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**Queer I Stand:
Doing Feminist Theology
outside the borders of Colonial Decency**

Queer politics...requires a resistance to regimes of the normal
Jeffrey Escoffier¹

*But if one lifts one's skirt, it is to show one's self –
not to show oneself naked like the truth
(who can believe that the truth remains the truth when one lifts its veil?)*
Jean Baudrillard²

First Indecencies. Lifting the Skirts of God and Strangers

Is theology the art of putting your hands under the skirts of God? If feminist theology is a revelatory theology, concerned with the liberative presence of God in history, and in the history of women, can we then redefine theology as, for instance, a reflection on God closely related to loving arts of intimacy with the Beloved? Can we express in this metaphor an affectionate and historically grounded reflection on God and women, at the margins of heterosexuality? How does Sophia-Wisdom fit into this loving metaphor? Can we lift her skirts?

Using sexual metaphors for theology is not a novelty; the Bible is full of them. However, the novelty (and the indecency) seems to come, whenever we dis-centre the assumed man-woman sexual identities of the dyadic system of Christianity. The point is that in dis-centring the subject of theology, we end by dis-centring God too. I have no intention of producing any theological shock by saying that doing theology may be related to touching God under her skirts,

¹ Cited by Alderson and Anderson in their introduction to: David Alderson / Linda Anderson (eds), *Territories of Desire in Queer Culture* (Manchester University Press: Manchester 2000), 3.

² Jean Baudrillard, cited in Stuart Jeffries, "Body of Evidence" (report of response to *La Vie Sexuelle de Catherine M*) in: *The Guardian Weekend* 30 June 2001, Review, 2.

but simply of making public the closeted affairs between theology and sexual ideology – in other words, of taking this old alliance of theology and heterosexuality out of the sphere of domestic violence and making it public. And this is what we are confronted with in the loving image of putting our hands under the skirts of Sophia-God, by denouncing the immateriality of theology and even feminist theology when they displace the site of women's bodies by transcendental configurations. Unfortunately for us in theology, when transcendence enters the scene, the body leaves. The body may remain of course at a symbolic level of exchange, but the real body, that is the body which speaks of the concreteness of hunger and pleasure, gets displaced. In Feminist Theology, it sometimes gets displaced by desire, if desire is not properly incarnated. The point is that desire may function as an abstraction, and as such, continues rehearsing the revelatory presence of what Butler would call the presence of the ubiquitous Phallus.³ It is precisely that Phallus which represents the transcendental in theology – a Phallus which depends on a Messianic Prototype, that is the prototype of the mystical penis of Christ. However, subversion is a hermeneutical space present in every interpretation. The mystical penis of Jesus can be subverted not by desire, but by pleasure. It is pleasure which, by the heaviness of its concrete allocation, offers feminist theology antidotes to the unnecessary transcendence of the Father's Phallus in Jesus and in God.

These antidotes in theology do not work following dyadic oppositional systems such as God-Father and God-Mother; or as in a discourse about "the feminine side of God" (which by the way assumes that the core of God's identity is heterosexually male, and femininity is just a side or an extra point of view). The metaphor of theology as the act of putting our hands under God's skirts belongs to another frame of thought, more diverse and irreducible. God's skirts are a suitable divine metaphor for material girls in theology which help us to reflect on God in our lives beyond biological, parental metaphors or even dismantle – perhaps – the ghostly look of Sophia Wisdom, and make of her an unreasonable, illogical God, with the kind of wisdom that patriarchal theology does not recognise.

Moreover, the image of touching God in an intimate way is not completely strange for us. As some discourses in Feminist Theologies have identified one of the persons of the Trinity as a lover, touching that lover under her skirt brings

³ See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge: London 1990), 13.

to the realm of theological imagination the reassurance, intimacy, fun and loving dialogue of women and God. In the same way, any metaphor of intimacy with God is a metaphor of mutuality, pleasurable activity and freedom after which neither we nor God are meant to remain the same. God is going to be enriched in the process.

Dislocations: What to Preach? Sex or God?

The first indecent act of the theologian is that recognition that no matter the metaphor you use, theology has been and will remain a sexual praxis. To do theology as an act of defiance, the first rebellions usually come with the awareness that theological reflections are in struggle with heterosexual canonical law. That law is based on a sexual covenant of uniqueness, based on mono-loving activities. Theological Mono-loving is carried through political and economical frames of thought, and it may be necessary to remember here the association between monotheism, monarchism and the subjection of women in marriage contracts. To that theology belongs a practice concerned with reaffirming a particular sexual understanding of the sacred, done by a systematisation of theology and also by liturgical and structural repetitive traditions which have inbuilt sexual, political and economical standpoints. It may be useful to highlight here the concurrency of heterosexual ideological thinking which pervades current theological practices, and can be found from Liberation theologies to Vatican theology, or even some Feminist Theology.

As I am interested in a reflection that may lead us to a praxis of sexual dislocation of theology and ideology, I have called this type of material sexual theology indecent, and its praxis, indecent acts.⁴ I called it indecent because this is a theology the main function of which is to destabilise the decent order, that is a constructed political, social and sexual order which has been ideologically sacralised, and whose moralising objective is based on the dyadic reflection on a dyadic God. I am using here the metaphor of “indecenty” as it comes from my own Latin American context, in order to start a reflection on Queer theology as a sexual and political theology with an option for the poor. Indecency is part of the dialectic of the “decent/indecent” which regulates the individual and community lives of women in my continent by a strict codification of sexual and gender understandings. It circumscribes and carefully supervises the delimited areas of public and private lives by delimiting

⁴ For further discussions on this point see my book, *Indecent Theology. Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics* (Routledge: London 2000)

the territory of the proper and the improper, which by default unveils the Christian sexual construction of society and politics in my continent. The fact is that Christianity has, more than a theology, a sexual programme. The story of colonisation shows this quite distinctively. For instance, Christianity came to Latin America with a sexual intention behind the catechisms intended to produce a conversion not so much to Christ but to the then prevalent European affective patterns of relationships. Although I must concede that little is known of the sexual lives of people in my continent before the arrival of Christianity, it is undeniable that it was different to the Christian European sexual project. The preaching was done on sex, not on God (unless we admit the conceptual interdependency here). This can be seen in history through the struggle for the imposition of European monogamous marriage rituals against the then existent polyamorous unions, homosexual affections and cherished cross-dressing practices which were later de-legalised by becoming non-Christian, and therefore indecent. Yes, Christianity is a sexual project (and not just a gender project, concerned with the subjection of women). However, as we have said before, with every interpretation comes a subversion, and a popular counter-theology of heterosexuality arose in my continent.

For Bigamy and God: Popular Theological Rebellions

I find this point important, because there is a lesson from history here. Is Feminist theology popular? Are Queer theologies rooted in common people's experiences? I must say, yes. Queer theologians find tradition through discontinuation. Indigenous revolts, for instance against the Jesuit missions, were sexual revolts, and as such I consider them part of the church traditions of sexual ideological disruptions. The *Chamames* (religious and political leaders of the Guaraní Nation) called people not to disbelieve in the Virgin Mary and the Trinity, but actively to defend bigamy and concubinage as part of a social, political and religious rebellion against the imposed colonial order. That act was also part of a theological struggle for a different understanding of God and sexuality which has much to do with the way people organise themselves as society. Idolatry was homologised to dissident sexual behaviours.⁵ Therefore, what we can now call a sexual discontent was in reality a discontent with

⁵ I am indebted for these comments to Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World. Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (London: Routledge 2000) particularly the chapter on Latin America, 141-79.

Christianity, and a legal discontent against the state. In many countries the Jesuits had the power to hold civil and criminal courts, and their missions (called *reducciones*, literally “reductions”) had their own jails and system of punishment for sexual offences such as marrying a first cousin or having two wives. For people who have learned their ecclesiastical history through films such as *The Mission*, it may be disappointing to know how the missions separated couples (or triads) and banned otherwise happy and harmonious relations as part of a political and religious hegemonic project. As a document from a group of elders at the time says, the Christians came to destroy the indigenous nations by destroying their happiness in love.

It is important to reflect on this gesture of sexual defiance of the colonies as a challenge to Christian theology, because through it we can see how people perceived that Christian dogmas were to be destabilised by rebelling against the imposition of monogamy or heterosexual affective contracts. There is a methodological issue there, because that was the people’s theology at the time, dismantling oppressive structures of the church not by arguing about the Trinity, but by de-legitimising the Christian sexual project. However, if theology is a sexual act, to stand up for bigamy or polyamorous relationships is to stand also for a queering attitude to Christology, Mariology or the Trinity. Queering theology does not leave theology intact in its systematic structures, traditional positions or ecclesiologies, but uses its own sexual ways of knowing to question the sacred as a heterosexual assumption. That is of course, high sexual revolt in theology. If the theologian puts her hands under the skirts of God, she is establishing a different pattern of dialogue with the sacred and with herself and her community of resistance. This heralds the end of unnecessary transcendence and the beginning of sensual concretisation in theology.

On Queerings: Queering the Theologian

Feminist theology is never neutral, and theologians are not neutral practitioners either. Feminist theologians have ideological and geopolitical investments in their praxis. Christian theology interpellates theologians by making them supposedly “free” to respond to God’s appeal, which is a sexual theological appeal. Freedom, in reality, is what is lacking. The heterosexual appeal of God comes with the understanding of a given. One does not need to be a feminist theologian to participate actively in approving or disapproving the heterosexual ideology of theological methods, in the same way that one does not need to be a liberation theologian to do politics in their theological praxis because sometimes, in/difference does it. In/differentiating habits in theology do not

work for neutrality but for the identity of the stronger ideology. This is the equivalent of the law of the jungle in Christianity. However, a theologian should stand in full consciousness for what she supports, or at least, any theologian working from a liberationist background as myself would do so. Therefore, when I say that I “stand queer”, I want to make clear that I stand in a tension: alone, with full responsibility for my discourse but also with my particular community of struggle. That community is made up of networks of aliens, or the community of strangers who cast a highly suspicious hermeneutic circle in the attempt to unveil the complexity of the sexual base lying below the construction of both the church’s dogmatics and its politics. By doing so, Queer theologies also try to find the presence of the stranger God, who stands outside the classroom definitions of heterosexual thinking, and is amongst us.

Why is it important to take a stance – and more precisely a sexual stance – in doing theology? Is it not, for instance, enough to stand for gender equality in a neo-liberal feminist agenda? If we think that we need to take a sexual stance in theology because lesbians, bisexuals or transvestites are trying to make their own contribution to the so-called theologies of story, and thus reclaiming a space of sharing the presence of God amongst us, that may not be the whole truth. If we think that for instance, bisexuals are – and rightly so – looking for a Christology which may convince the church that they too are children of God, that still may be a partial aspect of a queer theology. I agree that even if the pursuit of sexual equality in the church was the only objective of queer theologies, it should be encouraged as a worthy initiative, for, following a contextual methodology, we know that first we engage with critical reality and then we do theology from it as a second act. Moreover, we may also argue that as we have been using social sciences as mediatory sciences in the liberation hermeneutic circle, we have never considered heterosexuality seriously as ideology, so a different sexual theory should be welcome too.

However, there is always much more to come in the work of queer theologies. For sexual theologies are concerned with structures such as the structures of love and knowledge which regulate affective and political decisions in our lives, run economic thought and may even have exiled God from churches and theology long ago. And that is why for me, a queering theology is an encounter between strangers and a pursuit of God the stranger. God is also queer, perhaps the first queer of all.

Doing feminist theology, then, is an act defined in relation to that sexual act of standing critically in relation to heterosexual ideology. They may be post-Christian or reformist responses; it does not matter. The important point is

that our identity as theologians is shaped somehow in relation to a certain sexual response. Therefore, post-Christians may have a point in trying to break out of that circle of subjection to a condition which limits exchanges and ways to do theology through the given authorised medium of expression. But so do Queer theologians who have extended an alliance of different, plural sexual understanding to issues of church tradition, ecclesiastical history and dogmatics. Moreover, the post-Christian discourse is still a strongly gendered position, while in Queer theologies there is a deeper problematisation of sexual and gender categories. As we all stand for something while doing theology, I like to make clear my geopolitical decisions. I stand as queer amongst queers, as I stand for the circle of hermeneutic suspicion to be taken towards new limits, and for the presence of the strangers of theology to share stories from which a new, different face of God may appear. This is a call for a body theology, but one which embodies the unknown at our gates, the strangers in theology. By encountering those strangers a different body theology occurs; a theology made with the different shapes that come from the encounter. Queering confronts the theologian's own voice and responsibility too, for as Kosofsky Sedgwick has said, the Queer discourse can become so only when the 'I' is present in it.⁶ It is a theology which does not essentialise. In that sense, it is the perfect example of a theology done from someone's story, and the reflection where a theologian stands up in community, in solidarity and in uniqueness. Queer we may stand, with a sense of pride and resistance which comes from the sharing of our own stories and own sufferings, and the silence of a theology which has assumed too many things about sexuality and God. This has been the theology of sexual idealisation, an idealist-based theology now challenged by the materiality of our own strange communities, and the strange God who walks with them.

Queering Gender-Theology

It may be obvious at this point that it is not in reflection on gender, that considerably new sociological category, but in reflection on the sexuality of God that the possibilities of a radical theology exist. By "sexuality of God" I am not simply saying for instance, that God is a gender-fucker, that is, a God for whom gender and sexuality are fluid categories. Neither I am saying that Jesus

⁶ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick quoted by Linda Anderson, "Autobiographical Travesties: The Nostalgic Self in Queer Writing," in: Alderson / Anderson (eds), *Territories of Desire in Queer Culture*, 68-84, here 69.

should be seen exchanging clothes with the Magdalene. What we are pointing at here is the sexual epistemology of salvation.

It is also clear in this context that I am saying that the sexuality of God is not given or disclosed; that it is (to use a metaphor dear to many) closeted, hidden and waiting. The old theological inquiries done long ago, about Jesus' supposed femininity or God's female metaphors (curiously linked to re/production) are such a limited exercise because they never encounter strangers. If gender performances could make a difference, I for one could have started carving a statue of a transvestite, leather-clad and stockinged Christ in the hope of liberating God from dyadic representations as some of my sisters have done "Christas" hanging from their crosses. I say that with the understanding that Christas have been more important than many theological books. Christas made theologians become the voyeurs of a strange God by looking at her exposed nudity transgressing the cross. The presence of the woman on the cross, and the richness of all sort of theological reflections produced by that image have been extensive, but we have still not reached under her skirts. Displaying the symbolics of gender, useful as that is in destabilising theological high truths which are mere gender illusions, will not liberate. If this were not so, I would consider myself to have fulfilled my duties as a believer and as a theologian by simply and only cross-dressing Christ as the Virgin Mary and wondering about the nature of the Messiah's relationships with married men such as Peter. The situation is more complex than that because gender performances actively repeat sexual performances (using Butler's theory) but unless we reach that core of sexual production in gender representations, our analysis will be superficial, or, worse, may even reinforce the idea of sexuality as a given, that dual thinking is a given, that love-knowledge and theological knowledge are different things, that affective relations and economical ones have nothing in common, or that God can be on one side of the political struggle but on the other in sexuality, and that *that* God is straight.

Queer theologians thus are facilitators of the sexual traffic of the church's praxis. They facilitate an encounter amongst strangers which is much more radical than gender-talk. The theological method of sharing sexual stories requires for everybody to engage with honesty in a theology which takes distance from sexual ideologies. It requires for heterosexuals to come out of their own closets too, in order to discuss issues such as monogamy, fidelity and family structures, because they are crucial for Christian theology and practice. Having said that, I for one recognise that when our sisters started with the gender-based inquiry into theology, the path for the improper, for indecency, to

come into theology was opened. As feminist theologians opened the gates to encounter the margins, strangers and Queers started to arrive, and amongst them the Stranger-God came in. Elizabeth Grosz has commented that the sex of the author usually leaves traces in the text, and assumes the reader's sexuality too.⁷ We may say that language and the materiality of bodies constitute the matrix of theology which leaves traces so that to find a Queer, strange God in Christian theology means that we can read a different and even unlawful theology in reverse. It is us, the strangers in Christianity, who now can write the traces of a strange God amongst us. Why would we like to pursue a theological reflection on a strange God? Amongst other things, for political reasons.

Queering Colonial Theology

I remember Althusser's writings on ideology, and an interesting remark made by him concerning "fragments." He sees fragments as carrying with them the full ideological mechanisms that the centre-totality attributes to itself. The theological fragments or "theologies at the margins" to which we are referring here, share a colonial identity in dependency with their own colonial (or neo-colonial) masters. I have argued elsewhere that a God at the margins is not a marginal God.⁸ The latter would be a real God within the margins, and a God with a substantial difference from the charity models which present us with a God coming to our margins, to our borders. It is precisely that movement of coming towards the marginalised which betrays that God. Where does this God belong? Which cartography of salvation has been traced by this movement towards the margins?

The theology at the margins that I would like to pursue as part of a Queer trajectory in theology is not a neo-colonial theology where an economic and affective model of relationships needs to be either expelled from the system or incorporated by providing an understanding alien to what real margins are. Margins are not margins except for within the colonial mentality. The cultural, political and sexual relationship of gods at the margins usually end up ratifying colonial pacts on the materiality of theological practices instead of unsettling them. Theirs are theological projects instead of trajectories and God is a

⁷ See Elizabeth Grosz *Space, Time and Perversion. Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (Routledge: London / New York 1995), 18.

⁸ For further comments on this point see my article, "The Divine Exodus of God," in: Werner G. Jeanrod / Christoph Theobald (eds), *God: Experience and Mystery, Concilium* 289 (2001), 27-33.

modification of power; there is no sense of transgression here, but of normality, with perhaps the exceptions which constitute normality. Those are margins of gender. Those margins are not queer.

If every theology is always a sexual theology the question is how to disrupt this. A gender-based theology does not have a chance, but neither would a sexually-based one (heterosexual or gay) unless the instability of sex is recognised. The problem with heterosexuality, which I consider a respectable sexual option, is heterosexual ideology, in the Marxist sense of a dominant worldview which acts as an un-discussed method of understanding reality. To say that theology is and always has been a reflection rooted in sexual practices means that there is an epistemology which sacralises sexual exchanges and regulations by a circle of a permanent re-configuration of the sacred, based on heterosexuality's symbolic structures and value system. When it is said that theological practices do not come from heaven, I agree. In fact, I think they come from the theologians' own bedrooms, which also mean from the theologians' own closets. What I am saying is that not only is there an important theological contribution to the formation of heterosexual ideologies in the history of the churches, but that that sexual ideological formation is constitutive of the theological praxis itself. However, heterosexual ideologies come with economic, political, racial and specific cultural understandings and interpretation circles.

Queer theology is a theology of loose alliances amongst sexual dissidents which reconfigures different spaces of thinking and relating to each other. Theologically, there are many implications in this.

The Perv's Handbook of Feminist Theological Ethics

Our question now is: what regulatory, decent order has organised the systematic theological sexual discourse in Christianity? Which sort of classroom ideology is behind a theological ethics which reproduces and encourages an attitude of theological submission to one specific epistemological model such as idealised heterosexuality in the making of systematic theology? Judith Butler confronts us with the issue not of the constitution of gender (which in her opinion leaves sex un-theorised), but of the regulatory norms which act in the materialisation of sex; that is, how sexuality is socially constructed.⁹ Following from that, we may like to use hermeneutic suspicion to enquire how sex has been materialised through theological mechanisms. That would be to ask

⁹ See Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (Routledge: London 1993), 10.

what sort of regulatory doctrines of grace and salvation, or what Christologies are responsible for the theological construction of sex?

Moreover, we may like to enquire about the connections between a colonial or neo-colonialist theological framework of thought and those constructions of sexuality which not only gave God a penis, but also regulated what that penis was supposed to do. Here we are in the area of classroom ideology which closes its frontiers with precision but also rules which categories of the indecent should remain hidden in the closets of theology and the theologians. As I have said elsewhere, if Paul Tillich was a fetishist with a penchant for S/M religious symbols, I would not join Mary Daly in condemning him for that, but I would like to highlight the fact that in his theology he never addressed his own sexuality, which remained hidden at the core of his theological identity.¹⁰ If Karl Barth had just paid more attention to the fact that he found marriage somehow a dull experience, we could have had a much needed theology of mistresses long ago. The lack of engagement of theologians with their own sexual context at the moment of their reflections has kept the heterosexual roots of theology as an ideology without alternatives. But heterosexuality also has its own closets and fears, and it has its own ethical irresponsibility too.

I call this a *Perv's Theological Ethics*, because per/version is a concept that can be theologically related to alternative versions or options which it is our duty to imagine. Per/version (as a different version, or understanding) is the methodological path to take against projects of sameness.¹¹ Queer theologies may offer some ethical perversities to consider, as for instance:

- 1) Consensuality: Queer theology is a theology of alliances in agreement with their own diversity, in a consensual loving dynamic. Consensuality here also means dialogic, even if at times that is about code-breaking. A consensual relationship with the church and with God belongs to a different order than the old hierarchical, autocratic style of organising people and theologies to which we are accustomed.
- 2) We start our reflections from our own sexual stories. We lift God's skirts only after having lifted our own. In lifting our skirts we remind ourselves of our own identity at the moment of doing theology while we remain committed to theological honesty. It is from an alliance of sexual epistemologies in disagreement with heterosexual ideology that we reflect on grace, redemption and salvation, and not vice-versa.

¹⁰ Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology*, 146.

¹¹ For an extended commentary on the concept of theological perversions see Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology*, 87.

- 3) From different sexual epistemologies, we may find different ways of understanding not only the salvific project but alternative church structures too. For instance, the role of permutations has a pedagogical function in understanding the complexity of the dynamics of change within the church.¹² The scenes of exchanges between femmes and butches, or men in high heels and women in drag have much to teach the churches about change, the importance of performances and the joy of allowing plurality to be embodied in us. From Leather groups or the community organisation of poor transvestites in Buenos Aires come many lessons about the beauty of the economic and affective alliances of the excluded in the world. Feminist theologies have already discovered that pleasure (the materialisation of desire) is a place to start a theology of the body which dismantles dualisms.

Volver a Nuestras Almas (To Go Back to our Souls)

We may be doing a theology of encountering strangers, including a stranger God and a Queer Messiah, but in the end, Queering theology brings us back to ourselves, to our own lost soul. This queering trajectory is not only about destabilising, for instance, Jesus' sexuality by finding, for instance, bisexual patterns in the Messiah's own understanding of his messianic project (which I have done as part of my Indecent theological reflections), but about doing a theology for all the strangers who are entombed in us. Queering theology may have an indecent redemptive role, by inviting people to come back to themselves.

Volver a nuestras almas (to go back to our souls) is the expression Peruvian indigenous people use when they feel alienated living in the big cities of the white people and in need of a re-encounter with their true identities. They go back to the mountains, and they say "I'm back in the mountains; I have come back to my soul." Strangely, Queer theology also has a praxis of going back to our souls. This is a path made of ruptures and recoveries in order to find our true selves again. People may need to stand queer against Global Capitalism and to understand the importance of the production of new identities at one and the same time in order to do a theology after Seattle, or after Porto Alegre: a theology which reflects the queerness of the revolution in Chiapas under Subcomandante Marcos, where sexual understandings are changing fast as part of a new and different way of thinking politics, economics and the meaning of

¹² For the use of permutation as a hermeneutical choice, see my article, "Sexual Salvation: The Theological Grammar of Voyeurism and Permutation," in: *Literature and Theology* 15/3 (2001), 241-9.

being human, or a healing theology which dismantles false coherences and ideological scripts in theology to allow people to stand up as human beings for a perverse ethics and a perverse theology which dares to take a departure from monolithic controls concerned with law and not with justice. This is the end of unnecessary transcendence and of tradition as industrial re-production.

As theologians, paraphrasing Elspeth Probyn's analysis of Jeanette Winterston's *Oranges are not the only Fruit*,¹³ we may find that the role of theological tradition is to disarrange what we have become as Christian women, that is, that the past shows a discontinuity with our identity as queer theologians. Church traditions may sometimes through their closures and limitations show us our souls by contrast. We are what we were not supposed to be.

This means that a sort of colonial mobilisation is needed when confronting traditions and the history of the church and the theological community. It may be that as in the colonial experience, our Christian past negates us, but by doing so, it also affirms the production of new and multiple identities assumed in our communities. It is precisely that sense of preoccupation with the production of new identities and the role of theological imagination, more than of continuity, which is at the root of a queering theology. What we need is to remake our past, challenging the notion of established links between past and present, or between origins and identity.¹⁴ For Queer, indecent theologies are theologies of disruption which neither look for legitimisation in the past nor for a memory of a harmonious trajectory. It is curious, and *queer*, to discover that, paradoxically, coming back to our souls should not be done through a path of harmony, but in diversity, dis-order and justice. We may say, using words inspired by Pat Califia,¹⁵ that in a theological system which has done its best to wipe out many people, even interfering with their relationship with God, our main duty is to exist. And even if Queer theology is just another utopia kicking against the dogmatics of heterosexual ideology, proving that in the end not even by challenging heterosexual ideology can we transform this world, our duty is still to exist. Doing theology as if touching God under her skirts is a duty of love

¹³ See Elspeth Probyn, *Outside Belongings* (Routledge: London 1996), 112. Compare also Linda Anderson's comments in "Autobiographical Travesties," 72-3.

¹⁴ See Anderson, "Autobiographical Travesties," 72.

¹⁵ Pat Califia writes that "if you live in a society that wishes you didn't exist, anything you do to make yourself happy disrupts its attempt to wipe you out, or at the very least, to make you invisible." See Califia, *Macho Sluts. Erotic Fictions* (Alyson: Boston 1988), 15. I take Califia's "to be happy" as equivalent to the right to have integrity and to write theology with sexual honesty.

and justice and an encounter with God amongst us. May we together, by the grace of God, stand always *queer* with love, courage and a passion for justice.

Dans cet article, je soulève sérieusement la question des débats sur la sexualité dans les théologies féministes, et je le fais en *inversant* les choses. Je me demande ce qui se produirait si nous parlions de Dieu en usant de métaphores sexuelles autres que celles qui proviennent des idéologies hétérosexuelles imprégnant nos discours théologiques. J'emploie la métaphore «faire de la théologie comme si nous soulevions la jupe de Dieu», et j'entends par là démontrer deux choses. D'une part l'autorité qu'a l'idéologie hétérosexuelle aussi parmi les théologiennes féministes (à tel point qu'une métaphore sur une relation d'amour entre Dieu/femme et une femme puisse être perçue comme sacrilège, comme on me le fit remarquer à l'issue de la conférence de l'ESWTR de 2001). D'autre part la nécessité de regrouper en théologie diverses épistémologies sexuelles (ou formes de savoir sexuel). La déstabilisation des idéologies hétérosexuelles est devenue, pour la théologie, une nécessité absolue, si nous voulons radicaliser notre vision de la sexualité, de la politique et de l'économie, étant donné la déshumanisation croissante qu'entraînent le néo-libéralisme et la globalisation.

In diesem Artikel möchte ich die Aufmerksamkeit darauf lenken, was es bedeutet, Themen der Sexualität in feministischen Theologien ernst zu nehmen. Dies tue ich anhand der Frage, was geschieht, wenn wir sexuelle Metaphern für Gott benutzen, die nicht von heterosexuellen Ideologien, die unsere theologischen Diskurse durchziehen, herrühren. Indem ich das Betreiben der Theologie mit der Metapher "den Rocksäum Gottes lüften" beschreibe, möchte ich zwei Dinge demonstrieren. Erstens, dass die heterosexuelle Ideologie sogar unter feministischen TheologInnen Autorität besitzt (dies geht so weit, dass die Metapher einer Liebesbeziehung zwischen Gott/Frau und einer Frau als sakrilegisch erfahren werden kann, wie mir nach der ESWTR-Konferenz 2001 bedeutet wurde). Zweitens geht es um die Notwendigkeit, unterschiedliche sexuelle Epistemologien (oder Formen des sexuellen Wissens) in die Theologie einzugliedern. Die Destabilisierung heterosexueller Ideologien in der Theologie ist ein Projekt, das uns zu dem radikalen sexuellen, politischen und ökonomischen Denken führt, das die Theologie im Kontext entmenschlichender Prozesse des Neoliberalismus und der Globalisierung dringend braucht.

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