

Sigridur Gudmarsdottir

“In that Vesture, Let There be Diversity:” Reading Augustine at Gay Pride Reykjavík

“I don’t know what someone like me looks like, but when people look at me, I want them to think, ‘There is one of those people with their own interpretation of happiness.’ That’s what I am.” (Lou Sullivan)¹

The clock strikes two in downtown Reykjavík and the parade is moving. The trucks are lining up, carrying their colorful floats and myriads of people. People are marching in leather and latex, the music is loud, the rhythm is fierce, drag queens are laughing, fancy vestures are swinging by in all the colors of the rainbow, and all around are people watching, watching and waving flags. There are 80.000 people in downtown Reykjavík. The pastors are parading with a group within the LGBT community interested in religion and spirituality. They are wearing their collars and holding up a flag with the inscription “Church open to all”; “the church” in this small community of 300.000 people meaning Lutheran churches of which 80 percent of the Icelandic population is a member. The pastors look strange in this celebration of marching flesh. Their clerical shirts look a bit too prudent for the occasion, and even though they are laughing and waving their rainbow flags, (some even shaking their booties to rhythm of the music), they do look like the odd man out in the land of Tattoo.

How does one do theology at Gay Pride Reykjavík? How can queer practices and people inform Church structures? Lisa Isherwood and Marcella Althaus-Reid characterize three traits of queer theory, that is “an emphasis on the construction of sexuality, the element of plurality, which needs to be present in any reflection; and the idea of ambivalence or the fluidity of sexual identities.”²

¹ Lou Sullivan, “A Transvestite Answers a Feminist,” in: Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (eds.), *The Transgender Studies Reader* (Routledge: New York 2006), 159.

² Lisa Isherwood and Marcella Althaus-Reid, “Queering Theology: Thinking Queer Theology and Theory,” in: Marcella Althaus-Reid and Lisa Isherwood, *The Sexual Theologian: Essays on Sex, God and Politics* (T & T Clark: New York 2004), 5.

The men and women of the cloth have paraded from their safe heterosexual surroundings to this show of strange vesture for a special reason. The debate whether gays and lesbians should have the option of marriage in the church has been raging in Iceland for a while and the pastors are showing their support for queer peoples rights to have “their own interpretation of happiness”, as Lou Sullivan once said. The National Queer Organization in Iceland has advocated for legal rights for homosexual couples with great success. The law for confirmed cohabitation was passed in 1996. A legislation in 2006 gave homosexual couples the rights to adopt children, and lesbians the same right to assisted fertilization as heterosexual women. In addition to asking for civil rights many gays and lesbians in Iceland have fought for the right to name their relationship marriage, and that it should be accepted and blessed by the church. The Church Synod of Iceland recently passed a regulation on confirmed cohabitation, which provides a ceremony for same sex couples, which has a legal binding and which closely resembles the marriage ritual, similar but not quite the same.

In his encyclical to the church of Iceland the bishop of Iceland, Karl Sigurbjörnsson has argued against the idea of opening up the marriage institution for same sex couples. Christian marriage for bishop Sigurbjörnsson consists of the union of one man and one woman, founded on “the reciprocity of the sexes and the coincides of opposites.”³ The bishops’s father and a former bishop of Iceland, Sigurbjörn Einarsson goes further and maintains that the idea of same sex marriages is “simply absurd. For such a marriage would deny the very core of marriage, which is the service to life.”⁴ According to bishop Einarsson such “service to life” seems to involve an old Augustinian maxim for marriage, *fides, proles, sacramentum*, fidelity, fecundity and sacrament. No dirty tattoos, no theological erotics written on the body, no sexual ambivalence involved.

Sólveig Anna Bóasdóttir has criticized the encyclical’s idea of the “the reciprocity of the sexes” as a prerequisite for marriage. Bóasdóttir points out that bishop Sigurbjörnsson speaks about confirmed cohabitation as a confirmation of two *individuals* of their love and cohabitation, while defining marriage as the marital union of the two *sexes*. Bóasdóttir writes:

³ Karl Sigurbjörnsson, *Í birtu náðarinnar: Hirðisbréf til Íslensku kirkjunnar* (Skálholtsútgáfan: Reykjavík, Iceland 2001), 155, my translation.

⁴ Sigurbjörn Einarsson, “Ég veit vel að Hann heyrir,” in: *Fréttablaðið*, Reykjavík, 24 December 2007, 26, my translation.

“Is there then no sex to be found except in the union of the two sexes, the heterosexual ones? Are two women or two men asexual? The answer lies in the presupposition that they do not form a heterosexual pair, or a binary, which is considered to be the necessary prerequisite of marriage.”⁵

For Bóasdóttir, the segregation between confirmed cohabitation and marriage is constructed through the very binaries which feminist theory has long been criticizing. These binaries include the distinction and hierarchization of male and female, active and passive, soul and body, culture and nature, rational and emotional, still and unruly, to name a few. Needless to say, the latter is always considered more suspicious than the former and in need for constant check.⁶

To Bóasdóttir’s careful criticism of “the reciprocity of the sexes” as a marriage requirement I want to add that the expression “coincides of opposites” (which for bishop Sigurbjörnsson seems to mean the same as “the reciprocity of the sexes”) has a rich history since the fifteenth century cardinal Nicholas of Cusa of denoting the relationship between the infinite and finite, word and flesh. The union at stake in Cusa’s “coincides of opposites” does not necessarily open up to a binary such as, man-woman in a heterosexual marriage, but rather he explains the logic of the incarnation, the universalism of all believers and God’s relationship to humans and creation. In “The Learned Ignorance” Cusa argues that since God has no opposite and all is in God, all finite reality is contracted into God in the God-man, “the maximum that is both absolute and contracted, Jesus Christ, the ever blessed.”⁷ If a marriage can be read out of Cusa’s coincides of opposites, such a marriage would be inclusive of creation and church to the bridegroom who is both fully human and fully God. Cusa for his part puts on his queer bridal vestures and enters the parade in “On the Vision of God” moaning to his groom: “But how, my God, could

⁵ Sólveig Anna Bóasdóttir, *Ást, kynlíf og hjónaband* (Salka: Reykjavík 2008), 126, my translation.

⁶ See also Bóasdóttir, *Ást, kynlíf*, 130-137 for her criticism of procreation arguments against same sex marriages.

⁷ De Docta Ignorantia” III: 181, cf. Nicholas of Cusa, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, transl. H. Lawrence Bond, 169. On Jesus as *conjunctio oppositorum*, cf. Gerard Loughlin, “Introduction,” in: *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body* (Blackwell: London 2007), 3-4; Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (University of California Press: Berkeley 1987); and Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (Zone Books: New York 1991).

your bride, the human soul, attain her end if you were not lovable so that thus by loving you, the lovable, she could attain to the happiest bond and union?"⁸

If bishop Einarsson declared ideas of same sex marriage as "simply absurd", because it does not result in procreation, what then of the erotic, and illustrious interpretations of Song of Songs and Psalm 45 in the history of Christianity? What are the discharges and pleasures of the body of Christ, which is the church? One might ask why the notion of queer marriages would be considered ridiculous in the very community that confesses the word made flesh and considers the queer self-depictions of ecstatic monks in textual bridal costumes as mystical and deep. Thus, writing theology on the body and positing the cardinal against the bishops, I argue that "the coincide of opposites" so revered by the Icelandic bishop offers a different set of nuptials than the one prescribed by "the reciprocity of the sexes". This coincide of opposites prescribes a cosmic and an ecclesiastical matrimony between God and Israel. In this all-inclusive and perennial marriage ceremony, the guests, the virginal companions and the bride strangely slide into one another, all get to dress up in vestures, parade and perform at this textual wedding. Or as Gerard Loughlin writes:

"This is one of the queerest things about the Christian church; that it celebrates in its symbols what it denies to its members. Jesus goes to a wedding at Cana and marries his disciples; John the Baptist marries his friend, the bridegroom Jesus. But this is all imaginary, symbolic. It is not to be taken seriously, or not seriously in this way."⁹

In my view, this strange ambiguity of symbolism and denial gives rise to some of the greatest pains and promises of Christian theology today. Elizabeth Stuart writes: "The Church is the only community under a divine command and constructed according to a divine logic to be queer."¹⁰ When long denied issues of sexuality are finally addressed, affirmed, and taken seriously, the symbolic universe does not have to be invented, only explored differently than

⁸ Cusa, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 271, cited in Allen Prudence, *The Concept of Woman, Volume II, The Early Humanist Reformation 1250-1500* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids 2002), 777.

⁹ Loughlin, "Introduction," in: *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*, 3.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Stuart, *Gay and Lesbian Theologies: Repetitions with Critical Difference* (Ashgate: Aldershot, Hampshire 2003), 4.

before. *In veste varietas sit, scissura non sit*, Augustine once claimed using a textile metaphor for unity. “In this vesture (meaning the vestures of the church as the bride of Christ) let there be diversity, let there be no rent.” How then does one safeguard against the tearing of the fabric which constitutes the bride of Christ? How would one interpret such a theological statement of *varietas* in the context of Gay Pride, as we watch the a parade of colorful vestures go by, and as we are carried by the crowd, and the music into an ecstatic celebration of diversity and sexuality?

I am emphatically not trying to smuggle Augustine into this body theology as early campaigner of LGBT rights or as the “real founder” of queer theory. (Now that would be “simply absurd”!) Augustine has been criticized for his pessimistic views of human sexuality and often with a good reason.¹¹ However there is also something to be said about Augustine’s tortured infatuation with sexuality. And thus, Marcella Althaus-Reid claims queer theology as an Augustinian practice of writing theology in flesh. “Why Augustinian?” she writes, “Because it is a corporeal and intimate spirituality in which the theologian’s desires for the flesh... get mixed with other ultimately transcendental desires such as that for God.”¹² Thus, I want to use Augustine to do some queering of the “coincides of opposites.”

Historian of ancient Christianity, Virginia Burrus, notes the strange, textual desire that permeates Augustine’s theology of marriage, and his own complex erotic relations as illustrated in *Confessions*. Burrus writes: “Augustine is not merely fleeing marriage to save himself for a divine Bridegroom, like so many other ascetics of his day. The beloved lover in whose arms we finally leave

¹¹ Carter Heyward famously wrote: “Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, was the first theologian to systematize erotophobia – fear of sex – as a staple (arguably the staple) of christian orthodoxy.” Carter Heyward, *Touching Our Strength: The Erotic as Power and Our Love for God* (Harper & Row: New York 1989), 89. For studies on Augustine, gender, and sexuality, cf. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society, Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (Columbia University Press: New York 1988), 387-327; Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (Vintage Books: New York 1989); Margaret R. Miles, *Desire and Delight: A New Reading of Augustinés Confessions* (Crossroad: New York 1992); Elizabeth Clark, *St. Augustine on Marriage and Sexuality* (Catholic University of America Press: Washington D.C. 1996); Mathijs Lamberigts, “A Critical Evaluation of Critiques of Augustinés View of Sexuality,” in: Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (eds.), *Augustine and his Critics* (Routledge: London, 2000), 196-198; Judith Chelius Stark (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine* (Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, PA 2007).

¹² Marcella Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God* (Routledge: London 2003), 23.

him is not a *he* or a *she* but a multiplicity – a *they*.”¹³ Burrus observes, that the *they* involved are none other than the scriptures (*scripturae*), appearing to Augustine as a polymorphous mystery throughout the *Confessions*. Augustine sighs: “It is a horror to look into it, a horror of honor and a trembling of love”; yet he never seems to get enough.

Thus, in order to think theology at Gay Pride Reykjavík, I intend to tap into some of that Augustinian queer textuality, and highlight two themes in Augustine’s exposition of Psalm 45. The first point I want to make concerns Augustine’s queer, ecclesial and universal appropriation of nuptial mysticism. David G. Hunter has noted that Augustine interprets Psalm 45 in a very different fashion than his near contemporaries. Hunter explains that Ambrose and Jerome reveal bridal imagery as a symbol of celibate women. In stark contrast, Augustine’s bridal dress is not made up of virgins per se, but the church as a whole in all its variety.¹⁴ If my first step has to do with Augustine’s fusion of nuptial mysticism and logos theology in his exposition of Psalm 45, my second move is to point out the passionate non-vanilla language of the text as a source for thinking theology at Gay Pride.

What then would God write with God’s word on living bodies about marriage? Literary critic and theorist Héléne Cixous writes about writing as compulsion and ecstasy, compulsion because one always comes to writing, is driven by writing. This coming to writing for Cixous is both painful and delightful, a coming, an ecstasy, an orgasm and a serial transformative one. “Writing: first I am touched, caressed, wounded; then I try to discover the secret of this touch to extend it, celebrate it, and transform it into another caress.”¹⁵ Writing for Cixous is touching back, touching another, caressing a fabric, the skin of another. And taking the risk of being read in your own writing.

Does God emerge as writing then, that strange slit of a Word? Augustine seems to think so. “My heart has uttered a good word” is the opening verse of Psalm 45 and most commentators take the beginning of the psalm to mark the author inscribing himself into his verse. For Augustine, however, the

¹³ Virginia Burrus, “What is Queer about Christian Couples: Engaging Augustinés Theology of Marriage,” in: Second Annual Boswell Lecture, Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry, 29 April 2009 (unpublished), 18, Augustine, *Confessions* XII.14.17.

¹⁴ David G. Hunter, “The Virgin, the Bride, and the Church: Reading Psalm 45 in Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine,” in: *Church History* 69:2, (June 2000), 281-303.

¹⁵ Héléne Cixous, “Coming to Writing,” in: *“Coming to Writing” and Other Essays* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge 1991), 11.

speaker in the psalm is none other than God and the first verse he interprets the divine procession from the Father to the Son in terms of a double metaphor of pen and tongue.¹⁶ Instead of regular writing formed word by word, Augustine explains that the entire universe is written out of one giant ink blotch, namely the one and only Word. Cixous argues that writing implies reading, but also prevents a certain kind of reading. The writer keeps writing, licking the pages with the pen, so that no one can write her, read her, lick her. "Writing to touch with letters, with lips, with breath, to caress with the tongue, to lick with the soul, to taste the blood of the beloved body, of life in its remoteness; to saturate the distance with desire; in order to keep it from reading you."¹⁷ Thus Cixous presents us with a writ whose author does not want to be fully revealed, understood, nor engulfed, yet desire their writ to be read, to distance them, and to touch other people. "Writing is God" Cixous claims. "But it is not your God."¹⁸ Likewise, Augustine writes and hides his uttering God, who is all at once a tongue-twister, a writer, pen and writ. The bishop of Hippo turns yet another color in his trinitarian delights, he shoots out a Divine Tongue, then projects a Divine Pen, both from which proceed the Word/*logos*, also known as the Divine Groom.

"The nuptial union is that of the Word and the flesh. The Bridechamber of this union, the Virgin's womb. For the flesh itself was united to the Word: whence it is also said, 'Henceforth they are not twain, but one flesh.' The church was assumed unto Him out of the human race: so that the Flesh itself, being united to the Word, might be the Head of the Church: and the rest who believe, members of that Head."¹⁹

The images are written into an endless relational repercussions of queer genealogies *mise d'abîme*; the God-groom gets married to Flesh, in a chamber of

¹⁶ Schaff Philip (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series, Volume VIII St. Augustine: Expositions on the Psalms*, Grand Rapids (Cosimo Classics: New York 2007) 153. The Psalm is nr. 44 in the Latin version. See also Jacques Paul Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus, seu bibliotheca universalis, integra, uniformis, commoda, oeconomia, omnium ss. Partum, doctorum, scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum...*: Series Latina XXXVI, Paris, 1865, 493-514.

¹⁷ Cixous, "Coming to Writing," 4.

¹⁸ Cixous, "Coming to Writing," 11.

¹⁹ "Coniunctio nuptialis, Verbum et caro: huius coniunctionis thalamus, virginis uterus. Etenim caro ipsa Verbo est coniuncta: unde etiam dicitur, Iam non duo, sed una caro. Assumpta est Ecclesia ex genere humano, ut caput esset Ecclesiae ipsa caro Verbo coniuncta, et caeteri credentes membra essent illius capitis." *Enarrationes in Psalmos, Volume 38, Corpus Christianorum, series Latina*, E. Dekkers (ed.), (Turnhout, Belgium, Brepols 1956), 495.

female flesh (*uterus*), and produces a Son-groom who is a Word/Flesh combination, or what Cusa would later call “the coincides of opposites”. After having described the trinitarian progeny of the groom, Augustine sets out to describe the bride, who parades with her virgins. Out of the human race, the Word/ Flesh groom has brought forth a church, who is also a bride and a queen. Mixing his biblical metaphors, Augustine finally introduces the *Logos* as the bride’s head, in intimate relation to the believers who form both the body and later in the expositions also the bridal vestments of that body. The queen is adorned in golden robes, according to the psalm. Martin Luther would later improvise the Augustinian interpretation of Psalm 45, study the bridal underwear and physique thoroughly, and interpret the Queen’s garments as a golden bra, to support the (already lactating) ecclesial breasts. “The breasts of the church are the teachers of the weak, whom they instruct with the milk of more pleasant doctrine,” drones Luther,²⁰ but veteran Augustine has more interest in the writing of textures on the body than milk and lingerie. In the beginning of the exposition the Divine Tongue (*lingua*) had uttered the groom as his only Word. The bride, who is also a multitude of brides may be headless at this point, but she is all body, a body of tongues (*linguae*), which corresponds to the already introduced Tongue of God and holds together the Queen’s warp and weft.

“What is the vesture of this Queen? It is one both precious, and also of divers colors: it is the mysteries of doctrine in all the various tongues: one African, one Syrian, one Greek, one Hebrew, one this, and one that; it is these languages [*linguae*] that produce the diverse colors of this vesture. But just as all the diverse colors of the vesture, blend together in the one vesture, so do all the languages in one and the same faith. In that vesture, let there be no rent.”²¹

If Isherwood and Althaus-Reid laid out the characteristics of queer theory as paying attention to the construction of sexuality, the ambivalence of sexual identities and pluralism, all three seem to be at work in Augustine’s depiction of the parading bride and her companions. The bride is one and many, she is precious and various, she is flesh and she is vesture, and her dress consists of a myriad of moving tongues, that utter, moan, lick, move, twist and respond to words/Word.

²⁰ *Luther’s Works, Volume 10, First Lectures on the Psalms I: Psalms 1-75*, Hilton C. Oswald (ed.), (Concordia Publishing House: Saint Louis, Missouri 1973), 219.

²¹ Augustine, *Expositions*, 280.

The groom is endowed with a sword and arrow, which are made out of words, and penetrate the heart, "words that pierce the heart, that kindle love."²² Augustine queers the bride's passion as she gets ready to receive the wounds of groom/Word. "For she speaks of being "wounded with love," that is, of being in love, of being enflamed with passion, of sighing for the bridegroom, from whom she received the arrow of the Word." Augustine, "a matchstick man in a mitre," as Stephen D. Moore quips,²³ readily conjures out of his hat a wellknown bride from Tarsus, erect yet turning prostrate (*adhuc erectur, nondum prostratus*): "By an arrow launched from heaven, Saul (not yet Paul, but still Saul), still lifted up, still not yet prostrate, is wounded in 'the heart': he received the the arrow, he fell in 'heart'...O arrow sharp and most mighty, by which stroke 'Saul' fell so as to become 'Paul'!"²⁴ Who gives what to whom, who receives, who writes whom, and unto what, in these strange dislocations of desire and utterance? For Karmen MacKendrick the erections and prostrations of textual delight intensifies more than it names and locates. "This 'love' is not the answer, even an answer, but a constant refusal of answers, our constant dislocation, the constant cut accross the boundaries of our scheme of comprehension, a series of scars," she writes.²⁵

Augustine reaches his queer climax when the bridal body expands herself in unity and diffusion throughout the cosmos, (*propter unitatem diffusam toto orbe terrarum*).²⁶ The people who constitute the bride confess and strip their hearts, diffused are they "being laid bare, and made manifest, that she may know the whole of herself most completely, who here is, in many parts of her, unknown to herself."²⁷ Body and bodies, tongue and tongues, this excessive expansion of textual (and textile) pleasure, this transgressive writing on the body, this somatic knowing emerges as "polymorphously sensuous", (to use a phrase of MacKendrick's²⁸), is endlessly confessed, stripped, and pierced in the nuptial union of Word and Flesh.

²² Augustine, *Expositions*, 274.

²³ Stephen D. Moore, *God's Beauty Parlor and other Queer Spaces in and Around the Bible*, (Stanford University Press: Stanford CA 2001), 78.

²⁴ Augustine, *Expositions*, 274. For Augustine's usage of the piercing arrow of words in *Expositions and Confessions*, see Henry Fullenwieder, "The Loving Arrow: Pointed Diction in God's Word," *Rhetorica* 8 (Summer 1990), 259-260.

²⁵ Karmen MacKendrick, *Counterpleasures* (State University of New York Press: Albany 1999), 147.

²⁶ Augustine, *Expositions*, 283.

²⁷ Augustine, *Expositions*, 284.

²⁸ MacKendrick, *Counterpleasures*, 35.

Burrus maintains that Augustine's inscription of heteronormative marriage structures is disrupted by his textual infatuation with the figure of *scripturae*. She/they has/have indeed replaced his old girlfriends (*antiquae animae mea*) and opened up a marriage bed with new dimensions of the fidelity, fecundity and sacramentality, which is in striking excess to "the reciprocity of the sexes".²⁹

"His wager seems to be that seduction may thereby be drawn toward the border where time touches eternity – where a libidinous love evokes the reciprocal gift of fidelity without demanding it; exceeds itself in fecundity without commodifying its own productivity; and, finally, embracing all by grasping at nothing, touches on a joy that knows no end. *Fides – proles – sacramentum*. At such a barely imaginable limit-point, marriage has become so expansive – an ever-exceeding love set into the very weave of the cosmos – that he need no longer resist its lure."³⁰

Bishop Einarsson found the marriage of same sex couples to be "simply absurd. For such a marriage would deny the very core of marriage, which is the service to life."³¹ With Althaus-Reid, I would argue that if marriages that write libidinous love on queer bodies is absurd, that absurdity written in flesh is at least truly Augustinian.

Which brings me back to the parading pastors in Gay Pride Reykjavík. The Icelandic pastor had set out to open heterosexual marriage and normativity up to homosexual couples, but might in this rhythm and dance need to explore some of the foundations of sexual normativity itself. These shirted ecclesiastical bodies which symbolically and traditionally are meant to be the models of sexual discipline, prudence and social norms have wandered into a parade, close to people of leather and tattoo, punks, drag queens, "with their own interpretation of happiness", and who flaunt their sexuality in a way which is alien to most church practices. Even the pastor's collared necks start to look strangely queer in this crowd. I am tempted to think that something strange and subversive might be inscribed to clerical bodies in their clerical shirts as they parade. They are on the move as a weird heterosexual intertext in a homosexual, transgendered and intersexual story, crowded with people that are cheering on the sideline and where sexuality, gender and diversity is celebrated unconditionally. If such a deconstruction of heteronormativity is to take place,

²⁹ Conf. VIII:11.27.

³⁰ Burrus, "What is Queer," 19.

³¹ Sigurbjörn Einarsson, "Ég veit vel að Hann heyrir," in: *Fréttablaðið*, 26.

it is not sufficient to solve the homo-question in the church by creating a special ritual for cohabitation. Neither is it sufficient to include homosexual couples in traditional marriage structures (as long as they look and behave like heterosexual couples).

Isherwood writes: “As Christians we are called to live in the world but not of it; this does not stop at the bedroom door, it permeates all aspects of our lives. Fucking queer is a Christian commitment that changes the world.”³² When the celebration of flesh in its queer and performative dimensions is written on theological bodies, when the pastors parade and the ushers are dancing at the floats and the organists cheering, such participation and performance will show the way to radical reevaluations of the Christian doctrines of body, incarnation, sexuality and marriage. Thus, I claim Gay Pride Reykjavík as an excellent place to rethink Christian theology of marriage. “In that vesture, let there be diversity, let there be no rent!”

Augustinus hat einst eine dem Textilbereich entnommene Metapher für die kirchliche Einheit gebraucht. „Lasst Vielfalt herrschen bei diesem Gewand (er meinte die Gewänder der Kirche als der Braut Christi); da sei keine Spaltung.“ Wie kann man sich dann schützen vor den Rissen und Abtrennungen des Gewebes, das die Braut Christi charakterisiert? Wie kann man eine solche theologische Erklärung über die *varietas* im Kontext der ekstatischen Feier der Vielfalt und der Sexualität auf einer *Gay-Pride*-Veranstaltung deuten? Beim theologischen Nachdenken über die *Gay-Pride*-Veranstaltung in Reykjavík möchte ich auf einige queere Aspekte augustinischer Textualität hinweisen und zwei Themen in Augustins Auslegung von Psalm 45 aufgreifen. Die erste Bemerkung dazu betrifft Augustins queere ekklesiale und universale Aneignung der Ehemystik. Mein erster Schritt hat mit Augustins Verschmelzung der Ehemystik mit der Logos-Theologie in seiner Auslegung von Psalm 45 zu tun. Mein zweiter Schritt bezieht sich auf die leidenschaftliche unsentimentale Sprache des Textes als einer Quelle für das theologische Nachdenken über die *Gay-Pride*-Veranstaltung.

San Agustín emplea una metáfora del mundo textil para describir la unidad de la iglesia, diciendo “Dejad que reine la variedad en esa vestimenta (refiriéndose a la vestimenta de la iglesia en tanto novia de Cristo); no habrá escisión” (nota de la traductora: traducción de la traductora). ¿Cómo protegerse entonces de las rasgaduras

³² Lisa Isherwood, “Fucking Straight and the Gospel of Radical Equality,” in: Marcella Althaus-Reid and Lisa Isherwood (eds.), *The Sexual Theologian: Essays on Sex, God and Politics* (T & T Clark: New York 2004), 53.

y desprendimientos del tejido que caracteriza la novia de Cristo? ¿Cómo interpretar esta explicación teológica de la *varietas* en el contexto de la celebración extática de la variedad y de la sexualidad en los eventos *gay pride*? Al pasar revista teológica de los eventos *gay pride* de Reykjavik hablaré de algunos aspectos queer de la textualidad de San Agustín, haciendo especial referencia a dos temas de su interpretación del salmo 45. Tenemos en primer lugar la apropiación queer eclesial y universal de la mística del matrimonio. San Agustín funde aquí la mística del matrimonio con la teología del logos al interpretar el salmo 45. En un segundo paso nos referiremos al lenguaje apasionado e inconvencional del texto que nos sirve de fuente para la reflexión teológica del evento *gay pride*.

Sigridur Gudmarsdottir (*1965), Ph.D. (Drew University, NJ, 2007) has taught at Drew, Winchester and Iceland universities, and is a Lutheran minister in Iceland. Sigridur is publishing her dissertation, *Abyss of God: Flesh, Love and Language in Paul Tillich*, and she writes broadly on mysticism, ecofeminism, queer theory, philosophia prima and poststructuralist theology.