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# Rending the Chasuble: A Genealogy of the Anglican Crisis

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*Rending the Chasuble:*
A GENEALOGY OF THE ANGLICAN CRISIS


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Dr. Mark Hulsether and Dr. Misty G. Anderson, advisors

*To lives worth protecting, lives worth saving, lives worth grieving.*

*The strategic adversary is fascism ... the fascism in us all, in our heads and*
*in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power,*
*to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us.*
Michel Foucault


*When the church hears the cry of the oppressed it cannot but denounce*
*the social structures that give rise to and perpetuate*
*the misery from which the cry arises.*
Archbishop Óscar Romero

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## *Acknowledgments*

Projects like this are rarely the work of only one person. I am incredulous toward the very idea of a "self-made" person—as if human beings were capable of existing in vacuums. On the contrary, we need people with whom we can debate difficult ideas, celebrate when it seems they are coming together, and cry when it seems they never will. More than this, we cannot help but be profoundly affected by these relationships, by these friendships, acquaintances, and loves which so touch and change us. We are their products. We *are* through others. And since this is the case, the very least one can do is be honest about it.

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I only hope I have created something of which we can all be proud.

# Introduction: *Considering Theological Bodies*

Whatever story of their cruelty,
Or nail, or thorn, or spear have writ in Thee,
      Are in another sense
        Still legible ;
      Sweet is the difference :
        Once I did spell
      Every red letter
        A wound of Thine ;
      Now, what is better,
       Balsam for mine.
                 *-Richard Crashaw,*
                 "On the still surviving marks of our Saviour's wounds"

## *Theological Bodies*

      Bodies are problematic.  Surrounded by constellations of power through which they

become either unintelligible or intelligible, bodies are sites of constant negotiation and re-

negotiation with cultural forces known and unknown.  Medical and psychological establishments

tell us what our bodies are, how they work, of what they are composed.  We visit internists when

our bodies malfunction, physical therapists when they do not respond to our commands

satisfactorily, and psychiatrists when they seem to work against, or worse, betray us.  Even at

their most scientifically informed, bodies reveal themselves to be metaphorically constructed.

Scientific bodies "malfunction," "do not respond to our commands," "work against, or worse,

betray us": the languages of machines, soldiers, and interpersonal relationships cross conceptual

boundaries and recombine.  Moreover, the phrase "our body" distanciates the self from the body

on the level of grammar, invoking the logic of the subject and the object it possesses.  The body

is, even when viewed through the lens of scientific materialism, both self and not-self, part-of-us

but not-all-of-us, intimate and distant.

And yet, the body constitutes and represents human subjectivity in an important way. That is, it contributes to the "I" through which one enters language and speaks—as Jacques Lacan realized in his formulation of the "mirror stage."[1] Bodies are sites of interpretation, beginning with nothing less than our capacity to understand ourselves as "I's," as selves distinct from others. As much as bodies contribute to the foundations of our subjectivity, we also use them to signify ourselves to others: our personalities, interests, and identities. The ways in which we attempt to signify through our bodies—through gesture, costuming, and the performance of gender, for example—provide a pre-verbal grammar of our relationship to the other, speaking and imagining ourselves being heard or apprehended by others

That the body is a vehicle for our cultural interactions is nowhere more apparent than in the discursive construction of the body of Jesus Christ, which is invoked by Christians to describe the priest acting *in persona Christi*, to perform the sacrament of Holy Eucharist, and to signify the life of the church. These three "bodies of Christ" are at the center of this project's concerns: the *ordinate body*, in particular the (in-)ordinate bodies of LGBTQ persons and women when they take on the role of priest; the *sacramental body*, in particular the eucharistic body performatively and theologically materialized by Anglican liturgies; and the *ecclesial body*, in particular the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. These are the bodies this project seeks to explore and challenge—and to queer.

Judith Butler frames "bodies that matter" in terms of the following inquiries:

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[1] It is by recognizing (or, as Jacqueline Rose rightly points out, *mis-recognizing*) the body that the child enters the Imaginary. And yet, it is not solely the body-as-such, for Lacan elaborates that "the idea of the mirror should be understood as an object which reflects the visible, but also what is heard, touched and willed by the child" (Lacan qtd. in Rose 1982, 30). In the mirror stage, the body is part-but-not-all, is already a fiction like the self it constructs or, should I say, it interprets. The body is imagined, constructed, and (mis-)interpreted from the very first moments of our subjectivity.

How ... can one think through the matter of bodies as a kind of materialization governed by regulatory norms in order to ascertain the workings of heterosexual hegemony in the formation of what qualifies as a viable body? How does that materialization of the [heterosexual] norm in bodily formation produce a domain of abjected bodies, a field of deformation, which, in failing to qualify as the fully human, fortifies those regulatory norms? What challenge does that excluded and abjected realm produce to a symbolic hegemony that might force a radical rearticulation of what qualifies as bodies that matter, ways of living that count as "life," lives worth protecting, lives worth saving, lives worth grieving.

[Butler 1993, 16]

I will argue that the body of Christ belongs to the very "domain of abjected bodies" which Butler describes—a domain which, as she reminds us, can both buttress compulsory heterosexuality and subvert its fundamental terminology. Is Christian theological discourse, as Gerard Loughlin (2007) asks us to consider, a fundamentally *queer* enterprise (7), and if so, what sorts of challenges does it present to pre-existing cultural definitions of gender identity and sexuality? How does what Graham Ward calls "theo-logic" queer our very definitions of right and wrong, legitimate and illegitimate? In what ways can it displace the scientific power/knowledge of psychological and medical establishments—and how can these systematic displacements further rather than circumvent the goals of LGBTQ liberation? If the body of Christ is already queer and if, as I argue, this logic is internal rather than external to Christian theological and liturgical discourse, what effect can this have on gender politics in the public sphere?

In short, what does it mean that the Episcopalians down the street talk about their collective presence as a group or institution, the particular women and men they ordain, and the pieces of bread and sips of wine they consume as if they were Jesus? Specifically, what does it mean for this tradition's understanding of the body—and of gender and sexuality—that Jesus's body so constructed is already plural, already queer? These questions ask us not only to reconsider the erotic economy of Christianity but also the role of Christianity in a public square

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where it cannot, with any measure of integrity, presuppose its own lexicon and commitments. Over the course of this thesis, I will show how the queerness of the high Christology that subtends Episcopal theology and liturgy becomes apparent when we situate its language about the body in the discursive terms of poststructuralist accounts of gender. Chapter one explores how the queerness of this body, made visibly apparent in the Episcopal Church's ordination of LGBTQ people, has led to an outpouring of anxieties, culminating in politico-discursive rifts over the question of whose bodies matter in such a way as to stand *in persona Christi*. Chapter two shows how these anxieties and rifts are rooted in the ordination of women, exposing unresolved differences in Episcopal polity over what bodies can do and what *these* bodies, in particular, represent. The final chapter examines how the body of Christ is described and materialized by theological narratives and explores the potential of deploying this body's queerness to formulate an Anglican queer politics.

I should be clear that by "theological body," I do *not* mean "spiritual body." The term "theological body" is my attempt to foreground how theological discourses materialize certain bodies, materializations which constitute and inform the bodies of those who participate in this discourse and which, by extension, affect the "regulatory norms [that govern] what qualifies as a viable body" (Butler 1993, 16). In doing so, I will invoke the term "body" in three primary ways: as a signifier used to describe multiple bodies which combine to form a single corporate body or group (as in the phrase "the legislative body"); as a signifier used to describe the material body of a subject (as in the phrase "the woman's body"); and as a signifier used to describe the presence of a certain kind of materialization (by which I refer to the difference in connotation between a "body" and a "carcass" or "corpse"). The way in which Anglican

theology deploys these three meanings of "body" is my primary locus of analysis.  The anxieties

about ordaining women and LGBTQ people noted above mark a moment of tremendous

possibility, a moment in which to ask the following question: can the symbolics of the body of

Christ be deployed in such a way that liberation is effected, both in the institutional church and in

society-at-large?

### *Dangerous Memories and the Praxis of Love*

In her *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity* (1985), liberation theologian Sharon

Welch proposes a new *telos* for theological discourse: the recovery of histories of human

suffering and liberation which assist in bringing about further liberation in history.  Welch

christens such histories *dangerous memories*:

> A striking characteristic of liberation theology is its focus on the memory of
> suffering.  Liberation theology recounts the history of the marginal, the
> vanquished, and the oppressed. ... [It] does not address the problem of suffering
> and evil in the abstract, but focuses on concrete memories of specific histories of
> oppression and suffering.  It declares that such suffering matters; the oppression
> of people is of ultimate concern. ... [But] the dangerous memory expressed in
> liberation theology is not only a memory of conflict and exclusion ... It is a
> memory of hope, a memory of freedom and resistance. ... In order for there to be
> resistance and the affirmation that is implied in the preservation of the memory of
> suffering, there must be an experience that includes some degree of liberation
> from the devaluation of human life by the dominant apparatuses of power/
> knowledge.  [Welch 1985, 36, 39]

Dangerous memories, therefore, have two parts: a recollection of human suffering and an

affirmation of hope for liberation from said suffering.  I write as one transformed by such a

memory, an experience which forever changed my understanding of human subjectivity and

which today drives my theological and academic commitments.  During my junior year of high

school, one of my friends came out as a gay man.  Marcus and I had known each other since the

sixth grade, and he was likely my first real friend. Without rehearsing a tired tale of middle school angst, I can say that neither Marcus nor I was especially popular, and so we became very close; I watched as Marcus had his first (and only) girlfriend, as we both joined the middle and high school choruses, as we began to expand our group of friends beyond each other, and as his parents divorced. Sometime during our junior year of high school, then, Marcus came into the small room where the tenor section (of which we were both members) was practicing and began to speak. There were three of us, besides Marcus, in the room when he struggled to say, "I think I might be gay." Of the three—a United Methodist, a Roman Catholic, and me a Southern Baptist—I was the one who told him he had to be wrong.

As our other two friends hugged him and told him they loved him, I feigned the same even as I began to plot out a way to convince Marcus he was mistaken. I had been taught by my church that to be a homosexual was to live in a state of perpetual sin—a state which precluded one from being a "real" Christian and, by extension, from going to Heaven—so I tried to talk him out of the whole thing. This took several ugly forms. I distinctly remember ganging up on him with one of my teachers, assaulting him with a barrage of arguments about how his lifestyle was unholy and unnatural. The peak of my endeavor's "success" was when Marcus admitted to me that if he *could* choose, he would choose to be "straight"—but that he just did not know how. Dismayed that this seemed to do nothing to discourage his new identity and terrified by the thought that he (and others of my friends who did not identify as Christians) would go to Hell upon their deaths, I finally broke down one night, crying myself to sleep and crying out to God to help me. The discourse of evangelism to which conservative evangelical youth are subjected involves an empowering bestowal of *agency* which translates into an unbearable burden of

*powerlessness*.  I had been told it was my job to ensure all my friends got saved.  Supposedly, I had that power, and yet all my efforts proved fruitless; I was, therefore, responsible for the eternal destinies, the eternal punishment of my friends.  But in that overwhelming moment of guilt, I was given an epiphany: I do not save other people by demanding that they change.

I felt set free—liberated, even—and from that point on, I stopped trying to save Marcus and started trying to save myself or, perhaps more appropriately, to examine the ways in which I was sinning against him, participating in his oppression and the degradation of his humanity.  After all, I had successfully convinced Marcus to want to be someone other than himself, to be someone other than the person God had created him to be.  I can think of no greater cause for repentance.  As I began to stand up for Marcus rather than join with those who mocked and jeered him as he walked through the halls of our southern high school, I also sought out a new church, one which preached without embarrassment the love and acceptance I had been taught by my family and which, more importantly, would accept my friend.  Marcus is the foremost reason I became an Episcopalian.  I strove to stand beside and support Marcus when his mother told him he was going to Hell, when his step-father pushed him up against a wall and called him names, when mutual friends would make fun of him.  His experience and that of those who, like him, have had their humanity or right to exist steamrolled by dogmatism, greed, or fear motivate me to continue studying theology and practicing ministry, no matter the challenge it may present to my own comfortable assumptions.  And I feel a connection to those who—wittingly or unwittingly—participate in oppression, knowing from my own experience that change is always possible.

This is the dangerous memory that transformed me, a memory not of being oppressed but of learning how Christian theological narratives can shape one into an oppressor—and yet can also be queered so as to shape one into an ally of the oppressed. Marcus, by being courageous enough to be himself—his own act of *parrhesia* or fearless truth-telling—served *in persona Christi* for me, the embodiment of the Advent faith I now believe and pray; of a God who takes on the brokenness of our humanity and rips apart all our proud hegemonies, empires, and epistemes from within. Our friendship taught me about the praxis of love—that the experience of love is inseparable from the effort to communicate and realize that love in history. The evangelical narrative by which my experience of the world was constituted was displaced by Marcus's embodiment of another—by my encounter with another definition of bodies that matter. The words one uses to characterize one's own subjectivity, though always subject to deconstruction, are not meaningless. What one believes matters, and these beliefs do affect others. As Welch states,

> the ways in which we understand the nature of faith and ecclesia ... have life and death consequences; they determine the type of response the church makes to particular social and political crises; they shape the nature of human community and human belonging in the world. [Welch 1985, 29]

Marcus, by being himself, taught me how to be me, and this project is inseparable from the dangerous memory we share, a dangerous memory of "lives worth saving, lives worth grieving" (Butler 1993, 16)—lives like Marcus's.

I argue that Anglicanism's discursive construction of the "body of Christ," when analyzed in light of poststructuralist theories of power, gender, sexuality, and embodiment, reveals both deep-rooted anxieties about the gender of the "body of Christ" and extraordinary possibilities for apprehending and deploying the queerness of that body. Engaging the queerness

of Christian praxis and its embodiment as it is revealed in the present historical moment will both allow scholars to better understand the crisis facing the global Anglican Communion and will open new, more effective avenues for constructive theological intervention in ongoing debates.

In chapter one, I offer a historical overview of two rifts in the Anglican church—rifts to which I will refer as "schisms," following common ecclesial usage. That everyone from church leaders to journalists refers to the crisis facing the Anglican Communion in terms of *one* monolithic schism obscures the complexity of these debates and inhibits the development of constructive proposals. Deploying a model of discursivity consistent with Michel Foucault's refutation of the repressive hypothesis, I argue that one schism is precipitated by the emergence of three new theological understandings of sexuality, of which Bishop Gene Robinson, Dr. Marcus Borg, and Dr. Rowan Williams are representative. Then, drawing from the postcolonial theory of Homi Bhabha, I explain that the other schism is precipitated by Anglicanism's colonial heritage and the phenomenon of what Bhabha terms colonial mimicry; by deploying this concept, I hold Western Anglicans accountable for their own role in constituting the conservative views regarding gender and sexuality held by many Global South Anglicans—views they, nonetheless, rightly identify as problematic. These are histories which reveal the theological body of Christ as church to be already fractured; it follows that all proposals of ways forward for Anglicanism should presuppose rather than elide the reality of contest and division.

In chapter two, I explain why the emerging discourses that precipitated the schism over gender and sexuality are rooted in even earlier historical debates—ones which center on the ordination of women in the Episcopal Church. After theorizing the liturgical as a political and encultured space, I draw on Judith Butler's concept of performativity to explain the source of

Anglicans' deep-seated anxieties regarding the ordinate body and to demonstrate how the body

of Christ materialized by the priest said to preside *in persona Christi* is gender-queer.  The

ordination of women materializes a theological body that, as both male and female, confounds

and subverts the binary understanding of gender which undergirds the logic of compulsory

heterosexuality—a displacement that reveals the issues of women's ordination and LGBTQ

ordination to be inextricably linked.

In chapter three, I venture a constructive theological proposal, arguing that the internal

theological narrative of Anglicanism does not merely allow but makes necessary the ordination

of women and LGBTQ people.  Drawing on Foucault's later work, I argue that theology should

be viewed as a *parrhesiastic* endeavor in which the truth of particular claims is understood to be

ethical rather than descriptive or correlative.  Following theologians Kathryn Tanner and Graham

Ward, then, I argue that theological reflection should be viewed as a form of cultural activity, one

that assembles theological materials in the ethical spirit of *parrhesia*.  From this constructive

standpoint, I deploy Ward's queer Christology to argue for the ordination of women and LGBTQ

people using the theological language of the church.  In short, I argue that the theological bodies

of Christ as church, as priest, and as sacrament make the Episcopal Church's rejection of

compulsory heterosexuality a theological necessity, not to mention an ethical imperative.

The very textuality of Christ's crucified body—the way in which Christians encounter

this body through Biblical narratives and performative acts like the Eucharist—looms large in

these debates, as in Crashaw's poem (1646): "Whatever story of their cruelty, / Or nail, or thorn,

or spear have writ in Thee, / Are in another sense / Still legible."  My argument seeks to read the

still-legible stories of cruelty inscribed upon the bodies Anglican Christianity has declared

unintelligible—those whose abjection is inextricably tied up in theological claims—and it calls the church to do the same. In the discursive opening created by the displacement of older theories of what defines a body that matters, perhaps Anglicans can re-articulate in a new episteme the radical potential of theological bodies and their implications for the eschatological horizon within which all theology is ventured.

We dress them up, dress them down, pierce them, tattoo them, explore them, touch them, taste them, sense them, pleasure them, describe them. Which bodies does the church dress up *in persona Christi*—and how?

# Chapter One: *A Tale of Two Schisms*

First and foremost it's about whether Jesus Christ is who he said he is. Is he the only way to the Father, the only Son of God? Is salvation through him alone? Secondly, it's about the authority of Scripture. Can Holy Scripture be trusted? The third matter is whether in morality God has given some absolutes and expectations about how Christians are supposed to live, expectations that are more than just suggestions. It's on that third level, but at all the levels, that the Gene Robinson event pushed the Episcopal Church over the cliff.

> -*The Most Rev. Robert Duncan*,
> Archbishop of the Anglican Church in North America

You have to understand that we don't see a lot of difference between George Bush and Gene Robinson. You must understand that what the American church has done in the election and consecration of Gene Robinson is in our eyes just another example of what America is doing around the world: having its own way, and the rest of the world be damned.

> -*Anonymous African Anglican,*
> as recollected by Ian Douglas

## *Approaching the Fault Lines*

Some family disputes are private and others are public; that of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion over the issue of homosexuality undoubtedly belongs to the latter category, having played out in magazines, newspapers, blogs, theological journals, seminaries, and parishes across the globe.  The contours of this crisis are notoriously hard to discern, however.  Not only do we have difficultly pinpointing where we are at present, but we cannot know definitively how we got here to begin with.  First, the theological evolution of the Episcopal Church is implicated in at least two different historical genealogies: that of mainline U. S. Protestantism and of global Anglicanism.  Second, as the latter indicates, the Episcopal Church *is* a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion, which means that this debate— even when it takes place on a local level—is *never* purely American or solely between Episcopalians; it has undeniably global implications.  *It follows that making any sense of the present crisis in the Anglican Communion requires examining the fault line dynamics of at least*

*two schisms: one global and one local.* In this chapter, I do not presume to give a definitive history of the Anglican crisis; even if I thought it was possible to write such a history at this point, I have neither the time nor the space to do justice to all its internal and external complexities. I only desire to set the stage for an analysis of one particular (and, I think, particularly crucial) convergence in the genealogy of queer theology in the Episcopal Church. My reader should think of this historical overview, then, as if I were humming the overture to a musical; I will not be able to do justice to the whole instrumentation or even to particularly ornate sequences, but with any luck, it will get stuck in our heads.

## *Queering Anglicanism: Conflict, Tension, and Différance in D025*

At first glance, the crisis over the ordination of LGBTQ people seems resolved at the institutional level. In July 2009, the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church (officially known as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America) passed two resolutions that provided unprecedented, if nuanced, institutional latitude for both the ordination of partnered LGBTQ persons to all orders of ministry and the development of liturgies of blessing for same-sex relationships. A characteristically Anglican tension between forging ahead in a prophetic spirit and striving to circumvent disunity is present in D025 in particular, which reads in part:

> Resolved, That the 76th General Convention affirm the value of "listening to the experience of homosexual persons," as called for by the Lambeth Conferences of 1978, 1988, and 1998, and acknowledge that through our own listening the General Convention has come to recognize that the baptized membership of The Episcopal Church includes same-sex couples living in lifelong committed relationships "characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such

relationships to see in each other the image of God" (2000-D039); and be it further

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention recognize that gay and lesbian persons who are part of such relationships have responded to God's call and have exercised various ministries in and on behalf of God's One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and are currently doing so in our midst; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention affirm that God has called and may call such individuals, to any ordained ministry in The Episcopal Church, and that God's call to the ordained ministry in The Episcopal Church is a mystery which the Church attempts to discern for all people through our discernment processes acting in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention acknowledge that members of The Episcopal Church as of the Anglican Communion, based on careful study of the Holy Scriptures, and in light of tradition and reason, are not of one mind, and Christians of good conscience disagree about some of these matters.

[General Convention 2009]

This resolution contains several elements which inherently require interpretation, including but not limited to a commitment to remain within the global Anglican Communion, recognition that some members of the Episcopal Church are presently engaged in same-sex relationships—more, that some of these currently serve as clergy—and that there is disagreement about sexuality in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

Of particular dispute is the relation of D025 to an earlier resolution, B033 of the 75th General Convention (2006), which stated:

Resolved, That this Convention therefore call upon Standing Committees and bishops with jurisdiction to exercise restraint by not consenting to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion.

[General Convention 2007, 650]

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Bishop John Buchanan of the Diocese of Quincy offered an interpretation typical of Episcopal conservatives: "B033 was aimed at meeting a Windsor request [that is, an instruction included in the Windsor Report, a treatment of the sexuality crisis issued by the Communion in 2004] for a moratorium on ordination of certain folks. That moratorium has held for three years and it will only not hold if and when we ordain the next openly gay person as a bishop in our church." Meanwhile, liberals followed Bishop John Bryson Chane of the Diocese of Washington in claiming, "What this resolution [D025] says is, we've lived with the idea of using restraint in the consecration of gay and lesbian people for three years, and that time is up. Now what we have is a full awareness across the church and the communion that, by our constitution and canons, a person who is in a same-sex, committed relationship can ... be considered for ordination and consecration" (Hyche 2009). The comments of the Bishop of the Diocese of East Tennessee, Charles vonRosenberg—which, in effect, combine both Buchanan and Chane's sentiments—best summarize a moderate position:

> D025 is descriptive. That is, the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, which have not changed, are referenced. What can be done, according to those canons, is described.
>
> D025 also references the Anglican Communion. That is, we value our participation in this world-wide fellowship, and we commit ourselves to continuing involvement and prayers for the Communion.
>
> D025 indicates an end to the temporary moratorium on consecrations of gay or lesbian bishops, and that is the controversial aspect of it. That moratorium was one of three by which all Anglican churches, world-wide, were asked to abide for a time. [vonRosenberg 2009]

In light of these three interpretations, it should be evident that the language of D025 renders it anything but a definitive policy statement. In short, it appears prophetic but, ultimately, contains so much ambiguity that it can actually be used to the opposite effect. On the

level of grammar, its passivity—indicated by the verb phrases "reaffirm the continued

participation," "encourage dioceses, congregations, and members," "reaffirm its financial

commitment," "affirm the value of," "recognize," "affirm that God has called," and

"acknowledge"—begs readers to project already-formed readings onto the text.  One can either

see such passivity as reflecting the results of a theological discernment process (in which one

recognizes rather than prescribes the direction of the Holy Spirit) or as a description, free of

value-judgments, of the state of affairs on-the-ground.  Here, it bears noting that all three of the

aforementioned bishops voted in favor of D025 (Naughton 2009).  In effect, however, each voted

for a different resolution—a resolution which, consequently, has no stable existence while still

retaining ambiguous powers.  In the face of D025, the spirit of Derrida looms large.  D025 is

nothing but difference and deferral.[1]

And politics.  I wrote in 2009 that "it is fair to say that Resolutions D025 and C056

represent the culmination of a long theological evolution in the Episcopal Church."  This "long

theological evolution" certainly merits examination and tracing—indeed, I intend to venture a

little in this direction—but I no longer feel that D025 represents its culmination.  D025

represents one moment in a power struggle, a contest for hegemony in the Episcopal Church and

in Anglicanism more broadly.  What D025 *means* is far more important politically than what it

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[1] I mean to gesture toward Jacques Derrida's essay "Différance": "The word sheaf [which Derrida uses to describe how he will explain what he means by *différance*] seems to mark more appropriately that the assemblage to be proposed has the complex structure of a weaving, an interlacing which permits the different threads and different lines of meaning—or of force—to go off again in different directions, just as it is always ready to tie itself up with others" (Derrida 1982a, 3)

*Différance* evokes, for Derrida, the nature of language; the signifier makes meaning by *differing* and, thus, *defers* meaning indefinitely.  D025 seems a pertinent example of the "sheaf" metaphor, as the weaving of ambiguous signifiers has permitted—or even forced—different lines of meaning to emerge, represented here by the responses of Buchanan, Chane, and vonRosenberg.  It is important to realize, nonetheless, that this insight (that D025 means everything and, therefore, nothing) is not fully satisfactory.  Power continues to circulate through these interpretations, notwithstanding their inability to get at the essential meaning of D025.  The point is not that D025 is inconsequential but, rather, that its consequences are determined through power relations.  Appeals to the original spirit of D025 are politically ineffective, as there are at least *three* available.

*says*; Buchanan, Chane, and vonRosenberg know this much for sure. Rarely do I agree with Mark Lawrence, the Bishop of South Carolina, but I must admit that his was the most accurate of the reactions to D025: "We're staring into murky waters, and everyone reads the tea leaves the way they want" (Hyche 2009).

## Schism One: *Emerging Discourses of Anglican Sexuality*

It should go without saying that, if we are to approximate the complexity of the Anglican schism, we must always keep this sense of contested interpretations in the background. Even if D025 does not represent their culmination, there are still general observations to be made about the development of theologies of LGBTQ inclusion in the Anglican church. This is not, I will argue, a hitherto-repressed core of Christian inclusivity finally breaking through the constraining chains of "orthodoxy," nor is it the result of a slippery slope to liberalism. To argue from either of these positions is to valorize or demonize too soon, before these discourses' effects of power have been analyzed in relation to specific ecclesial cases. I posit, rather, that the new understanding of sexuality emerging in Anglicanism—represented in academic circles by the controversial moniker "queer theology"—is a convergence of at least three theological discourses, each speaking in a different symbolic register: the evangelical (as represented by Gene Robinson), the liberal (by Dr. Marcus Borg), and the Anglo-Catholic (by Dr. Rowan Williams). This is not the place to attempt a complete history of these three wings of Anglicanism. I propose, moreover, that we think of these not so much as "wings" or "parties" but as theological *sensibilities* which, though having their own distinctive languages and strategies, are still fluid and permeable.

In what follows, I will explain the Anglican conceptualization of sexuality in a manner consistent with Michel Foucault's refutation of the repressive hypothesis in *The History of Sexuality* (1990). Foucault claims that "the construction of normative sexuality is accomplished not by repression but rather through a multiplication of discourses on sexuality" (Pagliarini 1999, 99), an argument that follows naturally from his conceptualization of power as something which works from the bottom-up rather than the top-down:

> The analysis, made in terms of power, must not assume that the sovereignty of the state, the form of the law, or the over-all unity of a domination are given at the outset; rather, these are only the terminal forms power takes. It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; ... power's condition of possibility, or in any case the viewpoint which permits one to understand its exercise, ... and which also makes it possible to use its mechanisms as a grid of intelligibility of the social order, must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point ... [Rather,] it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable. ... Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. [Foucault 1990, 92-93]

A Foucauldian understanding of infra-power reveals that *the scepter* (read as a metaphor for a monolithic, vulgar Marxist conceptualization of Power) is actually a web of capillary power relations which constitutes the *fiction* of the scepter. The historical deconstruction of this fiction —a strategy Foucault terms "genealogy" after Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*—would proceed in the following manner: the power that seems to be manifest in the object of the scepter is actually constituted in part by a long history of a people's subjugation by a monarch, who happened to carry around a scepter; in part by a complex discourse—consisting of conversation, journalism, legal codes, literature, and propaganda—which invokes and describes the scepter; in part by a population's memory of accepting or resisting and, hence, participating in these

discourses about the scepter as a symbol; and by other related technologies of power. Following

such a model, it is less fruitful to narrate the emerging acceptance of LGBTQ folks in Episcopal

Church and the Anglican Communion in terms of a *de facto* sexual liberation—which would

repeat too simplistically a story of rebellion against the repressive, monolithic Power of the

scepter—than in terms of the emergence of alternative discourses regarding human sexuality

which made this acceptance theologically intelligible.

Gene Robinson was elected the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire in

2003, a decision which sent the Anglican Communion into an uproar due to his being the first

*openly* gay and partnered bishop in history. Robinson's history has been the subject of much

journalistic exploration and even a full-length documentary, but his theology is best discernible

from his memoir, *In the Eye of the Storm: Swept to the Center by God* (2008). His liberationist-

influenced evangelicalism is evident from his introduction, in which he states,

> I was persuaded to write this book because it would allow me to talk about my
> real passion: the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news that we are loved by the
> God who created us, and, through our redemption by Jesus on the cross, that we
> are set free to love one another and the world in God's Name. That liberation is
> for gay and lesbian people, of course, who are children of God and whose souls
> are just as important to save as other souls. [Robinson 2008, 4]

Robinson, therefore, couches his liberation theology in the familiar language of Protestant

evangelicalism, with its focus on "good news," "redemption ... on the cross," and being sent into

the world, though it should also be obvious that he has more in common with the social gospel-

inflected evangelicalism of Charles Sheldon's *In His Steps* (1896) than Jerry Falwell's Moral

Majority or even Billy Graham's neo-evangelicalism.[2] It is, perhaps, helpful to think of

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[2] For a history of these terms, see Mark Hulsether, *Religion, Culture and Politics in the Twentieth-Century United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 154-59.

Robinson's evangelicalism in the context of his desire to assert continuity with dominant

expressions of American Protestantism:

> It might surprise readers (I hope it will) to learn just how "orthodox" I am.
> Perhaps both my supporters *and* my critics will be surprised at just how
> theologically conservative I am.  Just because I favor taking a second look at what
> holy scripture actually says—and doesn't say—about homosexuality as we
> understand it today, it doesn't follow that I believe everything in scripture is up
> for grabs. ... The fear that inclusion of lgbt folk in the church is but a precursor to
> an all-out attack on the long-held orthodox doctrines of the church may be our
> greatest stumbling block to full inclusion.  My hope is that this book will speak to
> those fears in a way that sets the acceptance of gay and lesbian Christians within
> the larger context of orthodox belief.  [Robinson 2008, 4]

Robinson self-consciously asserts his theological conservatism not to evidence his

"domestication" or to make him "safer" but to speak more directly to those Anglicans who share

his theological commitments: to scripture, to the doctrine of the incarnation, and to the world.

Robinson's low-church argument for the inclusion of LGBTQ people is grounded in

scripture and the person of Jesus.  He states,

> The vulnerability inherent in God's creation of the world, and in God's becoming
> flesh in Jesus, is the key to unlocking the power and meaning of human sexuality.
> The spiritual and physical union between two people mirrors the relationship God
> desires with humankind.  ... When I can express with my body what I'm feeling
> with my heart, the integration of body and soul is astounding.  That's what we
> mean when we say marriage signifies the mystery of the union of Christ and his
> church.  [Robinson 2008, 38]

Robinson constructs sexuality as reflecting the vulnerability of the human-divine relationship

and, by extension, as a way to experience spiritual communion with another person as one

experiences communion with God.  He, moreover, situates this positive view of sexuality in a

reading of scripture which presupposes the Bible is not a transcendental *a priori* that fell down

from Heaven but is, rather, "culturally- and time-bound" (33).  Nonetheless, Robinson the

evangelical feels compelled to argue from scripture:

> For the Hebrews, sex is ... a grace-filled gift from God. It's no accident that in Hebrew, the verbs "to know" and "to create" both have as their source the verb that describes the genital, sexual act. ... The Song of Solomon is an ode to the sheer pleasure and joy of human sexuality, yet in our fear and our guilt, we've often lost that joy and delight to the proscriptions of "thou shalt not." ... But Jesus of Nazareth, whose life was permeated with earthiness and sensuality, stood much more in the tradition of the Song of Solomon than in the [Greek] tradition of [body/mind dualism, which considered sex] Pandora's Box.
>
> [Robinson 2008, 32-33]

Having, hitherto, rehearsed a well-established argument regarding the ritual meaning of "abomination" and the unavailability of the modern category of sexuality to Biblical authors (20) —the precise contours of which are not important to our endeavor to track differences between our three Anglican queer theologies, if for no other reason than these historical-critical arguments are presupposed by all of them—Robinson uses Biblical texts to frame sexuality as something other than mere procreation (31). His Christocentric appeals to scripture confirm his theological construction of sex as spiritual communion on parallel with the communion of God and humankind. Sex is a messy but, ultimately, sacramental joy which bespeaks the "earthiness and sensuality" (33) of the incarnation—God's taking on of human flesh in the person of Jesus. When Robinson declares "I am here to tell you what the homosexual agenda is: it is Jesus" (162) he is venturing not domestication but exegesis.

In contrast to Robinson's focus on scripture, experience, and incarnation stands Marcus Borg's formulation of a liberal theology which takes seriously the historical criticism of the Bible and strives to articulate Christianity in a way that makes sense in (and of) a modern world. Borg, a former professor of religious studies at Oregon State University and a member of the Jesus Seminar, situates his argument for inclusion within larger claims about the nature of the Bible:

> The single law in the Hebrew Bible prohibiting homosexual behavior between men is found in Leviticus: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an

26

abomination." The penalty (death) is found two chapters later. *If we see the Bible as a divine product, then this is one of God's laws*. The ethical question then becomes, "How can one justify setting aside one of the laws of God?" This is, of course, how fundamentalist and many conservative Christians see the issue. *But if we see the Bible as a human product, then the laws of the Hebrew Bible are ancient Israel's laws*, and the prohibition of homosexual behavior tells us that such behavior was considered unacceptable in ancient Israel. The ethical question then becomes, "What would be the justification for continuing to see homosexual behavior as ancient Israel did?" [Borg 2001, 24, *emphasis mine*]

Borg, therefore, embraces the treatment of the Bible in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, which holds that the Bible should be subjected to the same principles of interpretation as other texts (Forster 2008). This does not mean that Borg completely relinquishes Biblical authority. Rather, he re-defines this in terms of a "historical-metaphorical" reading of scripture:

By "historical approach," I mean all the methods that are relevant to discerning the ancient historical meanings of biblical texts. The chief concern of the historical approach is the past-tense question, "What *did* this text mean *in the ancient historical setting in which it was written*?" By "metaphorical approach," I mean most broadly a nonliteral way of reading biblical texts. A metaphorical reading does not confine itself to the literal, factual, and historical meanings of a text. It moves beyond to the question, "What does this story mean as a *story, independent of its historical factuality?*" [Borg 2001, 38]

By seeing the Bible as a human product which is, nonetheless, sacred in terms of its function in the life of the Christian—which Borg describes as "[living] within the world created by the Bible ... [listening] to it well and [letting] its central stories shape our vision of God, our identity, and our sense of what faithfulness to God means" (31)—this academic scholar of religion *and* card-carrying Episcopalian is able to bridge the principles of his two identities. In other words, he is able to take the historical findings of the Jesus Seminar to church.

In the case of homosexuality, these maneuvers allow Borg to subject the Bible to ethical scrutiny rather than vice versa. He argues,

> Because the Bible is a human product as well as sacred scripture, the continuing dialogue needs to be a critical conversation. There are parts of the Bible that we will decide need not or should not be honored, either because we discern that they were relevant to ancient times but not to our own, or because we discern that they were never the will of God. [Borg 2001, 30]

These are the concerns which cause Borg to ask, "What would be the [ethical] justification for continuing to see homosexual behavior as ancient Israel did?" This is the critical stance of liberal Anglicans: does this religious doctrine or Biblical injunction make sense in light of my modern experience—and modern morality? In his recent novel—a didactic exposition of Christian faith in modernity appropriately titled *Putting Away Childish Things: A Tale of Modern Faith* (2010)—Borg's stand-in, a religious studies professor named Kate Riley, asks her student, "Suppose we knew that Paul was really, and strongly, against homosexuality—that he was convinced that it's sinful, and that it really mattered to him. ... Now a question: Would it be okay to say Paul was wrong about that?" (208-09). Here, Borg is in subtle tension with Robinson's insistence that the Bible is still the centerpiece of the argument for inclusion. Borg likely agrees with Robinson that one can glean from the Bible a positive view of sexuality and that verses which appear to condemn homosexuality should be explained away in terms of historical context. Borg, however, feels that to use this strategy still subtly suggests that the Bible is a divine rather than human product. He is willing to concede, for the sake of argument, that Paul actually condemns homosexuality in Romans 1.26-27 because his answer to the question posed by Kate is an emphatic *yes*.

Borg balances the confessional understanding that, as sacred scripture, the Bible shapes those who participate in the world it imagines with a scholarly, historically-oriented understanding that the Bible is also a human document and, as such, is on trial before modern

ethics.  His avatar Kate continues by explaining how the church has made similar value-

judgments regarding verses in 1 Timothy and elsewhere which assert the ineligibility of women

to serve as ministers:

> Now mainline Protestant denominations ordain women.  So they're really saying
> that this passage—whoever wrote it—no longer applies.  And many of them—not
> all of them—are reaching the same conclusion about the Bible's passages about
> homosexuality. ... Christians have often decided that passages in the Bible are
> wrong—or, if you wish, that they no longer apply.  But that's just a gentle way of
> saying that maybe they've always been wrong—that the subordination of women
> and slavery were never right, but simply reflected the mores of the time.
>
> [Borg 2010, 210]

With this, Borg contextualizes homosexuality within a narrative of modernization, of ethical

progression beyond a society which oppresses racial minorities and women.  Framing LGBTQ

issues in terms of civil rights has clear advantages in terms of legal precedents in the political

sphere, and Borg's posturing can be read as a similar move in theological discourse; Christian

moderns also no longer own slaves or claim women are inferior to men.  He further argues that

> The biblical canon names the primary collection of ancient documents with which
> Christians are to be in a continuing dialogue.  This continuing conversation is
> definitive and constitutive of Christian identity.  If the dialogue ceases or becomes
> faint, then we cease to be Christian and become something else.  Thus the
> authority of the Bible is its status as our primary ancient conversational partner.
>
> [Borg 2001, 30]

In sum, Borg's creative fusion of historical-critical and narrativist understandings of scripture

allow him the freedom to re-imagine the Bible's sexual ethics in light of modernity as much as

he re-imagines modernity in light of the Bible.

A well-known Anglo-Catholic theologian, Rowan Williams is more self-consciously

interested in how this dialogue plays out vis-à-vis not only the Bible but also church tradition,

philosophy, literature, and theological discourse more broadly.  Williams, the 104th Archbishop

of Canterbury, penned his defense of same-sex relationships while he was the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford. Entitled "The Body's Grace," Williams' essay is rooted in a desire to find *something* redeeming to sex besides the Catholic tradition's classic answer of procreation. He does this, in part, by building upon the work of philosopher Thomas Nagel:

> Nagel ... sees [sexuality] as a special case of what's going on in any attempt to share what something means in language: part of my making sense to you depends on my knowing that you can "see" that I want to make sense, and telling you or showing you that this is what I want implies that I "see" you as wanting to understand. "Sex has a related structure: it involves a desire that one's partner be aroused by the recognition of one's desire that he or she be aroused." All this means, crucially, that in sexual relation I am no longer in charge of what I am. ... To desire my joy is to desire the joy of the one I desire: my search for enjoyment through the bodily presence of another is a longing to be enjoyed in my body. As Blake put it, sexual partners "admire" in each other "the lineaments of gratified desire." We are pleased because we are pleasing. [Williams 1989]

From the beginning, then, Williams reframes the sexual act in terms of mutual desire, constituted by risk. That sex is prefaced by one's desire that the other be aroused by one's desire for them to be aroused means the act is inherently unstable; it always invokes the possibility of rejection, which is, in turn, part of what constitutes the "spontaneous vulnerability" Williams identifies as characteristic of all ethically sound sexual relationships. This spontaneous vulnerability is part-and-parcel of the desire to communicate, to speak something of what Williams calls "the body's grace" in and through the physical and spiritual union of human bodies.

Deploying Nagel's philosophy of desire allows Williams to short-circuit the conservative appeal to genital and/or gender complementarity. If the sexual act is, at its core, about a state of spontaneous vulnerability which makes possible an experience of "the body's grace," then it follows that any two human beings who enter into such a state with honesty, integrity, and mutuality are within the bounds of Christian sexual ethics—regardless of gender. Indeed,

Williams sees such conservative appeals to heteronormativity through genital difference as

adventures in missing the point:

> Decisions about sexual lifestyle, the ability to identify certain patterns as sterile, undeveloped or even corrupt, are ... decisions about what we want our bodily life to say, how our bodies are to be brought in to the whole project of "making human sense" for ourselves and each other. To be able to make such decisions is important: a conventional (heterosexual) morality simply absolves us from the difficulties we might meet in doing so. The question of human meaning is not raised, we are not helped to see what part sexuality plays in our learning to be human with one another, to enter the body's grace, because all we need to know is that sexual activity is licensed in one context and in no other.
>
> [Williams 1989]

To identify the ethical acceptability of procreative, heteronormative relationships to the exclusion

of all other relationships is to avoid the difficult questions about human subjectivity which

Williams sees as central to the theological exposition of sex. It is, in other words, a strategy by

which one avoids the frightening vulnerability of exploring the messy world of bodies—at the

intersection of their own materiality and social construction. Yet, as we have seen, it is this

vulnerability which Williams sees as constitutive to moral sexual relationships to begin with; to

answer these questions with easy appeals to biological essentialism or puzzle-piece logic is too

safe for Williams—and, altogether, too futile to be useful. "Nothing will stop sex being tragic

and comic," he states. Williams sees this attempt to make sexual intimacy "safe" circulating

similarly in popular discourse regarding the sacrament of holy matrimony. He claims,

> I can only fully discover the body's grace in taking time, the time needed for a mutual recognition that my partner and I are not simply passive instruments to each other. ... When we bless sexual unions, we give them a life, a reality, not dependent on the contingent thoughts and feelings of the people involved, true; but we do this so that they may have a certain freedom to "take time," to mature and become as profoundly nurturing as they can. If this blessing becomes a curse or an empty formality, it is both wicked and useless to hold up the sexuality of the canonically married heterosexual as absolute, exclusive and ideal.
>
> [Williams 1989]

In other words, if the sacrament functions *only* as a formality by which one domesticates or sanitizes sexual acts, it is immoral—and even more so insofar as heteronormative construction functions as a strategy to further eliminate vulnerability. This construction, moreover, excludes other kinds of relationships—relationships by which the body's grace might be experienced—from the realm of possibility.

Having re-framed sexual relations in terms of a near-sacramental experience of grace, communicated by a bodily act constituted by spontaneous vulnerability and, thus, displaced gender and the capacity for procreation as loci of ethical justification, Williams identifies both why same-sex relationships present such a challenge to the church *and* why the Anglican church in particular has *already* framed sexual relations in terms similar to Williams'. He states,

> If we are afraid of facing the reality of same-sex love because it compels us to think through the processes of bodily desire and delight in their own right, perhaps we ought to be more cautious about appealing to Scripture as legitimating only procreative heterosexuality. *In fact, of course, in a church which accepts the legitimacy of contraception, the absolute condemnation of same-sex relations of intimacy must rely either on an abstract fundamentalist deployment of a number of very ambiguous texts, or on a problematic and non-scriptural theory about natural complementarity, applied narrowly and crudely to physical differentiation without regard to psychological structures.* I suspect that a fuller exploration of the sexual metaphors of the Bible will have more to teach us about a theology and ethics of sexual desire than will the flat citation of isolated texts.
>
> [Williams 1989, *emphasis mine*]

Williams, therefore, finds the church's dismissal of same-sex couples too easy and too escapist, an empty attempt to avoid considering the implications of desire, pleasure, and embodiment in and of themselves. More than this, however, he finds the church hypocritical in its exaltation of heteronormative procreation as the sole justification for sexual intimacy; simply put, this is an unacceptable line of argument in a church that has already justified the use of birth control and,

by virtue of this, identified in sex something holy *other than* procreation: that which Williams

calls "the body's grace."  Like Borg and Robinson, then, Williams argues that same-sex relations

are moral, but rather than expressing primary concern for what the Bible says or for whether the

witness of scripture corresponds to modern experience—though he is, certainly, interested in

both of these conversations—he examines how Anglicanism frames sexual activity theologically

and sacramentally.

The last three decades have seen the development and convergence of these three

different, yet distinctively Anglican queer theologies.  Each represents, at least in part, what

Welch calls an "insurrection of subjected knowledges," a kind of Foucauldian genealogy which

serves as a methodology for liberation theologians:

> Insurrections of subjugated knowledges bring about new interpretations of
> Christian symbols and texts, new analyses of social structures, critiques of the
> institutional structure of the church, and solidarity with others.  [They] are
> motivated by the solidarity of theologians with the victimized, the marginal, and
> the forgotten.  Theologians evaluate traditions and expressions in light of their
> impact on their lives and on the lives of the oppressed.  [Welch 1985, 35]

This critical evaluation—the reinterpretation of Christian theological materials and the critique

of the institutional church in solidarity with those who have been excluded from it due to their

sexuality—is the common link between Robinson, Borg, and Williams.  Of course, one may

protest that the language of "excluded," "subjected," and "insurrection"—especially when

applied to something like human sexuality—seems to *beg* the repressive hypothesis I claimed I

would avoid.  On the contrary, however, this language simply follows Judith Butler in re-

imagining repression in light of Foucault's aforementioned critique:

> "Sex" is a regulatory ideal, a forcible and differential materialization of bodies
> that will produce its remainder, its outside, what one might call its "unconscious."
> This insistence *that every formative movement requires and institutes its*

*exclusions takes seriously the psychoanalytic vocabulary of both repression and foreclosure.* In this sense, I take issue with Foucault's account of the repressive hypothesis as *merely* an instance of juridical power, and argue that such an account does not address the ways in which *"repression" operates as a modality of productive power.* [Butler 1993, 22, *emphasis mine*]

Repression, in a Butlerian-Foucauldian formulation, is produced. That is to say, "power as ... production ... also works through the foreclosure of effects, the production of an 'outside,' a domain of unlivability and unintelligibility" (22).

The theologies sketched above do, indeed, *liberate particular bodies* which have suffered such exclusion but *not* in the commonplace sense that all sex drives of all human beings everywhere are repressed on a psychological level and, therefore, for anyone to assert her or his sexually is to be liberated by default. Similarly, this is not a matter of Robinson, Borg, and Williams representing a final triumph of "true Christianity" versus the repression of the institution and its creeds. Though this interpretation is tempting, Foucault's critique reminds us it is too abstract and elides the historical ground of these debates. As we have seen, Robinson, Borg, and Williams all hail from *within* the institution and *re-interpret* its symbols in such a way as to create *new* theological discourses regarding sexuality, motivated by their solidarity with LGBTQ persons. It is not so much that LGBTQ people were liberated by the mere assertion of their sexuality but that the assertion of their sexuality was made intelligible by the production of new discourses of sexuality. These discourses sought to instate LGBTQ persons as full members of the church, but this development was not inevitable, nor is it conclusive. *Their work could be undone at any moment.* Moreover, as discourses of sexuality themselves, they too risk producing "an 'outside,' a domain of unlivability and unintelligibility that bounds the domain of intelligible effects" (Butler 1993, 22). Indeed, I feel the liberation effected by each of these

options is ultimately insufficient on this front.  They are, however, adequate to describe the plane on which Archbishop Duncan's declaration that "the Gene Robinson event pushed the Episcopal Church over the cliff" is intelligible.  They constitute the fault line of our first schism.

*Schism 2:* ***Staging a Postcolonial Intervention***

According to its own statistics, "the Anglican Communion [comprises] more than 80 million members in 44 regional and national member churches around the globe in more than 160 countries" (Anglican Communion 2010).  The history of this statement is far more disturbing than its matter-of-fact tone may suggest, however.  Numerous scholars from within and without the Anglican church have called attention to the ugly history of colonialism implicated in the establishment of the Communion; indeed, alongside the Commonwealth of Nations, the Anglican Communion appears to be the last vestige of British imperialism—the shadow of an empire on which the sun, infamously, never set.  J. Mills (2005) writes, "the illusion of a big, collegial, worldwide Anglican Communion is just that, *an illusion*.  Where it existed, it was a colonial church, run by and for the British Empire," and he proceeds to recount his acquaintance with both leaders and victims of abuse in post-colonial churches—including African friends from seminary days who could recount numerous "stories of abuse at the hands of their church leaders (all white Westerners)" (12).  There is more truth than fiction in a joke often told by Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of the Anglican Church of South Africa: "when the white man came, we had the land and they had the Bible; they said 'let us pray' and we bowed our heads; when we looked up, *we* had the Bible and *they* had the land."  There is, of course, more to be done in the way of analysis here, but it seems *at least* this much is true in

spirit.  It is, then, highly appropriate that the latest draft of the Anglican Covenant juxtaposes

history and repentance:

> (2.1.2) its gratitude for God's gracious providence extended to us down through
> the ages: our origins in the Church of the apostles; the ancient common traditions;
> the rich history of the Church in Britain and Ireland reshaped by the Reformation,
> and *our growth into a global communion through the expanding missionary work
> of the Church*; our ongoing refashioning by the Holy Spirit through the gifts and
> sacrificial witness of Anglicans from around the world; and our summons into a
> more fully developed communion life.

> (2.1.3) in humility our call to constant repentance: for our failures in exercising
> patience and charity and in recognizing Christ in one another; our misuse of
> God's gracious gifts; our failure to heed God's call to serve; and *our exploitation
> one of another*.  [Covenant Design Group 2009, 4, *emphasis mine*]

What is not clearly asserted in the Covenant—a crucial part of Williams's strategy as

Archbishop of Canterbury to keep the Communion together and to heal the rift between

provinces (the Anglican term for national churches)—is the way in which legacies of

imperialism continue to drive Anglican politics even today.  Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha

writes,

> Postcoloniality, for its part, is a salutary reminder of the persistent "neo-colonial"
> relations within the "new" world order and the multinational division of labour.
> Such a perspective enables the authentication of histories of exploitation and the
> evolution of strategies of resistance.  [Bhabha 1994, 9]

The contours of the "'neo-colonial' relations" to which Bhabha alludes have been described in

detail by dependency theorists, who argue that the unsymmetrical economic relations established

by global capitalism—relations which work to the benefit of "developed" nations like the United

States and the United Kingdom and to the detriment of "developing" nations like Uganda and

Nigeria—constitute new forms of colonial relations.  Signified by dollars rather than flags, neo-

colonialism is colonialism all the same.  Regardless of whether one accepts or rejects particular

aspects of dependency theory—or its successor, world-systems theory—as fully adequate

descriptions of international politics, its insights are palpably relevant to the Communion's

present situation.  Mills explains that

> the "dirty little secret" of the success of the modern Anglican Communion ... is the fact that for years we in the West have bought off the silence of the burgeoning Third World Anglican Church.  We have capitalized upon their desperate poverty with millions of dollars of what I can only call "hush money." We have made [a] deal, explicit or implicit, that for this money they will not complain about our liberal ways and we will not complain about their cultural realities with which we struggle such as polygamy.  But the cat is now out of the bag and the Western Anglican Fundamentalists have become political players— and have begun paying their own "talk money" to replace our "hush money."  [Mills 2005, 13]

Mills, therefore, self-consciously frames the influx of cash from American neo-conservatives in

terms of a *continuing* neo-colonialism; the spirit of exploitation is not new, even if the key

players are.  The financial influence of neo-conservatives in global Anglican politics is, indeed,

well-documented and has been touted by American progressives to great end.  In a 2006 report

from the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, Jim Naughton wrote that "Donors include five

secular foundations that have contributed heavily to politically conservative advocacy groups,

publications, and think tanks, and one individual, savings and loan heir Howard F. Ahmanson Jr."

*Sojourners* writer Rose Berger further explains that

> These funders have supported campaigns by the American Anglican Council and the Institute for Religion and Democracy ... working in concert with Anglican bishops in Nigeria, Uganda, and Argentina ... to split the U.S. Episcopal Church from the worldwide Anglican Communion.  [Berger 2006]

This is a disturbing trend—and one which merits the attention given it by the Diocese of

Washington—but, insofar as Mills's history is correct, progressives should engage in some self-

reflection before making accusations: "the ugly truth about all this [is] that it has been predatory, colonial behavior no matter who was paying the bills" (Mills 2005, 13).

Ian Douglas, a scholar at Episcopal Divinity School, explains the Anglican schism in terms of a global realignment from North to South which invokes this colonial history *and* a re-emergence of oppressed groups in general. As re-told by Garret Keizer:

> The situation in the Anglican Communion and beyond represents "a new Pentecost," one in which marginalized countries and marginalized groups of people are both rising and converging [...] "the Ian Douglases of the world: straight, white, male, clerical, overly educated, financially secure, English-speaking, well-pensioned, professionally established," will move to the margins while people previously marginalized will come to the center. [Keizer 2008]

What happens when some groups which were, to invoke Gayatri Spivak, once *subaltern* begin to speak for themselves but proceed to use their voices to silence those of other groups (as is the case for conservative Anglican archbishops in the Global South vis-à-vis LGBTQ activists)? At any rate, while Mills is certainly pleased that some measure of Anglicanism's dreadful history of colonialism is being reversed through the empowerment of Global South Anglicans, he is reluctant to see his daughter "live in a church and world dictated by current Third World Christian mores" (Mills 2005, 13).

Understanding why the emergence of once-*subaltern* voices from the Global South has such an effect requires more analysis than this, however. I agree, as does Mills, that going backward on gender issues is out of the question, but we need a better understanding of why the conservative archbishops use their new-found voices to say what they do—and why their voices have such powerful (and disturbing) effects. In doing so, it will be useful to consider Bhabha's conceptualization of postcolonial hybridity and mimicry. Bhabha argues that

> Beyond [foregrounding neo-colonial trends], postcolonial critique bears witness to those countries and communities—in the North and the South, urban and rural —constituted, if I may coin a phrase, "otherwise than modernity." Such cultures of a postcolonial *contra-modernity* may be contingent to modernity, discontinuous or in contention with it, resistant to its oppressive, assimilationist technologies; but they also deploy the cultural hybridity of their borderline conditions to "translate," and therefore reinscribe, the social imaginary of ... modernity.
>
> [Bhabha 1994, 9]

The re-inscription of the social imaginary of modernity to which Bhabha refers is exemplified in

Douglas's claim that, in the midst of this new Pentecost, "what we're seeing ... is an attempt at a

reimposition of an old order" which he then identifies as the binary thinking of Protestant

Fundamentalism (qtd. in Keizer 2008). Whatever we think about fundamentalist binaries in

relation to various aspects of modernity, it should be clear both that this re-inscription is

somehow tangled up with modern colonialism and that it has decidedly unsavory implications

for Anglicanism. Keizer himself characterizes the theologies common to break-away Anglican

churches in the U. S. as "*sola scriptura* with a weird appendix, Matthew, Mark, and Mega-trends

—and it is this aspect of the 'global crisis' in Anglicanism and of the cant attending it that one

would expect to be of greatest concern to any person marching under the flag of orthodoxy."

Most shocking, of course, are the social applications of these theological principles. Henry

Orombi—Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Uganda and, consequently, a leader responsible

for a multitude of the aforementioned break-away congregations—has, for example, made such

disturbing accusations as, "The homosexual practice as we know it attacks the very root of

humanity." More disturbing still, however, is the following assertion:

> If the Episcopal Church could be humble enough to understand that what they have done has contravened what we collectively came to understand and agreed on in 1998, what the Scriptures taught, even during their own time, perhaps the time of their fathers, who came to us as missionaries. *The faith we have is a faith they brought to us. They should understand that where we stand is where their*

*ancestors stood, who could still be witnesses of the faith and the gospel they preached.* [qtd. in Keizer 2008, *emphasis mine*]

Archbishop Orombi's comments about "the homosexual practice" make western Anglicans so uncomfortable because he brings to light dangerous memories of colonialism, recollections which make them aware of the myriad ways in which they have been oppressors and which, therefore, risk de-stabilizing their ecclesial identities. For Mills, the most central problem is that the Episcopal Church has failed to be true to its identity as a *via media*, not only between Protestantism and Catholicism (the famous result of the Elizabethan Settlement of the 16th century English church) but also between conservative U. S. evangelicalism and outright secularism:

> We have, putting a positive spin on it, preferred to live civilly within a reality that no longer reflects our ethos. More cynically, I would offer that we have lusted after the numbers, money and success of the more fundamentalist among us. And we found an ingenious way to do so. *We sent them overseas as missionaries ... in the 19th century.* [Mills 2005, 13, *emphasis mine*]

Orombi's theology and his almost overwhelming focus on sex presents to western Anglicans a frighteningly parodic version of themselves. What makes the emerging voice of the Anglican *subaltern* so disconcerting is what Bhabha calls the "mimicry" of the colonizer by the colonized, the repetition of "*almost the same but not quite*"

> by which the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed and "partial" representation rearticulates the whole notion of identity and alienates it from essence.
> [Bhabha 1997, 156]

As Bhabha recognizes, "to be Anglicized is *emphatically* not to be English" (87), the very axiom by which colonial power is maintained and subverted. In other words, the mimic *repeats* English-ness without *representing* English-ness, which begs the question of whether or not there

is anything particular to *representing* English-ness at all. If there is not, then much of the so-called moral justification for the colonial project is lost; the infamous "white-man's burden" described by Rudyard Kipling is reduced to a contingent construction. More disturbingly for the colonizer, this realization subjects the colonizer to the very process of dehumanization to which they once subjected the colonized:

> In the ambivalent world of the "not quite/not white" ... the founding objects of the Western world become the erratic, eccentric, accidental objects/tropes of the colonial discourse ... It is then that the body and the book lose their representational authority. Black skin splits under the racist gaze, displaced into signs of bestiality, genitalia, grotesquerie, which reveal the phobic myth of the undifferentiated whole white body. And the holiest of books—the Bible—bearing both the standard of the cross and the standard of empire finds itself strangely dismembered. [Bhabha 1994, 92]

Applying Bhabha's post-colonial framework to the Anglican crisis allows one to voice emphatic disagreement with the (anti-)sexual ethics of conservative Global South archbishops while simultaneously remaining cognizant of the ways in which imperial oppression is at the root of this ethic's constitution. Historian Rupert Shortt recalls that at "[being] asked why he appeared obsessed about gay sex to the exclusion of war, corruption, HIV and poverty in Africa ... [Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria] replied: 'I didn't create poverty. This Church didn't create poverty. Poverty is not an issue. Human suffering is not an issue at all'" (Shortt 2008, 313). I, of course, disagree vehemently with the sentiments expressed here, but as an Episcopalian, I also cannot help but see in them an element of *mimicry*, a parodic performance of ourselves as we were during the evangelical revival which saw hordes of Anglican missionaries scouring the continent of Africa on the court trains of empire.

This, then, is the plane on which our second schism must be considered, on which we should recognize the intelligibility of comparing Gene Robinson to George W. Bush. The fault

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line of concern here is the mimicry of an emerging *subaltern* voice that disturbs western

Anglicans—as it should.  It is for this reason that I agree with Mills's proposal:

> Let us part company with those parts of the Anglican Communion who wish to be
> done with us with grace, love and dignity.  Let them take their obvious numbers,
> success, and prestige.  God bless them.  More daringly, let us continue to give to
> them from our economic wealth...but now with no strings attached.  No more
> hush money, but love money, because of their desperate poverty.  Let's not burn
> our bridges either.  When and if they wish to have us return, let us also return with
> grace, love, and dignity.  It might just eventually happen.  [Mills 2005, 13]

This would not be a new act of schism but, rather, a recognition of and an act of repentance for a

schism which *has already occurred*, a fracture of the theological body of Christ as *ecclesia*

effected by the dehumanizing practices of a colonial church: "Black skin splits under the racist

gaze ... and the holiest of books ... finds itself strangely dismembered" (Bhabha 1994, 92).


### *The Ever-Crucified Body of Christ*

The Crucifixion means, among other things, that the Episcopal Church must rid itself of

nostalgia for wholeness, for its own theological imaginary contends that the body of Christ has

been broken from the beginning.  New Testament scholars argue that the church's earliest history

was characterized by at least four competing interpretations of Christian doctrine—at least until

Constantine legalized one to the exclusion of the others (Ehrman 2008, 3-7).  Inasmuch as the

Anglican Communion is concerned, the body of Christ was *never* coherent or peaceful.  The

good old days never existed.  This is the difficult truth with which Episcopalians must come to

terms if they are to be successful in creating a church that lives as it prays, that "respect[s] the

dignity of every human being" (*Book of Common Prayer* 1979, 417).  And yet, we must also see

how the Book of Common Prayer—and the new Anglican Covenant like it—functions like the

infamous mirror of Jacques Lacan's theory of subjectivity. Lacan argued that the mirror stage is the period at which a child discovers her or his body for the first time and imagines it to signify an illusorily coherent self. Jacqueline Rose explains:

> Lacan's account of subjectivity was always developed with reference to the idea of a fiction. Thus, in the 1930s he introduced the concept of the 'mirror stage' ... which took the child's mirror image as the model and basis for its future identifications. This image is a fiction because it conceals, or freezes, the infant's lack of motor co-ordination and the fragmentation of its drives. But it is salutary for the child, since it gives it the first sense of a coherent identity in which it can recognise itself. For Lacan, this is already a fantasy—the very image which places the child divides its identity into two. ... The mirror image is central to Lacan's account of subjectivity, because its apparent smoothness and totality is a myth. The image in which we first recognise ourselves is a mis-recognition.
>
> [Rose 1982, 30]

For Lacan, the self is incoherent and fractured from the beginning, constituted by a fundamental mis-recognition with which one must come to terms. Anglicanism must come to terms with its own mis-recognition, with its presumption of unity where there were structures of domination, with its failure to spur conflict when such conflict would, in fact, be *repenting of one schism in order to effect liberation in the other*. I should add that no one understands this better than Rowan Williams himself who, since becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, has noticeably shifted from the schism over sexuality to the schism over colonialism. Liberationists who fault Dr. Williams for not supporting their efforts to include LGBTQ people in the life of the church would do well to remember this—and the remarkable range of the work he began in "The Body's Grace."

As the insights of Foucault, Bhabha, and Lacan help us to see, beneath the surfaces of our creeds, our prayers, and our lovely narratives of progression lie contestation and fracture. This is why it makes sense to follow Martin Luther's advice to "sin boldly," grounded in the central

mystery of Christianity, one professed in the crucifixion and the resurrection and in their reiteration in the liturgy of Holy Communion: that fractures can bring forth life. In this project, I attempt not only to build upon the work of Robinson, Borg, and Williams but, more pointedly, seek to draw them nearer to what Patrick Cheng (2011) calls "radical love," that love which "dissolves our existing boundaries, whether they are boundaries that separate us from other people, that separate us from preconceived notions of sexuality and gender identity, or that separate us from God" (x). Without such dissolution, we will not effect real liberation but will, rather, unwittingly reproduce structures of injustice. The trope I propose as a means of thinking through schism to liberation, the *rending of the chasuble*, is "a troubling return, not only as an imaginary contestation that effects a failure in the workings of the inevitable law, but as an enabling disruption, the occasion for a radical rearticulation of the symbolic horizon in which bodies come to matter at all" (Butler 1993, 23).

For we are dust, and to dust we shall return.

# Chapter Two: *How to Rend a Chasuble*

As the French say, there are three sexes—men, women, and clergymen.
>                         -Sydney Smith,
>                          in *Lady Holland's Memoir*

Catholicism in particular is famous for giving countless gay and proto-gay
children the shock of the possibility of adults who don't marry, of men in
dresses, of passionate theatre, of introspective investment, of lives filled with
what could, ideally without diminution, be called the work of fetish.
>                         -Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick*,*
>                          *Epistemology of the Closet*

The biggest queens are in the sacristy.
>                         -Fr. Bob Leopold,
>                          St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee

All these propositions merely veil over the fact that *the phallus can only play
its role as veiled*, that is, as in itself the sign of the latency with which every-
thing signifiable is struck as soon as it is raised to the function of a signifier.
>                         -Jacques Lacan,
>                          "The Meaning of the Phallus"

## *Dangerous Bodies and June Brides*

The ordination debates of the 1970s are (and ought to be recognized as) dangerous

memories in the genealogy of Anglicanism's present crisis.  As of July 28, 1974, the Episcopal

Church maintained the last "all-male priesthood in mainline Protestantism," but as of July 29, it

did no longer (Hulsether 1999, 169).  It should be clear that the "Philadelphia 11"—a group of

eleven women extra-canonically ordained by Bishops Daniel Corrigan, Robert L. DeWitt,

Edward R. Welles, and Antonio Ramos (Women's Ministries 2008)—did more than break a glass

ceiling.  They, alongside their allies, changed the theological *and* liturgical trajectories of

American Anglicanism—and not with little controversy.  Theologically, the ordination of women

represented a break with the historic catholic tradition and with a traditional understanding of

men and women's ecclesiastical roles.  Hulsether relates that C. Kilmer Myers, Episcopal Bishop

of California, argued in *Christianity and Crisis* magazine that

priests represented God, and God in turn represented "initiative" ("in itself, a male rather than a female attribute") and "the generative function" ("plainly a masculine kind of imagery"). The "prototype for the ministry of women" was the Virgin Mary. [Hulsether 1999, 169]

It should come as little surprise, then, that the Philadelphia 11's determination "to be highly visible, and sometimes provocative, so the church could not forget that women priests were no longer a theoretical issue but a living reality" (Darling 2001) and refusing, therefore, the normative ideas crystallized in Myers's protoype would provoke not only theological objections but also psycho-social crises. Regarding the latter, psychologist John Thompson urged

> the need to overcome deep psychic blocks of fear and rage connected to the issue of [women's ordination]. He reported that a conservative priest receiving communion from [Carter] Heyward [one of the Philadelphia 11] had grabbed the chalice, "tightly held her hand, viciously scratched it, drawing blood, and said: 'I hope you burn in hell.'" [Hulsether 1999, 169]

This is a dangerous memory, of the living reality of a woman representing God in a way that so psychologically traumatized another priest that he mutilated her flesh and invoked the destruction of her theological body.[3] Carter Heyward, dressed *in persona Christi*, was too much to handle.

Gene Robinson says he should have known better. During a question-and-answer session following a lecture, Robinson spoke the infamous words that effectively summarized the collective anxiety of a heteropatriarchal Anglican Communion: "I always wanted to be a June bride" (Robinson 2008, 45). The statement—meant to characterize the celebration of a New

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[3] Here, in application, I should remind the reader that by "theological body," I mean something fundamentally different from "spiritual body." I do not so much care about whether or not hell exists or if Heyward's spiritual self will go there upon her death (not to mention the question of whether such a spiritual self exists at all) as I care about how such rhetoric functions. The language of theological bodies is my attempt to theorize how theological discourse constitutes the bodies of those who participate in it. And in this scenario, whether or not Heyward's body matters is tied up in what theological discourse has inscribed upon it.

Hampshire civil union with his partner, Mark—exploded into controversy, as Robinson himself recalls:

> Within hours, those eight words had made it around the world, thanks to conservative bloggers and the magic of the Internet. No context; nothing about the preceding hour of carefully constructed comments; nothing about my defense of—and love for—the scriptures; nothing about the loving God to whom I constantly pointed. Just this one sentence. [Robinson 2008, 45]

In reviewing the resulting backlash, one sees nothing less than the "deep psychic blocks of fear and rage" (Hulsether 1999, 169) observed by John Thompson in the 1970s regarding women's ordination. Commenting on the conservative Anglo-Catholic blog *StandFirm*, user AnglicanXn stated, "Susan Russell [a well-known LGBT activist in the Episcopal Church] will be the preacher at the event. This event may well be meant to rub our faces in the degradation of the Episcopal Church as it is to 'celebrate' their relationship. *I won't be looking at the news that day; I would vomit.*" Another, identified as Ralph, stated

> A church ceremony with Unholy communion, eh? *Whoever presides at this would be presiding at a black mass.* Inquiring minds would want to know who this will be. Of course, an *alternative lifestyle female priest* would be a very good choice, but *having the PB* [Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori] *would simply be perfect.* [Griffith 2008, *emphasis mine*]

Here then is another dangerous memory, the living reality of an openly gay bishop's relationship receiving the blessing of the church from a female priest in a way that so psychologically traumatized another Anglican that he talked of vomit, and yet another so that he couches the event in the language of the demonic. Robinson and Russell—like Schori and, indeed, like Heyward—were too much to handle.

The resemblances between the reactions to Heyward and to Robinson sketched above are not coincidental. They are, rather, two psycho-social symptoms of a crucial convergence in our

genealogy, one I seek to theorize. In 1976, the 65th General Convention of the Episcopal Church made three important decisions which, together, ought to serve as clues for the genealogical task. It approved a new *Book of Common Prayer*, approved the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate, and declared for the first time that homosexuals were "children of God," stating in particular that

> it is the sense of this General Convention that homosexual persons are children of God and have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the church ...
>
> [And, moreover,] that this General Convention expresses its conviction that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the laws with all other citizens, and calls upon our society to see that such protection is provided in actuality. [qtd. in Byham, Hopkins, and Bradley 2008, 3]

In 1976, then, the liturgical, the female, and the queer converged—a historical moment which, I argue, forever changed the trajectory of the Episcopal Church. This was not simply the intervention of the Holy Spirit, as Robinson would argue, or the institution finally coming to terms with modernity, as Borg would argue, or even the discovery of grace in LGBTQ relationships, as Williams would argue—though, I must insist, it is not *less* than these three. To leave 1976 as these alone, however, is to gloss over the profound subversion effected by this convergence. It is to leave the narrative too neat.

Most importantly, it is to elide the liturgical. Ecclesial heteropatriarchy—that which structures the repugnance and, by extension, the opposition toward the woman, the gay, the "queer" in the chasuble—is constituted in part by the chasuble itself, by the *liturgico-political performative* of transvestism and the crystallization of iterable clerical performances which constitutes the heterosexual matrix on the level of the liturgical. When the heterosexual matrix is disrupted by the *liturgico-political performative*—that is to say, *when one rends the chasuble*—

the aforementioned psychic rage looms large.  This is also a point where our two schisms converge, for that to which I refer as the *rent chasuble* is a disruption not dissimilar to that which Bhabha describes in saying, "the founding objects of the Western world become the erratic, eccentric, accidental objects/tropes of the colonial discourse [and] the body and the book lose their representational authority" (Bhabha 1994, 92).  Indeed, the particular challenge of the woman or the "queer" in the chasuble disrupts a conceptualization of gender that is arguably "Western" in Bhabha's terms.  Indeed, Lacan himself combines "masculinist vocabulary [and] colonialist cultural bias" in his ingenious illustration of the gender binary (which we will further discuss below).  He thereby indicates "that though these signs may be arbitrary, they are not meaningless" (Garber 1997, 13); on the contrary, they reveal the genealogy of modern gender to be linked as much to hierarchical understandings of colonizer and colonized as to male and female.  It seems that Orombi and Robinson *both* suffer under the imperialism of 19th century Anglicanism.  The *liturgico-political performative* is, then, a way to effect liberation in the context of both schisms: a disruption of older definitions of bodies that matter.  The theoretical work I venture here aims to open new possibilities in the discussion of the Anglican crisis, ones which pay attention to the performative constitution of identities: of holy women and holy men, of colonizer and colonized, and of the body of Christ itself.

The genealogist's task—which, Welch argues, is that of the liberation theologian as well (Welch 1985, 35)—is to "hear the distant roar of battle" (Foucault 2000, 340) in the uncontested, the violence in the mundane; it is to take sides in the war, and to fight.  The war in the Anglican Communion is about dangerous theological bodies wearing chasubles, among other things.  This is the "theatre" to which we must now fly.

### *The Liturgical is Political*

There is more to liturgy than the text.  In *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology after Habermas,* Siobhán Garrigan elucidates the evolution of Christian thought regarding sacraments in terms of two distinct "turns":

> If liturgical theology has established that theology's focus should be the liturgy as a whole, instead of its separate "elements," then the liturgy is, in a holistic way, a sacrament.  Furthermore, if liturgies are to be studied primarily as lived experiences and not as historical or prescribed texts or objects, there arises a demand that actual narratives of liturgies are included as the origin of the discourse ... What liturgical theology is exposing is that no liturgy, feminist or otherwise, can get "turned into" text in such a way that by studying the text one can study the liturgy.  And so we see that the "turn to language" has been joined by a "turn to praxis."  By coming to understand through the various liturgical movements and reforms of [the] twentieth century that sacraments must be studied as lived events, systematic and liturgical approaches have both posited as the object of analysis not text but context, the "juxtapositions," the narratives of experience.  [Garrigan 2004, 38]

It is the turn to praxis in liturgical theology that we must presuppose if we are to make sense of why Heyward's embodied presence so disturbed the conservative priest and why the same-gender blessing evoked the demonic for the blog commenter.  Garrigan's reflection on "the various liturgical movements and reforms of [the] twentieth century" looms large, as these lived twentieth century events force the re-consideration of particular bodies being blessed and of particular bodies blessing.

The turn to praxis is similarly reflected in the work of deconstructionist theologian John Caputo:

> The *meaning* of God is enacted in these multiple movements of love ... By asking Augustine's question, "what do I love when I love my God?", we concede that the love of God is radically, or ineradicably, translatable, that we cannot contain the process of substitution or translation that it sets in motion.  But this translation is not a *semantic* process but an existential or pragmatic one.  It is not a matter of

finding a dictionary equivalent for the love of God but of *doing* it, of giving testimony to it, of seeing that its effect is to translate us into action, to move and bestir us. ... When we pondered the translatability or substitutionality of these two terms, "God" and "love," and we asked which is a translation of which, we were looking in the wrong place for a translation. In the translatability of the love of God it is *we* who are to be translated, transformed, and carried over into action.

[Caputo 2001, 140-41]

Faced with the un-deconstructible love of God, Caputo moves from the semantic—the turn to language—to the existential and the pragmatic—the turn to praxis. To Caputo, I would add that this effect—not unrelated that which I named the "praxis of love" in the introduction—is one of the key functions of liturgical experience, for to foreground the liturgical is to seek an end similar to that of Caputo's conceptualization of faith as "truth without Knowledge" (116): it "has [the] immediate effect [of making] theology engage with divine-human relations (and thus the question of God) at the level of experience (as opposed to that of proof, designation or speculation)" (Garrigan 2004, 30). Liturgy and worship,[4] inasmuch as they are the site of this translation, are also the site of our own deconstruction; worship has the capacity to dissolve the boundaries with separate us and to subvert the categories within which we classify our lives. This is not wishful thinking nor romantic idealism but is, rather, the subversive capacity I seek to theorize through the motif of a *rent chasuble*. The stories we tell, the narratives we embody, and the symbols we deploy have real effects of power—effects that need tracing, critique, reconfiguration, and amplification as determined from case to case.

To consider the liturgical as a site of praxis capable of effecting strategic deconstructions is not to exalt it as a realm removed from power, however. The liturgical is constituted by a kind of citationality; in other words, it draws upon existing symbols, rituals, and cultural material,

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[4] Following Garrigan, I consider these synonymous and not, as she states, "[designating] only Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican traditions of practice" (Garrigan 6).

ideally arranging them in such a way as to open a space in which the aforementioned translation can take place.   But this translation must not distract from the assemblage by which it is effected.  In the words of Graham Ward,

> Christian theology tells God's story in the place where any theologian finds himself or herself situated.  Such storytelling cannot but rehearse and refigure the language, ideologies, cultural assumptions, fears, guilts and dreams of its times. ... The theologian attempts to read the signs of those times in terms of the continuing covenant of grace, but in reading those signs cultural negotiations are set in operation such that the theologian's discourse is itself a sign of the times. *Theological discourse is necessarily involved in the wider cultural dissemination and exchange of signs*.  [Ward 2005, 53, *emphasis mine*]

This is both good and bad news for the liturgical theologian.  Indeed, that "theology *is* a cultural activity" (Ward 2005, 48) means that liturgy—inasmuch as it *embodies* theology—is destined to reflect the cultural situation out of which it arises and cannot, therefore, be presumed to be universal.  But *this* itself means that liturgy has the capacity to engage culture on its own terms, that it can effect cultural and political change.  In other words, liturgy shares in what Welch, following Foucault, calls the "power and peril of discourse" (Welch 1985, 29).  Indeed, the *promise* of liturgical theology is its potential to show how the cultural syncretism inherent to theological discourse is not paralyzing but liberating—and show this in a way that systematic theology often cannot, for fear of losing its grip on [T]ruth.  The Christian liturgies I consider here—especially the Anglican celebration of Holy Communion or "the Mass"— work, by and large, within the symbolic economy of [western] Christianity as situated in the twenty-first century, and although this citationality affects and orders them, it does not completely determine them ahead of time.

In order to elucidate how these liturgies cite, transform, and/or buttress cultural material and norms—and to rectify the failure of "the turn to praxis [in liturgical theology] to say how

worship experience can be accessed except, paradoxically, as text" (Garrigan 2005, 39)—I want

to draw upon Judith Butler's concept of *performativity*.  Butler states that

> Performativity is ... not a singular "act," for it is always a reiteration of a norm or
> set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it
> conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition.  ... Within
> speech act theory, a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or
> produces that which it names ... [and] Derrida makes clear that this power is not
> the function of an originating will, but is always derivative.  [Butler 1993, 12-13]

Performatives, in other words, have histories, histories they hide by appearing to be willed

actions and which, ironically, are the source of their intelligibility.  The ritual act of consecrating

the bread and wine of Eucharist—in particular, the hand gestures and the words spoken by the

priest—are intelligible as rituals because they cite similar hand gestures made and words spoken

by priests for generations.  A performative norm "takes hold to the extent that it is 'cited' as such

a norm, but it also derives its power through the citations that it compels" (13).  In other words,

when the *present* act of consecration is recognized as such because it cites *previous* acts of

consecration, it compels *future* acts of consecration to cite this history as well.  A liturgical

performative invokes both past and future in the present.  This is the productivity of anticipation,

an effect Butler identifies in Jacques Derrida's treatment of "Before the Law" by Kafka:

> There the one who waits for the law, sits before the door of the law, attributes a
> certain force to the law for which one waits.  The anticipation of an authoritative
> disclosure of meaning is the means by which that authority is attributed and
> installed: the anticipation conjures its object.  [Butler 1990, xv]

To conceptualize liturgical performativity as citational is not, however, to make liturgical

revision impossible nor, it bears repeating, to make the liturgical a pure space unto itself removed

from culture (as if it were its own self-sustaining economy of symbols, locked in a paralyzing

chain of endless self-citation).  In describing the way in which performativity creates an

"imaginary morphology"—which, it should be noted, pertains to the liturgical as a space in which theological bodies are materialized—Butler argues that

> this imaginary morphology is not a presocial or presymbolic operation, but is itself orchestrated through regulatory schemas that produce intelligible morphological possibilities. These regulatory schemas are not timeless structures, but historically revisable criteria of intelligibility which produce and vanquish bodies that matter. [Butler 1993, 13-14]

If the liturgical is, therefore, the site of "ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo ... compelling the shape of the production, but not ... determining it fully in advance" (Butler 1993, 95), then it is also a site of the possible subversion *or* reification of hegemonic norms—norms cited in liturgical performatives by virtue of their inherent cultural syncretism. The liturgical is not outside ideology; it is for this very reason that it has the capacity to speak to ideology in hegemonic or counterhegemonic ways.

It should go without saying that one of the most important ideological norms cited in liturgies is gender; indeed, it is the performative citation with which this project is most concerned. In particular, the liturgical cites and resignifies what Butler calls the "heterosexual matrix," which she defines as that

> grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized ... a hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is appositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality. [Butler 1990, 208]

In other words, liturgies—in their invocation (intentional or otherwise) of gender—either reinforce or subvert the fiction of a stable, heteronormative, binary sex/gender system. This subversion-as-deconstruction is "queerness" gone liturgical:

the contentious practices of "queerness" might be understood not only as an example of citational politics, but as a specific reworking of abjection into political agency that might explain why "citationality" has contemporary political promise. *The public assertion of "queerness" enacts performativity as citationality for the purposes of resignifying the abjection of homosexuality into defiance and legitimacy. ... This is the politicization of abjection in an effort to rewrite the history of the term, and to force it into a demanding resignification.*
[Butler 1993, 21, *emphasis mine*]

In the context of the liturgical, I will refer to these moments of forced resignification as *liturgico-political performatives*. To continue the relevant example of gender, when a *liturgico-political performative* cites the heterosexual matrix in such a way that it reconfigures and subverts its fundamental terminology—in other words, when it materializes a theological body that confuses and confounds the simple categories of male and female—it defies compulsory heterosexuality and legitimates other forms of sexual experience. And by virtue of its cultural syncretism, this is an affront not only to the compulsory heterosexuality of Christian symbolism but also to the heterosexual matrix in all its guises. In this way, the liturgical can and must be part of the effort to effect "a radical resignification of the symbolic domain, deviating the citational chain toward a more possible future to expand the very meaning of what counts as a valued and valuable body in the world" (Butler 1993, 22).

It should be noted that my attempt to theorize the liturgical as a space or field within which certain ritual performatives are intelligible is to intentionally distinguish "the liturgical" from "liturgy" itself—which should be understood as an already ritualized chain of ritual performatives. The best example I can offer is that of the Eucharist. Consecrating the elements, passing the peace, and blessing the congregation are all ritual performatives which, together, constitute the overarching script to which one refers using the word "liturgy." *Liturgy* is something Christians do; it is, as classically formulated, "the work of the people." *The liturgical*

is the field on which the church does this work, a domain of action always already constituted by

the actions it renders meaningful.  The liturgical is not a sensibility but a space—a domain of

performativity and of cultural negotiation.  And to reformulate the feminist maxim, *the liturgical

is political.*[5]


## *Christological Considerations*

Recall that in the thick of the debate over women's ordination in the Episcopal Church,

Bishop Myers couched his objections in terms of the doctrine of *in persona Christi,* arguing that

"priests represented God, and God in turn represented 'initiative' ('in itself, a male rather than a

female attribute')" (Hulsether 1999, 169).  This is the same objection which was presented in a

more systematic fashion by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—the Catholic

magisterium—when it stated that

> The unity which [Christ] re-established after sin is such that there are no more
> distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all are
> one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).  Nevertheless, *the incarnation of the Word took
> place according to the male sex:* this is indeed a question of fact, and this fact,
> while not implying an alleged natural superiority of man over woman, *cannot be
> disassociated from the economy of salvation:* it is indeed in harmony with the
> entirety of God's plan as God himself has revealed it. . . . *That is why we can
> never ignore the fact that Christ is a man.  And therefore, unless one is to
> disregard the importance of this symbolism for the economy of Revelation, it must
> be admitted that, in actions which demand the character of ordination and in
> which Christ himself . . . is represented, exercising his ministry of salvation—
> which is in the highest degree the case of the Eucharist—his role (this is the
> original sense of the word "persona") must be taken by a man.*  This does not

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[5] Though I have not the space to theorize the implications of this maxim completely, I think the reverse is true as
well: that just as the liturgical has a political dimension, the political has a liturgical dimension.  This is, perhaps, a
domain of religious scholarship to be opened and explored, a domain in which the religious studies scholar can
foreground what is at stake in dividing the secular from the sacred in such a way that church services are deemed
"liturgical" whereas a Presidential Inauguration is deemed ritual-*istic*, at most.  What assumptions would be
unsettled by such a move?  What happens when we apply to our civic religion the same analytical tools (including,
here, analysis of the liturgical) we apply to other religions?

stem from any personal superiority of the latter in the order of values, but only from a *difference of fact* on the level of functions and service.

<div align="right">[qtd. in Alliaume 2006, 96]</div>

Karen Trimble Alliaume characterizes this logic as an "economy of imitation" (97)—in sum, "the priest must be male because Jesus Christ was male" (96)—and rightly gestures toward the classic objection of Rosemary Radford Reuther that "Women's inability to represent Christ is sealed by ... the male disclosure of a male God whose normative representation can only be male" (qtd. in 96). Alliaume claims, however, that Reuther's objection—couched, as it is, in the terms of the economy of imitation—is still not subversive *enough* and suggests, instead, a critique in terms of an economy of performativity:

> To the extent that feminist theologians continue to assert that women must resemble Christ (or that Christ must resemble them) in order to be saved, we remain indebted, I argue, to the same Christological economy of imitation espoused by official Church teaching, in which Jesus Christ is seen as the norm that individuals must resemble for the salvific economy to work and from which resemblance women are ultimately (in full or in part) precluded. ... I argue for a shift in Christological discourse to a "performative" economy in which the meanings of both "Jesus Christ" and "women" are understood to be performed in community. [Alliaume 2006, 97]

The shape of the critique which follows from this discursive shift is palpably different from that which follows from the economy of imitation. Rather than arguing from Jesus's historical body or life, one argues from Jesus's *theological body* as it is performatively and discursively constructed—beginning, as it were, with the invocations of Jesus's body by the church, *with the citations themselves*, and then discerning their Christological effects. Alliaume correctly argues that

> Jesus's body is a textual body, made up of stories and sayings and their reiterations. But Christians also understand him as Body, the members of the Church; his is a corporate body. The relationship between these two is what is

<div align="center">57</div>

at stake in feminist contestation for women's representation of divinity.

[Alliaume 2006, 98]

To this I would add that Jesus's body is also constituted through its liturgical citation, that the liturgical is an imperative part of the discursive construction of these theological bodies. We will return to the political and ecclesial implications of the fact that "Christians also understand [Christ] as ... a corporate body" in the next chapter, but for now, we must remain focused on the matter of the ordinate body—the body declared by the church to matter in such a way that it can act *in persona Christi* and participate in the performative construction of the body of Christ—and what is at stake in declaring bodies rejected by the heterosexual matrix to be "inordinate" (105).

### *Queering the Eucharist, Rending the Chasuble*

Much has been made of the subversive potential of drag and transvestism in deconstructing and confounding gender norms. Indeed, Marjorie Garber has brilliantly posited the ability of the transvestite to function as a *third term* which calls the categories of gender into crisis, claiming that we must

> confront the extraordinary power of transvestism to disrupt, expose, and challenge, putting in question the very notion of the "original" and of stable identity ... *transvestism is a space of possibility structuring and confounding culture*: the disruptive element that intervenes, not just a category crisis of male and female, but the crisis of category itself. [Garber 1992, 16-17]

Butler insists, nonetheless, that transvestism is not *always* subversive. She argues both that "the structure of impersonation reveals one of the key fabricating mechanisms through which the social construction of gender takes place ... [mocking] both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity" (Butler 1990, 186) *and* that "parody by itself is not subversive, and there must be a way to understand what makes certain kinds of parodic

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repetitions effectively disruptive, truly troubling, and which repetitions become domesticated and

recirculated as instruments of cultural hegemony"[6] (189).

I propose, then, that the means by which one distinguishes between subversive and

conservative occurrences of the "transvestite effect" (Garber 1992, 17) should center on the

Derridean concept of *iterability* which undergirds Butler's theory of performativity.  Derrida

writes in "Signature, Event, Context,"

> Could a performative statement succeed if its formulation did not repeat a
> "coded" or iterable statement, in other words if the expressions I use to open a
> meeting, launch a ship *or a marriage* were not identifiable as conforming to an
> iterable model, and therefore if they were not identifiable in a way as "citation"?
> [Derrida 1982b, 326, *emphasis mine*]

In other words, *iterability* means that a performative is inherently citational, invoking—as in our

theorization of liturgical performativity, which Derrida himself foregrounds by using the

example of the marriage liturgy—a whole history of performatives which, having created an

identifiable model, can be emulated.  Derrida illustrates this concept through the signature:

> In order to function, that is, in order to be legible, a signature must have a repeat-
> able, iterable, imitable form; it must be able to detach itself from the present and
> singular intention of its production.  [Derrida 1982b, 328]

Thus, by nature of its iterability, the signature which is supposed to signify an identity

simultaneously invokes the presence of a *counterfeit* (because for the signature to function as a

signature, it must have a recognizable form that exists outside of the intentional act of signing; in

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[6] An example of the latter is identified by Nancy Miller in her analysis of how eighteenth-century novels functioned
as mediums through which authors could take on drag.  Miller is careful to note that the "I"-in-drag in John
Cleland's *Fanny Hill: or, The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748) actually re-enforces patriarchal hegemony:

> The assumption of the Other's sexual identity through an "I" in drag constitutes an exemplary, if
> extreme, model of the erotics of authorship in the eighteenth-century novel: a mode of production
> calibrated not so much to seduce women readers as to attain recognition from other men.  ...
> Cleland's cheerful, even comic, pornography in the final analysis supports the prerogatives of both
> class and masculinity.  [Miller 1995, 97-8]

other words, someone can always imitate my signature and, therefore, pass as me).  Therefore, inasmuch as drag destabilizes the cohesiveness of gender performance—inasmuch as it calls into question the pronouns (and the iterable scripts they represent) used to describe the "he" dressed as a "she," or vice versa—it has the potential for subversion.  When a strategic transvestism calls attention to itself *as the presence of the counterfeit*, it disrupts the heterosexual matrix, the "hegemonic *discursive/epistemic* model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender" (Butler 208, *emphasis mine*).

When a woman dresses up *in persona Christi*, she is enacting such a strategic transvestism—a *liturgico-political performative*—which subverts the *epistemic* sphere of the heterosexual matrix by challenging its *discursive* foundations.  The woman *in persona Christi* displaces the economy of imitation and foregrounds the citationality and the performativity of the liturgical—and thus, the iterability of *in persona Christi*.  As Alliaume observes,

> The woman priests' inhabitation of Jesus's position provokes dissonance because it incites simultaneous recognition of two supposedly incompatible things, priesthood and womanhood.  She looks right (she is wearing the right things, performing the right movements, saying the right words), but her body belies our reading of her.  [Alliaume 2006, 112]

This is, in the words of Eleanor McLaughlin, the subversive capacity of "the 'woman (dressed as a man, dressed as a woman)' who startles and confounds the gaze of a congregation" (qtd. in Alliaume 2006, 111) to "[recontextualize] the body (and the Body) of Jesus, by putting into question the very conventions she is citing" (Alliaume 2006, 108).  And it is imperative to realize that, because the liturgical is a syncretic space, the woman priest cites and resignifies not only

the body of Christ but also the gender norms and compulsory heterosexuality of the heterosexual

matrix which has subtended the all-male priesthood.

To complicate McLaughlin's scheme of dress, the woman priest is a "she" who, by

dressing as a "he" [Christ], dresses as a "he" [male priest] dressed as a "she" [liturgical drag],

and in this, she subversively foregrounds not only the iterability of liturgical celebration itself but

also of the pronouns (and the iterable gender scripts they represent) used to describe this

situation.  The woman in the chasuble is dangerous because she risks revealing the queerness of

clerical gender full stop.  Mark Jordan, citing psychiatrist Margaretta Bowers, observes that "'In

our culture a man in a cassock is wearing a skirt.'  When it comes to clothes, we assign Catholic

priests to a mixed or third gender" (Jordan 2000, 199).  This is not to ignore the historical history

of liturgical clothing—not I, nor Jordan, nor Sedgwick, nor Garber claim that cassocks have

*always* been dresses—but to acknowledge the way in which this garb is read outside of the

church.  What the church says about its vestments is one thing; how they are *read* in practice is

another.  Either way, because the liturgical is a syncretic space and *not* a self-determining and

self-sustaining symbolic economy unto itself, the latter must be taken into account.  And as told

in the *Christian Century* magazine, Bishop John Baumgartner, upon having an alb, cincture,

stole, and amice dry-cleaned, received a receipt reading: "one dress, long; one scarf; one rope;

and one apron" (Garber 1992, 210).  The priest is a drag queen and a gender bender through and

through:

> It is the inevitable and inescapable camp of the clerical role, which is both tacitly
> and tensely marked off from ordinary masculine roles.  "I am not doing anything
> unusual—and yet no other man could get away with doing this."  "I condemn
> homosexuality—now watch me do the most public drag."  *Clerical culture acts
> out camp by stretching the prevailing gender roles and then denying that it has
> done any such thing.*  [Jordan 2000, 185]

The *liturgico-political performative* of a woman dressed *in persona Christi* in a chasuble

queers the liturgy; it calls into crisis all the theological and gendered categories which it cites.

The best way to illustrate this confusion and crisis—and the queerness of the priesthood in

general—is perhaps through Jacques Lacan's concept of "urinary segregation":

> The image of twin doors symboli[zes], through the solitary confinement offered
> Western Man for the satisfaction of his natural needs away from home, the
> imperative that he seems to share with the great majority of primitive
> communities, by which his public life is subjected to the laws of urinary
> segregation.  [qtd. in Garber 1992, 13]

The bathroom doors—one marked "gentlemen" and the other marked "ladies"—is the site of

sexual identification (division) and, for our priests, the site of crisis.



Through which door does the male priest go?  "He" is dressed like a "she" [is in liturgical drag].

Through which door does the female priest go?  "She" is dressed like a "he" [as a priest].  Better

yet, through which door would Jesus go, so materialized by the *liturgico-political performative*

of *in persona Christi*?  The bathroom doors invoke crisis because they assign

> sexual difference ... according to whether individual subjects do or do not possess
> the phallus, which means not that anatomical difference *is* sexual difference ... but
> that anatomical difference comes to *figure* sexual difference, that is, it becomes
> the sole representative of what the difference is allowed to be.  [Rose 1982, 42]

And yet, the priest in the chasuble confounds the division.  Confronted with the regulatory

maxim that "any speaking being whatever must line up on one or other side of the

divide" (Lacan, qtd. in Rose 1982, 42), the male priest *looks* like the female bathroom symbol

while urinary segregation supposedly relegates him to the other side of the divide. At this point, some may object that the bathroom doors do *not* present crisis at all but, instead, reinforce the stability of sex as anatomical; after all, male priests dressed in cassocks still use the men's bathroom. But the very symbols which mark the bathroom doors—*dress* = girl and *pants* = boy —foreground the transvestism and gender bending of the priest in drag and shows how gender is culturally and, as Butler famously argues, *performatively* constructed.

In the shadow of the bathroom doors, the woman priest dressed in a chasuble—the drag of *in persona Christi*—foregrounds the iterability of her role *and* of gender itself and shows how they are empty and historically revisable. Alliaume declares that

> The woman priest complicates the reproduction of the male-only priesthood as a function of bodily resemblance. Women priests are *interpellated* in a performative economy that mimes the economy of imitation in which only men can resemble Jesus, thus calling into question the terms of that economy.
> [Alliaume 2006, 113, *emphasis mine*]

As Alliaume observes, then, this is a moment of what Louis Althusser terms *interpellation*, "the moment of recognition that inserts [female priests] into [a liturgical] economy of intelligibility as recognizable subjects [performing *in persona Christi*]" (Alliaume 2006, 107)—an interpellation that *rends the chasuble*. The 1976 General Convention was, then, the Episcopal Church *formally* and *theologically* recognizing as "ordinate" the bodies of the Philadelphia 11, bodies which were already *liturgically* interpellated during their ordinations and in subsequent celebrations of sacraments. This was a radical *queering* of theological bodies, a resignification of the once-abjected bodies of the Philadelphia 11 "into defiance and legitimacy" (Butler 1993, 21).

*Rending the chasuble* is, then, a *liturgico-political performative* which "[indicts] the symbolic for the imaginary unity which its most persistent myths continue to promote" (Rose

1982, 47), an imaginary unity permanently unsettled by the crisis of clerical transvestism: the

calling of gender categories into question as they relate to theological bodies.  Once the chasuble

is rent, the power of what Gerard Loughlin refers to as "'heteropatriarchal Christianity' [is]

destabilized and deconstructed" (Cheng 2011, 8), for as Lacan has taught us, *the phallus can only*

*play its role as veiled.*  The Philadelphia 11 are saints of queer theology, and the rent chasuble is

their hagiography: the dangerous memory to which the salvation of Anglicanism is yoked.

# Chapter Three: *Jesus is Queer*

The church is the only community under a mandate to be queer and it is under such a mandate because its eschatological horizon teaches it that gender and sexual identity are not of ultimate concern, thus opening the possibility for love.

> -Elizabeth Stuart,
>  "Sacramental Flesh"

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.  For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ... But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.  If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.  Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

> -*St. Paul,*
>  1 Corinthians 12.12, 24-27 (NRSV)

To imagine a sexual act that doesn't conform to law or nature is not what disturbs people.  But that individuals are beginning to love one another—there's the problem.  The institution is caught in a contradiction; affective intensities traverse it which at one and the same time keep it going and shake it up. ... These relations short-circuit it and introduce love where there's supposed to be only law, rule, or habit.

> -Michel Foucault*,*
>  "Friendship as a Way of Life"

## *Encountering the Problem*

The *rending of a chasuble* is what Judith Butler calls "a troubling return, not only as an imaginary contestation that effects a failure in the workings of the inevitable law, but as an enabling disruption, the occasion for a radical rearticulation of the symbolic horizon in which bodies come to matter at all" (Butler 1993, 23).  This is an ambitious assertion, one I do not presume to prove definitively.  Still, I will gesture toward its effects through the constructive nature of my project and its self-conscious adoption of what I will call the *parrhesiastic* stance: a conceptualization of truth as ethical rather than epistemological.  In light of this tension—both the audacious assertion I have to make *and* the particularity of the narrative within which I must situate it—the political function of theology itself needs to be examined.  What is the role of

Christian theological discourse in a world demythologized—or, more to the point, in a situation

of radical religious pluralism?  What are its effects of truth; to whom are its assertions liberating;

and how?  More to the point, what does it mean for me to say that "Jesus is Queer," a question I

forward as an opportunity to examine whether postliberalism (a term I will discuss below) can be

creatively reconciled with liberationist sensibilities.  My answer approaches this intersection in

terms of theological *parrhesia* and then illustrates the promises of this method through my own

constructive theological proposal, one centered on the rent chasuble of Anglicanism itself.


## *Theological Parrhesia*

In an essay published in *Harper's* magazine, Mark Slouka (2009) asserts that "only by

attempting to understand what used to be called, in a less embarrassed age, 'the human

condition' can we hope to make our condition more human, not less."  Here, Slouka is contesting

the marginalization of humanities disciplines generally rather than promoting the study of

theology explicitly, but his argument remains relevant, nonetheless, for those who participate in

this kind of discourse.  Theology, in its effort to understand the human condition vis-à-vis the

divine, consciously resists what Slouka calls "the victory of whatever can be quantified over

everything that can't."  Loughlin (2007) argues that "theology relativizes all earthly projects,

insisting that to understand ourselves we must understand our orientation to the unknown from

which all things come and to which they return, that which—as Christian theology ventures—is

known and received in the life of Jesus" (7).  At its best, theological discourse presupposes

mystery—a stance motivated by the theologian's constant awareness that her or his effort to

elucidate the divine-human relationship and its consequences for society is limited by the confines of human language.  Loughlin further attests that

> even when theology was culturally dominant it was strange, for it sought the strange; it sought to know the unknowable in Christ, the mystery it was called to seek through following Jesus.  And of course it has always been in danger of losing this strangeness by pretending that it has comprehended the mystery, that it can name that which is beyond all names.  Indeed—and despite its own best schooling—it has often succumbed to this danger, which it names "idolatry."  [Loughlin 2007, 7]

In other words, a god whom we fully comprehend is not God, and to assume our theologies are definitive is to mistake our *talk about* God *for* God.  The theologian must, therefore, live in the tension between nihilism and idolatry, must recognize the inevitable failure of theological discourse to adequately describe its referent but, simultaneously, affirm its crucial importance as part of the effort to "make our condition more human, not less."

Propelled by Loughlin's account of my conviction, I conceptualize theology in terms of the *ethics* of truth described by Foucault.  In his analysis of the philosophers of antiquity, Foucault observes that "the philosophical question of 'how to have access to the truth' and the practice of spirituality (of the necessary transformations in the very being of the subject which will allow access to the truth), these two questions, these two themes, were never separate" (Foucault 2005, 17).  To say that God loves us is, to invoke Dorothee Soelle (qtd. in Welch 1985, 47), a truth which requires translation—that is, it requires a transformation in the very being of the subject to whom the truth is offered, effected by world-transforming praxis— or, else, it is rendered a lie.  Theology is, in other words, an *parrhesiastic* endeavor.  *Parrhesia* (or fearless truth-telling as a social virtue) was explored by Foucault in a series of lectures given at Berkeley shortly before his death:

My intention was not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of truth-teller or truth-telling as an activity. ... If Greek philosophy has raised the question of truth from the point of view of the criteria for true statements and sound reasoning, this same Greek philosophy has also raised the problem of truth from the point of view of truth-telling as an activity. ... And I would say that ... this problematization of truth has two sides, two major aspects. One side is concerned with insuring that the process of reasoning is correct in determining whether a statement is true (or concern itself with our ability to gain access to the truth). And the other side is concerned with the question: what is the importance for the individual and for the society of telling the truth, of knowing the truth, of having people who tell the truth, as well as knowing how to recognize them. With that side which is concerned with determining how to insure that a statement is true we have the roots of the great tradition in Western philosophy which I would like to call the "analytics of truth." And on the other side, concerned with the question of the importance of telling the truth, knowing who is able to tell the truth, and knowing why we should tell the truth, we have the roots of what we could call the "critical" tradition in the West. [Foucault 1985]

The kind of theological discourse my project explores and to which it seeks to contribute is rooted in the latter tradition rather than the former. The truths one tells about God say perhaps more about oneself and about the *risks* one is willing to take than they do about God, but this makes them no less theological than they would be otherwise. As Søren Kierkegaard has written of prayer, "the function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays." Theological *parrhesia* functions similarly; its logic is not deductive or inductive but dialectic, creating a "hermeneutic circle" between the praxis of liberation and the reflection of theology (Smith 1991, 28). Its purpose is not, as such, to describe God but to effect a transformation in the very being of the theologian (and others) such that God is experienced and liberation effected.

In presupposing with Loughlin that all theologies, as forms of discourse, are unable to definitively describe the God to whom they refer, theological *parrhesia* follows Foucault into a nihilistic reality, and yet, it strives to enter the inconclusive debate that is theology on the side of

the oppressed: a strategic risk in the struggle for truth which will hopefully allow the oppressed

to name their own experiences.  This means that the theological *parrhesiastes* adopts what

Foucault terms the war hypothesis, which states that

> Beneath the omissions, illusions, and lies that make us believe in the necessities of nature or the functional requirements of order, we are bound to reencounter war: it is the cipher of peace.  It continually divides the entire social body; it places each of us in one camp or the other.  And it is not enough to find this war again as an explanatory principle; *we must reactivate it*, make it leave the mute, larval forms in which it goes about its business almost without our being aware of it, and *lead it to a decisive battle that we must prepare for if we intend to be victorious*.  [Foucault 1997, 61 *emphasis mine*]

This is nothing less than Sharon Welch's conceptualization of Foucauldian genealogy-as-

liberation theology, that constructive fashioning of "new interpretations of Christian symbols and

texts, new analyses of social structures, critiques of the institutional structure of the church ...

motivated by the solidarity of theologians with the victimized, the marginal, and the

forgotten" (Welch 1985, 35).  The theological *parrhesiastes* seeks to reactivate the war shrouded

by metanarrative by daring to tell the truth about it: by drawing attention to the very presence of

struggle and preparing her- or himself and others to enter it on the side of the oppressed.  This is

a world-transforming praxis by which one experiences a transformation of being, motivated by

the proposition that God loves the world.

In sum, to assert that theology is a *parrhesiastic* endeavor is to assert that the primary

truth of theological statements is *ethical*, not descriptive or correlative as is the case with most

Enlightenment projects such as biology or, as Soelle famously remarks, ossology (Soelle 1990,

1).  As Foucault states,

> In the Greek conception of parrhesia ... there does not seem to be a problem about the acquisition of the truth since such truth-having is guaranteed by the possession of certain moral qualities: when someone has certain moral qualities, then that is

the proof that he has access to truth—and vice-versa. The "parrhesiastic game" presupposes that the parrhesiastes is someone who has the *moral qualities which are required, first, to know the truth, and secondly, to convey such truth to others*. [Foucault 1985, *emphasis mine*]

Foucault further suggests that this ethical quality is rooted in the danger and risk of the activity of truth-telling itself, for

> from the ancient Greek perspective, a grammar teacher may tell the truth to the children that he teaches, and indeed may have no doubt that what he teaches is true. But in spite of this coincidence between belief and truth, he is not a parrhesiastes. However, when a philosopher addresses himself to a sovereign, to a tyrant, and tells him that his tyranny is disturbing and unpleasant because tyranny is incompatible with justice, then the philosopher speaks the truth, believes he is speaking the truth, and, more than that, *also takes a risk* (since the tyrant may become angry, may punish him, may exile him, may kill him). ... Parrhesia, then, is linked to courage in the face of danger: it demands the courage to speak the truth in spite of some danger. [Foucault 1985, *emphasis mine*]

The theologian—and, I think, the liberation theologian in particular—is not so much a grammar teacher who explains the ins-and-outs of Christian doctrine as she or he is the one who, to further invoke Welch, *risks* telling the truth about the world as the world is seen through the Christian theological imagination. And at our present historical juncture, these truths must address the constructions of gender and constellations of power arrayed to declare certain bodies "queer" by analyzing the contours of the *liturgico-political performative* of *rending the chasuble*—by questioning the body declared to matter in such a way as to act *in persona Christi*.

### *The Location of Theology*

The *theological imagination* to which I refer above includes the vast theological and cultural materials available to the academic theologian for use in constructive acts of theological *parrhesia*. This follows from the poststructuralist understanding of culture recommended by

Kathryn Tanner, an understanding that views culture as inherently "politicized," the site of power struggle over the symbolic materials of culture and myriad forms of cultural activity (Tanner 1997a, 40). Tanner urges that this poststructuralist understanding both clarifies theology's existing operations and commitments *and* opens up new creative possibilities. Her primary thesis is that theology "is a material social practice that specializes in meaning production" (72) with its own loci of analysis, rhetorical conventions, and means of circulation—such as publishing houses, academic journals, church pulpits, and so forth—and "not mere theoretical reflection on material social practices" (73). That is to say, while liberation theologians who adopt the hermeneutic circle of *theology as critical reflection on praxis* (as articulated by Gustavo Gutierrez and many others) are to be commended for making lived experience their locus of analysis, they must also be careful not to lose track of how their theoretical reflection is *itself* a *practice*: a creative assemblage of cultural and theological materials which encourages and facilitates liberation. Liberation theologies are, in other words, acts of what Graham Ward terms Christian *poeisis*—a concept I posit as a way to think through how *liturgico-political performatives* function theologically. Ward explains that

> Put in structuralist terms, 'poetics' is a synchronic, ahistorical explanatory map, while *poiesis* is a diachronic, historical operation concerned with creative action. As such, *poiesis* would constitute one aspect of a theory of action—cultural action —and in this way it is associated with praxis. [Ward 2005, 7]

Distancing himself from Aristotle's usage of the same term, he clarifies that "[he wishes] to view *poiesis* in a complex sense that would not over-distinguish aesthetic production from [praxis, or] political and ethical activity. *It is social behaviour more generally and the practices of everyday life*" (Ward 2005, 7, *emphasis mine*). Here, Ward reflects the postmodern deconstruction of the supposed gulf between popular and high culture (and, by extension, between popular and

academic theology) described by Tanner; indeed, she herself recommends that academic theology adopt the politicized stance of popular theology, stating that "while everyday theology does not have as much to use, it tends to use everything it can; anything that might work is at least considered" (Tanner 1997a, 89).

To conceptualize the praxis of theological *parrhesia* as a form of *poeisis*—as transformation or production as an aesthetic practice—is to reconcile divergent impulses in Foucault's work as well. Foucault links *parrhesia* to the "care of the self," in which "one can comport oneself towards oneself in the role of a technician, of a craftsman, of an artist, who—from time to time—stops working, examines what he is doing, reminds himself of the rule of his art, and compares these rules with what he has achieved thus far" (Foucault 1985). And yet, *poiesis* (as care of the self or as praxis) is always already circumscribed, for it works with cultural material: "as an operation it is empowered and works with respect to other power relations" (Ward 2005, 8).

Ward and Tanner both acknowledge, therefore, that academic theology is inseparable from the lived experience of Christians on the ground—not simply because it makes lived experience its locus of analysis but also because it addresses and affects said experience. As Ward states through a compelling metaphor,

> In the work in and out and towards faith[,] theology must be rooted in the Church, but at its open western door—on the threshold between the world and the east-facing altar; as ready to serve in one direction as in the other. The Christian theologian stands at that place between the breaking of the bread and its distribution throughout the world. As the Christian theologian looks back into the church, the order of life is presented there—the baptism font, the chancel steps where confirmation, marriage and burial rites are spoken, the altar where the mass is celebrated and shared. As the Christian theologian looks out into the world, the serried ranks of city life are presented there—so many high points and squalid allies, neon-lights, plasma-screens, crowded tenements, seductions, excitements

and destitutions. ... This place 'between' is the place of prayer; prayer as simultaneously worship and intercession, confession and petition, doxology and yearning for the coming of the Kingdom. This yearning has depth—of experience, of knowledge, of passion—only in so far as it engages with the possibility of the impossible. [Ward 2005, 59-60]

The place "between" is the space of critical reflection (as *poeisis*) that strives to translate the love of God into a historical reality—in the context of this project, through the mediating figure of the priest-in drag-*in persona Christi*. The beauty of Ward's illustration, then, is that it foregrounds the "between" as the place from which theology issues and relates this location to the operations of prayer—which as discussed above has, in its Kierkegaardian formula at least, a logic similar to that of theological *parrhesia*. Its danger is that the illustration of a "between" implies a border between two autonomous spheres—in this case, between the church and the world or, more to the point, between theology and culture. It is important, then, to clarify that this is just the opposite of Ward's intentions, which strongly echo Tanner's on this point: "[Theology] is not a 'self-enclosed' discursive reflection; and neither *can* Christian theology or Christian living be self-enclosed. ... Theology *is* a cultural activity; the dialectic it is implicated in is, simultaneously, transhistorical, historical, and material" (Ward 2005, 48). Inasmuch as the baptismal font, the chancel steps, and the altar are given meaning in and through what I have referred to as "the liturgical"—in other words, inasmuch as they *mean* through the rite of baptism, the marriage and burial liturgies, and the ritual of Holy Eucharist respectively (and are, therefore, distinguishable from a bird-bath, porch steps, and a patio table)—they are profoundly *theological* and, therefore, profoundly *encultured* spaces[7]—spaces iterated through *liturgico-political performatives*.

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[7] It follows, as well, that the church in Ward's illustration could be replaced with any encultured institution: "'Christian theology' in this text could be replaced with any other cultural practice" (Ward 2005, 8). His point is not the separation of spheres but the elucidation of the *between* from which all theological discourse issues.

The theologian, as the *parrhesiastes* of theological truth, foregrounds this enculturation

and reflects on the relationship for which she or he is a bridge. *Theology speaks to culture*

*because it is cultural*. This is why the theological *parrhesiastes* can speak *to* the tyrant, can

participate in the transformation of culture—not because Christian theology is a language above

all other languages (as if it were superior to "the secular"[8] or to Islamic theology or Buddhist

cosmology) but because its symbolic economy is, as such, a site of cultural negotiation and

interpretation. This can be politically potent because, due to its eschatological horizon (Karl

Barth's phrase, by which he refers to the "already but not yet" nature of the Kingdom of God-

among-us), theology points beyond the limits of currently dominant cultural forms. It calls the

cultural beyond itself as such, for the theological imagination evokes for the theologian the world

that Christ dreams:

> As that eschatologically informed sphere, theology speaks to and in and through
> the cultural of a promised and operative reconciliation; a resurrection life not just
> beyond this world in some *post-mortem* realm but in this world as this world's
> concealed [*mysterion*] reality. The speaking of such a transforming hope, which
> issues from an equally fundamental judgment, is a speaking in the name of, a
> working in and out of faith to faith. *It is in this working that locks the theologian*
> *into the operation of the eternal in the temporal, which is at the eschatological*
> *heart of participation in Christ*. [Ward 2005, 57, *emphasis mine*]

Indeed, the eschatological horizon inherent to Christian theology is currently driving a

*theological turn* in critical theory, providing cultural theorists such as Slavoj Žižek, Terry

Eagleton, and Alain Badiou with strategies to energize a political left badly in need of good

ideas. Eagleton himself writes that

> Marxism has suffered in our time a staggering political rebuff; and one of the
> places to which those radical impulses have migrated is—of all things—theology.

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[8] The scare-quotes around this word are particularly important to note, for it is the very division between "Christian theology" and "secular culture" that I want to deconstruct here by way of Ward's deliberate assertion and defense of syncretism in *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*.

It is in some sectors of theology nowadays that one can find some of the most informed and animated discussions of Deleuze and Badiou, Foucault and feminism, Marx and Heidegger.  This is not entirely surprising, since theology ... is one of the most ambitious theoretical arenas left in an increasingly specialized world—one whose subject is nothing less than the nature and destiny of humanity itself, in relation to what it takes to be its transcendent source of life.

[Eagleton 2009, 167]

In other words, that theological discourse has contextualized its immense theoretical scope within an eschatological vision through which all things are given ultimate significance makes its deployment appealing to theorists such as Eagleton, who wish to restore a sense of human possibility that is not only honest about the tragic state of human affairs but also takes from this appraisal an urgent sense of the need for social change.  The political malaise which Eagleton laments—in which his colleagues on the academic left are both far too pleased about the current state of affairs and far too skeptical of their ability to effect radical changes—is precisely what is short circuited in the *poiesis* of theological *parrhesia*:

What characterises Christian critical practices in the world, Christian *poiesis*, is a governing soteriology that pursues social transformation by means of *opening up new utopian possibilities in the prevailing cultural Zeitgeist*.  These critical and transformative practices affect and reorientate the cultural imaginary.

[Ward 2005, 170-71, *emphasis mine*]

The eschatological horizon maps the location of theology—that queer discipline which "relativizes all earthly projects" (Loughlin 2007, 7) and yet, *as* an earthly project relativizes *itself*: the intersection "of the eternal in the temporal" (Ward 2005, 57) which is articulated in the language and logic of theology as incarnation.  In our own historical moment, it is politically efficacious for theologians to speculate as to what new possibilities for the body could be opened up by the deployment of the eschatological horizon, which by situating the body's ultimate

significance "in relation to what it takes to be its transcendent source of life" (Eagleton 2009, 167) intentionally calls the body beyond its present, historical construction.

The enterprise of theological *parrhesia* is, therefore, a profoundly destabilizing and destabilized operation, one that exposes the epistemic certainties of gender, class, nation, and sexuality as discursive constructions through the appeal to a third term, God, from within an openly acknowledged matrix of cultural mediation. As Ward states,

> Christians can speak theologically at all only on the basis of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. ... Our human words, as testimony to that which we have received, are coming to understand, and hold to be true, must issue from a relationship to the Word of God. ... *But as all our knowledge is culturally mediated, then the question will always remain as to how we ever know the extent of our words' affinity to the Logos incarnate.* [Ward 2005, 57-58, *emphasis mine*]

This balance between the reality of experience and the peril of the discourse which presumes to describe it mirrors Foucault's own remarks about the problematization of *parrhesia:*

> The fact that an answer is neither a representation nor an effect of a situation does *not* mean that it answers to nothing, that it is pure dream, or an "anti-creation." ... Given a certain problematization, you can only understand why this kind of answer appears as *a reply to some concrete and specific aspect of the world*. There is the relation of though[t] and reality in the process of problematization. And *that is the reason why I think that it is possible to give an answer—the original, specific, and singular answer of thought—to a certain situation*. And it is this kind of specific relation between truth and reality which I tried to analyze in the various problematizations of parrhesia. [Foucault 1985, *emphasis mine*]

The words theologians use to describe God are *never* God, but they do reflect "some concrete and specific aspect of the world": our "relationship to the Word of God," according to Ward. They issue from the experience of a God who, as Tanner relates from the encultured standpoint of Christian theology, "wants to give us the fullness of God's own life through the closest possible relationship with us as that comes to completion in Christ" (Tanner 2010, vii). The promise of theology is reflected, here, not only in its utility in inspiring insurgent consciousness

and practical utopianism but also in its ability to make peace with relativism. Theology is a discipline that willingly foregrounds its own discursivity: its first rule is that the discourse—the theology itself—is not the God it presumes to describe. And yet, it affirms that it does describe a specific aspect of life, that which effects those "transformations in the very being of the subject which ... allow access to the truth" (Foucault 2005, 17). In the midst of these uncertainties, it also declares that this truth must be incarnated, embodied to be intelligible.

### What Would Foucault Do?

It is important to note that this eschatologically-based relativization is *not* the "ideology of cultured despair" that Welch laments in her *Feminist Ethic of Risk* (2000) when she writes that "The *eschatological reservation* is the reminder that all of our good works are partial. Though inspired and guided by God, they cannot be directly identified as the work of God nor identified as the kingdom of God" (106). Here, I must emphatically declare that *the eschatological horizon inherent to the location of theology as I have described it **is not** the eschatological reservation described by Welch*. To conflate the two and give up on the eschatological project entirely is both to miss the point and to relinquish the opportunity to reconsider the *liturgico-political performatives* of the Episcopal Church available at this moment in history. Eschatology (and Christian theology in general) need not buttress what Welch terms the *ideology of cultured despair*, which exalts the "realistic" above and against the "impossible" such that neo-conservative politics seems the Christian order of the day. Welch makes some compelling points about how such buttressing has, in fact, occurred in practice. However, to declare with Ward that "Christian praxis participates in this eschatological incorporation; in an economy of salvation

that is inseparable from an economic working of the Trinitarian love in and through creation" (Ward 2005, 170) is in fact to propose a new approach that establishes exactly the "constructive relativism" for which Welch calls: "the recognition that we have to make the valued real. Our values are not eternal guarantees of right decisions or of proper analyses; they are calls to action" (Welch 2000, 167). This is not dissimilar to Ward's own statement that "the working of hope, then, is not an abstract principle but always an *embodied* one ... It is the *labouring* in hope that distinguishes that hope from wishful thinking and fantasy" (Ward 2005, 170, *emphasis mine*). It follows, moreover, that the embodied hopes of queer liberation theologians converge in the figure of the queered body of Christ materialized by the fundamentally unstable bodies of the priesthood.

Here, those who share Welch's sensibilities—which err more on the side of disavowing Christian theological discourse entirely because it supports both the *ideology of cultured despair* and, by virtue of its exaltation of absolute power in the patriarchal figure of God, an *erotics of domination*—may argue that Ward's critiques *sound* well-and-good but still rely too much on oppressive categories, flattened histories, and heresiological strategies,[9] that he still couches them in theological language which has been used to oppress: "To ignore the sexism inhering in the formative texts and formidable doctrines of Christianity and to imagine that it can be eliminated seem equally flawed responses" (Burrus 2006, 52). They may object, moreover, that his language reflects a pretension to universalism and that his political project is unnecessarily non-dialogical and grievously circumscribes the public to whom he can speak.

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[9] See, in particular, Virginia Burrus, "Radical Orthodoxy and the Heresiological Habit: Engaging Graham Ward's Christology," in *Interpreting the Postmodern: Responses to Radical Orthodoxy*, eds. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Marion Grau (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 36-53.

Both accusations, however, only hold inasmuch as they ignore what Ward has written regarding the profoundly encultured location of theology.  As Ward states in an earlier article concerning theology and masculinity:

> I can only speak from within the Christian theological tradition.  I want to move toward what Sandra Harding (1993) will term maximized objectivity, but I value the resources within my tradition for constructing an account of what it is to be a sexed human being made in the image of the divine.  *What I offer, therefore, I am aware is partial, but within our social and religious pluralism, our social and religious atomism, I see no easy routes to universalism.*  [Ward 1999a]

Having admitted forthrightly his presupposition of constructive relativism, he answers the objection as to "the sexism inhering in the formative texts and formidable doctrines of Christianity" as follows:

> So, well aware of the historical difficulties of a Christian conservative approach, which I prefer to call radically orthodox that it may not be confused with Biblical fundamentalism, aware the conservative approach has, in the past, tyrannized women and gay/lesbian relationships and presented some very distorted models for men being men also; nevertheless, this is the field I work in, taking courage from gay historians like John Boswell (1980) and Mark D. Jordan (1997) and Christian theologians like James B. Nelson (1988) and Richard Cleaver (1995).
> [Ward 1999a]

Ward understands and readily admits that his project is partial and that the symbolic resources with which he works are impoverished from the start.  But according to the poststructuralist understanding of culture both Ward and Tanner presuppose, this is true for *all* discursive projects, theological or otherwise—and like all grammars, the grammar of orthodoxy can be articulated in many ways.  None are fixed in meaning and *irremediably* oppressive.  According to Tanner,

> [Feminists] do not have to try to replace patriarchal theological discourse with another form of theological discourse having as little as possible to do with the first.  That kind of enterprise ... presumes that the cultural elements employed in patriarchal theological discourse are intrinsically and irremediably patriarchal.  According to the political understanding of culture [as the site of political struggles over the meaning and articulation of symbolic resources], however, such

a presumption is false. These elements do not in themselves express patriarchal interests; their service to patriarchy, or to male-dominated social structures, is a function of their articulation to such interests by way of particular discursive formations. Since this is so, every element in service to a patriarchal cause has at least some potential for alignment with a feminist one. [Tanner 1997, 188]

In other words, the language of orthodox theology (by which I, like Ward, refer to the school of postliberal or narrative theology and *not* the literalistic fundamentalism to which Soelle has famously ascribed the moniker "Christo-fascism") *can* be re-appropriated and re-signified so as to effect liberation *because* theology is a cultural activity, an act of creative assemblage or *poeisis*. The deployment of the high liturgical orthodoxy of Anglicanism in the service of the full welcome and ordination of LGBTQ persons—evident particularly, I argue, in Ward's work—is one face of this unfolding *poeisis*. Indeed, this is likely the best way forward for liberation theologians. As Tanner further writes (addressing feminist theologies in particular but with implications for all liberationist discourses), "the tactic of disarticulating as many elements as possible from patriarchal discourse and rearticulating them for feminist purposes is ... the only way to further a feminist transformation of theological and social practices" (Tanner 1997, 190). If Welch is unable to hear Ward's attempts to "show how a masculinist symbolics can be reconfigured" (Ward 1999b, 177)—and I should be clear that I *do not* think this is a given—it is *not* because she is the more Foucauldian of the two. It is because she is not Foucauldian *enough*.

This is the paradox of a Foucauldian theory of culture which presupposes that "power is everywhere" (Foucault 1990, 93): that hegemonic discourses *must* be challenged and disrupted, and yet, there is no way to transcend either discourse or power as such. The most important implication of this theory for activist strategies is *not* the notion that change is impossible

(because the activist is trapped in an inescapable web of power) but the revelation that resistance

is as ubiquitous as power.  Foucault clarifies that

> a power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that 'the other' (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, *a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up*.
> [Foucault 2000, 340, *emphasis mine*]

In other words, the very notion of infra-power which appears to be so deterministic is, by

definition, also a reconceptualization that makes *resistance to power* an inherent part of *any*

power relation.  There is no outside to the power structure as conceived by Foucault, but this

does not imply that counterhegemonic struggle is impossible.  It only means that there is no view

from nowhere.  The task then becomes *precisely* one of resignification and subversion—as

Tanner and Ward suggest—of finding the most promising ways of speaking within existing

symbolic economies.  To illustrate, one begins trying to say liberating things in English, even

while recognizing that English is a language which presupposes a hierarchical gender binary—

for one can only speak using language and to speak is an ethical and political imperative.  And in

short, speaking within the grammar of faith is politically efficacious for theologians because

> The cultural elements that are already articulated with patriarchy in the form of common sense or practical thinking are highly cathected with political significance.  For that reason, they are the primary stakes in a political struggle.  Whoever manages to align them with their own political agenda and vision for social relations gains the advantage; the political stakes of theological controversy are highest exactly at these points.  [Tanner 1997, 189]

When liberation theologians like Welch (or, more famously, Mary Daly) give up on eschatology,

Christology, soteriology—or on being in dialogue with Barth, Tillich, or the Bible—on the

grounds that these are all politically corrupt expressions of patriarchy, they risk resigning

themselves to a place of exile with meager resources from which to embody their own discursive practices of resignification. If there is no outside to the power structure, no outside to language, no view from no where, the *parrhesiastic* stance, with its ready admission of constructive relativism and its goal of maximized political efficacy, offers a way to theorize a liberationist praxis. It is the hope of a postliberalism with a normative liberationist motor: a postliberalism deployed in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed.

### *The Theological Body of Christ*

It makes sense, then, to speak of a *queer Christology*, one that does not renege on the richness of either of these signifiers: a theological body of Christ so materialized as to confound the logic of urinary segregation and reorientate the symbolic horizon upon which bodies come to matter toward the *eschatological* horizon upon which sexual and gender difference are deconstructed and displaced by their incorporation in the transcorporeal, ineluctably queer theological body of Christ as *ecclesia*. Alliaume, in arguing for the shift from an economy of imitation to an economy of performativity regarding the doctrine of *in persona Christi*, links the body of Christ as constituted by Christian narratives with the body of Christ as constituted by the church, reminding her reader that "his is a corporate body" (Alliaume 2006, 98). So defined, the shape of liberationist critique proceeds not by appealing to the historical body of Christ (which would remain too linked to the limitations of an economy of imitation) but to the theological body materialized by a discursive and performative economy at all the levels we flagged at the outset—ecclesial, ordinate, and sacramental—operating within a horizon of utopian hope.

This is the scene into which Ward's famous essay "The Displaced Body of Jesus Christ" (1999) enters, with its bold assertion that "questions such as 'Can a male Saviour save women?' and modern investigations into the sexuality of Jesus, which simply continue the nineteenth-century rational search for the historical Jesus, fail to discern the nature of corporeality in Christ" (Ward 1999b, 163).  Feminists and queer theologians who focus too much on the concrete historical sex and gender of Jesus will not effect a shift radical enough to change the criteria for what constitutes a body that matters, for they will remain indebted to the binary categories of sexual difference which constitute the heterosexual matrix.  Ward instead proposes "[examining] both the performance of Jesus the gendered Jew and the way that performance has been scripted, reperformed and ventriloquized by the community he brought to birth" (163).  My effort to theorize the *rending of the chasuble* should, therefore, be read as an extension of this part of Ward's project—a profoundly Christological, as well as queer, intervention in liturgical theology.

If the ordination of women—which, by virtue of the priests' performative citation of the body of Christ in presiding *in persona Christi*, queers the gender of Jesus—represents a liturgical displacement of Christ's gender, Ward's work examines the myriad additional displacements that occur on the level of theological discourse, showing ultimately how both of these theological bodies (materialized as priest and as *ecclesia*) inform and constitute each other.  Presupposing the encultured location of theology and basic grammar of postliberal theology discussed above, Ward argues that

> The displacements of Jesus's body simply give Christological significance to the nature of embodiment.  John's Gospel is emphatic about these assumptions, with its repetitions of ontological scandal—I am the way, the life, the truth, the Temple, the bread, the light, the vine and the gate into the sheepfold.  But in the Gospels

generally, in those stories which focus on the body of Jesus, there are five scenes where these displacements are dramatically performed: the transfiguration itself; the eucharistic supper; the crucifixion; the resurrection; and, finally, the ascension. Each of these scenes, in an ever-deepening way, problematize the sexed nature of Jesus's body and point towards an erotics far more comprehensive and yet informing the sexed and the sexual. [Ward 1999b, 165-66]

In short, the various narrative displacements of Jesus's body, culminating in the ascension and the birth of the Church, queer the gender of Jesus (as known and performed narratively) by stretching his body's boundaries—by articulating and materializing it as transfigurable (one body being seen through another), transposable (one body being located both *here* and *there*), and, to invoke Julia Kristeva, transcorporeal (one body being constituted by others). This has social implications beyond the problematization of gender for Ward: "because the boundaries between physical bodies, civic bodies, social bodies, sacramental bodies and the body of Christ are fluid ... then practices of hope move in and through one body affecting all the others" (Ward 2005, 170). If, as made concrete through a shared theological narrative of the ascension, the body of Christ is now the multigendered body of the church—a "processional [relationship] as the relationship between the trinitarian persons is processional [for] one abides in and through the other" (Ward 1999b, 177)—what are the implications of this statement (its "practices of hope") for the other bodies Ward describes? If the Church is to say with St. Paul (per 1 Corinthians 12.12) that it is the very body of Jesus Christ, does this not fundamentally redefine what counts as a body that matters?

I think Ward gestures toward an answer in his statement that "the body of Jesus Christ, the body of God, is permeable, transcorporeal, transpositional [and] within it all other bodies are situated and given their significance" (Ward 1999b, 176)—a realization which, as Ward himself suggests, makes possible the theo-logic of Galatians 3.28 (NRSV, *emphasis mine*): "There is no

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longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; *for all of you are one* in Christ Jesus." The church's performative embodiment of the multigendered body of Christ thus becomes a means by which one "[expands] the very meaning of what counts as a valued and valuable body in the world" (Butler 1993, 22). Returning our locus of analysis to the liturgical—to the site of Anglican debates regarding ordinate and inordinate bodies—this expansion is deployed constructively by Elizabeth Stuart who, presupposing Ward's gender-queer Christ, states that "as one who functions as an image of Christ to Christ's church it is in fact essential that the priesthood consist of many genders, because the resurrected body of Christ is multi-gendered and therefore beyond gender" (Stuart 2007, 71). As discussed in chapter two, if we discursively construct such a theological body *in persona Christi,* we disrupt the logic of urinary segregation—thus calling into crisis the gender binary which, to Butler's mind, buttresses the hegemony of compulsory heterosexuality. If we dismantle the gender binary, situating the significance of bodies within a transcorporeal theological body that *itself* confounds the bathroom doors, we begin to dismantle the logic of compulsory heterosexuality.

This is what Patrick Cheng refers to as the "grace of constructivism" (Cheng 2011, 74). It is, moreover, the activist edge of a queer Christology which yokes the liberation of women to that of LGBTQ persons, positing that Jesus is "the embodiment of a radical love that dissolves sexual *and* gender boundaries" (85, *emphasis mine*). According to Stuart, to "[confine] any order, ministry or role to one gender or sexual orientation (or to one race or class) solidifies rather than dissolves non-eschatological reality [and] signifies the lack of an eschatological horizon" (Stuart 2007, 72). The narrative horizon to which Stuart here refers relativizes the all-too-tidy fictions of our identity categories because they fail to adequately describe the

transcorporeal body of Christ that "expands to embrace the whole of creation" materialized by Anglican theological discourse. And yet, there is still no easy triumphalism, for as Ward reminds us, "that body continues to expand by our continual giving and receiving of signs ... the textuality of Christian time, made up, as it is, of doxological words and liturgical practices" (Ward 1999b, 177). This means, among other things, that if the church refuses to embody the queer Christ of Ward, Stuart, and Cheng in its doxologies and liturgies—and if the Episcopal Church, in particular, refuses to come to terms with the full implications of the rent chasuble—the body of Christ will not expand but will, instead, contract back into a violent reinscription of hegemony.

That the theological body of Christ is queer is something Anglicans affirm, at least implicitly, week after week in their celebration of the eucharistic meal. The *liturgico-political performative* of Holy Eucharist, with its exhortation that "This is my *body*, given for you," insists on the scandalous displacement of Christ's body—and that of the priest acting *in persona Christi* —onto an unsexed object: a piece of bread. At stake here is not transubstantiation-as-such[10] but the *performative declaration* of this bodily displacement by the Anglican priest during the communion liturgy: the discursive materialization of a body that does not fit into a bathroom door. That "Jesus' body as bread is no longer Christ as simply and biologically male" (Ward 1999b, 168) means that Jesus' body so materialized is rendered unintelligible by the heterosexual matrix full stop. The eucharistic host confounds its fundamental terms and disrupts its calculus. It is the body that is not allowed to be—and yet, Anglicanism emphatically declares that this is a

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[10] I should be clear that I do *not* mean to prosecute views of the Eucharist which may or may not fall into the category of "transubstantiation." In the Anglican tradition, eucharistic theology is extraordinarily diverse and doctrinally generous; its intentional self-imagining as a *via media* between Protestantism and Catholicism makes this inevitable. In light of this, the claims I posit here presuppose not the affirmation of transubstantiation full stop but, rather, the broad acknowledgment of the mystery of "Real Presence" characteristic of Anglicanism and which subtends its communion liturgies—an acknowledgment articulated by the following poem attributed by some to John Donne and by others to Elizabeth I: "He was the Word that spake it; / He took the bread and brake it; / And what that Word did make it, / I do believe and take it" (Bartlett 1919).

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body that matters.  From within this narrative/theological imaginary, I posit the following

*parrhesiastic* claim: *the church cannot accept the logic of the heterosexual matrix without*

*rejecting Christ.*  Liturgical regimes which continue to exclude female and/or LGBTQ bodies by

declaring them inordinate—an exclusion Butler couches in terms of abjection, which as Kristeva

has taught us, evokes the image of the corpse—cannot help but abject the theological body of

Christ (as sacrament *or* as church) along with them.[11]  To treat the very body of Christ as if it

were a corpse is to render the Eucharist fetishized necrophilia.

Conversely, to declare that these are *all* bodies that matter is to participate in the praxis of

these bodies' resurrections.  When the Episcopal Church can embrace the queerness of Christ,

when it can dress up queer bodies *in persona Christi* and rend their chasubles through the

celebration of a cosmic, liturgical, and political feast which promises to heal its wounds by short-

circuiting the imperialism of compulsory heterosexuality, it will have introduced revolutionary

love where there was once only law.  The Mass compels us not only to go in peace but to

incarnate the scandal of a God who tears apart our epistemes from within and will never abide by

our pitiful definitions of the possible.

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[11] Butler's linking of the "materialization of the [heterosexual] norm" to the "[production of] a domain of abjected bodies" (Butler 1993, 16) evokes the consideration of abjection by Kristeva, who writes that "the corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life" (Kristeva 1982, 4).  And as suggested in the introduction, the connotative difference between "corpse" and "body" is part of what the language of *bodies that matter* seeks to describe and explain.

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