.

¹⁵ Schmitz, whom O’Herron calls an intellectual cousin of Wojtyla, (see Kenneth Schmitz and Paul O’Herron. *The Texture of Being: Essays in First Philosophy*. Washington: Catholic University of

lived experience of the human person does not abandon ontology or science, philosophy or any of the other disciplines. Rather, anthropology benefits from an analysis of the experience of being human. Such reflection unites varied human experiences into a useful and effective differentiation of meaning in regard to the human person and contributes towards a definition of personhood:

Phenomenology is primarily a style of thought, a relationship of the mind with reality, whose essential and constitutive features it aims to grasp, avoiding prejudice and schematisms. I mean that it is, as it were, an attitude of intellectual charity to the human being and the world, and for the believer, to God, the beginning and end of all things.¹⁶

In no way does Wojtyla ever abandon objective truth in favour of the subjective experience of the human person. Rather, he envisages a unity between subjective experience and objective truth. He found that the phenomenological method could assist the work of theology because it fosters the interplay of concrete experience with the investigation into ethics and the moral life.¹⁷ The work that has come to be called theology of the body demonstrates that identifying the experience of being human allows an understanding of the exterior and objective norms, in the case of theology, proposed by the Church. A further benefit arises from beginning with the human experience. It provides a way to engage meaningfully with today's world within the prevailing attitudes to issues of gender.¹⁸ In the midst of much fluidity in the meaning of masculinity and femininity, beginning with the human experience, rather than absolute norms, seems to strike the right note, even more so with masculinity. Whatever confusion, disagreement, dispute may have occurred regarding masculinity, there is the lived experience of being male which remains rich source for theology.

America Press, 2011, xii) while himself more a philosopher of being acknowledges that Wojtyla contributed to the philosophical understanding of the human person through the use of the phenomenological instrument of action and experience.

¹⁶ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 65. This statement was made by John Paul II in an address to a delegation of the World Institute of Phenomenology, 22 March 2003.

¹⁷ In the Introduction to *Man and Woman He Created Them* Michael Waldstein provides both an overview of the work known as Theology of the Body as well as Wojtyla's previous work. This statement comes from the section on Wojtyla and Scheler, pp 63-76.

¹⁸ Engaging meaningfully with the world and the human experience is a flavour of the philosophy of the Lublin School. I note that Krapiec adopts the view of the world as a world of goods. (See Kunat, "The Good as the Motive of Human Action According to Mieczyslaw Albert Krapiec", *Studia Gilsoniana* 3 (2014): 155-66.) In fact he proposes that the good gives purposefulness to the world and is the motive of human action. The negation of the good leads to, as Wojtyla would express it, the objectification of the human person and its accompanying dehumanisation.

As well as the phenomenological approach, this thesis relies upon the personalistic principle and personalistic norm used by Karol Wojtyła.¹⁹ This principle states that the human person is neither an object nor reducible to an object. This non-objectivisability of the human person generates an ethics that respects human freedom and human dignity.²⁰ However, ethics is not to be pursued here. Nevertheless, the foundation of human freedom and dignity resides in personhood. Non-objectivisability also signifies that each person is an unrepeatable reality to whom there is afforded not only individuality but also uniqueness.

This attribution of uniqueness and individuality also refutes any understanding of a human person that beholds a specific human person as an individuation of a generic human nature. Personalism means that the way of being human is personal not generic. “No other nature has any real (that is, individual) existence as a person - for this pertains to man alone.”²¹

The subjectivity of the person is also central to the anthropology used here. This is a consequence of the non-objectivisability of the human person. If the person cannot be treated as an object then the person is a personal subject. Furthermore, the person as subject allows the experience of the person to be an object of his or her own subjectivity. This is possible not only through an advanced intellectual capacity of the human person but also because of the realisation of one’s own subjectivity. The person who acts can experience himself or herself as the object of his or her own actions. As well, the human person manifests himself or herself and the complexity of personhood in action.²²

In addition, the human person is capable of self-disclosure without losing subjective personhood. Disclosure does not leach away a finite entity that is personhood. Indeed, a person’s action allows a moment of capture, a moment of insight.²³ Furthermore, in each action the same person is disclosed while at the same time personhood is not exhausted or completely disclosed by multiple actions.

¹⁹ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 40-44.

²⁰ Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła - the Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*.

²¹ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, X, 84.

²² This is a central premise of Karol Wojtyła’s *The Acting Person*.

²³ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, X, 10.

Consequent upon this is the value of oneself and of other human persons. Personal value permits of the capacity to enter into relations with other persons because of the recognition of the intrinsic value of the other. This intersubjectivity allows a knowing of the other as another, not a copy of oneself, and also the recognition of the objective reality of the other in the realm of experience.²⁴ Furthermore, since the other is a personal subject then the inner experience of the other is never fully communicable.

Nevertheless, mutuality and recognition of the value of another allows the gift of self within the realm of personal relation. It is another "I" which calls forth from one human subject the gift of self as a person. This is a gift that is communicable yet at the same time not able to be fully appreciated due to the mystery of the other. The very fact that it can be communicated, and received, albeit not completely, is because it is the inter-personal gift of one person to another.

Hence this style of anthropology is both subjective as well as capable of investigation through observation. It has both a subjective quality as well as an objective one. Subjective anthropology allows a person to understand the humanity that is theirs through the experience of being human and living among and with others in this world. "Man creates both the experience of the world and the experience of himself."²⁵

The corporeal and the physical is a crucial aspect of the anthropology of this thesis. A human person both has and is a *soma*, a body. The body plays a key and significant role in a person's self-understanding and consciousness of self as well as in the perception of the other. However a person is not identical with the body because the totality of a person transcends the body. The body is the "complexity that is unified in action, and the passive and resistant element in action".²⁶ It can be asserted that the body exerts a most significant influence upon anthropology. It certainly is not the only influence. There is the spiritual and the metaphysical aspects of the human person.

²⁴ This was a contribution of Scheler to modern philosophy. See Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla - the Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, 57.

²⁵ *Karol Wojtyla - the Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, 66.

²⁶ Robert F. Harvanek, "The Philosophical Foundations of the Thought of John Paul II," in *The Thought of Pope John Paul II*, ed. John M. McDermott (Rome: Editrice Pontifica Universita Gregoriana, 1993), 15.

While focusing upon the corporeal and bodily aspects of the person, the very unity of the human person must always be considered.

The human person is not simply a bundle of drives, reactions, affectivities, capacities or levels of consciousness. In the totality of a person's acting as well as in experience there are linkages that do not permit a reduction to any of the component actions and experiences, nor to any faculty of the self that is constitutive of the person. Any move to focus on one aspect of personhood separate from the whole can be result in a radical disortion.

Besides unity, understood as the fruit of personal integration, there is the task of integration, the ability to govern or possess oneself.²⁷ This is not to appeal solely to a psycho-medical understanding, but to an understanding of the dynamics of the human person, seeking integrity, and avoiding psychological and ontological disintegration. Indeed, personal integration is the goal of the human person, whether consciously pursued or not.

To this theological task, phenomenology makes a contribution through its method. It tends to examine a problem by moving from the less to a more adequate understanding of an issue, and the various dimensions of a particular question, in this case, the nature of the human person.²⁸ Phenomenology is interested in the many ways in which reality shows itself. Each is observed and deliberated upon so as to come to conclusions based on reality and experience rather than be dependent on abstraction and pure theory. This method allows for the existential variety of masculinity, which is lived by many men and is not a generalised or universal concept.

In summary, what is the goal of the human person within the anthropology adopted in this thesis? It is that the human person not only becomes but also possesses the experience of being an integrated and self-possessed person whose:

²⁷ Karol Wojtyla devotes Part Three of *The Acting Person* to the integration of the person.

²⁸ This succinct description of phenomenology is sourced from John J. Conley who provides a response article to Harvanek, "The Philosophical Foundations of the Thought of John Paul II," 23-28.

consciousness consists of a cognition that has integrated not only bodily awareness and activity, but also affective life. In the course of a lifetime, this person has become aware of objective moral values and has developed the appropriate human and humane skills to embody these values. [This] person can concentrate the whole of his or her energies in conduct and behaviour that fulfils him or her as self.²⁹

The aim of this anthropology is also human freedom. Not freedom in a political sense or in the liberal or individualistic style. Rather it is a freedom that operates in a person who is not susceptible to coercion and who is able to resist the demands of conformity. Stagman notes that this is a human freedom with a metaphysical character, something of value to a theological perspective on the human person.³⁰

With all this as context and background, the question now to be investigated is what is the more direct interplay between theology and anthropology.

A Theological Anthropology

Building the next level of the foundation further enables a theology of masculinity to be constructed. Following the insights of Vatican Council II, God and mankind cannot be separated. "For without the Creator the creature would disappear...When God is forgotten...the creature itself grows unintelligible."³¹

The human person was examined in the previous section. It was shown that the hallmarks of human personhood are personal subjectivity, personal dignity and human freedom as well as a corporeal and spiritual composition. Adding a theological vision to this has led some to claim that the whole concept of the human person is a product of Christian theology, rather than being that to which theology adds another perspective.³² Ratzinger proposes that it was the interplay between human thought and the Christian faith that developed the concept of the person. This needs to be pursued here since it will build the case for the legitimacy of theology not only to be engaged in this discussion, ultimately of masculinity, but also to guide and direct it.

²⁹ David Stagman, "The Implications for Theology of *the Acting Person*," in *The Thought of Pope John Paul II*, ed. John M. McDermott (Rome: Editrice Pontifica Universita Gregoriana, 1993), 215-16.

³⁰ "The Implications for Theology of *the Acting Person*," 215-16.

³¹ GS, Vatican Council II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - *Gaudium Et Spes*," 36.3.

³² Joseph Ratzinger, "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," *Communio* 17 (1990).

Ratzinger claims that in the early centuries of the Christian faith to answer the question of who God is and who Christ is required turning to the concept of *persona* and developing it beyond what had been done before in Greek or Latin learning. He traces the origin of the concept of the person, as we would understand it now, to Tertullian who developed the use of *persona* in describing the nature of God – *una substantia-tres personae*. Tertullian relied upon a reading of and exegesis from Scripture to do this. He argued that in Scripture God is active, in dialogue and in personal communication with humanity. This relational stance that God takes and develops with humanity allows not only a personal quality to be attributed to God but also sheds light upon what being a person entails. To be human involves a relational quality, which is shown by the human person towards others. What is more, the human person holds this quality, which Ratzinger describes as “from someone else and toward someone else”,³³ in imitation of the divine personhood, which is essentially and purely relational.

The nature of person underwent a further development in the attempt to describe the unique nature of Christ. Theology developed the formula that Christ has two natures and one person. Now this was a complex statement, which was not universally received nor understood and there were many aberrations and heresies concerning it that needed to be addressed and corrected over the centuries. In this labour of refinement, the concept of person was also refined beyond what the Latin and Greek mind had conceived at the beginning of Western thought. The change that Ratzinger perceives is from a substantialist perception of the person to an existential one. The human person is not the individual substance of a rational nature but rather the incommunicably proper existence of a spiritual nature.³⁴

It was in seeking to express the Christian belief in both the Trinity and Christ that theology compelled philosophy to develop from the level of substance or essence to that of existence in understanding the human person. Of course, this is a generalised overview and the movement was not simple or quickly achieved. In summary, Ratzinger’s contribution is to focus upon the legitimate and necessary intervention of

³³ {Ratzinger, 1990 #461@446}

³⁴ Ratzinger, "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," 448-49.

theology into the philosophical anthropology in use in the early centuries of the Christian Church. In doing this, he demonstrates that theology is not foreign to anthropology but rather has contributed to it. I contend that this contribution continues and thus a theological anthropology of the human person can be articulated.

At the core, to admit theology into anthropology is to admit God into the understanding of the human person. This has already been noted in the sense that to speak of God enables one to speak of the human person. There is however another dimension to this. The Christian understanding of God is that God is the Highest Good and that he has the fullness of existence.³⁵ As such, God is superior and transcendent to all living things because God is the perfect being. Furthermore, since God is perfection in being, then rightly and logically God is considered the end of all being, that is, all beings tend towards perfection, which is God. Then it can be said that human nature tends towards God through an existential desire or attraction towards perfection and what is transcendent.

In keeping with the personal nature of the human being, as noted above, Christianity also declares that God is accessible through human reason as well as through faith. Human reason is capable of accepting that God exists. Faith, acting alongside reason, allows the human person to enter into a personal relationship with God, in whom the non-objectivisability of existence has its origin and from whom the non-objectivisability of the human person derives. The person of God meets the human person not as equals but equally personal. This is particularly a Thomist view of the human person and of God. This understanding of the nature of God allows an understanding of the human person. Thus, faith, or theology, is key to a comprehension of the human person. "When God is forgotten...the creature itself grows unintelligible."³⁶

Origin

This intrinsic and unbreakable connection between the nature of God and nature of the human person reaches its clearest expression of the human person created in the

³⁵ Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla - the Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, 76.

³⁶ Vatican Council II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - *Gaudium Et Spes*," 149§36.3.

image of God. Already dealt with briefly in chapter three as a component of the cognitive perspective on masculinity, here it is revisited as one of the key propositions for an understanding of the human person. The resemblance to God that is contained within the principle of 'being in the image of God' not only denotes the human person but also separates the human person from other living beings. It signals that essential to human nature is a divine resemblance. The claim has been made that this creation of the human person *imago Dei* is the basis of all Christian anthropology.³⁷ Such a claim provides a necessary foundation for understanding the human person in theological terms.

What is the basis for the Christian understanding of being in the likeness of God? It is found in the first account of creation in Genesis 1:1-31. Here in the unfolding of creation over the span of six days, God brings into being all visible things, animate and inanimate. On the sixth day God changes the way of operation from a continuous unfolding of creation to a pause before mankind is brought into existence. The progression that has been in evidence to this point is interrupted and even abandoned. It seems as if God ponders and withdraws into Himself seeking a plan or blueprint for this next act of creation. This pause in itself signals something special about the creation of humanity. It is within the divine personhood that the design for man and woman is found.³⁸ There is thus an explicit relation between man, woman and God which does not exist between the Creator and other created things. John Paul II expresses it in this way: although the creation of mankind is placed within the cycle of creation, the likeness of man is not to that of the other creatures or created inanimate objects, but rather the likeness is to God. This is unique and singular to the human person.³⁹ The Christian faith holds that God is a personal being and thus being created in the image of God means creation as a personal being, in semblance of the Creator.

This is of fundamental interest for theology for an understanding of mankind and the human person. Theology is not interested primarily in the process or timing of the

³⁷ John Paul II, "Mulieris Dignitatem," (1988), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_15081988_mulieris-dignitatem_en.html.

³⁸ This insight into the creation of man is found in Bransfield, *The Human Person According to John Paul II*.

³⁹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 135.

beginning of human existence, but is interested in who it was that brought the human person into existence and why.⁴⁰ It cannot therefore be overstated the significance that a personal God brings into existence that which is personal, like unto himself.

Furthermore, the Christian understanding that God created out of nothing, *ex nihilo*, when placed alongside the creation of mankind in the image of God, further emphasises the personal nature of man and woman. Mankind is not like the other creatures, not reducible to the world. Humanity springs in the image of God from nothing. This places man and woman in a unique category within creation and also emphasises that from the personal divine will and in imitation of the personal divine nature, they come into existence. “The human person can emerge only from what is personal.”⁴¹

The second account of creation (Gen 2:4-24) provides further theological reflection upon anthropology. In particular this account provides a basis for the subjectivity of the human person with the associated self-knowledge and self-consciousness.

In this account God creates a singular human being and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life and thus the human being became a living being. (Gen 2:7) This human being is placed in a garden, which he must till and care for and in which is located all that he needs. He exists in an original happiness. There is also every kind of living being and plant in this garden. As John Paul II names it, this original human being exists in solitude, original solitude. Not only is he the only human creature but also he finds himself in obvious dissimilitude to the other living creatures. God brings all the other living creatures to the man for him to name them. Through this naming of the other creatures, the man “gains the consciousness of his own superiority, that is, that he cannot be put on a par with any other species of living beings on earth.”⁴² He also comes to realise that none of the other creatures provide for him the contact and interaction of another human person. This prepares for the account of the creation of woman in Genesis 2:21-23. The man’s consciousness of himself is aroused through the negative, of not finding himself reflected in any of the creatures brought to him. In

⁴⁰ Bransfield, *The Human Person According to John Paul II*, 52.

⁴¹ *The Human Person According to John Paul II*, 63.

⁴² John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 148.

this we see the human person capable of self-awareness and self-knowledge, that objective looking at self that is possible only because of the subjectivity a human person possesses.

The creation of woman leads to a new differentiation and explication of the subjectivity of the human person. When finally the man beholds the woman with the words, “This one at last is bone from my bones, flesh from my flesh!” (Gen 2:23) there is in the act of comprehension the expression and the realisation that the human person exists as a subject not only capable of self-awareness and self-knowledge but also, despite differences, aware of the characteristics that denote the human person. About no other creature was the man able to say this because no other creature possessed the anthropological nature of the woman, which is particular and specific to the human person. Furthermore, the man recognises similarity but also difference and is thus able to behold in woman the objectivity and subjectivity of the feminine. The human person possesses a subjectivity that enables not only a self-awareness, but also an awareness of another. Each is capable of being an object to perception but, as mentioned before, is not reducible to an object, as were the other living creatures, which were named and were placed under the authority of the man. There is mutual subjectivity between the man and woman.

Constitution

Theology contributes to an understanding of the personal reality of man and woman and that they exist in this world, created by God, as personal subjects in image of the divine likeness. This is complemented by the theological understanding of the constitution of the human person as a body and a spirit. The preparation for this section is to be found in the earlier section on hylomorphism.

In addition to that previous discussion, it is helpful to note that central to this research is the dual constitution of the human person as a fruit of the personal nature that belongs to mankind. This has not always been clear in recent times. John Paul II points out that an opposition of body and spirit has led to a loss of the subjectivity of

the person. When a dualism operates the person is more easily open to manipulation and exploitation; to be treated as an object, especially in the area of sexuality.⁴³

Classical theology gives prominence to the spiritual dimension of the human person, namely the immortal and rational soul.⁴⁴ This is the constitutive element by which man and woman most clearly resemble God, who is spirit. It is where the *imago Dei* is most clearly perceived. In addition, it is there that the capacity to receive the communication of divine life through grace resides. To this John Paul II develops and adds the relational *imago Dei* as will be explained later in this thesis.

Theology must not exclude the body. Rather, the qualities and functions of the soul are not only proper to itself, but also complement and inform those of the body so that an integral whole of the human person is experienced. Indeed it is the role of the body to make visible that which is invisible, the spirit or soul. “The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it.”⁴⁵

It is consciousness of the body that allows the human person to discover and experience the complexity of his or her own constitution. Just as the body becomes the doorway through which the inner self makes a presence in the exterior world, so too for the human person, the body becomes the window into one’s own subjective interior. John Paul II understands the action of God in Genesis 2:7, where God breathes life into the nostrils of the man and he becomes a living creature, as a biblical indication of this complexity of the human person. He observes that “biblical anthropology distinguishes in man not so much ‘body’ and ‘soul,’ but rather ‘body’ and ‘life.’ Here the biblical author represents the conferral of the gift of life by the ‘breath,’ which does not cease to be the property of God: when God takes it back, man returns to the dust from which he was taken.”⁴⁶ The soul or spirit then, according to this understanding of the human person, makes the man or woman a living being

⁴³ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 43.

⁴⁴ Bransfield, *The Human Person According to John Paul II*, 98.

⁴⁵ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 203.

⁴⁶ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 153fn11.

and capable of receiving the divine life. This in turn influences the body because of the complex interaction between the two and the integral structure of the person.

In this section on the constitution of the human person it must also be noted that mankind only exists either as male or female.⁴⁷ The masculine and feminine are two ways of being the same human person. Each to the other is both recognisable and unknowable at the same time. Man “always has before him the other way of being human, which to him is inaccessible.”⁴⁸

This complementarity of human existence as male or female is questioned by some. This was acknowledged earlier. For this research it is accepted and is foundational. It is foundational not because the man and the woman are two halves of humanity and must merge to generate the totality of the human person. Rather, the man on his own and the woman on her own are equally human persons. This complementary duality of human existence is accepted so as to allow the possibility of pursuing a theology of masculinity. Such a theology must begin with an anthropology of the human person, which in turn allows an anthropology of the masculine. There is also an anthropology that is possible for woman as the other mode of human existence. This work though will not explore both.

The twofold human existence leads then to a consideration of the desire for unity and communion between man and woman. This is the contingent character of the human person, as Scola expresses it; the “I” needs the other and depends upon the other for his fulfilment.⁴⁹ This contingency brings forth the call to communion through the gift of self as a person.

Communion and Gift

Scola claims that this contingency of the human person points to the fulfilment of the human person being dependent upon this interaction between “I” and the other. He

⁴⁷ Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*.

⁴⁸ *The Nuptial Mystery*, 7.

⁴⁹ *The Nuptial Mystery*.

claims there is a void or deficiency within the self that is met by the other. He concludes that the human person is inter-personal.⁵⁰

John Paul II expresses the same principle from the second creation account of Genesis. As already noted, the man created alone finds in the woman a companion unlike to and more satisfying than the other living beings of the *animalia*. Both the man and the woman experience the original unity, which John Paul II calls “the overcoming of the frontier of solitude and at the same time an affirmation – for both human beings – of everything in solitude that constitutes ‘man’.”⁵¹

From the creation accounts, this original unity is interpreted as the divine intention for human persons. Being created male and female and then entering into a relationship of persons constitutes the first instance of the communion of persons.⁵² The term *communion of persons* is favoured by the Second Vatican Council and John Paul II because of its more explicit and rich connotation of a personal subject being drawn towards and being beside another human person. This term conveys both the depth and the personal nature of this *communio*.

The communion of persons is not just an end in itself nor a mechanistic means of personal fulfilment. From a theological perspective, entering into *communio* is an expression of the personhood of the man and the woman, which personhood is expressed through the combination of self-possession and communion with others. “Persons are empowered precisely by their self-possession to enter into communion with others. Not only that, but they are never so much themselves as beings of their own as when they share their lives by self-donation.”⁵³ This theological claim rests upon the human *communio personarum* reflecting the divine *communio personarum*. It also has its origin in the human person being in the image of God. So, in seeking a theological understanding of the human person, the capacity and desire for *communio* mirrors the one who is the model, namely God, as well as reproducing the prototype of *communio*, namely God. Thus, God provides the meaning of the human person.

⁵⁰ Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 7.

⁵¹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 162.

⁵² Vatican Council II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - *Gaudium Et Spes*," 12.

⁵³ John F. Crosby, “John Paul II’s Vision of Sexuality and Marriage – The Mystery of ‘Fair Love’”, Gneuchs (2000), 55.

Furthermore, it is through the communion of persons and through the individual personhood that man and woman become the image of God. Masculinity and femininity individually manifest God. The communion of persons also reflects an image of God.

This is important to note for the task of this thesis. Through his masculinity, his personal solitude, a man expresses an image of God. Masculinity possesses this theological capacity. It is also through the communion of persons, which is entered into through masculinity and femininity, that a man likewise expresses the image of God. Solitude and communion are both capable of a theological meaning.

The questions then arise as to how one brings this *communio* into existence and how one enters into it. The answer is through the gift of self. This capacity for the giving of self now needs to be addressed. Once more it is in relation to the divine that this gift of self is comprehensible.

Both Scripture and tradition declare that God created out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. Further to what was said before, if the human person arises from nothingness by gift and design of the Creator, then through this, man can understand the reality of gift in creation. What is not in existence comes into existence. However, it is not just in this understanding of gift that the realisation of the divine work manifests itself. It is also in the divine-like capacity of a human person to give of oneself to another that there is likeness to the Creator. Equally a human person may give of himself or herself to the Creator in a divine-human interpersonal interaction.

What is the means for this gift of self? How is this personal communion of man and woman achieved? It is through the body. John Paul II proposes that the body and sex are at the service of the communion of persons.⁵⁴ A theology of the body, in particular of the male human body, will be sketched in a later section. At this point, the importance and value of the body for the creation of the communion of persons, most particularly in marriage, must be noted. Being both bodily and spiritual, the human person is not satisfied by a purely spiritual connection with another but rather desires a fuller and more comprehensive connection with the other personal subject. Leaving

⁵⁴ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 126.

aside for the moment the ethics and morality of sexual activity, the culmination of the communion of persons is experienced through the union of two bodies.

The *communio personarum* through the union of bodies signifies the union of personhood. The unity of the human person includes the spiritual and non-corporeal aspects of a person's constitution in this *communio*. Otherwise, it would not be a personal communion, but rather the union of bodies, which might be a convenience or the satisfaction of bodily urges, but which reduces the human person to the category of the *animalia*. It also approaches objectification of the human person. This bodily quality and capacity for self-donation is a key teaching of John Paul II in his theology of the body. Exploring this briefly will provide a further perspective on a theological anthropology.

The dual existence of the human person as man and woman is relative to and reaches its fullest expression in the conjugal bodily union. The body enables this to happen and could be called the instrument of this, being careful not to reduce what is constitutive of the human person, namely the body, to mere instrumentality.

John Paul II calls man and woman “two diverse ways of being a body that are proper to human nature”.⁵⁵ The human body expresses the fundamental personal existence of man and woman. It is a body that has been received as a gift from the Creator. Indeed before the creation of woman, it was through the body that the man experienced not only his own existence, but was able to differentiate his own existence from the other living corporeal beings. Upon beholding the woman, it was the feminine body in contrast and relation to the male body that enabled not only a recognition of the personal existence of the woman, but also her shared personal existence both in similarity and in difference.

The original unity experienced by the original man and the original woman was possible through these two different but similar bodies. Thus it was that this man and this woman became aware of the potential that the body has of conveying to the other the gift of self. John Paul II calls this the spousal meaning of the body. The body carries this meaning and even speaks a language of gift. The spousal attribute is the

⁵⁵ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 179.

power to express that love by which the man becomes a gift and through the gift fulfils the very meaning of his being and existence. The human body with its sex, in its masculinity and femininity, when seen in the mystery of creation also contains fruitfulness and procreation.

This spousal meaning of the body inscribed in masculinity and femininity signals that the very meaning of life and of a person is to be a gift. Thus, the capacity for self-gift is a clear component of the personal. Here the compelling statement of Vatican Council II is to be remembered where the Council declared that man is the only creature in the visible world that God willed for its own sake and man cannot find himself except through a sincere gift of self.⁵⁶ Human personhood, let alone human happiness, is not found in self-indulgent isolation.⁵⁷

When dealing theologically with the understanding of the human person, this spousal meaning of the body is most significant. From non-theological perspectives, this spousal meaning of the body could be easily dismissed. This was demonstrated earlier in this work among some sociological insights and gender theories. It is a firm contention of this work though that the spousal meaning of the body contributes to the theological understanding of the human person, and for the purposes of this work, the male human person. This is a two-sided reality. Firstly, awareness of this meaning of the body, whereby the body holds the capacity for the gift of self to another, is fundamental to human existence in this world. It is not accidental, nor is it at the periphery. To be human is to be in the body and in a body that holds the potential for self-gift. From the reverse angle, so to speak, such a capacity for self-gift can only be realised by a personal subject. Self-donation requires personhood.

This stage of the development of the theological anthropology for this thesis anticipates some direct applications to the topic under investigation, namely masculinity. The desire for *communio* resides within a man by virtue of his personhood. The means of realising this personal communion is located within the

⁵⁶ Council, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - *Gaudium et Spes*," paragraph 24:3.

⁵⁷ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 135.

male body, with its particular masculine composition and sexuality. A theological interpretation of the male human body will be taken up in the next chapter.

Destination

A theological understanding of the male human person, indeed of all human persons, cannot omit or ignore the end of human life. This has a double aspect to it. The end can be taken to mean the experience and moment of death as well as what follows death. It can also be taken to mean both the direction and purpose of human life.

The reality of death as well as the existence after death, for Christians, is grounded in the death and resurrection of Christ himself. So, it is to the resurrection of the body that attention must be given so as to understand the destination of human persons. At the outset, it has to be admitted that the resurrection, as Christians understand it, is not a universally held belief. For this work, that situation is tangential and may well be worthy of study in itself. For this thesis, to understand the male human person from a Christian theological perspective, it is critical that the resurrection of the body be addressed.

What must be avoided is any segmentation of human existence. John Paul II proposes this in his theology of the body as he operates from a hermeneutic of continuity between Scripture and human experience. This makes possible looking with understanding from historical human experience to the original experience of mankind contained in the accounts of creation in Genesis. Admittedly, such understanding is limited, though possible. In a similar manner, relying on Scripture and the tradition of the Church it is possible to look forward towards the *eschaton*, towards that experience beyond death with a similarly limited understanding. Moreover, it is primarily and definitively Christ's own resurrection that enables this move towards understanding the *eschaton*.

To outline the aspects of this understanding of the eschatological human existence, it is helpful to rely upon John Paul II's carefully constructed argument that incorporates a significant role for the body.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them – A Theology of the Body*, 379ff.

The beginning point is the dialogue between Christ and the Sadducees about the so-called levirate marriage found in the Synoptics (Mt 22:24-30, Mk 12:18-27 and Lk 20:27-40). Here Christ makes an appeal to the resurrection and an appeal to the Old Testament noting that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and David; God of the living, not of the dead. In denying the resurrection, the Sadducees held to an anthropology that proposed that the soul died with the body. This denial of an immortality to the soul meant they were not caught in a dualism of immortality and mortality, but rather a denial of any immortality.

Having established that there is a resurrection, Christ answers their hypothetical question about whose wife the woman will be. He answers it by saying, “When they rise from the dead, they take neither wife nor husband.” (Mk 12:25)

These words indicate, says the Pope, that in the resurrection human beings regain their bodies with its masculinity and femininity and regain them in the fullness proper to the image and likeness of God. There will not be marriage because marriage belongs to this world exclusively; marriage and procreation do not constitute the eschatological future of mankind. West comments that the great mystery of the spousal union in this historical existence anticipates and prepares man and woman for the great mystery of eternal union with Christ. Thus, marriage anticipates and foreshadows an eternal reality.⁵⁹

It seems consistent then with the scriptural message to propose an eventual recovery of bodiliness after the death of the body and separation from the soul. This is a recovery of bodiliness within a re-establishment of human life in its integrity; a union of body and soul in an entirely new state of human life.

What is the nature of the eschatological existence? John Paul II gleans from the expression in the Synoptics that in this eschatological existence man and woman become equal to or like the angels. So this future existence is essentially different from the historical existence and not only in degree, and even different from the ‘original’ existence. This is consistent with the soteriological principle that through

⁵⁹ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 326.

Christ's redemption we gain even more than what we had in the state of original innocence. Heaven is not merely a return to Eden, but an entrance into a completely new fullness of our humanity.⁶⁰ The Pope describes this future existence as a spiritualisation of the human person. However, it is not a transformation into some angelic existence, for that would make resurrection meaningless. If the body is not raised, then Christ's resurrection bears no relation to our own psychosomatic existence in history. The eschatological existence involves a spiritualisation of the body; a submission of the body to the spirit by means of a new system of powers operating in man. The opposition between the body and spirit is no longer present and there is perfect unity and harmony between the two. The spirit permeates the body in a way that is not experienced in this historical dimension. This unity and harmony is a perfect realisation of one's masculinity and femininity, of all that is personal in the human person. This harmony safeguards the primacy of the spirit. It is not a domination of the body, but a primacy over it.

The spiritualisation that occurs to the body, the perfect balance between body and spirit, and the integral primacy of the spirit, is also a divinisation of one's humanity. This is both inaccessible to and different in degree from what is experienced on this earth and in time. It is the fruit of grace and of God's self-communication to the whole of the person's psychosomatic subjectivity. John Paul II deliberately uses 'subjectivity' to underline that this divinisation is not a functional re-formation so as to be able to see God face to face. Rather it is one's entire personal subjectivity being formed in a new way, which arises from a union with God in the Trinitarian mystery of perfect and intimate communion. The human person is not absorbed by this but emerges in a new and fuller way.

The Pope makes a strong claim for continuity between historical present and eschatological future. Indeed, this bodily experience in time provides the substratum and basis for the future experience. Even though the identity of the human person is realised in a different way in each of the three 'experiences' of origin, history and *eschaton*, it is fundamentally the same person, the same humanity as was created by

⁶⁰ *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 307fn1.

God. Christ's words about the resurrection indicate this. He says that there will be no marriage. He does not say that there will be no male and female. So, the meaning of masculinity and femininity in the *eschaton* will be found outside of marriage and procreation but not outside the mystery of creation, not outside the reality of human personhood. This will happen through the complete co-penetration of redemption into human history and the recovery of the grace of creation through the redemption of the body. The human person will be established fully in the perfect freedom of the gift of the self through the body in the eternal communion of persons.

This eschatological understanding of the human person not only develops the theological understanding of mankind, but also underlines some key concepts about masculinity. These will be developed later. It is important though at this point to draw attention to two.

Firstly, the body is not unimportant in this eschatological existence. In fact, John Paul II goes to great length and effort to demonstrate that the body is involved in this future existence to the extent that this eschatological existence could be said to need the body so as to be complete. Neither is it divorced from this present existence, as has already been noted. In *Redemptor Hominis*, John Paul II expressed the destination of the human person, eternal life and the resurrection of the body, as the "final fulfillment of man's vocation...the fulfillment of the 'destiny' that God has prepared...from eternity."⁶¹

Secondly, it must be noted that this eschatological existence is not purely theoretical hypothesising such that it might eventuate to be something completely different. While largely unknown and outside historical experience, it is connected to and is a development from the historical existence of the human person in the economy of salvation. The mystery of the resurrection is accessible from the historical experience of the human person.

⁶¹ John Paul II, "*Redemptor Hominis*". 18.2.

Christ

To this point the identity of the human person in his or her origin and destination, the constitution of the person, and the inter-personal momentum, have all contributed to a theological anthropology. In addition, these examinations have provided an understanding of the dignity of the person. This is a dignity that is grounded in human nature, especially as it is in relation to and in the image of God. Though not absent, it is timely now to explicitly Christianise this anthropology by reference to Christ and his humanity.

This is not done in any polemic way over and against femininity, but rather to explore more fully a theological framework for masculinity. Bringing a Christological viewpoint will augment what has already been said and securely establish the absolute value of the human person, whether male or female.

One of the developments and clarifications of doctrine that the Second Vatican Council brought was an anthropology that was expressed in a way that the world at that time had not heard before; in a way that was at the same time fresh but in keeping with tradition.⁶² As quoted earlier, the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, expressed it in the clearest way: “The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light.”⁶³ Another translation of the Latin original says that only in Christ does the mystery of mankind become clear.

How is this so? The key lies in the dual nature of the God-Man, completely divine and completely human, perfectly united in one person. It is particularly in his humanity that Christ reveals the humanity that he shares with every human person and also demonstrates the totality of who the human person is. This will only make sense from the starting point of the human person created *imago Dei*. It is this divinely-imagined humanity, which in Christ reaches its perfection with the divine suffusion of the person of the Son of God into that one human person, Jesus of Nazareth. Christ then is the prototype of humanity. He can be called also the perfection of humanity.

⁶² *Memory and Identity : Personal Reflections*, 124-25.

⁶³ Vatican Council II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - *Gaudium Et Spes*," 22.1.

The Council does not accept that Christ is beyond humanity. His perfection and his unique status come from the divine nature residing completely and integrally with human nature in his one personhood. Moreover, the Son of God through the incarnation has made himself united “in some fashion with every man”.⁶⁴ The humanity of Christ informs the humanity of the human person.

From the humanity and divinity of Christ, united in his person, and from the origin, constitution and destination of the human person, flows the dignity of the human person. This is a dignity proper to personhood. It has to be pointed out that this is not unsubstantial theorising, but arises from an existential understanding of the human person as well as from an existential reflection upon human existence in light of the revelation of faith and the event of the incarnation and redemption. It is also a successful attempt to describe the uniqueness of human person. Without the Gospel, Christian revelation and faith, the human person will remain a dramatic and existential question without a sufficient answer. “The correct response to the question about man is Christ.”⁶⁵

This view of the human person becomes an authentic humanism, not of human invention but truly as the result of human reflection upon the revelation of faith and human existence. Such a humanism is not alien to, nor is it an addendum to Christianity. It exists within the very substance of the Christian faith. “In reality, the name for [the] deep amazement at man’s worth and dignity is the Gospel. It is also called Christianity.”⁶⁶

To the same degree, the human person is not to be considered in a general de-personalised way or as a member of an amorphous mass, which is redeemed by Christ. Christ is united with each human person through a shared humanity. He is united to a unique and unrepeatable individual human reality that is accorded worth and dignity. The history of each one’s life, and John Paul II adds of each one’s soul, is written by each human person through the experiences, interactions and existence of

⁶⁴ "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - *Gaudium Et Spes*," 22.2.

⁶⁵ John Paul II, *Memory and Identity : Personal Reflections*, 129.

⁶⁶ "*Redemptor Hominis*". 10.2.

his or her life.⁶⁷ It is these individual lives as well as the whole of mankind that becomes, says John Paul II, the “primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission”.⁶⁸ This is not a decision made by the Church, but rather one that has, in effect, been made for the Church by Christ himself by the assuming of a human nature in the incarnation. Thus, the Christocentric dignity of the human person is at the centre of the Christian faith. It is neither a social policy, nor even an anthropological distillation of the faith. Equally, it is not a humanism brought into the faith and Christianised.

A Theology of the Body

Relying upon theology, an adequate anthropology of the human person has been proposed on the pathway to constructing a theological framework of masculinity. Two more steps remain in this pathway, namely, to examine the body and sexuality theologically. It has to be said that in doing this there is no desire to give an importance or prominence to the body and sexuality over the other constitutive parts of the human person. Rather, these two aspects of the human person deserve a more thorough examination. As will be noted in the next chapter and has already been seen in the paradigms of masculinity in chapter four, the body and sexuality bear a particular significance for masculinity. Each has suffered through a misunderstanding or an absence of true appreciation in contemporary discourse about masculinity. This suggests the need for an attempt at rehabilitation. It is both wise and helpful then to pause and assemble these theologies of body and sex before a theology of masculinity.

While John Paul II has provided the most usual association with a theology of the body, and his insights will assist in this examination of the body’s theological meaning, his is not the sole contribution in this matter. Others have realised both the capacity of the body to hold a theological meaning as well as the necessity and desirability of it doing so.

⁶⁷ "Redemptor Hominis". 14.1.

⁶⁸ "Redemptor Hominis". 14.1.

The poet T. S. Eliot in 'Dry Salvages', written during the bleak days of the German air raids over England in World War II, ponders the intersection of timelessness and time. To most, he notes, that this intersection is hidden in the unattended moment of consciousness of the beauty of the world. Even if not fully aware, there is always "the hint half guessed, the gift half understood...the Incarnation."⁶⁹ It is precisely the Incarnation of the Son of God in human flesh, in a human body, which opens the door of theology upon the body. John Paul II goes further and claims that through the Incarnation, the human body enters theology through the main door.⁷⁰ This is all to lay the ground for not only the logic of examining the body theologically, but also its appropriateness. If the body is important for an understanding of the human person, likewise, it is important for a theology of the human person.

It is necessary to restate some observations already made as well as some new ones before examining the significant features of a theological perspective on the body.

While sharing many features, the body of the human person is different from the body of the members of the animal kingdom. This is because the human body is a personal body. It is not an animal body.⁷¹ This personal human body enters into a relationship and interaction with the personal and immortal human soul, such that what affects the body affects the soul and vice versa. It is as if, without any merging of entities, the body enters into the realm of the spirit and the spirit, likewise, into the realm of the body. The corporeal and spiritual constitution of the person must be kept in mind as a theology of the body is expounded.

Further to the unique quality of the body of a human person among the living creatures, the creation of man and woman in the image of God, which has already been observed and expounded, gives to the body a quality of sacramentality. Indeed, this is implied in the statement above, that the human body has entered into theology by means of the Incarnation. The sacramentality of the body signals God's desire for self-revelation. In the beginning, in the act of creation, was the first among many

⁶⁹ T.S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages," *Four Quartets*, <http://www.davidgorman.com/4Quartets/3-salvages.htm>.

⁷⁰ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 221.

⁷¹ Maria Fedoryka, "The Foundation in the Spirit of Spousal Desire in the Theology of the Body," in *Fourth International Symposium on Theology of the Body* (Fatima, Portugal 2013).

occasions whereby God revealed Himself. Thus it could be said that in a general sense Christianity exists because of and within the desire of God for self-revelation.

This capacity to image the divine is both a divine gift and an inherent quality of the human body. At the same time as admitting the latter, it has also to be noticed that the sacramentality of the body is not because of its biological construction but rather because of the body's unity with the soul. In theological tradition, emphasis has been placed on the soul as the reason for mankind's being in the image of God. The possibility that the body participates in this divine image had not been dismissed and indeed has been at times proposed and discussed.⁷² Just as the body participates in the dignity of the person, so too does the body participate in being a means for the divine image to be manifested. Furthermore, the physical and spiritual reality of Christ's own resurrected body points to the sacramentality of every human body.⁷³ Moreover, John Paul II's personalist understanding of the human person and the human body leads him to claim a sacramentality for the body both through Christ's own resurrected body as well as in the sense that the body is an expression, a sign of the person.⁷⁴

The relevance and significance to theology of the human body, and in particular, the theology of the male human body is located as a starting point and foundation in the body of Christ himself. Indeed, it is only because of the human body of the Son of God that a theology of the human body can be spoken of and expounded. Once more, it is the Incarnation that is critical here. "Christ fully reveals man to himself through the revelation—in *his body*—of the mystery of divine love."⁷⁵ This mystery of divine love is the inner life and communion of the Trinity. So, what is of God and from God can enter the world by means of the human body. This is the human body being theological.

How does the human body transmit this invisible reality and mystery of divine love? It is done through the sexual difference of male and female with its concurrent bodily

⁷² Bransfield, *The Human Person According to John Paul II*, 114.

⁷³ Jean Lafitte, "Redemption and Sacramentality of Human Love," in *Fourth International Symposium on Theology of the Body* (Fatima, Portugal 2013).

⁷⁴ John F. Crosby, "John Paul II's Vision of Sexuality and Marriage – The Mystery of 'Fair Love'", Gneuchs (2000), 60.

⁷⁵ Christopher West in *Preface to John Paul II, Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, xxvii.

manifestations as well as through the communion of persons between man and woman, expressed and realised through the one-flesh union. This has important implications for a theology of masculinity since it establishes that a man's physical reality as a man carries the capacity for revelation of the divine mystery in himself as well as through the interpersonal communion with the feminine. This establishes that being human, and thus being a man, is not only biological, but also is theological. Any reduction of the body to mere matter or biology is blind to the full potential, significance and beauty of the human body.

A theology of the body thus rests upon the human person being in the world as a visible expression and the highest visible expression of the gift of divine self that God makes to the whole of creation in His role as Creator. The human person does this through masculinity and through femininity. Further, the human person holds within himself and herself the capacity to make a gift of self to another through the communion of persons entered into through the body. In this too there is a theological character to the body because the inter-personal communion of human persons mirrors the Trinitarian inter-personal communion.⁷⁶

A theology of the body allows a theology of sexuality to be spoken of.

A Theology of Sexuality

Having established that the body is an integral part of the person and then exploring its theological value, it is a progression of principles to apply theology to sexuality, which resides in and is expressed and experienced in the body. Sexuality can be accorded a theological value, in addition to its human value, if it is accepted that sexuality and sexual identity are constitutive of the human person. If sexuality is viewed as an attribute or characteristic, like hair colour, then this theological value for sexuality becomes unworkable and impossible.

Earlier in the thesis, some sociological and psychological perspectives were cited that do not view sexuality as a constitutive aspect of the human person. It is certainly not from this viewpoint that this thesis operates. Rather, the understanding that being

⁷⁶ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 202§19.3.

male constitutes the identity of a human person enables the adoption of the principle that masculinity contributes to the definition and constitution of personhood, along with acts of will and intelligence, something which delineates mankind from the *animalia*.⁷⁷

To express it from another angle, as already has been noted, a human person cannot but be either male or female.⁷⁸ To reduce sexuality to a characteristic is also to reduce the integral constitution of the human person and to do harm to the relationship between the dynamic parts of a person. The human person is a dynamic and integrated subject.⁷⁹ This dynamic and integrated personal subject exists in the world through either masculinity or femininity.

Further to this, the sexual identity of the human person, being constitutive and not characteristic, enables a complementarity between the two sexes to be deduced. The very integrity of both masculinity and femininity to the person who possesses that sexual identity raises the question of the unique contribution each sexual identity makes to the human person as well as the relation between the two sexual identities. A complementarity of equality in dignity and yet a differentiation of sexual identity is grounded theologically in the scriptural accounts of creation, particularly the first where God creates male and female in the divine image.

It must be noted that this complementarity is not to be read in light of the interpersonal communion created between man and woman as a complementarity of parts but as a complementarity of wholes.⁸⁰ The one-flesh union does not create the human person *per se* but rather the *communio* of human persons. The male is not one half of a human person and the female the other half such that they come together to make the whole human person. They are whole human persons in their own integrated and

⁷⁷ This is the understanding of Karol Wojtyla in *Love and Responsibility*. See particularly pp. 47-51. Of course, this applies also to femininity.

⁷⁸ It is outside the scope of this thesis to discuss the phenomenon of hermaphroditism or any other confusion of sexuality either in body or psyche.

⁷⁹ Zimmermann, "Karol Wojtyla and Emmanuel Levinas on the Embodied Self: The Forming of the Other as Moral Self-Disclosure," 991.

⁸⁰ Prudence Allen, "Man-Woman Complementarity: The Catholic Inspiration," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 9, no. 3 (2006).

mutual subjectivity. Man and woman are two complementary types of the spiritual person of the human species.⁸¹

From the integral complementarity of man and woman and the personal subjectivity as masculine and feminine flows a non-interchangeability between the two sexes. It is not that a woman may possess masculinity or a man may possess femininity. The very consciousness of self and operation in the world as masculine or feminine presupposes that a loss of personal integration would eventuate if there were a mutability to masculinity and femininity. This, of course, is not to say that particular traits that may be considered masculine cannot be demonstrated by a woman and vice versa. What is spoken of here though cannot be contained by or defined by individual actions. It is the somatic structure of the human person and the psychological consciousness of self that constitutes masculinity or femininity.

How does all this discussion so far speak of a theology of sexuality? Firstly, it must be placed in line with and in light of all that has been said before: about theological anthropology and the theological aspect of the human body. Also and more importantly, what has been said about the theology of sexuality is said in light of divine revelation about the creation of man and woman before sin. Primary among these is man and woman's creation in the image of God. Sexuality, as a constitutive part of the human person, shares in this existence in the divine image.

These theological insights and teachings, however, are not separated from human experience or from a reflection upon human experience. Ultimately, the position of this thesis is that sexuality must have a theological quality and potential because of all that has gone before which expresses that human sexuality "reveals something of the mystery of God's inner life and his plan to grant us a share in the divine nature".⁸²

⁸¹ Alice Von Hildebrand, introduction to Dietrich Von Hildebrand's *Marriage; The Mystery of Faithful Love* referenced in "Man-Woman Complementarity: The Catholic Inspiration.", 91.

⁸² Christopher West, "A Response to Luke Timothy Johnson's Critique of John Paul II's "Disembodied" Theology of the Body," (2012), <http://www.christopherwest.com/resources/articles/articles-on-theology-of-the-body/a-response-to-luke-timothy-johnsons-critique-of-john-paul-iis-disembodied-theology-of-the-body/>.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to lay the foundation upon which a theological framework for an understanding of masculinity can be built. It has been essential to speak of the human person in his or her theological origin and constitution. In addition, the personal inter-subjectivity that is expressed in the *communio personarum* was explored. The eschatological future of the human person and the critical significance of Christ for the dignity and understanding of the human person also formed part of this chapter. Since it holds such significance in contemporary secular understandings of masculinity, the body and sexuality were also brought into theology.

This chapter, and indeed previous ones, have been both necessary and preliminary to the exploration of the central thesis of this work, namely, what can be said theologically about masculinity. Relying upon firm foundations now laid, that framework for understanding a theology of masculinity can now be assembled in the next chapter.

Chapter Eight – A Theology of Masculinity

Introduction

The point has come in this thesis to address the central question, namely, what constitutes a theological perspective on masculinity and what might it contribute to the conversation about masculinity. It has been the intention from the outset of this research to allow theology to inform and even at times to direct the discussion about masculinity. Now is the moment of specificity.

Throughout this chapter propositions will be made about a theology of masculinity that come from a structured, disciplined, academic and theological reflection upon masculinity. Such propositions are developed from and based upon the preliminary work of the previous chapters. It is possible that there may be other positions and propositions that also can add to the conversation about masculinity from a theological perspective. There is also the possibility that not each proposition in this chapter, or its expression, would find universal agreement. Nevertheless, I have come to these conclusions in what I consider a balanced and reasoned way and I offer them as a contribution to the conversation about masculinity. If they provoke discussion then that may be of benefit for the refinement and development of this important conversation.

Firstly, it will be helpful to offer a guiding principle for all that follows. In speaking about the human person, the fundamental theological instrument of interpretation is God himself as Trinity, as a communion of Persons.¹ From this principle, John Paul II provides a *raison d'être* for bringing theology and masculinity together. There is no better model, he proposes, for understanding the human person than God. Theology then is not only capable of informing the discussion about masculinity but makes a definitive and positive contribution to it. Indeed, it offers the ultimate hermeneutic for masculinity.

¹ John Paul II, "Mulieris Dignitatem". 7.

From the beginning of the work until now, the conversation about masculinity has been described and sketched so that the parameters and contours of the conversation might be understood. Some significant voices have been explored and occasionally I have entered into the conversation through observations and analysis. The process has been mainly descriptive, occasionally analytical and indicative. It is hoped that through this process, undertaken so far, the main characteristics of the wider conversation about masculinity, and indeed that of masculinity itself, have been identified. As a necessary and immediate preliminary to this chapter, the preceding one dealt with the theological identity of the human person. A theological anthropology was outlined.

It must be freely admitted that the selection of voices that have been heard to this point are not the only contributors to an understanding about masculinity. They are not the only voices to be heard in this conversation. They have been chosen because they are significant in that they are mostly what men are saying about themselves. Such an accumulation of insights, as Lonergan would term it, contributes to an assembly of meaning, in this case, an assembly of meaning about masculinity. To defer further to Lonergan, we have come to know about masculinity so far in this thesis “by taking a good look”.²

I have relied upon Lonergan’s cognitive, constitutive, effective and communicative functions of meaning to provide the organisational structure of the chapters of this thesis. In his theory of cognition, outlined at the beginning of this thesis, Lonergan’s intentionality analysis reveals empirical, intellectual, rational and deliberative levels of conscious self-transcendence.

But now, for the purposes of examining the robustness of the claims made in this thesis, we turn to Lonergan’s account of differentiation of consciousness in exploring any area of meaning and value. This thesis seeks to move towards a new consciousness of masculinity, firmly rooted in experience, analysed from a multi-disciplinary approach (to this point), and presented as an assembly of components inherent in a theological perspective on masculinity.

² Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 303.

The first and second differentiation of consciousness are concerned with being attentive to the data, the given, within the context of a world that is mediated by meaning. Then there is possible the third differentiation: a conscious accumulation of insights. As noted, this has been already done for masculinity in the preceding chapters of this thesis. The evidence surrounding masculinity within the context of the past decades since the 1960's enabled an accumulation of insights that provided the colourful tapestry that is the understanding of gender and masculinity in particular.

Fourthly, what is known and what has been discovered requires expression. It is not just the retelling of information, I suggest, but an expression that makes systematic the meaning that has been discovered, which is Lonergan's fifth differentiation. Expressing what has been discovered about masculinity in a meaningful way in this thesis has allowed masculinity to be described successfully, particularly in chapters three to six.

It is into the sphere of a systematic meaning for masculinity mediated by theology that I propose now to move so that a contribution can be made to scholarship about masculinity, the eighth of Lonergan's differentiations.

There are two themes that act as a *leitmotif* throughout what is to follow. They will be woven into the background as well as directly noticed. They enable a drawing together of threads as well as the assembly and composition of a theological structure or framework for masculinity.

The first is the masculine vocation. For the purpose of this thesis, it is assumed that there is a proper course in life for every person's development to follow.³ Towards and in this development of a person's life I maintain masculinity adds a particular and compelling flavour. So, one can speak of the masculine vocation inasmuch as one can also speak of the feminine vocation. Further on in this chapter the concept of vocation will in itself also provide a component of the framework of a theological view of masculinity.

³ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 256.

The second aspect of the *leitmotif* is the *imago Dei* in which each man is created.⁴ This is a most significant contributor to a theology of masculinity. If God is the model by which to understand the human person and the model according to which man is created, then there is a theological component to masculinity by those very claims.

To make explicit a theology of masculinity, there is a need to continue from the previous chapter and expand upon the concept of personhood from a masculine perspective. As well, the particular masculine experience of the body and of entering into personal communion needs to be developed from what was demonstrated before. As these are revisited and, in a sense, particularised into the masculine, the structure of the theological framework of masculinity will be constructed. To these components will then be added the role of fatherhood and of the person of Christ in a theology of masculinity. Finally, with an exploration of the masculine vocation in history and in the *eschaton* will the structure be complete and there will emerge the fullest theological picture of masculinity possible in this work.

The analogy of building a framework is most apt. The individual components of this chapter are both inter-connected and interrelated. Each provides insight into the theology of masculinity but also benefits from the others to make the whole structure. Like a building and its framework, so too is this theology that I propose. A meaningful theology of masculinity cannot be reduced to any one individual beam or support, but needs a view of the whole structure. So, each of the following headings provides its own insights and adds its own supporting weight to building the framework.

There is one last introductory comment before beginning. Although this has been said before in the thesis it is important to restate it here. Nothing in this thesis is intended in any way to be a devaluation of the feminine in favour of the masculine. To embark upon describing a theology of masculinity is *de facto* not only to imply, but also predicate that there is also a theology of femininity. Both complement each other and explicate in a unique way a theology of the human person, and as, John Paul II has shown, a theology of the body. The purpose of this thesis is not comparative nor

⁴ Of course, each woman as well; but here, in this chapter, it will be only from the male perspective that I will write.

combative but demonstrative; and to demonstrate that it is possible to speak theologically of masculinity and to clarify how this may be done.

Masculine Personhood

A theological anthropology was proposed in the last chapter. It is now the task to move from that towards a theology of the masculine person. Another way to express the task, apart from that of constructing a framework, is to pose it as a question. As a development from the theological concept of personhood described in the preceding chapter the question is: who is the masculine person through the lens of theology? Is there a masculine personhood? I propose that there certainly is a masculine personhood and that the masculine person can be understood through the lens of theology.

Even the obvious needs to be stated at times. So to begin to answer the questions posed it is important to re-state that every person is a sexual being.⁵ Every man is a sexual being whose sexual identity is constituted through his masculinity. The variety and the individuality of masculinity are not ignored here. Neither overlooked are the psychological and biological differences occurring among men. It is still possible to speak of the masculine human person in the face of variations just as one can speak of the human person cognisant of the corresponding variation of femininity or to speak of the healthy human person while acknowledging that some human persons suffer illness. Equally, to discuss the masculine human person is not to propose a model to which all men should aspire or an ideal from which all men individuate a variation.

Personhood and sexuality, constituted in masculinity, are intricately connected. Wojtyla expresses this fundamental and constitutive aspect of masculinity. He notes that a person's whole existence is flavoured and oriented by one's sexuality and this is shown in one's internal development, within the sphere of the emotions, attractions, sexual urges and desires.⁶ However, he adds that it is not simply an internal matter. Human sexuality, and thus masculine sexuality, pervades the whole of a man's existence, his inner and outer self. The very fact that sexual desire, sexual urges, and

⁵ William E. May, *Theology of the Body in Context: Genesis and Growth*. 14.

⁶ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 47.

emotions arising from them, are located within a person is testimony to the fact that they belong to the whole of the person not just to a sphere or function of the person. Indeed, it could be added that the masculine sexual identity is more objectively observable from the external sphere of the body than in the inner psyche because of the external nature of male genitalia. The masculine sexuality, and the identity that flows from it, is nevertheless both exterior and internal, influencing and pervading the whole man. From this pervasive influence of masculine sexuality within the whole person, it can be claimed that masculinity is a fundamental quality in a man's personhood. Furthermore, it follows that masculinity is essentially personal because masculinity belongs with personhood. Given this fundamental quality of sexuality, while being mindful of exceptional cases, it is a sustainable claim that the human person is either male or female. For a man his personhood is constituted and expressed in the totality of his male sexuality.

In the second account of creation (Gen. 2:23) when God brings the woman to the man he exclaims that she is "bone from my bone and flesh from my flesh". His recognition of her is as another person. He had been presented with all of the animals earlier in the creation account and from them he had found no suitable companion. Because of her personhood the woman is not just a body and certainly not an object. Of course, her personhood is visible through the body and, at the same time, her personhood is more than her body. Equally, though it is not recorded, the woman must have beheld the man in a similar way; as another human person whose personhood was experienced through his bodily masculinity. Personhood and masculinity are two reciprocal and interpenetrating realities and both are recognisable and able to be experienced through sexuality, most clearly in the male body.

This bodily sexual personhood can be viewed through the lens of one of the themes of the *leitmotif*, that man and woman are created by God and willingly so created as *imago Dei*. The male human person is constituted by God through his masculinity.⁷ This existence in masculinity inherently has a theological quality because the male human person is willed into existence by God. What comes from God is necessarily theological. What is created in the likeness of God cannot but be theological. The

⁷ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 187.

significance of this cannot be overstated. Masculinity has a theological character bestowed on it by the very act of creation, and by the Creator himself.

A man brings into the world a likeness to God and makes this likeness visible through his masculinity. There is something both fundamental as well as transcendent about this reality. Each man simply by existing brings a representation of the divine into the visible world. Here we must be mindful of the Catholic view ofhylomorphism mentioned in the preceding chapter. The soul, the innermost aspect of a person, is the seat of the image of God. At the same time, the male human person is both body and soul. A man does not bring the likeness of God into the world as an individual construct but rather in a spontaneous and existential manner. At the same time, he cannot but do it in any other way than through his masculinity because this is fundamentally constitutive of his human personhood. Masculinity is man's visibility in the world and this is something essential to him, essentially personal, from his own personhood. Yet by it he can transcend himself in reference to God as he also reflects the personal reality of God.

John Paul II proposed that when speaking theologically of the human person it cannot be overlooked that the body speaks; it has a language. Relying upon his earlier propositions in *The Acting Person* whereby a person is known in acting, he develops in his theology of the body the proposition that the body speaks of who the person is. This is one of his foundational themes. Admittedly, he developed it when speaking of the sacramentality of marriage: "the perennial and ever new 'language of the body' is not only the substratum but in some sense also the constitutive content of the communion of persons."⁸ From John Paul II's concept, it is possible to propose that if the body can speak within the communion of persons, it can also speak within the visible world about the individual human person. Thus, the possession of a male human body not only makes visible the likeness of God, located most especially in the soul, but also speaks on the exterior of the interior of the male human person. Therefore, masculinity is spoken in the world through masculine bodies and through the masculine personhood that both exists within and with that male body.

⁸ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 533.

Therefore, inherent in masculine personhood is visible bodily masculinity and an inner masculine reality that is both personal and fundamental. Furthermore, both the interior and exterior of the male human person is according to the measure of the image of God since the human body shares in the *imago Dei* through its animation by the soul.⁹ It is important to note at this point and to make explicit that man *imago Dei* can never be understood in such a way as to contain the image of God to masculinity to the exclusion of femininity. No human reality can contain or fully express the divine reality. Neither one human person nor one grouping of human persons is capable of this. Yet, this divine imaging is a characteristic of the transcendent quality of human personhood, which is ultimately and originally a free and undeserved gift of God to the human person.

It is possible to speak of the interior of the human person having a theological character since God penetrates the human person who is always known to him. “No created thing can hide from him; everything is uncovered and open to the eyes of the one to whom we must give account of ourselves.” (Heb 4:13 JB) Furthermore, because of the necessary integrity of the human person whereby the interior and exterior form a unity of the person, it can be said that the interior of a man has a masculine character. Some would claim that there is a masculine spirit or soul.¹⁰ While Scola notes that the very ontology of the male human person is intricately linked with the male sexual identity, with a man’s masculinity, this is not to be understood as admitting sexual difference to the soul itself.¹¹ On the other hand, the soul, as the form of the body, is united with the body in a single, concrete individuality of the male human person.¹²

In a preliminary manner this discussion of masculine personhood is necessary before moving into other aspects that enable a theology of masculinity to be constructed. As a summary at this point, it is essential to be mindful of the dignity and freedom, uniqueness and individuality of the human person who has an existential presence in

⁹ The Catholic Church, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Homebush, NSW: St Pauls, 1994), 94.

¹⁰ Gordon Dalbey seems to do this. Note his book, *Healing the Masculine Soul*.

¹¹ Scola examines Heidegger’s understanding of ontological difference in comparison to Aquinas’ and notes that Heidegger reduces difference to Being and places Being within the individual being. Scola observes that this is not helpful when speaking of sexual difference and ontological difference. Ontological difference manifests in sexual difference. Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*.

¹² The Catholic Church, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 63.

the world. For men, these indispensable qualities of the human person are located in the context of masculinity, experienced in masculinity, and are expressed bodily through masculinity.

The Masculine Body

The human person is endowed with either masculinity or femininity on coming into being. Moreover, coming into being means coming to be in a body. Thus, as has been previously noted, the body is integral to the human person.

Furthermore, the body belongs to and is proper to the human person. The significance of the body for human personhood was established in the previous chapter. Now, attention turns to the actuality that the body enables masculinity to be visible as that which is fundamental to the male human person. It is the male body that makes masculine personhood visible. Such visibility of personhood through the body finds its place in a theology of masculinity.

It is the contention of this thesis that the body belongs intrinsically to the constitution of the person. To separate it from a discussion of masculinity will lead to a less than complete understanding of masculinity. Masculinity requires the body and the body manifests masculinity. Perhaps because of its visibility and because it is the usual way a person experiences not only his own personhood but also that of others, the body is likely at times to be overlooked or taken for granted. However, “human bodiliness and sexuality...establishes an inalienable norm for the understanding of man on the theological plane.”¹³

So, the male body can be admitted into a theological discussion of masculinity. In the previous chapter, John Paul II’s foundational claim that the human body entered theology through the main door because of the Incarnation was mentioned. Relying upon this, at this point the question is what is the experience of the male body and how is this theological? The task is to demonstrate how the male body fits into the framework of a theology of masculinity.

¹³ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 165.

From the second Genesis account of creation, John Paul II expounds the original solitude of the human person. This solitude of personhood belongs to the man before the creation of woman. (Genesis 2:7-25) This is not solely male solitude since the first human person is not called male until after the creation of woman. The solitude of the first human being is that which belongs to the human person, not to masculinity or femininity *per se*. This is “a fundamental anthropological issue that is in some way prior to the issue raised by the fact that man is male and female...prior, not only in the chronological sense, but rather in the existential sense: it is prior ‘by its very nature’.”¹⁴

The solitude is most necessary to incorporate adequately the male body into a theology of masculinity. In a later section the necessary *communio personarum* will make its own contribution to masculinity but, for the moment, it is the consideration of the man himself that is the focus. Without an appreciation of personal and existential solitude there would be the tendency to consider man only in his relation to others. Theological solitude enables the male person to be considered on his own and for his own value, and also to consider the associated dignity of masculinity. It becomes possible to say that masculinity has a value in and of itself as well as in relation to others, and especially in relation to femininity. Solitude allows a theological identity for masculinity in and of itself.

How does the male body contribute to this? Firstly, the male body is the physical expression of masculinity. It is the bodily language of masculinity. It is what demonstrates and underlines masculinity. To be male means to have a masculine body and, similarly, it can be said that to have a masculine body is to be male.

As mentioned earlier, the distinctive quality of the male body is its externality. It has been expressed that the external genitals of the male infer that a man is made to go out of himself, beyond himself.¹⁵ Unlike the primary receptiveness of a woman, a man primarily gives himself in the conjugal act. Relying upon this insight, masculinity can thus be styled principally as gift and donation. In terms of the *imago Dei*, through this

¹⁴ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 148.

¹⁵ Katrina J. Zeno, *Discovering the Feminine Genius: Every Woman's Journey*, (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2010). 126.

external physical composition and capacity, masculinity provides a likeness to the divine generativity of God, who is pure love and pure self-donation. Of course, this divine generativity does not exhaust the nature of God because there is also divine nurturing and devotion.

The significance of the male genitals is also to be found in the Genesis creation accounts, particularly in the temptation of the woman and her husband (*cf* Genesis 3:7 JB). Once they had eaten the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden their eyes were opened and they realised their nakedness. At this point shame entered into human consciousness and the man and woman covered their nakedness. The hiding of his genitals by the man indicates their critical quality as the external manifestation of his maleness. At the same time the genitals are a significant manifestation of his personhood in masculinity. The male genitals are, in a sense, worthy of protection because the woman recognises his masculinity through and by them. As St Paul notes, it is “our unpresentable parts that are treated with greater modesty” (1 Cor 12:23 RSV). The male genitals are worthy of special respect because they are the primary external manifestation of masculinity. The man covered his genitals because they provide the significant differentiation from the woman. It is that quality of differentiation that required the covering. In this situation the man, both interiorly and exteriorly, experiences his masculinity and his personhood and the vulnerability of both.

An unnecessary and even inordinate degree of attention can be given to the male genitals but that is usually as a result of the concupiscence of lust. Leaving that aside, it is important to make explicit the purpose and value both theologically and existentially of the male body with its primary sex organs, the genitals. Once more, it needs to be said that the body speaks masculinity and allows an experience of masculinity by those who are other, as well as the person himself. Just as it can be an object of concupiscence and lust, equally, the male body, as a vital component of the person, can be an object of love and respect because of the value of the person.¹⁶

¹⁶ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 160.

The actual lived experience of masculinity in human personhood testifies to the sexual value of the body, whether it is the man's own body or the body of others. As much as it may be attempted, this sexual value is not commodifiable because it belongs to human personhood. Indeed, the value of the body can stir a reverence for the body, which in turn points to a holiness of the body. Such a quality of holiness arises because of the body's participation in the divine holiness, because man is *imago Dei*. It is possible also to speak of the "gratuitous beauty of the male body".¹⁷ Such male beauty has a value in and of itself, but also this value takes on a theological quality, as it is a reflection of the divine beauty.

In review, the theological quality of the male body finds its origin in the theological value of the male person. The body and the person cannot be separated because "the dynamisms of the body are not an independent and self-contained phenomenon, but are naturally oriented to serving the good of the integral human person."¹⁸ The value and contribution of the male human body for and to theology is that it belongs to the primordial mystery and gift of creation, which is initiated and governed by God. Masculinity through the male body brings this mystery of creation into existential reality. In addition, the male body signals the masculine capacity to make of personhood a gift to another as well as through the act of self-giving to transmit life, in imitation of the Creator. It is to this capacity for the donation of self that my attention now turns so as to describe the theological character of the masculine spousal quality achieved through the body.

The Gift of Self

According to *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, the human person cannot be authentically who God created him or her to be except through a sincere gift of self.¹⁹ In the establishment of reciprocal communion with another through this gift of self, the human person demonstrates a capacity,

¹⁷ John Paul II, *Memory and Identity : Personal Reflections*, 31.

¹⁸ In endnote #48, Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 303.

¹⁹ *GS*, 24.3. Crosby notes that the personalism present in *Gaudium et Spes* bears the hallmark of Wojtyła but that also he uses it in the beginnings of his catecheses, called the Theology of the Body, to introduce the polarity of self-possession and self-donation. See "John Paul II's Vision of Sexuality and Marriage – the Mystery of Fair Love" in Gneuh (2000), 54-55.

which is like the divine capacity for communion that is constitutive of the Blessed Trinity.

Contained within this gift of self and, indeed arousing it and motivating it, is the desire for union. This desire is present within every human person. Every human person, every man, has a need to give himself to another.²⁰ This inner desire and need is experienced, demonstrated and fulfilled by means of the body. The body is not incidental to the *communio personarum* nor is it merely functional. The body plays a significant role because it belongs to the human communion of persons, which because it reflects the divine communion, possesses a theological character.

The body not only enables this *communio* but the call to or desire for communion is inscribed in the human body. John Paul II names this capacity of the body to bring into existence the *communio personarum* as the spousal meaning of the body. Such a meaning inscribed precisely through masculinity and femininity, and their attendant sexualities, he calls “the fundamental component of human existence in the world.”²¹

Just as the male body is the physical expression of masculinity, as noted in the last section, so the male human body is the physical expression and means of the masculine way of giving oneself. It is the masculine way of entering into the *communio personarum*. Here the two theological qualities of masculinity are finally side by side. The male human person through the body is in likeness to God through his masculinity. Equally, through his capacity to give of himself through the body, and thus create a communion of persons with woman, he is also in likeness to the divine communion of God.

It has already been noted that the male body possesses a singular external quality. It is this external quality of the male body that speaks most clearly of the giving of self. The male genitals not only make possible the one-flesh union for the man but they also anticipate it and indicate it in their own masculine way. They indicate the unitive meaning and capacity of the male body. “The male body is distinctively external. It is made to penetrate, to go out of itself. It is made to literally give its body and blood -

²⁰ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 253.

²¹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 189.

its semen - away.”²² Masculinity, through the male body, contains both a meaning that is personal and a meaning that is unitive. Masculinity not only signifies a personal solitude and a communion of persons but also masculinity is delineated as masculine solitude and communion.

This should not be seen as a surprising claim. Human sexuality, and thus masculine sexuality, is not an attribute, but rather “reaches all that the human person is in the deep recesses of identity”.²³ It is the masculine person who experiences an attraction to the other and a desire to give of himself by means of his body. This does not occur solely with the sexual part of the self but integrally with the whole masculine self.

This integrity of person has a theological quality. It is through personal integrity that there is a foretaste of the *eschaton* and of the beatific vision of God. John Paul II proposes that consciousness of the spousal meaning of the body is beatifying, and thus is transcendent.²⁴ The masculine person, through his male body has an awareness of his own identity and value and he experiences in his body the desire for union. He can understand that his body holds within it the capacity to achieve this union. It is through the gift of self that the man feels the tranquil and beatifying, original innocence of the first man and woman and thus experiences a personal integrity or fulfilment. This experience of a pre-historical innocence within time transports the human person into a foretaste of the *eschaton*, which will be discussed in a later section.

As noted, the masculine mode of giving of self to create the communion of persons is integral to masculinity. As mentioned before, this masculine and personal gift echoes the divine giving of the Creator. The concept of the spousal meaning of the body also means that masculinity possesses the power to express love, which is another divine attribute. The spousal attribute of the male body signals the capacity to express love in the particular masculine way. By the expression of love through the body a person becomes a gift and at the same time “fulfills the very meaning of his being and

²² Katrina J. Zeno, *Discovering the Feminine Genius: Every Woman's Journey*. 126.

²³ Bransfield, *The Human Person According to John Paul II*, 115.

²⁴ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 194.

existence.”²⁵ This fulfillment indicates that the donation of self through the body does not exhaust masculinity because in the act of giving there is also the receiving of the other person. Admittedly, the external quality of the male body indicates the man’s prime movement is that of giving, but masculinity is also the act of receiving the feminine, which is also enacted in the unique masculine way.

To understand the spousal meaning of the body in masculinity is to identify the innermost point of a man’s freedom, which is a freedom of the gift.²⁶ A man is most himself, a man is most masculine it could be said, when he gives himself freely as a gift to another. Such freedom arises not ultimately from his own masculinity, though it is certainly experienced in it. This freedom comes from an imitation of the divine communion of persons in the Blessed Trinity and also from the foreshadowing of the union with God, which is the experience of eternity.²⁷ This theological quality is also glimpsed through a mature sexual attraction in the man to woman. Such maturity of attraction experienced in and through masculinity and femininity “inspires deep awe and wonder at the mystery of God” that is revealed through the masculine body and the feminine body.²⁸

In concluding this section, it is worthwhile to quote from John Paul II and to make it particular in application to the masculine human person, though not excluding of the feminine, which also holds the same capacity within itself in its own particular way. “Man appears in the visible world as the highest expression of the divine gift, because he bears within himself the inner dimension of the gift. And with it he carries into the world his particular likeness to God...A reflection of this likeness is also the primordial awareness of the spousal meaning of the body pervaded by the mystery of original innocence.”²⁹

Now, it is to the procreative consequence of the masculine gift of self, namely, fatherhood that my attention turns. This adds another element of the structure of the theology of masculinity.

²⁵ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 185-6.

²⁶ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 200.

²⁷ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 173.

²⁸ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 514.

²⁹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 203.

Fatherhood

The specific and proper capacity of the male human body for procreation contains within it the accompanying ordering of male sexuality towards paternity. John Paul II calls this a 'hidden' meaning of fatherhood and he asserts that in being open to fertility, in this case paternity, there occurs a divine confirmation and renewal of man in the image of God.³⁰ In addition, West comments that fatherhood is in some sense the crowning of masculinity.³¹

This hidden meaning of fatherhood within masculinity is a helpful distinction. Masculinity and paternity are intimately connected to each other, most especially evidenced in male biology. However, they do not always manifest together and at the same time in a man's life. Fatherhood can be a potential and thus implied as well as being expressed and realised. Indeed it can be both physical as well as spiritual.

Equally, calling fatherhood the crowning of masculinity denotes the unambiguous connection between masculinity and fatherhood as well as the directional aspect fatherhood gives to masculinity. The progression already undertaken in this work of constructing a theology of masculinity through consideration of personhood, then of the masculine body, followed by the gift of self is maintained in this declaration. Such a directional quality that fatherhood provides to masculinity allows the construction of a careful and systematic theology of masculinity to continue. The consideration of fatherhood adds to this theological structure for masculinity.

A man's masculinity can be directed towards many ends and in many directions. Some of these realise his personhood, some his own capacities and capabilities. Some lead towards a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment. The spousal meaning of the male body and the masculine desire for personal communion, which is realised through the conjugal union, point to the ordering of a man's masculinity towards paternity.³² It subtly but really means that fatherhood, in whatever way it is expressed,

³⁰ This may be seen in *Man and Woman He Created Them* on page 214 and it is also quoted by West as per the following footnote.

³¹ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 156.

³² John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 184.

is a fulfilment of masculinity. Thus, another element in the framework of a theology of masculinity is a theological perspective on fatherhood.

A most direct theological insight into fatherhood is given in Scripture. In Genesis Adam, the first man, “begot a son in his likeness and image, and named him Seth” (Gen 5:3 NEB). The repetition of this phrase, used for the creation of man and woman by God in Genesis 1:27, positions earthly paternity clearly as a participation in the divine transmission of life. Thus man can be rightly called *particeps Creatoris*.³³ The theological significance of this is clear. A man is not only himself created in the image and likeness of God, as mentioned previously. It is also in the act of paternity that a man portrays an image of and likeness to God the Creator. This is further enhanced in consideration of the quality of origin that resides within paternity.³⁴ To be a father means to have been present at the beginning, before and as the new person comes into being. This echoes the divine quality of origin; God present at and before the coming into being of creation.

This is emphasised because it is understood that this participation in the divine creative act through human procreation, is not as a passing by-product of masculinity but rather is intrinsically part of masculinity. It could be said that paternity expresses an inherent element of masculinity. Moreover, masculinity contains within it an inner and latent fruitfulness. It is the fruitfulness bestowed upon man and woman from the beginning. “On all this, right from the beginning, the blessing of fruitfulness descended, linked with human procreation.”³⁵

As already proposed, the masculine body, with its external quality of male sexuality, signals unequivocally that located within masculinity is the characteristic of self-donation. Biologically it is from the man’s body that the semen comes, which is received into the woman’s body for conception. “New human life will never be conceived if a man withholds his biological gift of self.”³⁶ Theologically, this is a participation in the divine creative act. Both biology and theology then indicate a value for masculinity in and of itself. Biology signifies masculinity as intrinsically

³³ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 246.

³⁴ Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 241.

³⁵ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 164.

³⁶ Katrina J. Zeno, *Discovering the Feminine Genius: Every Woman’s Journey*. 130.

linked with procreation and new life. Theology understands masculinity as not solely for insemination but rather for the gift of self in the personal communion, which leads to procreation and new life. Theology allows a clear expression of the distinct value of a man both in his masculinity and as a person. “That man can give life to a being in his own likeness makes plain his intrinsic value.”³⁷ To biology, theology adds a clear expression of the value of a man before God and as a participant in God’s creative design. The value of masculinity contained within the male human person becomes even clearer and is augmented in paternity.

This intricate and expressive interaction between humanity and divinity, which theology proclaims, can lead to both a renewal and deepening of the man’s own understanding and experience of his masculinity. It can also assist the woman’s understanding of her femininity. For both it allows a symbiotic deepening of the connection to God, the Creator. The act of paternity for the man can plunge him deeply into his own masculinity and also into the theological reality of God:

In this “knowledge,” in which they give rise to a being similar to themselves, about which they can say together, “It is flesh from my flesh and bone from my bones” (Gen 2:24), the man and the woman are “carried off” together, as it were, both taken into *possession by* the very humanity which they, in union and reciprocal “knowledge,” want to express anew and take possession of anew by drawing it from themselves, from the marvelous masculine and feminine maturity of their bodies and in the end—through the whole sequence of human conceptions and generations from the beginning—from the very mystery of creation.³⁸

Consideration must also be given to the mutual expressions of fatherhood, physical and spiritual, so to arrive at a full theological perspective on masculinity through paternity. Such consideration certainly begins with an imitation of divine fatherhood, which itself is both originating and sustaining. It also acknowledges that the moment of begetting, the biological exercise of paternity, leads to and involves a much longer time of nurturing and supporting. This takes on a spiritual quality and non-bodily investment in another human person. As discussed earlier in this work, a spiritual fatherhood belongs to those men who do not marry or who commit to a life of

³⁷ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 259.

³⁸ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 215.

consecrated celibacy. Fatherhood is capable of being understood from the viewpoint of human personhood as well as from a biological level.³⁹

Biological fatherhood demands that the father shape and form the inner self of the child, the personhood of the child. This shaping and forming means spiritual paternity in the realm of persons. It is only a person who can form another person and it is only a person who can do this spiritual nurturing. This does not belong to the world of *animalia*. The physical act is shared with all *animalia*. It is only spiritual paternity that belongs to human persons and to the human person's capacity to be a reflection of the divine nature.

Here is touched the desire within the human person for lasting generativity; an experience that prolongs and deepens the experience of masculine begetting as well as operating in a man's life separately from it. Fatherhood in the non-physical realm is generative because it draws to itself others who take what is offered, which is the gift of the personal self in a non-biological way. Spiritual paternity will also seek out those with whom it wants to share what is offered from the personal self.

This is seen in a masculine care of the young through education and sports, a priest's love for his people as well as the particularly potent masculine mentoring of a young man by an older one. While not always acknowledged as such, these are acts of and sharing of masculine love. Indeed, it is also a sharing of personhood and personality, which demonstrates once more that spiritual paternity exists only in the realm of persons. Of this paternal movement, it is the spiritual parenthood of God that provides the prototype and the source.⁴⁰ This is both within and beyond the natural and biological order. Spiritual fatherhood finds a place within the spiritual and supernatural realm of God.

One further theological view deserves consideration, even if only briefly, and that is the fatherhood of God. While it is beyond the scope of this work to examine the divine paternity in depth, viewing human paternity through the lens of divine paternity makes possible a further theological perspective to human fatherhood.

³⁹ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 259.

⁴⁰ *Love and Responsibility*, 261.

Firstly though it is necessary to state that God is pure spirit and is therefore neither male nor female. “But the respective perfections of man and woman reflect something of the infinite perfections of God: those of a mother and those of a father and a husband.”⁴¹ In addition, it is instructive to recall the Angelus address of John Paul I. While a brief papacy might add a disproportionate weight to his words, nevertheless it is both helpful context and provides a useful balance to insert his words at this point. “We are the objects of undying love on the part of God. We know: he has always his eyes open on us, even when it seems to be dark. He is our father; even more he is our mother.”⁴² Thus, not only can human motherhood and fatherhood reflect the “infinite perfections” of God, but also in a careful way, we can speak of the maternal and the paternal qualities of God. It is helpful in this endeavour to focus upon the paternal qualities of God while not excluding the maternal.

As for the useful, though not in itself adequate notion of divine paternity, both the Athanasian and Niceno-Constantinopolitan creeds profess the relationship between the First and Second Persons of the Blessed Trinity to be that of generation so that the Second Person is related to the First as son is to father. This procession and relationship of persons is true and proper fatherhood and sonship.⁴³ Scripture also records the title of Father for the First Person (*cf* John 5:18) and Son for the Second Person (*cf* Matthew 17:5). Christ revealed the First Person as Father and himself as Son and in doing so revealed the eternal relationship between them. Furthermore, the fatherhood of God encompasses the quality of God as the source of all things and also a divine being who is father-like in tenderness and compassion.⁴⁴ All this helps to understand human paternity.

When placed alongside the Incarnation of the Son into human flesh, and that particularly into a male body, the theological reality of enfleshed, divine love is presented to the world. It could be said that the procession of divine persons becomes visibly fruitful in the human person of Christ. Furthermore, there is a visible likeness

⁴¹ The Catholic Church, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 94.

⁴² John Paul I, “Angelus address of 10 September 1978,” *Supreme Pontiffs: John Paul I: Angelus/Regina Coeli* (1978), accessed 8 December, 2014, www.vatican.va

⁴³ Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Patrick Lynch (Charlotte, North Carolina: TAN Books, 1954/1974), 62.

⁴⁴ The Catholic Church, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 63.

of the Son to the Father. "He is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15 REB). The divine paternity of God has engendered "his own Son, watched over Him and knew Him as only a father and son can know one another."⁴⁵

When speaking of God in this particularly fatherly and male way, attention can be drawn to the qualities of human male and fatherly actions. A human father engenders his child and then watches over and nurtures the engendered child in protection and nurturance. He does this as a man in a fatherly way, which is different to the way of the woman and mother. Since these activities by the man spring from love and can only be sustained by love it is possible to say that fatherhood captures male love and places it in bodily form.⁴⁶ This can have two meanings. The human father in his own self carries male love and so he is an example and indicator of male love. As well, the child engendered enfleshes and signifies male love because he or she is a product of that masculine love. This might be said to be even clearer when the child himself is male, in other words, a son. Nevertheless, human fatherhood possesses a theological quality since a man relives and reveals on earth the eternal fatherhood of God.⁴⁷

There is a unique human fatherhood, the investigation of which also holds relevance to this theological reflection upon fatherhood. This is the fatherhood of St Joseph. This fatherhood is particular and unique since Joseph did not engender Jesus in the order of nature. Yet, his fatherhood is not imaginary. It is real and it was established under law since Joseph had the task of naming the child and, as well, most presumed that Jesus was Joseph's natural son. Furthermore, as John Paul II points out in *Redemptoris Custos*, the marriage of Mary and Joseph lacked none of the requisites of marriage, as there was fidelity, the sacrament and offspring. In addition, there was the union of hearts and souls. While it could be called a spiritual fatherhood rather than a physical fatherhood, the fatherhood of Joseph was expressed concretely "in having made his life a service, a sacrifice... a total gift of self, his life and work."⁴⁸ This is the

⁴⁵ Anne Lastman, "Fatherhood: Mirror of God's Relationship with the Son," *AD2000* Vol 27, no. 7 (2014).

⁴⁶ "Fatherhood: Mirror of God's Relationship with the Son."

⁴⁷ John Paul II, "Familiaris Consortio," (1981), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.html.

⁴⁸ *Redemptoris Custos*, Apostolic Exhortation of the Supreme Pontiff, John Paul II on the Person and Mission of Saint Joseph in the Life of Christ and of the Church, (Vatican City 1989),

theological mark of fatherhood irrespective of any physical act of generation. When fatherhood entails this aspect of self-giving it achieves not only its theological character, but also its true and lasting reality.

I contend that the intrinsic relationship between masculinity and fatherhood is enhanced through a theological perspective. John Paul II noted the unique contribution of both masculinity and fatherhood for the good of the conjugal union and of the family when he wrote that the man is called to be “the guardian of the reciprocity of the gift and of its true balance.”⁴⁹ This quality of guardianship of what is beyond him and yet that to which he uniquely contributes emphasises that fatherhood is a great privilege and responsibility. Kleponis emphasises the importance of fatherhood and that it is supported by a virtuous life and requires the embracing of the role of protector, provider and leader.⁵⁰

From a consideration of paternity it is now to Christ that attention turns. What the person of Christ clarifies about masculinity then will allow a consideration of masculinity in the *eschaton* and a consideration of the masculine vocation. From a theological discussion of vocation it will be possible to draw together some conclusions in a summary of this chapter.

Christ and Masculinity

The fact that the Creator is found in his creature and that God is found in flesh, is an honour for the creature and not a humiliation for the Creator. Man, why do you have so low an opinion of yourself, when you are so precious to God? Why do you so dishonour yourself when you are so honoured by God? Why do you enquire about where you were made and not ask why you were made?...Christ willed to appear as man.⁵¹

This section reverses the perspective of the previous ones and yet is just as important to the discussion of a theology of masculinity. A case could be made that it is even more important. Up to now, the viewpoint has been how the male human person

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_15081989_redemptoris-custos_en.html. 8.

⁴⁹ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 261.

⁵⁰ Peter Kleponis, "Pornography and Its Attack on True Fatherhood," in *International Symposia on John Paul II's Theology of the Body* (Fatima, Portugal 2013).

⁵¹ St Peter Chrysologus, "From Sermon 148 on the Memorial of St Peter Chrysologus," in *The Divine Office* (London: Collins). 139*-141*.

reflects or images the divine. To put it another way, what is it about the male human person that has a quality or content that relates to God, echoes God or speaks of God; a quality or content that is theological? It has been a movement from the male human person towards God. This section on Christ begins rather from the divine and moves towards the human, as did the event of the Incarnation itself.

Some might say that this is overly presumptuous to bring the person of Christ into a discussion of masculinity; going too far towards the divine. In response to that, I contend that this theological discussion of masculinity is only possible because of God's free and sovereign action as described by St Peter Chrysologus: "Christ willed to appear as man." What God freely has done is admissible into a theological investigation.

Another criticism would be that to ally Christ so closely to masculinity overlooks and excludes femininity; perhaps even distances women from Christ by bringing men closer to him. This is not the intention of this thesis, as has been stated before. Women can have, and indeed should have, their own distinctively feminine relationship with Christ as man and as God. In the same way, men can and should have their own distinctive masculine relationship with Christ. It is complementarity not similitude that is decisive and necessary.

Before examining the theological understandings of masculinity that can be distilled from Christ, it is necessary to remember the teachings of the Church on Christ and the Incarnation. Christ has two natures and is one person. This is called the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures within the one personhood of Christ. While succinct and sufficient, this expression does not explain the interaction between the two natures. Neither does it elucidate how two seemingly contradictory natures can be held in harmony in the one person. Coming to this precise definition of the hypostatic union caused much discussion and heat in the early centuries of the Church. In the centuries following, there have been pendulum-like movements towards favouring either the divine over the human or vice versa. It could be said that the Church is never free of some misunderstanding of this unique and unrepeatable union of two natures in one person.

That having been said, this doctrinal description is fruitful for the Church and for theology. For the purposes of this work, indeed it bears much fruit because “in Christ, in the man who is completely God, human existence is not cancelled, but comes to its highest possibility.”⁵²

Ratzinger claims this because, in Christ, human nature transcends itself into the absolute, the absolute of divine love. He proposes that this is the fulfilment and purpose of human nature. Indeed in the human person, arising from his or her own spiritual nature is both the desire and capacity to transcend oneself towards the other. To transcend oneself towards the absolute Other, who is God, is complete and total fulfillment of the human person. In Christ this has been achieved to perfection.

Ratzinger goes further and this is even more significant for the proposal that Christ is vital for a theological understanding of masculinity. Since Ratzinger has named the fulfilment and purpose of human nature as transcendence towards the other as well as the divine Other, then Christ cannot be looked upon as an ontological oddity or exception but rather “the directional arrow, as it were, that indicates what being human tends toward.”⁵³

This Christ direction is indicated when Christ is referred to as the New Adam.⁵⁴ Christ is the new man in continuity with the first man, Adam. I suggest that it is in Christ and from Christ that an understanding of masculinity in perfection can be found. This perfection of masculinity in Christ is both unique yet salutary. Each historical and human man does not achieve and cannot achieve this perfection of masculinity in historical time. It is a goal only to be reached in the *eschaton*, which will be discussed in the next section. Nevertheless, knowing the perfection or the goal of masculinity is not pointless. Rather, Christ, the perfected model, illuminates and explains masculinity lived in time. Christ enables a deeper theological meaning for masculinity.

⁵² Ratzinger, "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," 452.

⁵³ "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," 452.

⁵⁴ The Catholic Church, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 104 paragraph 411. See also 1 Cor 15:21-22 and Rom 5:19-20.

It is important also in this discussion of Christ and masculinity to clarify another fundamental understanding of the doctrine of the hypostatic union. What we say about Christ's human nature is predicated upon the union of the two natures in the one person.⁵⁵ The two natures cannot be separated because of the one personhood of Christ. Thus it is possible to say that the human nature of Christ was perfect. He did not suffer the moral weaknesses of concupiscence and so he was "like to us in all things except sin".⁵⁶ At the same time, his human experience was real and full. Christ as a human person possessed perfect and perfected humanity. Christ as a man possessed perfect and perfected masculinity. Because of this he sheds light not only upon masculinity *per se* but also upon its end and goal. In seeking a complete theological understanding of masculinity Christ's own masculinity must be admitted to the investigation since the key to a man's self-understanding lies in "contemplating the divine Prototype".⁵⁷

There is a further rich theological reward from examining human masculinity through the lens of the divine nature and the human masculinity of Christ. While absolutely holding to the traditional formulation, mentioned earlier, that God is a non-physical being, it is a consequence of both the Incarnation and the Resurrection that in the Trinity there exists a resurrected human body. That body, which is Christ's, displays transfigured masculinity. "[His] humanity can no longer be confined to earth and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm."⁵⁸ St Paul calls the resurrected Christ "the man of heaven". (*cf* 1 Cor 15:47-49)

What this masculinity is like is beyond historical human experience. However, elements of it are discernable from this historical existence. This will be examined in the next section also. What this masculine bodily presence within the Trinity provides theologically is twofold. It signals the destiny of all human bodies, as God desires it to be. In addition, it indicates that the humanity and masculinity of Christ takes on a theological quality because it abides within the life of God. Since the masculinity of Christ is not a construct or an intellectual concept, then the masculinity of Christ can

⁵⁵ Timothy Finigan to The Hermeneutic of Continuity, 28 June 2014, <http://the-hermeneutic-of-continuity.blogspot.com.au/2014/06/the-sacred-heart-and-purifying-of-our.html>.

⁵⁶ The Catholic Church, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 119..

⁵⁷ John Paul II, *Memory and Identity : Personal Reflections*, 125.

⁵⁸ The Catholic Church, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 645.

become the exemplar for human masculinity. A human reality is immersed in a divine theological one. Thus, do masculinity and theology belong together in Christ.

One further point before examining what Christ's own masculinity might mean for masculinity itself. Within the Christian tradition Christ is utterly foundational and central both to human living, human flourishing and human redemption and eventual blessedness in heaven. The Christian perspective is that because the Son of God took human flesh, then there is no aspect of being human for which Christ is irrelevant. Christ is the meaning of human existence. "Christ is the meaning of embodiment."⁵⁹ For this work, Christ provides a definitive meaning of manhood.

How then does Christ's masculinity intersect with human masculinity? What view can an individual man hold of Christ? The very reality that Christ was a man, had a male human body and a masculine identity makes him significant for men. As has been seen earlier in this work, the development of a masculine identity comes to a boy through his experience of the masculinity of his father and other significant male figures in his life. Masculinity from without develops masculine identity within, built upon the pre-existing masculine biology. Christ then can provide a masculine model for men.

However, in theological terms, Christ's own masculinity is not one model among many, but a pre-eminent and unique one because of the hypostatic union and his perfect, sinless, masculine, human nature. Speaking from a spiritual sense and from the perspective of grace, Christ's perfect masculinity is not only a model, but also an exemplary masculinity that is accessible. Through the divine power of the Holy Spirit it is transmittable to other men. Thus, men can share in Christ's masculinity and not just look up to it, as one might do to another human man. This is compatible with both Scripture and tradition. In the Letter to the Philippians, St Paul urges, "In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5 JB). In addition, one of the spiritual classics is called *The Imitation of Christ*. Thus, being like Christ has always been an ideal or goal of the Christian life. I am proposing that Christ's masculinity is an aspect of his humanity that men can aspire to imitate in a similar direction as they might seek

⁵⁹ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 408.

to imitate another worthy or outstanding man. With Christ though, this becomes a unique style of imitation of a unique model.

This possibility is further upheld by the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and the sacramental theology underpinning Eucharist and Holy Communion. If Christ is received in Holy Communion, body, blood, soul and divinity, is it possible for men to draw from Christ many aspects of his own human and divine person, including his masculinity?⁶⁰ St John Eudes expresses this possibility: Christ “is to you as the head is to the members of the body; all that is his is yours. His spirit, his heart, his body, his soul, all his faculties, all are to be used by you as if they were your own...”⁶¹

The accessible and unique masculinity of Christ also demonstrates for men the epitome of masculinity in Christ’s own sacrificial giving of himself. In a previous section of this chapter the particular quality of masculinity to give of oneself, a giving that becomes fruitful, was examined. It was asserted that this is a particularly masculine quality and one that is primary to masculinity. Christ demonstrates this powerfully, and to the point of death, in his passion, suffering and crucifixion. “On the cross, the masculine body reaches its destiny and shines forth in its greatest perfection.”⁶² Christ shows what masculinity is and he shows it perfectly and to completion.

This divine-in-human demonstration of masculinity articulates a theological understanding of masculinity. It informs a perspective on masculine sacrifice, whether small or large. It indicates the very act of sacrifice can bring a fulfilment to the masculine character of a man. The closer a man imitates the sacrifice of Christ, and the more he is in replication of Christ, the purer, in a theological sense, will be his masculinity. From a soteriological sense also, the more a man imitates Christ’s own sacrificial masculinity, the more his own masculinity will be redeemed and become more like the masculinity at the beginning, before sin entered the world. “By

⁶⁰ The Catholic Church, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 346.

⁶¹ St John Eudes, "A Reading from the Treatise 'the Adorable Heart of Jesus'," in *The Divine Office* (London: Collins). It is worthy of investigation also about the female way of doing this.

⁶² Katrina J. Zeno, *Discovering the Feminine Genius: Every Woman's Journey*. 127.

meditating on Jesus' relationship with the Father and gazing on the cross of Christ, men re-encounter the origin and source of their masculine identity."⁶³

Masculinity in the Eschaton

A theological perspective on masculinity must not overlook what masculinity will be in the resurrection of the body. This is because not only does the resurrection complete a theological understanding of human personhood, but it also informs an understanding of historical masculinity. Indeed, it is not possible to understand a man theologically without reference to the resurrection of the body in the eschaton. Using the principle of phenomenological continuity, it is possible to claim that the experience of the male human body now in time allows an understanding of what has always been masculinity since the beginning as well as seeing within it the seeds of a future masculine existence.⁶⁴

John Paul II deals with the resurrection of the body in chapter three of part one of *Man and Woman He Created Them*. He investigates it, following his accustomed method, beginning from Scripture. As mentioned in the last chapter, in this case he uses the dialogue between Christ and the Sadducees in the Synoptic Gospels about the so-called levirate marriage between seven brothers and the same woman; each brother dying in succession leaving no issue.⁶⁵ Christ answers that when all these seven brothers and the woman rise from the dead there will be no marriage. John Paul II says, that this means that not only will there be a resurrection, contrary to the belief of the Sadducees, but also that there will be an existence that continues to be both male and female. The latter is clear because of the reference to the unnecessary state of marriage: "When they rise from the dead men and women do not marry" (Mark 12:25 REB).

As already noted, these words indicate that in the resurrection, human beings regain their body with its masculinity and femininity, in the fullness proper to the image and likeness of God. Christ's words presuppose a recovery of bodiliness after the death of

⁶³ *Discovering the Feminine Genius: Every Woman's Journey*. 134.

⁶⁴ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 400. Of course, this applies to the feminine body as well.

⁶⁵ Matthew 22:24-30, Mark 12:18-27, Luke 20:27-40.

the body and the separation from the soul—the re-establishment of human life in its integrity as a union of body and soul in an entirely new state. Thus, a man will find his specific masculine character preserved, but the meaning of being male in the body will be constituted and understood differently and in a new way. West comments that nothing of being human, of being male, is mitigated or eliminated but rather being male reaches its ultimate realisation.⁶⁶

Is there more that can be said about the nature of this eschatological masculine existence? When Christ says in Mark 12:25 that: “...they are like angels in heaven.” it can be deduced that a man becomes equal to or like the angels. This similarity to the angelic nature implies that this eschatological existence is even different from the ‘original’ existence before the Fall. Not only does a man gain more in the *eschaton* than Adam had in the original masculine existence, but he experiences a unity of self and a purpose of existence unequalled and unexperienced either in the beginning or in historical existence. His whole masculine self, *pneuma*, *soma* and *psyche*, not only will exist in complete harmony, but also his masculine self will be directed towards God as are the natures of the angels. This divinely oriented existence will not only be one of service and worship, as is that of the angels, it will also signal for the male human person a perfection of the intellect and the will.⁶⁷

This future existence is a spiritualisation of man. A man does not become an angel for that would be to combine the two creations, the spiritual and the corporeal, angelic and human. This would contradict the tradition of the Church, which has always taught the free act of creation on God’s part was to bring into existence this corporeal world and the spiritual realm.⁶⁸ The human person occupies a unique place in the corporeal creation since he or she possesses both a body and a spirit, a psychosomatic existence in history. The eschatological existence then is characterised by a removal of the opposition between the body and spirit, which establishes perfect unity and harmony between the two. This heralds the end of concupiscence. While it is impossible to predict what this experience of a spiritualised body may feel like, I

⁶⁶ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 302.

⁶⁷ This perfection of intellect and will is an understanding of the angelic existence found in traditional Catholic doctrine about the angels. See Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 117.

⁶⁸ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 114.

suggest that, for men, this would be not only a liberation from the concupiscence of the body, but also a perception of his own body, and those of others, which affords it the original dignity, where there was no shame.

As mentioned before, this eschatological existence is not a re-formation or a re-creation of the male human person. This is rather the fulfilment of masculinity and it is not a destruction of masculinity or a weakening or diminution of it. A man is not less a man in the *eschaton* than he is in history. The *eschaton* can be called the goal of masculinity. A man possesses masculinity so that he can arrive at this manner of existence, which is marked by the perfect and intimate communion, namely, a full experience of the Trinity. The experience of *communio personarum* here on earth through one's masculinity, whether that involves the conjugal union or not, is both a preparation for, and a sign, of this eschatological reality. The divinisation of the human person through participation in the Trinitarian communion signals the end of the need for marriage and procreation. This is not only because it is the end of the earthly reality, but also because the body takes on a new meaning. This eschatological re-formation of the human subjectivity leads to a new discovery of the spousal meaning of the male body in a virginal way.

This opens up much for reflection. It signals that masculinity, no matter what idea or image of it is proposed at any particular moment or from any particular ideology or philosophy, can be theologically understood as oriented towards the divine. Furthermore, the eschatological communion of a man with God in perfect love and in a face-to-face vision will be experienced in a perfectly mature subjectivity keeping masculinity in the glorified body. This will happen because of the self-communication of the Divine Subject. The man will be enabled through this experience to make the perfect response and donation of self; to give the reciprocal gift of self to God. This self-donation made in a virginal state of body is the completion and eschatological fulfillment of the masculine, spousal meaning of the body. This is not a diminution but a fulfilment. While it is a new and perfect subjectivity for each person, as John Paul II describes it, through the concentration of knowledge and love that comes from a participation in God's life, it must also be a discovery of the new and perfect intersubjectivity of all.

The meaning of masculinity in the *eschaton* will be found outside of marriage and procreation, but not outside the mystery of creation. The previous bodily experience of solitude *and* communion will be fulfilled in a virginal way. “Heaven will be the experience of a great multitude of solitudes living in perfect unity without any fear of being seen and known by each and by all.”⁶⁹ The Trinitarian mode of existence will become the ‘form’ of human existence. It will happen through the complete co-penetration of redemption into human history; the recovery of the grace of creation through the redemption of the body.

All that is personal in man will be perfected into a perfectly mature masculine subjectivity. The glorification of the body, which will accompany this, will be the fruit of divinising spiritualisation. This will not only be the primacy of man’s own spirit restored into perfect balance with the body, but also the complete permeation of the body by the Holy Spirit. The male human person will be established fully in the perfect freedom of the gift of the self through his male body in the communion of persons. This perfect freedom will nourish all the communions that will make up the communion of saints. “In this union the objective development of the human person reaches its highest point.”⁷⁰

This could be called the realisation of the ‘eternal’ masculine where masculinity enjoys a never-before-experienced freedom; where masculinity is affirmed and valued on the perfected level of human persons.⁷¹ This eschatological masculine existence seems to engage many of the ideas of those already encountered in this work who have written both with longing and with expectation about a ‘better’ masculinity. To arrive at this ‘eternal’ masculine requires the journey of the ‘historical’ masculine. Eternity is predicated upon time. A man must live his life and vocation as a man, in a masculine way, so as to arrive at the *eschaton*.

⁶⁹ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 305.

⁷⁰ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 255.

⁷¹ Modelled upon John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 287.

The Masculine Vocation

The structure of this theological framework for understanding masculinity is almost complete. To this point the various “beams” of this structure have dealt with the male human person in his personhood and in his body, and the body’s generative capacity culminating in fatherhood, with its own dual manifestations. The important place Christ holds in a true and theological understanding of masculinity was proposed, as well as that towards which masculinity tends in the resurrection of the body. The last supporting beam in this structure is to consider the notion of vocation and how it operates in the life of a man.

To enter into this discussion, it is necessary to step back and take a wider view and to ponder what is the purpose of a man’s life. In part, this question was answered by consideration of the *eschaton*, because that is the destination willed by God for every human person. However, it is more than a consideration of the goal of this earthly life, which comes after death. It also includes pondering upon the meaning of life and how a man can live this life not only for fulfilment, but also for flourishing. In doing this, the task is to discover the truth about the male person: a truth that has its roots in original masculinity before the Fall, is lived in historical masculinity, and moves towards eschatological masculinity.⁷² This is why attention to the themes of John Paul II’s theology of the body has been supportive. Furthermore, unless a wider view of masculinity is supported by what is authentic and true, it will not only flounder, but also begin to lack a universal application, becoming lost in a mire of specificity of time, culture and history.

From this wider perspective, it is possible firstly to view masculinity as a life-long task given to a man by being born with a male body, with the body’s specific influence upon his spirit and psyche. Being a task does not imply a burden or an activity that is laborious. Rather it proposes an ongoing, constant and continual impetus in a man’s life to live as a man and to experience this world as a man. This task is theological in so far as it was assigned to each man from the Creator, who

⁷² *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 356.

brought him into existence and gifted him with masculinity.⁷³ Percy notes that having been born male, the task for a man is to develop a masculine personality.⁷⁴

To this, the concept of vocation brings the notion of the proper course for every person's development to unfold in life. In this proper course there is the interior self, in which masculinity holds a central and focussing position. There is also an external component to vocation in that each man must commit himself to the service of something and/or someone other than himself. He must give of himself and he must also be aware of what others expect of him. This self-understanding and capacity for choice in self-determination is intimately connected to personhood. It is only a person who can have a vocation. Vocation does not exist in the world of other living creatures, except in the world of persons.

Vocation is also connected to the relationship between the human person and God. It exists within the framework of an act of justice towards God through love.⁷⁵ This act of 'right return' of personal relationship can only exist since God is also a personal being. This personal Divine Being invites the personal human being to "integrate himself into the activity of God."⁷⁶ It is from this understanding of vocation that the expression of *Gaudium et Spes* begins to be understood that Christ "fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear".⁷⁷ It is also the same paragraph from *Gaudium et Spes* that states that this supreme calling or vocation is lived in union with Christ, who unites himself with every human person.

Thus, it is with certainty it can be said that the masculine vocation exists and operates. The theological understanding of the human person assists in this and, in a sense, moves inexorably towards this. A man has a vocation in life, a calling to which he responds and through which he realises his own development. That vocation is to be a man; to understand his masculinity within the context of his own personhood and his

⁷³ *Man and Woman He Created Them - a Theology of the Body*, 360.

⁷⁴ Anthony Percy, *Theology of the Body Made Simple* (Ballan, Victoria: Connor Court Publishing, 2006).

⁷⁵ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*. It is in this book that Wojtyła describes vocation as operative in the life of a human person. This is done in Chapter IV pp. 245ff

⁷⁶ *Love and Responsibility*, 258.

⁷⁷ Vatican Council II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - *Gaudium Et Spes*," 22.

relation through Christ to God. While simply expressed, it is the task of a lifetime and of each individual man and it is lived from and within the masculinity he carries and which flavours his personhood.

Conclusion

Having come to the end of this construction of a theological framework for understanding masculinity, it is worthwhile now, to use an analogy, to stand back and inspect the edifice.

The first plank in the construction was the human personhood of a man. Personhood with its unique quality among all living things is viewed theologically as coming directly from God and personhood is possessed in the image of God. In fact, God wills human beings for their own sake, not for any functionality. A man is a person willed by God for his own value.

Upon personhood is built the particular body and sexuality of a man. Since the man as a human person possesses his own value, so too does the masculine body and sexuality. They hold value in and of themselves, and also as the visible means by which the man enters into relationship and communion with other human persons. The male body enables the creation of the *communio personarum*, most clearly and most fully in the conjugal union. In the context of conjugal union, the man's unique contribution is the gift of self, for which the male body is marvellously and directly made. This conjugal gift of self marks off the particular and primary quality of masculinity, namely, to give himself and even arising from this self-donation to sacrifice himself. This adds a further component to the framework.

To add another beam to the structure, it is in fatherhood that this masculine call to self-donation and sacrifice finds fulfilment. Whether that is in physical fatherhood and/or spiritual fatherhood, this donation of self is the hallmark of the masculine. Once more, this is theological because this personal gift of self is found among the divine attributes.

This self-donation is found most clearly in the God-man, Jesus Christ, and so the argument was proposed that Christ is the epitome, model and even a source for

masculinity, a clear theological proposition. This is presented as a most significant, almost a supporting, beam in the framework.

Lastly, almost as if adding the roof, masculinity in the resurrection of the body was examined. Being mindful of the endpoint of masculinity both crowns and fulfils this earthly life and reveals masculinity in its eternal yet bodily quality; something that can be inspiring and hopeful for men. Then, as if to add the walls, the concept of the masculine vocation completes the structure. Vocation brings to a finalised form the relationship between the man and God; a relationship that subsists within the story of the whole human race from the beginning, and which takes on a unique character in the life of each man.

The reason for pursuing this theological construction has been because the objective development of the human person reaches its highest point in union with God.⁷⁸ It is my contention that masculinity is not a hindrance or obstacle to this union but the means for a man to achieve it. Masculinity belongs to the whole drama of human existence and belongs in its own unique and masculine way. Theology can provide for masculinity the truth of who a man is as a male human person. It also affords a sense of wonder at, and admiration for, masculinity. It can even make of man a living evangelisation of the mystery of masculinity and of the call to communion achieved in a masculine way.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 255.

⁷⁹ West, *Theology of the Body Explained - a Commentary on John Paul II's Man and Woman He Created Them*, 612.

Chapter Nine - Conclusion and Synthesis

The task of this thesis has been twofold. First, there was the intention to explore and to make explicit the theological significance of the male human person. This entailed investigating towards a theological anthropology; something relevant to persons of both genders. Secondly, there was a desire to articulate a theological understanding for masculinity. This twofold endeavour has been situated not solely within theology but has engaged other academic disciplines such as history, sociology and psychology. Such a multi-disciplinary approach has successfully contextualised what this study has been able to determine theologically about masculinity. Such a contextualisation has added comprehensiveness to what has been articulated as theological, and it had also connected what has been said within the contemporary reality of the male human person. Through the entire project ran the streams of Lonergan's imperatives of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. Thus, in a critical and structured way, masculinity has been investigated in order to exhibit its interior and communal meaning.

While certainly not complete in itself and admitting of further investigation in the area, this work has contributed to a significant theological understanding of masculinity. It has also contributed to the wider endeavour of a theological anthropology; something which is an ongoing task for theology and which is most necessary in the present cultural situation. In a sense, the task of this thesis, and the wider enterprise of theology in which it rests, is enduring because of both the nature and intention of God, who is the very object of theology:

God's very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love...and he has destined us to share in that exchange.¹

The eternal nature of the divine exchange of love is reflected both in human nature and the shared subjectivity of woman and man. It is also reflected in the communion of persons and the intersubjectivity of man and woman, both of which are the ends towards which masculinity and femininity tend and are the fulfilment of human

¹ Catholic Church. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Homebush, NSW: St Pauls, 1994), 60 paragraph 221.

nature. The enduring nature of theology arises from the reality that such an eternal and divine “exchange of love” is not perceived solely and completely within the individual human person but rather also within the collective quality of human nature as well as in the personal communion entered into by man and woman; all of which moves throughout history and time towards the completion of this creation in the *eschaton*.

This thesis does not stand unless the human person is viewed, using both Scripture and tradition, as being created in the image and likeness of God and as an unrepeatable and unique participation in the divine personhood. Similarly, the human person must be viewed as an embodied and spiritual existence, who finds fulfilment in communion with others. In addition the plurality of human existence must be acknowledged. The human person is not an individualised generality. There is a plurality of persons, of experiences, and of circumstances of life that is also grounded and expressed in the dual existence of the human person as male and female. Furthermore, this work is founded upon the personalist principle: “the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love.”²

The process adopted in this thesis was to engage in a disciplined and structured reflection upon masculinity and to arrive by careful stages at a theological enunciation about the male human person. This was done through a prudent selection from the literature surrounding masculinity so as to establish the presence of an existing conversation on, about and around masculinity. Exploring the most advantageous context in which to situate the reflection augmented the literature review. For the purposes of this study, it was theology that was identified as the most suitable context.

Masculinity was examined cognitively, constitutively and effectively, relying upon Lonergan’s functions of meaning. These dimensions of meaning, each in its own way, allowed a fruitful explication of masculinity while at the same time creating an integrated sense of the whole. This was made possible through attention to Lonergan’s principles of being attentive, intelligent, rational, and responsible.

² Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 40.

Having completed the detailed overview of masculinity, we presented a theological anthropology of the human person before becoming theologically explicit about masculinity and the male human person.

Some of the issues surrounding masculinity that were identified in the course of this reflection bear repeating in this synthesis, not only for the purposes of summary, but also to highlight how theology has assisted in understanding them, and perhaps in practical experience, to address them.

The very critical quality of physical difference between men and women became a significant factor in the conversation. This arose both in the sociological and psychological literature. By implication and inference, it also featured significantly in what could be called the 'masculine literature'. This was the literature that is not so much academic, but more popular in its appeal. The centrality of the physical became evident in the prominence given to the body in theological discussion. By extension, the unique bodily quality of the male human person assumed importance. It was noted that gender difference also has implications upon individual, group and societal understandings of existence and upon a person's contribution to group and social activities. Roles and expectations are affected by physical and gender differences.

Flawed portrayals of masculinity and of men were presented and the effects of these upon the experience and expectations of men were investigated. As well, flawed perceptions of the attributes of men were examined. Both of these were surveyed to give the opportunity to enunciate helpful and positive descriptions of men, of their capabilities and potential. This was judged to be necessary given the context of recent decades, which were marked by an ascendancy of the feminine, even in some ways a distrust or marginalisation of the masculine, and a proliferation of gender identities. Within this contemporary context, various movements and groups were identified: mostly those of men and for men. In addition, the issues to which they sought to respond, or needs, which they sought to supply, were explained. Some of these groups were contemporary and some had their origin in earlier decades.

The substantial proposition that speaks of the wounds, needs, and failures of men was also noted, explored and analysed. Connected to these phenomena is the observed need that men appear to have at this time of an affirmation of their masculinity and

manhood. This is a significant factor in the popular or generalist conversation about masculinity and its pervasiveness demands a presence in this work. However, there was no attempt made to answer or respond to these issues. Rather they were presented as a significant portion of the context leading towards the theological perspective and to which theology is capable of addressing a helpful understanding.

One of the thought-provoking aspects of the context of masculinity, particularly for a theological investigation, and which was identified in the thesis, is the relative absence of men from the life of the church. To express it differently, men do not engage with the church in the same proportion or to the same degree as women. Such a perceived 'feminine face' for the church was explored and it was concluded that a masculine expression of Christian faith has largely been deficient. This has been identified by three groups whose efforts to reconnect men with the church were described and considered in the effective perspective on masculinity.

To build the most comprehensive understanding of masculinity possible in this study, the male contribution to marriage, to male celibacy and the quality of paternity were also studied. Situated within the attributes of human personhood, it was the capacity to make of oneself a gift to others that informs and flavours this activity in a masculine way. It was established that a man achieves this self-donation in his own masculine manner, which is different from but complementary with the feminine manner.

This segued neatly into an exploration of the identity of the human person, relying upon the phenomenological principle of exploring the experience of being human particularly in the subjectivity of the human person, which finds expression within action and relation. These are encountered by the person in the movements and activity of life with its personal inter-subjectivity and relationality, which resides at the core of human nature. Speaking theologically, this is also in imitation of the divine nature. Alongside this personal subjectivity and inter-subjectivity is the inner stimulus that moves the person towards integration, which of itself becomes the experience of fulfilment. In understanding this, the human nature of Christ, located within the hypostatic union, provides both a key and a model.

Lastly, it was the task to assemble all that had been noted and explored, and to situate it firmly and clearly within masculinity. This became a double-edged process. Firstly, there was the need to explicate and particularise what was said about the human person into the masculine. This was done not only so that what was general about the human person and common to each could be applied to men, but also so that the unique masculine way of being human could be made obvious. Secondly, it was also, by speaking so clearly about the masculine that all that had been noted previously in the conversation about masculinity could be contextualised and informed by such a clear expression. It was a deliberate attempt to employ what had been introductory and preparatory as a recipient of the understanding of masculinity in the task of constructing the framework of understanding. All of this served well in the task of expressing a theological understanding of masculinity.

Lonergan notes that conversion is basic to Christian living and an objectification of conversion, as well as its communal dimension, provides a foundation to theology.³ This work gains credibility and authority as it has successfully addressed the three conversions identified earlier: the intellectual, the moral and the religious.

The commitment to truth and meaning, beyond illusion and projection, has led to a description of masculinity that has avoided an ideology of masculinity but has demonstrated a capacity for masculinity to enter into an authentic dialogue with femininity along with a self-understanding that realises man's contribution to the human community. A similar requirement to move beyond selfishness and self-satisfaction in moral conversion has highlighted masculinity's inner direction towards self-gift and even self-sacrifice. Lastly, towards God in religious conversion masculinity's reference in loving surrender to God in vocation and man's participation in the divine likeness was proposed.

In addition to making concluding statements it is opportune to enunciate also the anticipated outcomes of this work. These are suggested in the hope that they might be achieved, even if modestly.

³ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 130.

By means of what has been noted and made explicit about masculinity, there was the intention that *men appreciate and even rejoice in the uniqueness of masculinity*. Some of the authors who reacted to and against feminism, and this is seen in some of the popular and mythopoetic literature, judged that masculinity and men's contribution to and status in society has become devalued or, at least, overlooked. This may have happened because of the usual pendulum swing in the opposite direction when a correction of societal norms or customs is needed. Yet, the research and the literature gave substantial reasons to validate these observations. It was noted that some men had become confused about what being a man entailed. Some came to comprehend that being male was wrong and some men endeavoured to be more feminine. It could be said that there was some need for a rehabilitation of masculinity. Such was attempted in this thesis through a thorough and balanced focus upon masculinity and its own individual qualities and contributions. Whether this has been successful is for others to evaluate. There is a quality of success though simply in undertaking the task and allowing the need to be expressed and examined. Perhaps, even if only in a minor way, men might come more clearly to understand being male and value being men. In particular, they might come to understand that masculinity has a firm grounding in theology, which, in itself offers a sense of transcendence to the experience of the male human person.

For a Christian theological endeavour, it was also the intention to illustrate *the centrality of Christ* not only to the general theological endeavour, but also that his unique humanity in the hypostatic union come to be appreciated more. Christ's own humanity can inform the humanity of each human person. Furthermore, the masculine quality of Christ's humanity can have particular relevance and impact upon the living of masculinity. This needed careful and delicate handling due to the unique experience of Christ's humanity for men, which is different from that for women. Yet, if Christ might be viewed not as remote, but as close at hand in the living of masculinity, this thesis would be deemed to have achieved success.

Fundamental to masculinity is fatherhood and paternity. Any investigation into masculinity would have to include this to be comprehensive as well as helpful. Through this thesis, it was intended that a *fresh and substantial understanding of fatherhood and paternity* might emerge. The very admittance of them into the

discussion is helpful and productive. However, it is hoped that in clarifying their intricate and intimate connection to masculinity, not only in its physical expression but also in a more lasting way in its spiritual expression, the dignity and the value of these two uniquely masculine traits might be expressed in a renewed way.

There was also a desire arising from my life and pastoral experience to offer in this thesis a *reply to the false understandings of masculinity*. Some of these, which are prevalent in society, are warped or shallow expressions of masculinity and they suffer from a lack of a detailed and reflective understanding of masculinity. Often, they are an expression of a latest trend, fashion or the particular lifestyle of a prominent person. There is no greater value that can be served than to allow what is true and wholesome to emerge. May this thesis and its examination of masculinity, most importantly its expounding of a theological expression for masculinity, serve the expression of what is true about masculinity.

Connected to this is the desire to express deliberately a *theology of the male body* within the wider theology of the body. The theological value of the body allows, and indeed springs from, a theology of the human person. In appreciating the theological qualities of the male body, men are able not only to understand masculinity in a more complete way, but also to live through the body a life that is fulfilling and can lead towards God, who is the Creator of the body. In this endeavour, I also wished to contribute to a clear expression of body theology for the male human person. This is intended to be a contribution to the work of John Paul II and filling the gap in his work in a modest way. This will have been achieved if my work allows the conversation about masculinity to be continued through this contribution and even provides an impetus for others to take the task.

Lastly, just as women banded together in the decades that gave rise to feminism, so too I would hope that this investigation into masculinity and its theological qualities might prompt men to do something similar. If men could *come together* in their shared masculinity, there would be a powerful impetus to renewing masculinity and contributing a revitalised vigour to the human community. This must be done in a masculine way, not in imitation of the feminine. Otherwise, it will falter because what works for women does not necessarily work for men. There is evidence in the thesis that men can achieve much when they come together to address masculine issues in a

masculine way. This proves to be attractive to men and appears to summon them forth into action.

While a work of some time and effort, this undertaking and investigation into masculinity has been immensely rewarding as well as interesting. On a personal level it has augmented my own understanding and appreciation of masculinity. By its very nature and scope it has been a journey that has covered much terrain as the landscape of masculinity was mapped and explored. From an academic perspective, the intricacies of exploring human personhood have been discovered. The interaction that is necessary between disciplines and the exactitude of expression that is advantageous have both been revelatory in their own way. It is also the beauty and dignity of being human in the image of the Creator and the profundity of the communion of persons that leaves one with a sense of wonder. It is anticipated that through this theological endeavour men and women might find hope in a masculinity that can be clearly expressed and easily understood and thus effectively lived. Moreover, might this contribute to a deeper understanding of the shared subjectivity of men and women, which theology holds, and to a further appreciation of the common and complementary humanity, that is lived by women and men. Just as Pope John Paul II coined the phrase “the genius of woman”,⁴ so that there might be the beginnings of a Christian feminism and that femininity may not become ever more depersonalised, so too it is my hope that this work would contribute in its own way to a discovery of the genius of man and that masculinity may not suffer a depersonalisation. To finish with Lonergan; may having “had a good look at” masculinity enhance its meaning.

⁴ This comment is referenced from John F. Crosby, “John Paul II’s Vision of Sexuality and Marriage – The Mystery of ‘Fair Love’”, Gneuchs (2000), 68.

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