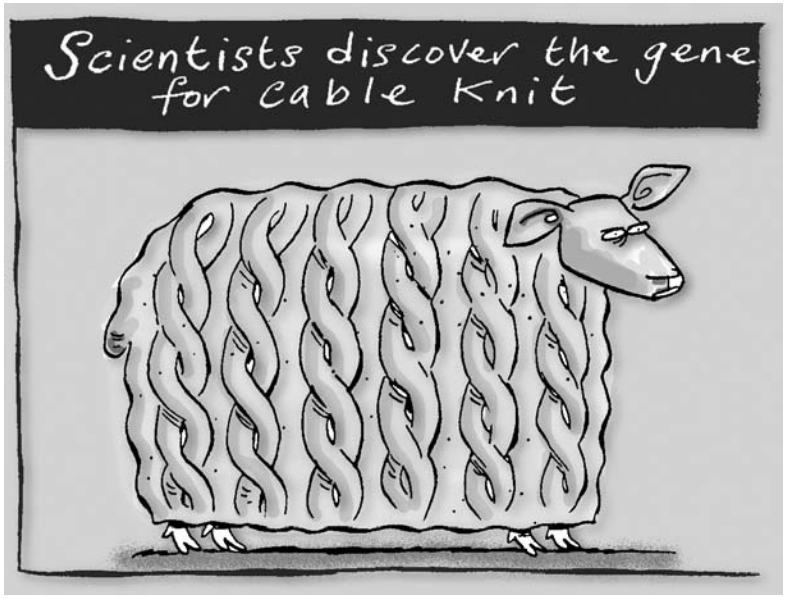

Source: *New Scientist*

Introduction

My Genes Made Me Do It! (the title is facetious) is an attempt to place in the public arena the scientific facts about homosexuality—particularly the information that the homosexual orientation is not inborn or hard-wired, and that sexual orientation can naturally undergo huge change.

The West has been subject to such a campaign of misinformation and disinformation in the last 20-30 years that its public institutions, from legislatures and judiciaries to the church and mental health professions widely believe that the homosexual orientation is innate—in the sense of biologically imprinted—and therefore unchangeable.

The implications of this are that anyone who makes the scientifically true statements below is considered the one who is misinformed.

- sexual orientation is not inborn but develops over some years in response to an individual's response to life events— as many human predicaments do
- homosexual orientation can change, i.e half the homosexual population naturally moves towards heterosexuality over time (without any therapeutic interventions), and further and faster with counselling and support
- The same-sex attracted are not 10 % of the population but (including bisexuals) much closer to 2.5 %

The West has lost its way on this issue, and today we are seeing the outcome.

The outcome

The Mental Health professions

In the West now, mental health professionals in many jurisdictions are unable to offer "reparative therapy" for people with unwanted

same-sex attraction. They are often under policy constraints to counsel clients towards acceptance of their sexuality.

The American Psychological Association (which tends to set the trends in mental health policies in the West) has been under unrelenting pressure for years to ban reparative therapy for people with unwanted homosexuality. It tends to rubber-stamp its Gay and Lesbian Task Force reports and in 2009 endorsed an assessment of sexual reorientation therapy rejecting it as probably harmful and change as dubious. The Task Force making the evaluation was comprised of activists in gay causes, most themselves publicly identified as gay. Every practitioner of sexual reorientation therapy (at least five highly qualified people) applying for inclusion on the committee was rejected by the APA's President Brehm.*

The report applied ridiculously high standards of proof that re-orientation therapy worked— standards not required of any other therapy. In its determination to show that change could not occur the Task Force ignored the psychological literature showing evidence of a great deal of change.

Nonetheless, other professional organisations follow suit with little appreciation that the APA stance on homosexuality is political, and not scientifically grounded.

The Judiciary

In the judiciary, homosexuality has steadily gained status as an "immutable characteristic" (like skin colour and gender) so that it has become widely unconstitutional in many countries to discriminate against it in any way—with the inevitable result that it also becomes unconstitutional to withhold marriage licences. Marriage is no longer distinctively a contract between a man and a woman able to naturally procreate.

* Joseph Nicolosi, founder of NARTH and 25 years a reparative therapist, from commentary on the APA Task Force report, www.narth.com, 2010

The churches

The crises in the Roman Catholic and Anglican denominations are the outcome of the stance that homosexuality is something that is innate and impossible to change. The media have presented the sexual abuse by priests of children as pedophilia; we have rarely heard the word "homosexuality." But 99 % of the abuse has been against young men past the age of puberty; in other words the crisis is not about a few errant priests who have molested children, but about priests with a homosexual orientation who have sought sexual connection with post-pubertal males.

The Roman Catholic church has a significant amount of homosexuality in its priesthood (we estimate about 10 %; much higher than in the general population), but though it counsels celibacy in its priests, it has never (to our knowledge) appreciated the scale of the crisis, i.e just how many homosexual priests have sought refuge in its ranks, and the effect on such a number of a policy that fails to take account of the extent to which sexual orientation can change. Rather, priests are expected to be celibate.

The Anglican communion has gone further than the Roman Catholics, particularly in the USA, where the denomination has divided so thoroughly over the ordination of gay bishops and priests and the sacrament of marriage for practising gay couples, that some of the faithful are placing themselves under foreign bishops, while gay and gay-friendly US bishops and clergy refuse to back down. Merciful men like Archbishop Desmond Tutu have been caught in the falsehood. The Archbishop equates homosexuality with skin colour and asks, therefore, why we don't want homosexuals "to give expression to their sexuality in loving acts?", since "it is becoming increasingly clear they can do little about [their sexual orientation]." These attitudes naturally filter down to people in the pews, whose opinions are already shaped by the misinformation that homosexuality is "genetic" and that 10 % of the population is gay. They will also quote the attitude of Christ who is inclusive and loves all men and women. Compassion is better than judgmentalism, and anything but full acceptance is judgmentalism and homophobia. Ordination of practising gays is the compassionate act. This view is also increasingly held in other denominations.

Governments

Governments with strong social agendas have been both victim to misinformation and propagators of it, so the idea that homosexuality is just another minority category that needs special protections now runs wide and deep in Western Governments. Political debates don't even consider the scientific facts. Few politicians would give alcoholics or the obese or gamblers special protections in law because they realise these particular personal difficulties can be overcome. Homosexuality belongs far more in this company than in that of skin colour or gender, but that is not generally known or believed.

The United Nations

In the UN the pressure is on non-Western governments by Western representatives to globally end discrimination against gays. The message: all member states must pass legislation enshrining homosexuality as a human right in all cultures. The declaration is non-binding, but has been signed by at least 66 countries, most of them Western, and the pressure will continue. The debate, driven by gay activism and its backers in high places takes it for granted that the issue is one of a large minority denied the right to protection for something as basic and unchangeable as eye colour. This is not the truth: homosexuals (including bisexuals) are a tiny proportion of Western populations with a condition as responsive as many other human disorders to support and good counselling, the will to change and hard work. In this middle ground there is still plenty of room to make sure people with a homosexual orientation are protected from the malicious and bigoted.

The media

The media, under pressure to condense information to soundbites and headlines, or more often because it is frequently a purveyor of information passed on by special-interest groups seeking publicity, often gives the public skewed facts.

Usually (in our experience) the science is misrepresented. We're left with a headline that says something like, "Gay gene discovered," or "Genetic basis to homosexuality," or

"Homosexuality found in rams." Any reputable geneticist begins to cry! But most of the rest of us make a mental adjustment of sorts—"Well, I guess if it's genetic there's not much they can do about it… and if animals do it too, then it must be just a natural part of life."

"Most of the rest of us" are Mr and Ms Average Citizen, and the people in the preceding paragraphs: the bishops, clergy, laity; members of the judiciary, politicians, psychotherapists, counsellors, teachers, state servants, community leaders, parents. We are not specialists in homosexuality. We are busy people who often only have time to scan the headlines, or absorb the first couple of sentences on the TV news, or follow the policy directions from head office.

Education

Students are increasingly provided with counselling support if they believe they might be homosexual. This has come in response to pressure from policy makers and the gay lobby to protect "homosexual" students at school. But it is not generally understood that almost all 16 year olds who think they are homosexual now will, one year later, believe just as firmly, that they are heterosexual and in fact go on to develop heterosexually. Some *will* become homosexual, but to offer gay-affirmative counselling and contacts to teenagers finding their way through the wobbly process of acquiring stable heterosexual gender identity is a stumbling block to acquiring it rather than a stepping stone. Children (and parents of children) showing evidence of GID (Gender identity disorder) can instead be offered solutions to recognise and resolve contributing factors rather than affirm what is probably a developing homosexual orientation.

The gay community

In the gay community itself more than 90 % of gays now believe genes are a significant factor in their orientation—a ten-fold increase in fifty years[**]. Few people know enough to tell them

** Otis MD, Skinner WF. An exploratory study of differences in views of factors affecting sexual orientation for a sample of lesbians and gay men. *Psychological*

differently. And because of the current climate in the psychological and counselling professions few know how to help them change if they want to. The only other path left is the fight for equal freedoms—and Western human rights-focussed governments are easy prey to gay activist assertions that they are a minority with innate and immutable characteristics that need special protections.

So much of what people in the West believe about homosexuality now, is not the truth. The blind are leading the blind. It suits some people to believe what they do, but many others genuinely don't know what to believe and would welcome the truth if they only knew where to find it.

Here is a very basic piece of truth. There is nothing fixed or final about the homosexual orientation and its natural expression —homosexual behaviour. No politician, church leader or member, judge, teacher or counsellor, or homosexual person, or friend or family of a homosexual person, needs to feel forced into a position on homosexuality based on the apparent immutability of the homosexual orientation. Homosexuality is not inborn, not genetically dictated. Nor for that matter is heterosexuality or any other human behaviour. In fact our genes do not make us do anything. Whether it's homosexuality, a foul temper, bed-wetting or addiction to chocolate, our genes have very little to do with it.

Any genetic influence is weak and indirect

In human behaviour everything is nature and nurture. Without genes you can't act in the environment at all, and without the environment your genes have nothing to act on. No behaviour, including homosexuality, results solely from genes. At least for homosexuality this book argues that the level of genetic influence could easily be as low as 10 %, the balance of 90 % coming from the environment. And that 10 % is not a direct genetic influence. Every human being has a 10 % genetic influence on behaviour. A man or woman may have long fingers but that doesn't make him a player of Liszt, a man may have compact build and good co-ordination but

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that doesn't make him another Roger Federer. In homosexuality the genetic factor can be any physical characteristic that might make a man or woman feel gender atypical. But many people with SSA have none of these.

For other human behaviours genetic influence may be as high as 50 %, but nothing about that is fated either. Probably the best tool for measuring genetic influence on any behaviour (studies of twins) makes it quite clear that the genetic content of any behaviour drops commensurately with whatever environmental interventions of an opposite kind are brought to bear upon it. In other words, even if homosexuality did have a genetic content of 50 %, opposite environmental influences could almost nullify it.

My Genes Made Me Do It! attempts to bring scientific objectivity into the debate about homosexual orientation and its many implications. In the following pages you will read what orthodox science tells us about homosexuality, and you can draw your own conclusions. Don't let the numerous references persuade you that this book is for academics and scientists only. The references are listed for those who want to refer to the original research but the text is accessible to the average reader.

Because the scientific evidence so clearly shows sexual orientation can and does change we dedicate this book to those heroic people who, against a strong tide of Western public opinion, have found the courage to change their sexual orientation.

This is the second edition of *My Genes Made Me Do It!*; the first was published 10 years ago. The years since have only strengthened the book's original conclusions. Although there have now been many studies of biological factors none has come close to showing an overwhelming influence on homosexuality. Twin studies, in particular—which provide the best quantative estimate of the genetic contribution—have continued over the last decade to lower their estimates of genetic input into homosexuality. In addition, recent work on the role of histones (Chapter One) in gene expression hints at a much greater environmental role than twin studies have factored in. The first edition of *My Genes Made Me Do It !* suggested

a figure of 10 % genetic influence, both weak and indirect. Nothing has happened over the period to make us alter that view.

This edition further emphasises the role of the predominant random factors, including some indirect random genetic factors. It also contains quite a number of new arguments not used elsewhere. They are progressively being published in peer-reviewed journals.