CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMIANRY

WHAT'S QUEER ABOUT THE EUCHARIST? A SODOMITICAL THEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF LOUIS-MARIE CHAUVET'S EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FACULTY IN THE CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

BY

JACOB PAUL MAY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MARCH 2026

ABSTRACT

Author: May, Jacob Paul
Institution: Chicago Theological Seminary
Degree Received: MA Religious Studies
Title: What's Queer about the Eucharist? A Sodomitical Theological Critique of Louis-Marie Chauvet's Eucharistic Theology
Supervising Professor: Dr. Bo-Myung Seo

Linn Tonstad's project of sodomitical theology incorporates the anti-social queer theory of Lee Edelman and the queer theology of Marcella Althaus-Reid to underscore the universality of human sinfulness and advocate for solidarity with the marginalized. Louis-Marie Chauvet developed a Eucharistic theology informed by Martin Heidegger's linguistic turn in philosophy and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis. Chauvet describes the Eucharist as a form of symbolic exchange and central to the creation of Christian identity. This thesis demonstrates compatibility between Chauvet and sodomitical theology on the effects of sin and concern for the other, yet a queer critique of Chauvet's Eucharistic theology identifies elided patriarchal and heterosexist dynamics in his account and inattention to the "structural queer." Critiques of Tonstad's theology are engaged, and suggestions for future research are provided.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

The Eucharist has been at the center of Christian practice since the early church. The Eucharist—which also goes by the name of the Lord's Supper or Communion, among others—is considered one of the major sacraments in the Christian faith by many traditions.[1] In three of the Gospel accounts, Jesus takes his disciples into a room on the first day of Passover to eat a Last Supper before his death. He distributes the bread, which he calls his body, and the wine, which he calls his blood.[2] In an earlier account, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells the readers that eating and drinking are acts of remembrance, adding, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."[3] Table fellowship, eating and drinking, and remembrance are connected in this ritual to Jesus's death and coming again.

Debates over the valid practice and orthodox meaning of the Eucharist arose in the early church and have been hallmarks of Christian theological discussion ever since. Christian reflection on the Eucharist has always engaged the diverse and evolving philosophical and metaphysical thought dominating each new context.[4] This thesis engages two such streams in the 20th century, represented by one dominant voice within each and their engagements with Eucharistic theology. The linguistic turn in philosophy shifted Eucharistic debate away from ontological disputation, and towards the semiotics of the ritual, what the signs and symbols embedded therein *mean*. Louis-Marie Chauvet explicates the sacraments—especially the

[1] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction,* 5th ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 404–405.
[2] Lk 22:19–20; Mt 26:26–28; Mk 14:22–24.
[3] 1 Cor 11:26 (NRSVue).
[4] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 414–420.

Eucharist—as "acts of ritual symbolization."[5] Participation in the Eucharist brings one into the symbolic world of Christianity.

The second stream is queer theology, as articulated by Linn Marie Tonstad. As a term that inherently bucks classification and norming, the ambiguity of *queer* theology is one of its strengths and challenges. In general, definitions span from 1) theologies done by queer people—i.e. those with LGBTQ identities, 2) theologies done with special attention to themes of sexuality and gender, and 3) theologies done in engagement with queer theory.[6] Tonstad innovated in applying certain queer theoretical methods and critique to traditional systematic theology. Notably, her monograph, *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude*, uses methods from queer theory to identify the sex and gender logics in various Trinitarian theologies, and she finds heterosexist and patriarchal logics in many of them, including nominally feminist and queer ones.[7] She critiques queer theologies' lack of engagement with prominent themes in queer theory, especially the anti-social turn (also called the negative turn), which embraces the unintelligibility and non-integrability of queerness over against projects of redemption and reformist political progress. Tonstad's radical queer theology is therefore distinguished from mainstream queer theologies based on paradigms of liberal politics and "inclusivity."[8]

---

[5] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Liturgical Press, 1995), 321.

[6] Patrick S. Cheng, *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* (Seabury Books, 2011), 9. See other definitions in Gerard Loughlin, "Introduction: The End of Sex" in *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*, ed. Gerard Loughlin (Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 7–10; Chris Greenough, *Queer Theologies: The Basics* (Routledge, 2020), 4–5; Susannah Cornwall, *Controversies in Queer Theology* (SCM Press, 2011), 24–34; Linn Marie Tonstad, *Queer Theology: Beyond Apologetics* (Cascade Books, 2018), 1–3; and Marcella Althaus-Reid and Lisa Isherwood, "Thinking Theology and Queer Theory," *Feminist Theology* 15, no. 3 (2007), https://doi.org/10.1177/0966735006076168.

[7] Linn Marie Tonstad, *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude* (Routledge, 2016), 1–4.

[8] Linn Marie Tonstad, "The Limits of Inclusion: Queer Theology and Its Others," *Theology & Sexuality* 21, no. 1 (2015), https://doi.org/10.1080/13558358.2015.1115599.

Eucharistic theology is a theological locus ripe for queering because of its inherent embodiedness. Additionally, discourse around temporality is prominent in queer theory, which was significantly impacted by the imminence of mortality during the HIV/AIDS crisis, so to the extent that the Eucharist is about the recalling Jesus's death and reconfiguring one's relationship to the present and future, it invites queer theoretical reflection. The Eucharist involves all of one's senses: sight, touch, sound, smell, and taste. For this reason, Chris Glaser calls a sacrament a "*sensual* spiritual affair."[9] Elizabeth Stuart's queer Eucharistic theology has also been widely discussed. Patrick Cheng highlights how, for Stuart, the Eucharist "symbolizes the erasure of sex," in the transformations of the priest and Christ in the ritual.[10] Andy Beuchal identifies how Stuart sees the Eucharist as parody, as "repetition with a critical difference," following queer theorist Judith Butler.[11] One of the differences that the Eucharist enacts is a different relationship with death, due to its figuring of Christ's resurrection. Tonstad's unique queer theological perspective, engaging the anti-social turn in queer theory and identifying the covert gender and sexual logics in nominally progressive theologies differentiates her project from others.

One theological program that Tonstad has started to develop is a "sodomitical theology," which brings together the anti-social queer theory of Lee Edelman with the "indecent" queer theology of Marcella Althaus-Reid.[12] Her sodomitical theology is premised on the incompleteness and vulnerability of the human subject because of sin, opposition to visions of imaginary wholeness due to their inevitable exclusion of others, and queer reading strategies that

[9] Chris Glaser, *Coming Out as Sacrament* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 15. Emphasis in original.

[10] Patrick S. Cheng, *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* (Seabury Books, 2011), 122. See also the gender fluidity of the priest identified by Sarah Coakley's "The Woman at the Altar: Cosmic Disturbance or Gender Subversion?" in *Anglican Theological Review* 86, no. 1 (2004): 75–93.

[11] Andy Buechel, *That We Might Become God: The Queerness of Creedal Christianity* (Cascade Books, 2015), 71.

[12] Tonstad, "Limits of Inclusion," 16.

highlight the embodiedness of theological reflection and the sexual logics always embedded therein.[13]

This thesis will identify areas of compatibility and then apply a queer critique in the vein of Tonstad's sodomitical theology to Chauvet's Eucharistic theology. Compatibility arises in Chauvet's emphasis on human limitation, embodiment, and a commitment to the other who is unlike oneself. A queer critique helps identify the real bodies of the participants in the Eucharist, the gendered and sexual logics of Chauvet's account of the Eucharist, and attention to the most marginalized others, all of which are elided in Chauvet's account.

Chapter 2 will provide a summary of Tonstad's sodomitical theology. It commences with a brief theoretical overview of the anti-social turn in queer theory, with specific emphasis on Lee Edelman's *No Future* and Tonstad's engagement with him. Next, an overview of Marcella Althaus-Reid's queer theology and Tonstad's engagement with her will be provided, culminating in a summary of Tonstad's "apocalyptic ecclesiology" and its Eucharistic implications as explicated in her *God and Difference*. Chapter 3 will summarize Chauvet's Eucharistic theology, with special emphasis given to the concepts of Symbol, Symbolic Exchange, and the Body—especially in relation to the Eucharist—explicated in his works, *The Sacraments: The Word of God and the Mercy of the Body* and *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*. Chapter 4 will identify areas of compatibility between Chauvet and the anti-social turn in queer theory, then apply a queer critique by identifying the gendered and sexual logics of his account of the Eucharist and drawing attention to the most marginalized others elided therein. It will conclude by considering critiques of sodomitical theology with respect to

[13] Linn Marie Tonstad, "Everything Queer, Nothing Radical," *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* 92, no. 3–4 (2016): 123–128, https://journals.lub.lu.se/index.php/STK/article/download/17214/15591.

themes identified in this thesis. By way of a conclusion, Chapter 5 will summarize the findings of this project and suggest avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 2.

LINN MARIE TONSTAD'S SODOMITICAL THEOLOGY

The quintessential sinner in church history is arguably the sodomite. Sodomy is a capacious term that historically went beyond the typical association with male-male intercourse, but it had doctrinal, ethnic, "political, generational, social, and economic" connotations as well.[14] It was a malleable term that could be deployed against most any rival. For most of church history, the judgment and punishment of the sodomite could not wait until the eschaton, so it was meted out in ecclesial and civil courts.

Tonstad recounts how in the 20th century, with the assistance of modern psychology, "the classic gay-is-good strategy" arose: since homosexuality is natural and innocent, gay people are not bad, not sinners. Indeed, they are sometimes more moral (and fruitful) than male-female couples. To the contrary, *other* sexual violators are sinners. Perhaps homophobic Christians are the *real* sinners.[15] Appeals to the story of Sodom and Gomorrah are common: if the sin of Sodom is actually *inhospitality*,[16] then homophobic Christians are the biggest "sodomites" of all![17] Tonstad's sodomitical theology is a rejection of this common apologetic strategy in queer theology. Moving LGBT people from one side of the sinner versus saint divide *ceteris paribus* is insufficient.

The alternative starting point for Tonstad's sodomitical theology is the "Edelman–Althaus-Reid nexus."[18] In dialogue with Lee Edelman and other exemplars of the anti-social turn

[14] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 124. See also Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (University of Chicago Press, 1997).

[15] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 125.

[16] Prooftexting Ezek 16:49.

[17] Also see Kent L. Brintnall, "Who Weeps for the Sodomite?", in *Sexual Disorientations: Queer Temporalities, Affects, Theologies*, ed. Stephen Moore, Kent Brintnall, and Joseph Marchal (Fordham University Press, 2018).

[18] Tonstad, "Limits of Inclusion," 16.

in queer theory, Tonstad acknowledges the fracturing, incompleteness, and ambiguity at the heart of all humans. This intrinsic lack is theologically termed *sin*. In Peter Kline's words, "sodomitical theology begins with non-integration […] of the self."[19] The sinful nature of the sodomite is embraced, not rejected. On the other side of the nexus, Marcella Althaus-Reid's queer theology foregrounds the lived reality of the "other," of those termed "indecent" by dominant theologies, embracing the queer holiness of transgressing violent imperial regimes of decency. Althaus-Reid uncovers the hidden sexual, economic, and political logics embedded in *all* theology, so one can identify liberative alternatives. Sodomitical theology is a "revolution all the way down," says Tonstad, acknowledging how sex, gender, theology, economics, and politics are always intertwined.[20] The division between good and bad, saint and sinner, has too long resulted in the denial of the means of subsistence and dignity of the latter.

Recalling the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the sodomitical theologian does not displace the violence visited upon homosexuals by shifting the annihilation to another "other." What both Edelman and Althaus-Reid teach the theologian is to identify oneself with the inhabitants of Sodom: "I am a Sodomite."[21] The sodomitical theologian follows the example of Lot's wife who saw the consequences of dividing the sinner from the saint and expressed solidarity with the former, no matter what it cost her: "let us place ourselves with the filthy, underserving, sinners; let us stay with the Sodomites."[22]

[19] Peter Kline, "Against Innocence: Feminism and Original Sin" in *Feminist Theologies: Interstices and Fractures* ed. Rebekah Pryor and Stephen Burns (Fortress Academic, 2023), 10.
[20] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 128.
[21] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 126.
[22] Kline, "Against Innocence," 10.

The Anti-Social Turn in Queer Theory

The anti-social turn in queer theory can be traced to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s, during which the association between homosexuality and death was explored.[23] One of the seminal texts is Leo Bersani's "Is the Rectum a Grave?" published in 1987. In this era, homophobic rhetoric associated the gay community with promiscuity, irresponsibility, and death, and in response, apologetic accounts of gay sexuality asserted its egalitarian and communitarian nature, the classic gay-is-good strategy recounted above. Bersani balked against these apologetic accounts and conceded the widespread hierarchism, racism, and sexism that still persisted in the gay community.[24] Bersani provocatively embraced the "socially abrasive character of gay sexuality"[25] and asserted that the value of gay sexuality is how it demonstrates the risk, vulnerability, and "self-shattering" intrinsic to sexuality in general.[26] Bersani's contributions to the anti-social turn include opposition to "redemptive" accounts of sexuality and embracing the "social *position* of vulnerability" over against accounts focused on gay *identity*.[27] These themes are taken up decades later by Lee Edelman.

The text most associated with the antisocial turn in queer theory is Edelman's 2004 *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, in which he recounts how both conservative and progressive political projects "work[] to affirm a structure, to authenticate a social order," a process he terms "reproductive futurism."[28] These political visions of the future often promise "a

[23] Hannah McCann and Whitney Monaghan, *Queer Theory Now: From Foundations to Futures* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 218.

[24] Leo Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?", in *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays* (The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 204–212.

[25] Jack Slater, "Turned queerly inwards: sin, queerness and Leo Bersani's homo-narcissism," *Theology & Sexuality* 29, no. 1 (2023): 7, https://doi.org/10.1080/13558358.2023.2242269.

[26] Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?", 222.

[27] McCann and Monaghan, *Queer Theory Now*, 219. Emphasis in original.

[28] Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Duke University Press, 2004), 2–3.

fully unified community, a fully realized social order […] the fullness of the future to come,"[29] in which "the narrative sequence of history [and desire]" is fulfilled and "Imaginary wholeness" is achieved.[30]

The problem with such visions of a perfect social order is that they always require an abjected other, argues Edelman, who provokes anxiety and poses a threat that must be eliminated. The borders of any perfect social order must be policed, and those who do not fit must therefore be removed. Even many progressive and LGBTQ-affirming visions of the future do this (e.g. the homeless, the Muslim, etc.). Like Bersani, Edelman defines "queer" not as an identity, but as those who occupy this abjected "structural position," that is, the structural queer.[31]

Another key contribution is Edelman identifying the figure of "the Child" to be a common rhetorical strategy for justifying reproductive futurism. In political debates, the claim that one is fighting for "the children" is a trump card that renders any opposition impossible.[32] The Child is the "fantasmatic beneficiary" of politics, always on the "perpetual horizon."[33] The needs of the hypothetical Child trump the real needs of existing humans. Indeed, the Child is not to be conflated with any actual historical children, as actual children are often victims of the narrow vision of the social order promised to the Child.[34]

Queer of color critiques have rightly subjected Edelman's thesis to much scrutiny. For example, James Bliss argues against the "assumed whiteness of the anti-social project."[35] The most common foil though to Edelman's project is José Esteban Muñoz's 2009 text, *Cruising*

---

[29] Lee Edelman, "Ever After: History, Negativity, and the Social," in *After Sex? On Writing since Queer Theory*, ed. Janet Halley and Andrew Parker (Duke University Press, 2011), 115.
[30] Edelman, *No Future*, 10–11.
[31] Edelman, *No Future*, 24.
[32] Edelman, *No Future*, 2.
[33] Edelman, *No Future*, 3.
[34] Brintnall, "Preface," xv.
[35] McCann and Monaghan, *Queer Theory Now*, 222.

Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity. Muñoz identifies the elided racialization of the Child in *No Future*: "this monolithic figure of the [Child] is indeed always already white."[36] Black and otherwise racialized children are largely *not* considered in social visions of the future. They are disproportionately victims of hate crimes, already cast as the abjected Other. Muñoz argues for using queerness to "imagine a future." He argues that the LGBT community must "dream and enact […] ultimately new worlds," drawing from past experience.[37] On the other hand, some theorists of color are sympathetic to Edelman and the anti-social turn. Frank Wilderson III co-chaired a 2021 panel with Edelman on Afropessimism and queer theory. Both theories are about finding oneself in the abjected structural position, outside of the Symbolic order, and therefore "unintelligible."[38] Queer of color critiques have compelled Edelman to better articulate his theory's relationship with race, which he engages in his 2024 *Bad Education: Why Queer Theory Teaches Us Nothing*.[39]

Linn Tonstad and Lee Edelman

In her 2015 article, "The Limits of Inclusion: Queer Theology and Its Others," Linn Tonstad identifies Lee Edelman's work, alongside Marcella Althaus-Reid's, as a "desirable methodological starting point for queer theology."[40] In that article, she specifically identifies how Edelman warns that "the projection forward of a positive political—we might add, theological—program for the full flourishing of all humans serves as a site of constraint rather than

[36] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Theory* (New York University Press, 2009), 45.

[37] Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 1.

[38] Eyo Ewara, "For Estrangement: Queerness, Blackness, and Unintelligibility," *Philosophy Compass* 18, no. 3 (March 2023): 2–4, https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12897.

[39] Lee Edelman, *Bad Education: Why Queer Theory Teaches Us Nothing* (Duke University Press, 2022), 21–31.

[40] Tonstad, "Limits of Inclusion," 16.

possibility."[41] Indeed, Tonstad rehearses many of the themes recounted above characterizing the anti-social turn in queer theory. She agrees with anti-social theorists' concerns about the "risky effects of imagining an authentic, full humanity."[42] In other words: "expanding the boundaries of what counts as the human—rendering others fully human as well—does not shift the need to distinguish the human from the inhuman."[43]

Tonstad takes the side of the anti-social theorist who opposes "queer" political programs that focus on assimilation, recognition, and integration of LGBTQ people into the present social order. She takes her cue from Edelman to develop her account of the risk of normative visions of humanity in creating abjected others: "The hope of a fully unified community becomes an alibi for the violence directed against whomever stands in for 'the obstacle destabilizing every unity.'"[44] Even in progressive visions of humanity, there are those "whose very insistence bespeaks non-integration, the one who cannot be tolerated within a program devoted to tolerance and unity, to the flourishing of all."[45] One example she highlights is how progressive and even "queer" images of Jesus—with his message of inclusion, mercy, and transgression against norms—are contrasted against his alleged background of "Jewish ethnocentrism, legalism and patriarchy," activating precisely those harmful antisemitic tropes.[46] This is an example of how queer Christian strategies for LGBTQ inclusion can rely on the creation of the image of the exclusive Jew, forming a new abjected other.

In her monograph, *God and Difference*, Tonstad presents her most sustained engagement with Edelman in her development of an "apocalyptic ecclesiology."[47] This ecclesiology takes

[41] Tonstad, "Limits of Inclusion," 16.
[42] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 123.
[43] Tonstad, "Limits of Inclusion," 16.
[44] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 123.
[45] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 123.
[46] Tonstad, "Limits of Inclusion," 3.
[47] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 254.

Edelman's critiques of reproductive futurism seriously and applies them to the ways in which the church reproduces itself socially and symbolically. One need not look far for accounts of the church that are based in the pious reproduction of the faith from generation to generation. Orthodox doctrine, the sacraments, and holy orders are "handed down from ecclesial father to ecclesial son through faithful nonsexual reproduction."[48] In this way, the church participates in reproductive futurism. Appeals and adherence to this lineage often serve to affirm and authenticate the social order envisioned by the church. Progressive and otherwise LGBT-affirming churches are not exempt from this participation in reproductive futurism. Tonstad points to open and affirming churches, for example, that offer "nothing more than an expansion of what already exists to include gays and lesbians."[49]

Churches are among the most prominent users of "the Child" in political rhetoric. The flurry of anti-LGBT activism from evangelical churches is stark evidence of how "think of the children" rhetoric is deployed against "the indecent poor," "predatory gays," and more.[50] Again, conservative churches are not the only ones who use "the Child" in political rhetoric, but progressive churches use the rhetoric of the Child too. Arguing for expanding social recognition to LGBT folks via marriage equality or equal civil rights often takes the form of appeals to the mental and emotional wellbeing of the LGBT child. This strategy upholds and simply refigures the existing social order, foreclosing more radical, structural changes. It is a participation in reproductive futurism.

The alternative to the church's ecclesial reproduction is an apocalyptic ecclesiology. Tonstad argues that the "apocalyptic orientation of Christianity […] changes the church's relation

[48] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 258.
[49] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 256.
[50] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 267.

to time."[51] Edelman's refusal of the reproduction of the current social order is compatible with the apocalyptic implications of Jesus's death, resurrection, and second coming in Christian theology. They both embrace a radical break with the current social order, over against the conservative political impulse of the logic of the Child. Both Edelman's project and apocalypticism embrace "the end of history's reproduction of sameness."[52]

Importantly, this apocalyptic break does not legitimate the queer's or the church's vision of a new ideal social order. As rehearsed *supra*, anti-social queer anthropology cautions against images of imaginary wholeness for the individual and for society. This stance finds theological precedent in Protestant, especially Lutheran, anthropology for Tonstad. Both the anti-social queer theorist and the Reformer "worr[y] about human capacities for self-deception and for doing evil in the name of seeking the good."[53] The fallenness of humanity precludes one's ability to envision and enact such a society. Asserting one's goodness and worthiness to extend—and refuse—social recognition to various others "assumes a self-transparency and motivational purity that are illegitimate on theological as well as theoretical grounds."[54] Rather than the church seeing itself as the judge of the age, the church should remember it "stands under judgment," a critical component of apocalypticism.[55]

Marcella Althaus-Reid: Reading Queerly and Indecently

One major influence on Tonstad's theology is the late Argentinian queer theologian, Marcella Althaus-Reid. Althaus-Reid's project started as a critique of Latin American liberation

[51] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 269.
[52] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 273.
[53] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 123.
[54] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 270.
[55] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 273.

theologies for their failures to consider gender and sexuality in their activism on behalf of the poor and marginalized. The liberation theologian overlooked how economic oppression and oppression based on gender and sexuality are interconnected. While liberation theologians upheld the image of a "broad Eucharistic table, surrounded with enough chairs for everybody," they "systematically denied chairs to […] women [and] non-heterosexual people."[56] Althaus-Reid argued for a materialist theology that foregrounded the experiences of those marginalized by heteronormative theology for their gender and sexual practices.[57] An instructive image in Althaus-Reid's work is found in the opening pages of *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics*, where she describes the female lemon vendors on the streets of Buenos Aires going about their work without underwear, a metaphor that explicitly "brings together sexuality and economics."[58] Althaus-Reid's work can be seen as the theologian similarly doing theology "without underwear." As Tonstad says, "Marcella Althaus-Reid makes clear that theology is always sexual, always economic, and always political."[59]

One major contribution of *Indecent Theology* is the demonstration that "every theological discourse is implicitly a sexual discourse."[60] Traditional Christian theology is a heterosexual theology, and it was exported to Latin America during colonization. Althaus Reid terms this traditional, heterosexual theology "totalitarian theology" or "T-theology" for short. T-theology created a binary of decency/indecency, wherein those practicing dominant heterosexuality were considered "decent," and all others who diverged from that norm were considered "indecent,"

---

[56] Marcella Althaus-Reid, "Demythologising liberation theology: reflections on power, poverty and sexuality," in *Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, ed. Christopher Rowland (Cambridge University Press: 2007), 124, 127.

[57] Thia Cooper, *Queer and Indecent: An Introduction to Marcella Althaus Reid* (SCM Press, 2021), 1–2.

[58] Marcella Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics* (Routledge, 2000), 1–2.

[59] Linn Marie Tonstad, "Dios, el sodomita" (presentation, La Internacional Cuir: La Indecencia y el Futuro de la Teología, Buenos Aires, October 15, 2016).

[60] Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology*, 22.

with its attendant characteristics of impropriety, disorder, and sinfulness. In her Argentinian context, homosexuals, sex workers, trans people, and independent women were all considered "indecent." Dominant heteronormativity marginalized those considered indecent in the political and economic spheres as well.[61] This system is reinforced by a sexual theology replete with fathers, sons, and virgins, which undergirds its sexual ethical demands. T-theology's "theological calculations" justified how liberation theologians "reduce[d] the list of those invited to the [Eucharist] to a select number."[62]

Confronting T-theology is the process of "indecenting" theology. As a verb, "indecenting is a way to unveil sexual ideologies in theology," says Althaus-Reid.[63] The goal of her project of Indecent Theology is to "destabilize the decent order, that is a constructed political, social, and sexual order."[64] After confronting and destabilizing T-theology, indecenting requires enabling and promoting a diversity of new, indecent theologies that foreground one's own gender, sexual, and economic particularity. In this way, indecenting includes a constructive component that does not posit one new "correct" theology but is a diverse process—"*caminata*"[65]—of reflection and action and reflection again by the marginalized wherever they are found, not based on some ideal or "normal" but on the realities of the lives of sexual and economic others.[66] Importantly, indecenting is closely related to the method of "queering" from queer theory, where the "hermeneutics of suspicion" are applied to theological texts.[67]

---

[61] Cooper, *Queer and Indecent*, 99–100.

[62] Marcella Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God* (Routledge, 2003), 70.

[63] Marcella Althaus-Reid, "Doing a Theology from Disappeared Bodies: Theology, Sexuality, and the Excluded Bodies of the Discourses of Latin America," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*, eds. S. Briggs and M. M. Fulkerson (Oxford University Press, 2011), 448.

[64] Marcella Althaus-Reid, "Queer I Stand: Lifting the Skirts of God," in *The Sexual Theologian: Essays on Sex, God and Politics*, ed. Marcella Althaus-Reid and Linda Isherwood (T&T Clark International, 2004), 25.

[65] Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology*, 6. Emphasis in original.

[66] Cooper, *Queer and Indecent*, 105–107.

[67] Cooper, *Queer and Indecent*, 123.

One example of doctrinal "queering" can be found in Althaus-Reid's queer sacramentology. It is primarily explicated through her reading of the French novel, *Roberte ce Soir*, by Pierre Klossowski, in which a theologian, Octave, and his wife, Roberte, invite a "stranger at the gate"—Count della Santa-Sede, an emissary of the Vatican—into their home. What transpires next is a confusion of identities between the host and the stranger. The gratuitous and queer hospitality of Octave, through the merging of identities with the stranger, leads to the sexual sharing of Roberte with him. Althaus-Reid sees in this image a queer sacramentality, that masters become guests and guests become hosts.[68] This "radical exchange of identities" is a "truly Eucharistic exchange."[69] This reversal of identities and sacramental transgression of decency is *not* found in the Catholic Eucharists that Althaus-Reid sees in Latin America, as women and homosexuals are excluded.[70] They also lack the "festivities of the plaza" and the "voices of protest"[71] that characterize the indigenous celebrations that play with the reversal of identities. Althaus-Reid's queer sacramentology, with its merging and exchanging of identities, can find practical application in, for example, opening the celebration of the Eucharist to the laity.[72]

Because "Queer Theology is an incarnated, body theology" for Althaus Reid,[73] the starting point for theological reflection is real-life bodies, especially of women, LGBT folks, and those from the global south—not the idealized bodies of men that have historically been assumed in the canons of Western theological reflection. Moreover, even the patriarchal brown bodies of male Catholic liberation theologians and conformist bodies of respectable women reflect the

[68] Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 64.
[69] Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 72.
[70] Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 122.
[71] Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 122.
[72] Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 123.
[73] Althaus-Reid, "Thinking Theology," 309.

decency of T-theology that Althaus-Reid critiques. The lemon vendor—or theologian—without underwear is the indecent model, because "God is inscribed in the passion and sufferings of concrete women's bodies."[74] The Eucharistic image Althaus-Reid uses is the "bushy armpits" of the "real bodies" of women.[75] Related sacramentally, the "freedom and gratitude" that are central to the Eucharist can only work if the ritual takes seriously the real-life bodies of the congregation—"the body 'as-is.'" For Althaus-Reid, the Eucharist is a gathering and communion in real life, both "concrete" and "transcendental."[76]

Althaus-Reid's indecent theology was a trailblazing work of queer theology that refocused liberation theologies onto the real lives of the poor and oppressed—especially those of sexual and gender minorities. She used feminist and queer theory to identify the sexual and gendered logics harbored in dominant theologies and charged subsequent generations of theologians to do theology without underwear.[77] This image highlights how the body, theology, and economics are always tied together, a theme that is engaged by subsequent queer theologians, not least Linn Tonstad.

Tonstad's Queer Eucharistic Theology

In *God and Difference*, Tonstad identifies and deploys several queer reading strategies, which can also be found in Althaus-Reid's work: "over-literalization, catachresis, and other forms of mimesis."[78] The strategy of over-literalization "make[s] visible how a theology

[74] Marcella Althaus-Reid, "'Pussy, Queen of Pirates': Acker, Isherwood, and the Debate on the Body in Feminist Theology," *Feminist Theology* 12 no. 2 (2004): 159, https://doi.org/10.1177/096673500401200204.

[75] Althaus-Reid, "Pussy, Queen of Pirates," 158.

[76] Althaus-Reid, "Pussy, Queen of Pirates," 169–160.

[77] Mark Jordan quite literally recommends this exercise to readers. See Mark D. Jordan, *Transforming Fire: Imagining Christian Teaching* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 55.

[78] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 204.

works."[79] Metaphor and analogy are a common theological tools, and their use—especially in theological work—requires a disjunction between the source and target domains, sometimes explicitly limited by the theologian (e.g. God as Father but not a literal human father).[80] Tonstad is concerned with how imagery—especially gender and sexual imagery—works in ways beyond its original intended use and how it "activates […] deeply embedded affective registers," which can be illuminating.[81] Catachresis means the "misuse" of a term, which involves linguistically forcing a new meaning on a term, which can be an "impropriety and an opportunity," as it exposes a reconfigured relation to that sign."[82] In Edelman, for example, catachresis is a central concept, as "queerness" signals that which occupies the place of unintelligibility, that which cannot be said.[83] Of course, queerness is then referenced throughout his texts. These strategies inform Tonstad's queer reading or "queering" of theological texts.

The intersection of sexuality, economics, and theology is a central focus of Tonstad's use of Althaus-Reid, to which Tonstad devotes a chapter in her introductory, *Queer Theology: Beyond Apologetics*.[84] Just as Althaus-Reid made central the lives of the sexual Others that T-theology and liberation theology excluded, Tonstad is concerned about the "Others" in theology, including the "unrecognized Other who may remain unknowable by me."[85] In this way, Althaus-Reid's program complements the anti-social queer project's caution against creating abjected others in the imagining of a whole social order. The destabilization inherent to and open-endedness of Althaus-Reid's theology is also compatible with Edelman's critique of a "vision of

[79] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 204.
[80] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 29.
[81] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 49n9.
[82] Sîan Melvill Hawthorne and Adriaan S. van Klinken, "Catachresis: Religion, Gender, and Postcoloniality," *Religion & Gender*, 3, no. 2 (2013): 160, https://doi.org/10.18352/rg.9170.
[83] Edelman, *Bad Education*, xv.
[84] Tonstad, *Queer Theology*, 78–103.
[85] Tonstad, "Limits of Inclusion," 16.

a harmonized future."[86] Both Edelman's anti-social queer theory and Althaus-Reid's indecent queer theology work hand-in-hand to inform Tonstad's ecclesiology and related sacramentology.

The Eucharistic theology developed in Tonstad's *God and Difference* takes seriously the image of "all seated around the banquet table," following Althaus-Reid's critiques of Latin American Liberation theology.[87] It is also attendant to Edelman's concern that images of social wholeness will turn out to exclude new abjected others. For Tonstad, "all" being seated at the banquet animates her Eucharistic theology through her emphasis on the "colocality" inherent in the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, Christ's body and the elements are present "in the same place at the same time." The implication for the church is that human diversity can also be present in the same place and time, without "crowd[ing] each other out." The colocality of Christ in the Eucharist is an image of the colocality of human bodies.[88]

For this reason, the Eucharistic theology of "impanation" is preferred to the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. The Reformation doctrine of impanation "endeavoured to safeguard a belief in the Real Presence while denying the destruction of the substance of the natural elements."[89] For this reason, Tonstad describes the doctrine as fundamentally "additive."[90] That is, Christ's body exists in the same space as the elements, without the reduction of either one. Moreover, Christ's body is "omnipresent and potentially infinitely multipliable" in the geographically diverse and enduring celebrations of the Eucharist across space and time. Taylor Driggers summarizes Tonstad's queer Eucharist as an "image of loving coinhabitance within the church as the Body of Christ that transgresses bodily, identitarian,

---

[86] Kristien Justaert, "Dancing in the Dark: Marcella Althaus-Reid and Negative Queer Theory," *Feminist Theology* 26, no. 3 (2018): 235–236, https://doi.org/10.1177/0966735018759450.

[87] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 238.

[88] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 239.

[89] F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds., "Impanation," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 2005), https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780192802903.001.0001.

[90] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 240.

geographical, and institutional boundaries without assimilation into an undifferentiated sameness."[91]

The materiality of the Eucharist is also not lost on Tonstad, who affirms the need for an economic, sexual, and gendered analysis of the Eucharist, which are, as Althaus-Reid demonstrated, implicated in all theologies. Baking bread and making wine is an embodied and economic process. The congregation's tithes pay to purchase the elements. In some traditions, women are excluded from celebrating the eucharist, and their primary contribution is through breaking the bread.[92] The Eucharist cannot be reduced to solely the moments in which the celebrant vocalizes the words of the liturgy and the congregation receives the elements.

In her imagining of the Eucharist, Tonstad filters the sacrament through the Edelman–Altaus-Reid nexus that subtends her sodomitical theology. It opens the Eucharistic table to the "other," even the other unknowable to me. A theology of impanation implies a Christ who does not displace the other when showing up amongst us. The Eucharist is also an inherently bodily—economic, social, and political—practice, and attention to these aspects is necessary in any theological reflection on the ritual.

[91] Taylor Driggers, "Feasting at the Threshold: Eucharistic Eroticism and Homonationalism in Diane Duane's *The Tale of the Five*," *Mythlore* 43, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2025): 111.

[92] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 240–241.

CHAPTER 3

LOUIS-MARIE CHAUVET'S EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY

Louis-Marie Chauvet is a French priest who was born in a Catholic region of the Vendée and was a professor at the Institut Catholique of Paris for many years. He made significant contributions to Eucharistic theology after Vatican II, engaging many of the major postmodern voices in philosophy during the 20th century, especially Martin Heidegger's linguistic turn in philosophy and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis.[93] Chauvet is considered an important and impactful voice in contemporary sacramental theology, with significant influence beyond the Catholic Church, having inspiring prolific reflection.[94]

This chapter identifies three core concepts in Chauvet's thought, as related to his Eucharistic theology, which are pertinent to the queer critiques developed in this thesis. First, as can be seen in the title of one of his texts, *Symbol and Sacrament*, the concept of "symbol" is a governing one in Chauvet's thought. *Symbols* are how subjects create meaning in the world and are themselves created as subjects. Second, *symbolic exchange* is one type of exchange that societies perform, which powerfully grants and denies membership in a social group and subjecthood according to its standards. The Eucharist is a type of symbolic exchange that forms Christian subjects. Finally, Chauvet places a premium on *the body* and corporeality in his discussion of the Eucharist as a primarily embodied act and as the site where subjects are made by symbols and affected by sin.

[93] Xavier M. Montecel, *Communion in Hope: Liturgy and Ethics in the Key of Virtue* (PhD diss., Boston College, 2021), 26, https://ur.bc.edu/system/files/2025-04/bc-ir109303.pdf.

[94] Lizette Larson-Miller, *Sacramentality Renewed: Contemporary Conversations in Sacramental Theology* (Liturgical Press, 2016), xiv.

Sign and Symbol

The symbol is a key concept for Chauvet, because symbols order all of reality. Symbols give meaning to the world in which we live. Moreover, symbols give meaning to subjects in the world. The formation of Christian identity is therefore a process of building a certain symbolic world, and the sacraments—especially the Eucharist—are a key component of Christian identity formation.

Chauvet's theology it built on a critique of scholastic theology and the philosophy that informed it. One of the traditional dichotomies in the Western philosophical tradition is that between being and language. Plato in particular "maps a separation between the sensible and intelligible realms."[95] Reality is what can be sensed, touched, and held. It can be directly encountered without the mediation of language. Language is a secondary phenomenon. It is a "tool" or "instrument" that humans use to describe and discuss the real world they encounter. The truthfulness of language is determined by how close or how far it corresponds with that reality.[96] The assumption within this "instrumentalist" view of language is that there is some real, unmediated reality behind the phenomenon of language that is accessible. Theologically, it may be said that "sin" is the barrier between reality and our language's grasp of it.[97]

In traditional Western sacramental theology, the dichotomy between being and language is analogous with the dichotomy between the efficacious effect of the sacraments and their outward "sign." According to Chauvet, this has led to a distinctive defect in the tradition's approach to the sacraments.[98] What matters is the "operative means of producing grace in the

---

[95] Kornelius Supranoto Bardata, *A Descriptive Assessment of Sacrament as Language Events in Louis-Marie Chauvet and David Noel Power* (PhD diss., University of St. Joseph Macau, 2017), 17–18, https://files01.core.ac.uk/download/pdf/84689402.pdf.

[96] Bardata *Sacraments as Language Events*, 18–19.

[97] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God and the Mercy of the Body*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Liturgical Press, 2001), 4.

[98] Bardata *Sacraments as Language Events*, 26.

soul," and the symbols themselves and the subjects participating in the symbols have become less important. For instance, carefully following the script of the Eucharist in order to efficaciously produce the desired effects has in some quarters become more important than the meaning of the action, says Chauvet.[99]

As an alternative to language (and the sacraments) serving as instrumental signs, pointing to a (spiritual) reality behind them, Chauvet proposes that sacraments should be understood as "symbols." For Chauvet, the definition of "symbol" starts in its etymology from the Greek *sym-ballein*, meaning "to put together, to place side by side the elements of a whole."[100] He presents the historical context of the *sym-ballein* as a literal paper contract that is cut in half with particular jagged edges, so when the two parties present the contract at a later date, they can be confirmed by fitting the edges together like pieces of a puzzle. The *sym-ballein* shows that two parties are governed by the same contract, and a symbol likewise invites subjects into a shared understanding of the world.

The difference between sign and symbol is explained in several different ways by Chauvet. The sign belongs to the instrumentalist understanding of language. A sign is used for the "transmission of information or knowledge" about the outside world.[101] For example, scientific discourse primarily works in signs.[102] It encodes data about reality into language. A symbol, on the other hand, "does not refer [] to something of another order than itself; rather, its function is to introduce us into an order to which it itself belongs," writes Chauvet, quoting Edmond Ortigues.[103] In contrast to the sign in scientific discourse, the symbol is at work in Van

[99] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 10.
[100] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 14.
[101] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 76.
[102] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 80–81.
[103] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 113.

Gogh's painting of the peasant shoes, for example.[104] Van Gogh is not attempting to communicate information or knowledge about shoes. On the contrary, the image invites the viewer into a world of the poverty yet humble dignity of the rural 19th century peasant. Another example Chauvet presents is that of a stone from the Berlin Wall. To those who share the same symbolic world, the stone represents Communist dictatorship, but outside of it, the stone is simply like any rock found on a hike.[105] To give a theological example, to a non-Christian, someone performing the sign of the cross is just a random gesticulation.[106] Like the *sym-ballein*, the symbol brings multiple parties into a shared understanding of the world.

Symbols have four functions, states Chauvet: "(1) fitting together, (2) crystallization, (3) recognition (or identification), and (4) submission to a communal Other."[107] Just like the jagged edges of a contract fitting together, *fittingness* occurs when subjects share the same symbolic world. For those unfamiliar with the Cold War, a stone from the Berlin wall is just a stone. To an Amazonian tribe, Van Gogh's shoes are just a curiosity. One is operating on the level of the symbolic when the symbol fits into the whole. *Crystallization* naturally occurs in this symbolic world as shared symbols "spontaneously" become "precipitates" of meaning. In the Cold War context, the Berlin Wall simply *is* Communist dictatorship in a very real way. *Recognition* occurs when two subjects see themselves as a part of the same symbolic world.[108] Just as the two parties in a contract recognize each other as such in the example of the *sym-ballein*, one Christian who sees another perform the sign of the cross both find each other as subjects in the same symbolic world, for example. Whereas signs are about the relation between a subject and an object, the

[104] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 81.
[105] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 69–72.
[106] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 75.
[107] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 70.
[108] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 70–73.

symbol is about the relation between subjects. The "symbol assigns a place to a subject."[109] Finally, the recognition of a shared *Other* is implied by the symbol. The historical *sym-ballein* only works because of the shared law governing contracts. Those who share the same symbolic order fall under the same Other. This Other is typically God for the religious, but it can be an ideology, tradition, or literal law in other contexts. The Berlin Wall signifies Communist dictatorship to those under the shared Western democratic ideal. The sign of the cross signifies grace to the believer. This shared Other creates a shared community.[110] For Chauvet, the symbol is the means by which humans are "able to recognize one another and discover their own identity."[111]

Every culture is full of symbols in the religious, economic, social, and political spheres which are interconnected in order to make meaning. Subjects encounter a multitude of symbols that work together in a seemingly "coherent pattern" to create the symbolic world in which they exist, called the *symbolic order*.[112] Humans communicate with one another and God "always within the context of a language and culture that preexists them."[113] As seen above, symbols do not point outside to some "real" reality out there (as signs ostensibly do), but this interconnected web of symbols *is* the world in which subjects live and how we create meaning within it. Indeed, it is how subjects *are themselves created as subjects*. From infancy, meaning in the world is created by the symbols we encounter, and we in turn learn how to integrate ourselves into that world as subjects.[114]

---

[109] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 74.

[110] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 74.

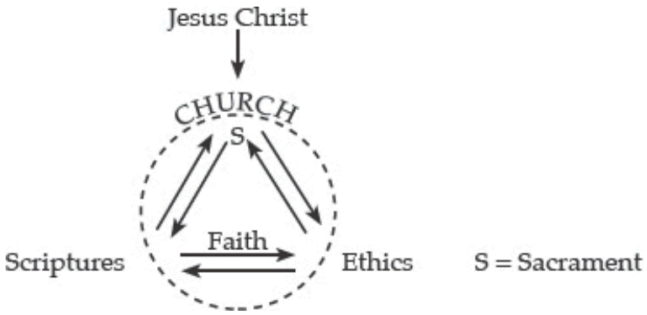
[111] Judith M. Kubicki, "Sacramental Symbols in a Time of Violence and Disruption: Shaping ad People of Hope and Eschatological Vision," in *Sacraments: Revelation and the Humanity of God; Engaging the Fundamental Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet*, ed. Philippe Bordeyne and Bruce T. Morrill (Liturgical Press, 2008), 174.

[112] Kubicki, "Sacramental Symbols," 175.

[113] Rhodora E. Beaton, *Embodied Words, Spoken Signs: Sacramentality and the Word in Rahner and Chauvet* (Fortress Press, 2014), 148.

[114] Bardata *Sacraments as Language Events*, 39.

For Chauvet, the goal of the Christian theologian is to create a symbolic order proper to Christianity and to create *Christian subjects* in particular. To be Christian, Chauvet says, one "must be part of the symbolic order proper to the church."[115] In *The Sacraments*, Chauvet provides the following diagram, which illustrates the dynamics of Christian identity:



Christian identity exists within the dotted circle of the church. While the circle encloses Christian identity, the dotted nature of the line represents Christian openness to the world and openness to Christ in the church, a rejection of Christian ghettoization. Constituting the triangle within the church are the three "marks" of Christian identity: *sacrament*, *Scriptures*, and *ethics*.[116] For the purposes of this thesis, the most important is sacrament. Amongst the sacraments, the Eucharist is the "summit" because "through participation in Christ's eucharistic body […] one is fully integrated into the ecclesial body."[117] Chauvet calls the church the "common 'womb'" within which one must live in order to be a Christian subject.[118] The Eucharist is therefore a key symbol in the formation of Christian identity. The symbolic action of the Eucharistic liturgy takes the form of a *symbolic exchange*, which will be explicated subsequently.

[115] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 17.
[116] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 28–31.
[117] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 30.
[118] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 33.

Symbolic Exchange and the Eucharist

Drawing from Marcel Mauss' 1925 "Essai sur le don," Chauvet describes a system of exchange in a society that is based on gift-giving, gratuity, and grace above and beyond market-oriented value calculations. He then applies this system of "symbolic exchange" to the Eucharist, which is God's gracious gift to the church. Symbolic exchange is also key in creating identity and signaling membership in a certain social order; therefore, the Christian social order includes those who participate in the symbolic exchange of the Eucharist and respond to God's grace with a life of love, justice, mercy, and sharing.

Having established the difference between sign and symbol, the difference between "market exchange" and "symbolic exchange" develops analogously. As previously established, a sign is related to the transmission of knowledge or information. This content has a certain *value* within an economic, political, or social system. Market exchange works on the level of sign. When one purchases goods or services with money or via bartering or credit, an approximately equal exchange of value occurs. This is the logic of market exchange, and it can be seen in most modern economic systems. On the other hand, a symbol doesn't function to communicate knowledge and therefore it does not function to hold value. It exists "outside the value system."[119] It functions with the logic of symbolic exchange.

Chauvet cites mid-20th century anthropologists who have identified alternative exchange logics in certain traditional cultures, like those in Melanesia.[120] Instead of meticulously

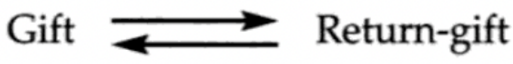
[119] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 117.

[120] See the description of the *kula* in Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1966), 81–104. See also the system of "affinal exchange" in James G. Carrier and Achsah H. Carrier, *Wage, Trade, and Exchange in Melanesia: A Manus Society in the Modern State* (University of California Press, 1989), 72–75 (originally described by Margaret Mead). Critiques of such anthropological research can be found in Lenora Foerstel and Angela Gilliam, eds., *Confronting the Margaret Mead Legacy: Scholarship, Empire, and the South Pacific* (Temple University Press, 1992).

calculating whether a transaction is "worth it," everyone in the society shares what they have produced, and everyone has enough.[121] This type of exchange is considered symbolic exchange, because it functions outside of the system of value, just like the symbol. Chauvet therefore indicates that symbolic exchange follows the "logic of *gratuitousness* or 'gift'"[122] I still give, even if the value I receive is not commensurate. Chauvet is clear that while the giving is gratuitous, there are still responsibilities associated within the system of symbolic exchange. Anyone refusing to give what they have "short-circuit[s]" the system.[123]

The system of symbolic exchange can short-circuit in such a way because it is set within and helps create a certain *social system*. Just like the symbol relates one subject to another within the same symbolic order, the system of symbolic exchange reveals that both are within the same symbolic order as well. Symbolic exchange is less about the value of what is being exchanged, but the fact of the exchange itself demonstrates that one is "*recognized as a subject, as a full member of a group*."[124] Everyone gives gratuitously to the other, and all are shown to be in the same community. If one does not participate in the exchange, one "place[s] oneself socially and symbolically outside the circuit."[125] One loses one's status as subject within that symbolic order.

Market exchange and symbolic exchange are also distinguished as a *binary* process versus a *ternary* process, respectively. The binary of the market exchange of value can be represented by the below diagram:



[121] Chauvet emphasizes that "traditional" societies should not be taken as a pejorative and gives examples of Western societies engaging in symbolic exchange as well. Gift-giving, for example, at Christmas is not about an equal exchange of value, yet *not* participating in the gift exchange has social consequences, to be explicated below. Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 117n1, 120–121.

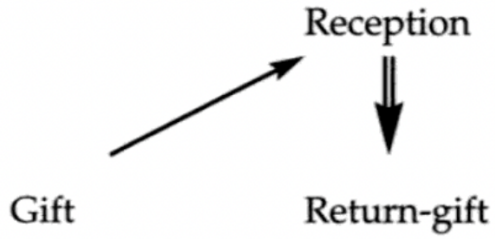
[122] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 118. Emphasis in original.

[123] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 118.

[124] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 119. Emphasis in original.

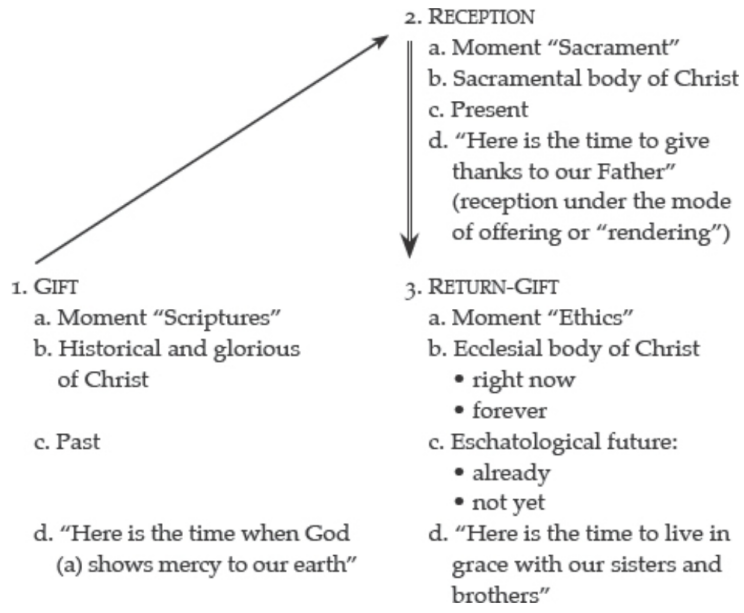
[125] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 118. See also Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 106–107.

In market exchange, the gift given has value, and in reciprocity, a return-gift of equal value is given back. However, in the system of symbolic exchange, the giver does not receive back something of equal value, thus no return arrow. It is a gratuitous gift to the receiver. The receiver nonetheless has an obligation (signified by the double-lined arrow), yet it does not function in the same way as the original gift. See the below diagram:



For Chauvet, the Eucharist follows the logic of the symbolic exchange rather than market exchange. God gives the gift of God's grace gratuitously, and humans cannot return it by a simple value calculation following the logic of market exchange. Humans have nothing of equal value to give. God's free gift nonetheless creates an obligation upon humanity: "the return-gift of faith, love, conversion of heart, witness by one's life."[126] Other obligations include the church "keeping alive […] the memory" of Christ's life, death, and resurrection.[127] The "fundamental aim" of the liturgy is "the communication of the gratuitous gift of God."[128]

[126] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 124.
[127] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 28.
[128] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 87.



Chauvet argues that every sacrament follows the above diagram. One can map the Eucharist to it.[129] God gives us the gift of salvation history, which is revealed to humanity in history, in Scripture, and narrated in the Eucharistic prayer. The reception by humans of God's gift occurs in our reception of the Eucharist—which is the sacramental body of Christ—in the present, uniting us to Christ and to the whole church. We cannot give anything back to God according to value logics or market exchange, but the return gift that we give is right living in the present, i.e. ethics, which for Chauvet includes the entire breadth of Christian living. "[L]ove lived in justice, mercy, sharing" becomes the essential outpouring of the Christian's identity, demonstrating that we are indeed a part of the body of Christ.[130] This identity holds in the present and persists through the eschatological future. There are risks associated with overemphasis on any one moment in the Eucharistic symbolic exchange, says Chauvet. An overemphasis on *scripture* leads one to fundamentalist literalism, an overemphasis on *sacrament* can lead to

[129] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 143.
[130] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 144.

liturgical pedantry, and an overemphasis on *ethics* leads to a political and social activism displacing the worship of God.[131]

The Eucharistic exchange of God's free gift of grace for the Christian's return gift of ethical living is a key part of Christian identity formation. Just as those who reject the systems of symbolic exchange in Melanesia or our own society are thrown outside of the circuit, the Eucharist is a *sine qua non* of Christian identity for Chauvet, signaling who is considered a full member of the community and who is not. Distortion of this symbolic exchange results from overemphasis on any one element, e.g. too much activism or too much celebration. Participation in this symbolic exchange is inherently bodily, in the reception of the gift of the elements and how the Christian lives in response.

The Body

For Chauvet, the body is the starting point of Eucharistic theology, because liturgy is not principally an intellectual object of study but a "practical activity," sharing the same suffix as "dramaturgy" and "metallurgy."[132] Therefore, the concept of the "corporality" is central for Chauvet, calling the body the Arch-symbol. The body does not only refer to the physical body. The body is symbolically constituted, by culture, history, and the subject's relation to the symbolic Other. On this side of eternity, the body is subject to sin, which means human perception is error-prone and we lack transparency to others and to ourselves. The human ethical response is therefore love, meaning radical openness to the other, for Chauvet. God in Christ is the pinnacle of this love, and the Eucharist is one chief means its expression.

[131] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 39–40.
[132] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 324.

The body and symbol are so tightly related in Chauvet that he calls the body the "Arch-symbol."[133] The body is the site of symbolic action. The body is where meaning making within the symbolic order occurs, and each body is itself interpreted within the symbolic order. The body therefore has three levels: 1) the "*social* body," which is constructed within a specific symbolic order, 2) the "*traditional* body," which comes to us via a particular history, and 3) the "*cosmic* body," as symbols are mediated via a shared Other, which for the Christian is God.[134] The subject is not an island but a result of many relationships: "The human is irreducibly bodily, and the human is irreducibly relational."[135] Analogous to the difference between sign and symbol, this approach is in opposition to the stream in the Western philosophical tradition that locates the subject in the thinking mind, an autonomous, rational subject, dichotomized from the body.[136] This high view of the body has critical theological implications: *"[t]he anthropological is the place of every possible theological*."[137] All theological—including sacramental—reflection and action is dependent on and flows from the body.

As discussed *supra*, Chauvet accepted Heidegger's critiques of the instrumentalist function of language.[138] The assumption that there an unmediated reality beyond human senses that one could potentially grasp was shown to be a major error in Western philosophical thought. The subject does not and cannot engage with reality in an unmediated way. In the instrumentalist scheme, the goal of human intellectual endeavors is to get *behind* the "errors of perception, of transmission, of reception obscuring human grasp of reality," and it was assumed that "these

[133] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 151.
[134] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 150–152. Emphasis in original.
[135] Benjamin Durheim, *Christ's Gift, Our Response: Martin Luther and Louis-Marie Chauvet on the Connection between Sacraments and Ethics* (Liturgical Press, 2018), 79.
[136] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*,149.
[137] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 152. Emphasis in original.
[138] Bardata *Sacraments as Language Events*, 15–17.

errors are corrigible, at least partially in this world."[139] Whereas Heidegger demonstrates this is not possible philosophically, Chauvet is interested in its meaning theologically.

In theological terms for Chauvet, the intrinsic failure of human mediation to uncover truth can be attributed to sin. Human desire is misdirected and misaligned with finding truth. Humans generally want truth to be easily accessible and transparent, and we therefore try to "evad[e] the contingency of the sensible, bodily, social, historical mediations" It is a result of human pride that we want to "seize the 'thing' in an *immediate* way."[140] In addition to us wanting the world to be transparent to us, we want to be transparent to ourselves. We also want others to be transparent to us, and we (sometimes) want to be transparent to others. The reality of sin in the world also ensures that our relationships with ourselves and with others are mediated. Symbol is the mediator of human experience for Chauvet. To be a subject is to be mediated by language, and for the Christian, the symbolic milieu for that mediation is the church, our common "womb."[141] Being in the church does not eradicate the existence and effects of sin. Chauvet embraces the distinction of the "already" and "not yet"[142] in Christian theology, and he emphases that the church's work—including its liturgical work—occurs on the "not yet" side of history, the side tainted by sin.[143]

Chauvet asserts both the *difference* and *similarity* of bodies to each other. My body is irreducible to any other body (the symbols that coalesce to create my identity are different from anyone else's), yet my body is deeply similar to all others (identity can only be created in a symbolic order in which meaning is common with many others).[144] Chauvet says, "if YOU is the

---

[139] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 4.
[140] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 4. Emphasis in original.
[141] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 9.
[142] "But although this victory [over sin and oppression] is already definitively gained [in Christ's resurrection], it is not yet definitively accomplished [until the eschaton]" in Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 56n15.
[143] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 102.
[144] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 149.

most completely opposite of the I, it is at the same time the most similar."[145] Acknowledging the other as a subject means recognizing them as constituted within the same symbolic order I myself am. This recognition of the other as similar is analogous to Jesus's teachings that are replete with reversals, e.g. the last shall become first.[146] The one that is other is the most similar to me. Also note the rejection of market exchange (where the "least of these" is valued as "least") in this formula, in favor of symbolic exchange (where the other is welcomed into the community without respect to value).[147] Yet, as previously established, being situated in a symbolic order is what creates one as a subject, and those who refuse to be a part of the system of symbolic exchange are jettisoned outside of the community and outside of subjecthood as imagined by the community.

Finding similarity in difference has ethical, anthropological, and theological implications for Chauvet. He defines love as "respect for the radical *otherness* of the other […] a relation to the other as 'the other similar to me.'"[148] He encourages love that does not reduce the other to the same, because it is in difference that we see each other as truly similar. This love involves giving oneself for the other. Giving oneself so that the other than be more fully themself and more fully other builds this relationship of love, that is, of similitude in difference. Love in this way, Chauvet asserts, "alone makes one fully human."[149] The one who has the most difference with humanity is God, and therefore it is God who is the most similar. God perfectly embodies this relationship of love as radical difference in Jesus on the cross, who gives of himself to allow the

[145] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 122.
[146] Mt 20:16
[147] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 93.
[148] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 163. Emphasis in original.
[149] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 163.

other to be fully other. In this way, God is both "morally" and "ontologically […] the only one fully human."[150] God is most fully other and similar to us.

The Eucharist is how humans experience the grace of this radically other yet radically similar God. It is a deeply corporeal, embodied ritual, wherein the divine meets the human through human-made elements and experienced by all the senses. It is a communal event, as humans in all of their differences come together and are made part of one symbolic body, the body of Christ and the womb of the church, therefore becoming more fully human.

Chauvet moves past the historical ontological arguments about the Eucharist by engaging the linguistic turn in philosophy following Heidegger and the psychoanalytic turn via Lacan. The concept of symbol is therefore a central concept in his theology. Symbol is not only representative but efficacious. For Chauvet, symbols create the subject's world and in so doing create the subject itself. Participating in a symbolic exchange creates a certain type of subject that is within the social order, who is part of the community, who is granted personhood and humanity. This is a key insight for the creation of Christian identity, which is about the creation of a particularly Christian symbolic world. The Eucharist is the principal sacrament by which this occurs, a symbolic exchange that identifies the recipient of God's gratuitous gift of grace as a full member of Christ's body. The Eucharist is an intrinsically bodily ritual, and the Christian's ethical response to it in the world necessitates bodily action as well. Chauvet's Eucharistic theology has been widely influential and has received critiques in certain respects,[151] but its compatibility with the anti-social turn in queer theory and the gender and sexual logics of his theology have not been widely analyzed.

[150] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 163.
[151] For example, see Montecel, *Communion in Hope*, 30–36.

CHAPTER 4

QUEERING CHAUVET'S EUCHARIST

Human incompleteness, ambiguity, and non-transparency are theologically termed sin and are hallmarks of both Chauvet's anthropology and sodomitical theology. Even well-intentioned human efforts towards proper relationships and a just social order are undermined by the effects of sin, distorting human motivations and rendering us incapable of seeing the deleterious side effects of our aspirations. Chauvet does not go as far as the sodomitical theologian in acknowledging this risk. Queering Chauvet's sacramental theology can uncover some of the elided patriarchal and heterosexual logics in his account of the Eucharist, despite Chauvet's intended goals of breaking down barriers between humans and a radical embrace of the other. Moreover, the "other" for Chauvet is not the structural other—the "queer"—but the other who those within the same structural order can recognize, find intelligible, and to whom are extended humanity. Therefore, the most unrecognized others are excluded for Chauvet but are the primary concern of the sodomitical theologian.

Chauvet and the Anti-Social Turn

The compatibility between the anti-social turn in queer theory and Chauvet's anthropology is striking. In his discussion of the dichotomy between sign and symbol, Chauvet not only highlights the "frailty" and "errors" of the human grasp of reality, but the intrinsic warping of human desire and lack of transparency to ourselves and others that make such an unmediated engagement with reality impossible.[152] This defect is theologically termed sin. Both inspired by Lacan and other postmodern philosophers, Chauvet's approach corresponds with

[152] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 4.

Edelman's rejection of the illusion that the subject is "whole, complete, or sufficient unto himself."[153] The illusion of "self-securitization […] self-transparency and motivational purity" as theoretically illegitimate is translated into sin discourse in Tonstad's theology.[154]

For both Chauvet and Tonstad, the sinfulness of humanity necessitates the rejection of imaginary wholeness as something accessible to us. The imaginary order is necessary for humans, because in day-to-day life, the cultural, social, and linguistic world of the symbolic order is not engaged as such. The world of the symbolic is necessarily flattened in order for the subject to not be overwhelmed by the immensity of the world, so it creates fictive unities and harmonies to make life livable.[155] This is the imaginary order. The risk associated with the imaginary order is the collapsing of the radical otherness of the other into sameness and losing how each symbol fits into the larger symbolic order.

Because embracing the radical otherness of the other is the definition of love for Chauvet, the flattening of the other is antithetical to love. The other must be able to remain other in all of their complexity, particularity, and unknowability. Incorporating the other into the imaginary order necessarily involves a collapsing of this particularity and mystery into the easily comprehensible. Since the other must be accepted as other for love to occur, this collapse in the imaginary order undermines love. There are also risks to the Eucharist itself when one component is so idealized that its place in the symbolic web of signification is distorted. Examples of such risks for Chauvet include the consecration of the elements being elevated to an almost "magical" moment, and the priest *in persona Christi* being "exalted […] almost above the

[153] Edelman, *No Future*, 97.
[154] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 270.
[155] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 15.

angels."[156] The undue idealization of the other or anything else in the symbolic order can distort one's relationship with reality, including the Eucharist.

For the sodomitical theologian, the risk of illusory imaginary wholeness flattening the other has deadly outcomes. While some others can be (mistakenly) integrated into the imaginary order, there will always exist others who cannot, the common historical example being the homosexual or, before that, the "sodomite."[157] Moreover, the "queer" for Edelman and for the sodomitical theologian is not one with an LGBTQ identity, but the one who is structurally located outside of the symbolic order, the one who is not recognized as a subject by their community, the one who is an obstacle to the integration of the symbolic order. As the anti-social theorist demonstrates, the fate of this queer is violence and ostracization. There may be differences in the specific risks of positing imaginary wholeness for Chauvet and Tonstad, both affirm a resistance to it.

Gender and Sexuality in Chauvet's Body

Chauvet makes well-intentioned overtures at inclusivity with respect to human diversity, but his treatment of gender and sexuality assumes patriarchal and heterosexist norms. Moreover, his Eucharistic theology itself contains patriarchal logics in his characterization of the church as "womb" and the Eucharist as the (heterosexual) marriage and consummation between Christ and the church. Tonstad's critique of the gendered spatial logics of the womb and its penetration in the context of Trinitarian theology in *God and Difference* can be marshalled to critique the gendered and sexual logics of Chauvet's Eucharistic theology.

[156] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 4.
[157] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 123–124.

Chauvet champions the unity of the church across demographic dividing lines. He appeals to Paul's vision of the church as the tearing down of "barriers," "dividing wall[s]," and "partitions" between ethnicities, social statuses, and gender in the creation of a "new self" and "new 'we'" in the church.[158] This corresponds with his definition of love as embracing the other. Breaking down the barriers between male and female, for example, creates a "rich diversity of members and functions."[159] Yet this embrace of diversity does not overcome the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church, restricting priestly ordination to men. Indeed, the language of equality despite different "functions" echoes standard complementarian language.[160] Women are accepted into the church, but they have a different function than men have and vice versa. Partitions still remain between genders with respect to their permissible functions within the church. The barriers have not been fully broken down, and the discrimination that Althaus-Reid saw in her Argentinian context persists into the present. The partitions the church erects between those of different sexualities are not torn down either, and Chauvet takes the chrononormative[161] benchmarks in the Christian's life ("birth, adolescence, marriage, death") to be "seem[ingly] universal."[162]

Patriarchal gender norms are not just assumed in the everyday functioning of the church, but Chauvet's Eucharistic theology is symbolically gendered in patriarchal ways. Chauvet identifies the church as the "womb"[163] in which one is made a believer, a traditional Christian

[158] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 28. Citing Gal 3:26–28, Col 3:10–11, and 1 Cor 12:13.
[159] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 28.
[160] See for example, Paul C. Vitz, "Introduction: Women and Men and Their Complementarity: The Rationale and Evidence," in *The Complementarity of Women and Men: Philosophy, Theology, Psychology & Art*, ed. Paul C. Vitz (The Catholic University of America Press, 2021).
[161] Chrononormativity being defined as "the interlocking temporal schemes necessary for genealogies of descent and for the mundane workings of domestic life" in Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Duke University Press, 2010), 22.
[162] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 173.
[163] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 33.

image.[164] Tonstad is interested in how the "chain of associations" from "femininity to the womb to place to passivity […] and so on" are tied deeply together in the Christian tradition and our symbolic order. [165] They are connected so deeply that transgressing one does not break the chain of associations, a phenomenon she calls "the affective life of binaries."[166] The womb's "spatialization" implies "a place for the becoming of the other."[167] The feminine who gives up herself, who moves aside, who makes room for the other is the patriarchal logic that inheres in the image of church as womb, as Tonstad demonstrates throughout *God and Difference*.

Moreover, the church as womb is heterosexist logic, because the empty space of the womb is made "to be filled by the other."[168] Christ is the masculine subject, resonating with the chain of associations "from masculinity to origin to power to activity."[169] For Chauvet, Christ has all of these characteristics, so it is unsurprising that the womb of the church is phallically penetrated by Jesus Christ in the diagram on page 26. The sexual logics of the masculine Jesus penetrating the womb of the feminine church in order for the formation of Christians therein is straightforwardly heterosexist. Moreover, Chauvet makes the heterosexist Christ-church relationship irreducible: even as the church cannot be the church without Jesus, the "being-Christ of Jesus […] is not separable from the church," says Chauvet. To underscore this point, he uses the image of heterosexual matrimony: "[t]he function of the sacraments is precisely to symbolize this indissoluble 'marriage' (see Eph 5:33)."[170] The Eucharist is the repetition of the heterosexual wedding and consummation of Christ and the church.

---

[164] John Behr, "Our mother church: Mary and ecclesiology," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 22, no. 4 (2022): 333–334, https://doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2023.2168868.
[165] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 120.
[166] Tonstad, "Limits of Inclusion," 5–11.
[167] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 13.
[168] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 16.
[169] Tonstad, "Everything Queer," 120.
[170] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 86.

The gendered and sexual implications for the Eucharist are multiple. The masculine Christ is the one who takes the active role in the Eucharist for Chauvet. While the priest stands "in the name of Christ"—*in persona Christi*—Chauvet emphasizes the priest nonetheless functions "within the church."[171] While this potential gender confusion in the presider is upheld by some theologians as breaking patriarchal and heterosexist logics, Tonstad's thesis in *God and Difference* is that those logics are in fact reinscribed due to the affective life of binaries. This is why she rejects the theological sexual logic of "womb-wound"—i.e. requiring the reduction of oneself to make room for the other—and instead affirms "impanation" and its associated "colocatility," where "[t]wo bodies can be in the same place at the same time without crowding each other out."[172] Rather than embodying a heterosexual logics, Tonstad's ecclesiology is conceived as a "clitoral" relation, without penetration and without reproduction.[173] Althaus-Reid also notes how the return-gift in the "gift-economy […] of the Eucharist" is gendered: self-sacrifice typically "exalts men while it destroys women."[174] Women's bodies are often uniquely commodified in their self-emptying,[175] so perhaps women's participation in the Eucharist often falls into the logic of Chauvet's dyadic market exchange, rather than a truly symbolic exchange.

If the starting point for Eucharistic theology in Chauvet is the body, it is the masculine, heterosexual body of Christ and the priest. The feminine body of the church is only referenced in the lack, the empty space symbolized by the womb. The actual bodies of the gay and women congregants are elided. For the sodomitical theologian, the starting place is the actual bodies of women, not the "domesticated, shaved bodies of patriarchal theology" but the "bushy armpits" of

---

[171] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 34.
[172] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 240.
[173] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 136, 275.
[174] Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 70.
[175] "Following Irigaray's analysis in her article 'Women on the Market', we may agree that women are the providers of the organisation of social and cultural infrastructures through the usage of their bodies, their consumption and public circulation." Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 70.

women "with glorious, rebellious chestnut bushy hair shouting out loudly their different stories."[176]

Where is the "Queer" in Chauvet's Symbolic Exchange?

Chauvet does not explicitly mention LGBT or otherwise queer subjects in his works, but the "structural queer" as defined by Edelman can be located in Chauvet's engagement with the symbolic order and systems of symbolic exchange. To the extent that the reproduction of the social order—especially the church's order—plays a part in Chauvet's account of Christian identity, it partakes in reproductive futurism, which forecloses queer alternatives. The participation in versus break with the current social order and its reproduction can be illustrated in a contrast between Chauvet's and Tonstad's eschatology. Finally, responses to the other and to the current social order are intrinsically questions of ethics, which differ between Chauvet and the sodomitical theologian.

Differences between Chauvet and the sodomitical theologian arise in the evaluation of inclusion in the symbolic order. Recall the etymology of symbol for Chauvet, the *sym-ballein* or literal contract that invites two subjects into a common agreement. Symbols bring subjects into the same common world analogous to the two pieces of the divided contract that literally "fit[] together."[177] Symbols also function to help subjects recognize each other (and themselves) as subjects and assign them a place in the world. Common symbols signal a shared social order. Beyond this, a society's system of symbolic exchange also establishes who is recognized as a subject or not. If one does not participate in the exchange, one "place[s] oneself socially and

[176] Althaus-Reid, "Pussy, Queen of Pirates," 158
[177] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 70.

symbolically outside the circuit."[178] The Eucharist is a form of symbolic exchange that creates subjects as Christians. Chauvet is focused on those who exist within the dotted circle of the church in his diagram on Christian identity (page 26).

The concern of the sodomitical theologian is precisely those who fall outside of the social order, those who are violently thrown outside the circuit or refuse to take part in it. "A sodomitical theology begins with non-integration—of the self, of the community, of theology."[179] While Chauvet's poststructuralist anthropological analysis suggests assent to the non-integration of the self, his Eucharistic subject is assumed to be integrated into the social order and to Christian identity. The person who is outside the social order, outside the circuit of symbolic exchange—the "*queer*," in Edelman's terms—is elided.

To the extent that Chauvet's Eucharistic theology is invested in and assumes the perpetuation of the existing social order—including the Christian social order—it is participating in reproductive futurism.[180] Unsurprisingly, Chauvet's ecclesiology highlights "keeping alive […] the memory" of Christ and passing along tradition[181] He attempts to acknowledge the radical break with the present order signified by Christ's death, resurrection, and coming again. Referencing Paul's letters, this break occurs in the tearing down of "barriers" between diverse demographics and the creation of the "new 'we'" in the church.[182] As seen above, embracing the radical otherness of the other is the definition of "love" for Chauvet. Yet these barriers have not broken down—especially the gendered limitations instantiated by patriarchy—as seen above in the continued complementarian exclusion of women from presiding at the Eucharist.

---

[178] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 118.
[179] Kline, "Against Innocence," 10.
[180] See the definition on pgs. 5–6.
[181] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 28.
[182] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 28. Citing Gal 3:26–28, Col 3:10–11, and 1 Cor 12:13.

Moreover, Chauvet sees this creation of newness in an eschatological mode, similar to Tonstad. "[E]schatology requires present history as the very place of the eschaton's possibility," says Chauvet; humanity in the present is in the process of being "transfigur[ed]" and "resurrect[ed]," in light of Jesus's historical resurrection and in anticipation of God's future full reconciliation of the world.[183] Life in this in-between time animates the "already" and "not yet" dynamic in Chauvet's and traditional Christian thought. Chauvet has reservations about an overly-realized eschatology though. He rejects the Eucharist as a "sumptuous banquet" in favor of the "eschatological reserve" signified by "a little bread."[184] While ethics—"*agape* between brothers and sisters [sic]"—is a key mark of Christian identity and a reflection of Christ's eschatological work in the present,[185] he rejects an overemphasis on ethics as a deformation of Christian identity. Christians who succumb to this overemphasis, he terms the "political" or "activist" type, who try to "advance[] the reign of God on earth."[186] Breaking with the current social order can only go so far, for Chauvet.

Chauvet's eschatology leans towards affirming the eschatological "not yet." Jesus's victory over sin and oppression is not yet fully accomplished, justifying an eschatological reserve in the Eucharist and rejecting ethical attempts to fully bring God's kingdom on earth. On the other hand, Tonstad's apocalyptic eschatology leans into the "already," as victory over sin has already been gained, demanding the "abortion of the current order" and the end of the church's participation in its reproduction (even if in a reformist mode).[187] For the sodomitical theologian, the "not yet" of theology is a reflection of the sin and violence perpetrated on the queer, not a

[183] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 240.
[184] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 102.
[185] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 280.
[186] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 40.
[187] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 273.

justification for reserve with respect to the social order. It is a full-throated rejection of the social order, which structurally excludes and therefore visits violence upon the queer. The rejection of Eucharistic reserve is also found in Althaus-Reid's preference for the "festivities of the plaza" and the "voices of protest" as Eucharistic practices, over the somber Eucharists of the Catholic Church.[188] Celebration and protest can be hallmarks of the queer's break with the present order and embrace of the new.

The ethical implications of a sodomitical theology cannot be conflated with the ethical reformism of liberal LGBT politics. Ethical deliberation as such belongs to the symbolic order, and as far as progressive politics are still playing politics in the current social order, they are participating in reproductive futurism. "Antagonism [understood as queerness], as a structuring principle, may serve to establish the field of ethics, but for just that reason it remains outside of ethical determination," says Edelman.[189] The structural queer's ejection from the social order, from the possibility of recognition as ethical in the social order, is the starting place of anything akin to "ethics" for the sodomitical theologian. Instead of distinguishing between good and bad, virtuous and evil, according to the present social order, the sodomitical theologian always places herself on the side of the sinful, the inhuman, the queer. The social order's circle of inclusion should not be simply extended. Seeing the "I" in in more "yous," affirming more others as subjects and fully human, is not the goal. Sodomitical theology "figures forth the abortion of the current order,"[190] which undoubtedly looks like Chauvet's "activist" type, a radical ethical break.

Throughout Chauvet's work there is affirmation of and openness to the other which is not like ourselves. This embrace of radical otherness would seem to be compatible with queer

[188] Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 122.
[189] Edelman, *Bad Education*, 30.
[190] Tonstad, *God and Difference*, 273.

theologians' "passion for the marginalized."[191] It seems to carry this impulse—yet the other in Chauvet is not the *structural* other, who is outside the social order, but is the other who belongs to the same symbolic order and therefore the other who is granted subjecthood and humanity. Edelman's contention with Judith Butler's extension of social *intelligibility* is instructive and here. In *Gender Trouble*, for example, Butler says their goal is "to insist upon the extension of this legitimacy to bodies that have been regarded as false, unreal, and unintelligible."[192] They interrogate what "qualif[ies]" and "delimit[s]" the field of the "human."[193] Contra Butler, Edelman argues that "[r]ather than expanding the reach of the human," we should "insist on enlarging the inhuman instead."[194] For Edelman and the sodomitical theologian, the queer occupies the space of the inhuman, the unintelligible—no matter how wide the circle of intelligibility and humanity is extended. Althaus-Reid also sees the Eucharist in a "radical exchange of identities," like the stranger at the gate and host swapping positions, yet the stranger for her is more comparable to Edelman's structural queer than the "other" within a shared symbolic order.[195] The stranger "is an image of marginality which resists incorporation."[196] The "stranger at the gate" is indeed outside the gate.

Critiques and Responses

Few direct critiques of Tonstad arise from the conservative right, which is typically content to ignore constructive queer theology. Many reviewers of *God and Difference* shared her feminist and queer-affirming commitments yet felt unease about the application of queer theory

[191] Althaus-Reid and Isherwood, "Thinking Theology," 308.
[192] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 1999), viii.
[193] Butler, Gender Trouble, xxii.
[194] Edelman, *No Future*, 152. See also Tonstad, "Limits of Inclusion," 123.
[195] Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 72.
[196] Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 69.

to systematic theology. One representative commentator is Filipe do Vale: "the most pervasive problem that besets Tonstad's book is the incompatibility between Voice 1 [the systematic theologian] and Voice 2 [the queer theorist]."[197] The assumptions and aims of the queer theorist are widely taken to be incompatible with those of the systematician, especially by those trained in the latter field. Tonstad accepts that scholars may disagree about the success of combining the two voices.[198] The 2024 volume, *Lee Edelman and the Queer Study of Religion*, edited in part by Tonstad, presents additional avenues for the compatibility between religious studies discourse and Edelman's work. The common influences of the anti-social turn in queer theory and Chauvet identified above show one avenue for fruitful dialogue between these two seemingly disparate endeavors. This thesis contributes to demonstrating the viability of applying queer analysis to traditional theological loci.

Specifically relating to Tonstad's queer theological project, Ish Ruiz has identified three critiques: 1) rejecting the division between good and evil is "idyllic" and cannot address real-world oppression, 2) queering—as in deconstructing binaries—can lead to the "eras[ure of] cultural differences," which racial and other minorities hold dear, and 3) destabilizing good versus evil leads to "methodological contradictions."[199] There are very real and open questions about the sufficiency of anti-social queer theory for benefitting those currently experiencing profound oppression. Some of these critiques and Edelman's responses were rehearsed *supra*.

---

[197] Fellipe do Vale, "Linn Marie Tonstad. *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitud*e," *Journal of Analytic Theology* 6, no. 1 (August 2018): 715. See also the Syndicate Symposium responses by Karen Kilby, Sarah Coakley, and Paul DeHart in "God and Difference by Linn Tonstad," *Syndicate Theology*, May 14, 2017, https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/god-and-difference/.

[198] Linn Marie Tonstad, "Response to Sarah Coakley," *Syndicate Theology*, May 14, 2017, https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/god-and-difference/.

[199] Ish Ruiz, "Queer Theology and a Synodal Catholic Church," *Feminist Theology* 32, no. 3 (May 2024): 295, https://doi.org/10.1177/0966735024123.

Often, these critiques elide the structural argument that Edelman—and Tonstad in Ruiz's case—are making. The outcome of a sodomitical theology is not moral equivalence between a Nazi and a Jew, as Ruiz suggests, but to identify that even if the Jew is rescued from the "queer" position of the structural other, the burden of queerness shifts elsewhere. The charge is not for the Jew to express solidarity with the Nazi, but for all of us to express solidarity with the Jew or any other figure that takes the place of the structural other. Working within the political sphere for change is always working within the reigning symbolic order. Creating a certain political vision for the future cannot control for the unexpected ways in which that future may harm us and others. A sodomitical theology's ethical action in the world is nonetheless radical, nonetheless revolutionary, nonetheless engaged in a "diverse" range of causes.[200] Political action must always be a process of a "*caminata*," being open to and understanding that our actions may lead to "different neighbourhoods [and] obscure alleys" that cannot be negotiated ahead of time.[201] Sodomitical theology resists the temptation to be married to one cause of action and is a constant reminder to identify the new structural queers in shifting and diverse social orders.

The critique of Tonstad falling into relativism and extinguishing cultural particularity due to a commitment to queer theology's overarching antinormativity elides several instances in Tonstad's work where she specifically rejects this conclusion. First, her article, "Ambivalent Loves: Christian Theologies, Queer Theologies," engages the active debate in the field of queer theory on the limits of antinormativity as a critical heuristic, concluding that queer theology should "think[] harder" about its "reflexive commitments to antinormativity."[202] Her work on the

[200] Tonstad lists "union organizing, nuclear disarmament, peace, urban renewal, prison activism, immigration reform, the environment, rape, abortion, domestic violence protection, and birth control" in "Everything Radical," 128.

[201] Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 51. Emphasis in original.

[202] Linn Marie Tonstad, "Ambivalent Loves: Christian Theologies, Queer Theologies," *Literature & Theology* 31, no. 4 (December 2017): 484, https://doi.org/10.1093/litthe/frw043.

affective life of binaries shows how seriously she takes this critique. Additionally, Tonstad rejects the temptation in queer theory to "overcome[] 'feminist' and 'lesbian' contributions […] erasing their contributions and internal diversity." She instead calls for "retain[ing] a certain specificity in relation to sexuality."[203] While this is not a call for retaining cultural particularity in theology, Tonstad demonstrates a deliberate wariness against nebulousness as the outcome of antinormativity, in favor of "specificity."

Synthesizing queer theory and systematic theology is a difficult endeavor, given often disparate methodologies and commitments. Nonetheless, it can be a fruitful endeavor, as demonstrated in this thesis. Critiques of Edelman's anti-social queer theory abound, and similar ones have been leveled against Tonstad's sodomitical theology. Reservations that they are unduly universalizing and quietist are important to consider. Sodomitical theology can be a critical safeguard to queer theological projects in particular and progressive political movements in general. Overconfidence in human nature and our capacity to create new, whole political orders is tampered by the reality of sin this side of eternity. The creation of new abjected others within changing social orders is all too common. Redirecting our gaze towards the sodomite with every step along the *caminata* is challenging yet necessary.

[203] Tonstad, "Limits of Inclusion, 14.

CHAPTER 5.

CONCLUSION

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

~Marcella Althaus-Reid[204]

This thesis has applied one genre of queer critique to one account of the Eucharist. Specifically, Linn Tonstad has developed a sodomitical theology, which emerges from the Edelman–Althaus-Reid nexus. She starts with a commitment to the universality of human sinfulness: our ambiguity, incompleteness, and ultimate unknowability to ourselves and to others. This commitment has both theological and theoretical roots. The latter are informed by Lee Edelman's anti-social queer theory, which identifies reproductive futurism as the reproduction of the existing, oppressive social order, even in progressive and otherwise LGBT-affirming politics that strive for a complete social order. For Edelman, the "queer" occupies the position of the abjected other in any vision of the social order, and he cautions against how this structural queer is inevitably displaced onto other others even in such progressive visions. The queer project should therefore be solidarity with whoever occupies that structural position. Translated theologically, the sodomitical theologian does not want to save the homosexual from Sodom and displace divine wrath onto other "sodomites"—she follows the example of Lot's wife who bears witness to the sodomite and expresses solidarity with their fate.

[204] Althaus-Reid, "Queer I Stand," 109.

The queer theologian's focus is those on the margins of the world. "Terrible is the fate of theologies from the margin when they want to be accepted by the centre!"[205] The actual bodies of the marginalized are the starting point of theological reflection, not the idealized bodies of T-theology. The bodies of the marginalized together, expressing solidarity, expressing joy and song and protest is a Eucharistic exchange. The combination of these impulses yields a Eucharist for Tonstad that is apocalyptic in character. It emphasizes the radical break with the present that Jesus's death and resurrection imply, breaking the reproductive futurism found in society and in the church. The promiscuous sharing of Jesus's body across countless sites and centuries is an image of the church where all are welcome. No one has to reduce themselves for the other to arrive. This logic is also repeated in a theology of "impanation": Jesus's body does not displace the elements of the Eucharist. This is not a new vision of imaginary wholeness; the eschatological "not yet" still persists this side of eternity. It is a *caminata*, where sudden turns and changes in course are expected.

Chauvet's Eucharistic theology has elements that suggest compatibility with sodomitical theology. He upholds the depth of sin and its far-reaching effects on human intellectual and political projects, and he advocates for a radical love of the other. These qualities are undercut as he elides the real bodies of the participants in the Eucharist, the gendered and sexual logics of his account of the Eucharist, and attention to the structural queer as well. Sodomitical theology helps recover the bodies of the indecent who are rejected from the Eucharist—and from their material and political needs. The patriarchal logic of the church's womb and the heterosexual logic of its phallic penetration must also be reimagined. Finally, solidarity with the "other" must go beyond

[205] Althaus-Reid, "Thinking Theology," 304.

the "other" in whom I see myself. It must be extended to the "stranger at the gate" who exists outside of the symbolic order's granting of subjecthood and humanity.

With *God and Difference*, Tonstad demonstrated the productivity of applying methods from queer theory to the theological locus of Trinitarian theology. This thesis has corroborated Tonstad's project and demonstrated the productivity of queer theological analysis applied to a different locus of traditional theology, namely Eucharistic theology. Not only has this thesis advanced the project of queer theology in the above ways, but it has made a contribution to contemporary Eucharistic theology. Chauvet's sacramental theology has been widely influential with ecumenical appeal, and many aspects of it have been analyzed. This thesis contributes to this corpus by providing a queer theological critique.

This thesis has only identified critiques without trying to resolve them or reimagine Chauvet's theology in light of them. Further constructive engagement between sodomitical theology and Chauvet's Eucharistic theology would be welcomed. For example, to the extent that Tonstad has yet to develop an account of what the sacraments in general and the Eucharist in particular *do* to the Christian, Chauvet's project demonstrating their function on a symbolic level could perhaps enhance Tonstad's sacramental theology, given their baseline theoretical compatibility. Additionally, issues of race, disability, and gender identity were not widely engaged, but reflection on sodomitical theology's compatibility with Eucharistic theology and other theological loci from diverse perspectives would also strengthen the project.[206] Continuing the *caminata* of theology from the margins requires diverse and continued input and reflection.

[206] For a womanist analysis of Chauvet's Eucharistic theology, see Khalia J. Williams, "Encountering Christ: A Womanist Exploration of Chauvet's Symbolic Exchange in Communion," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Liturgical Theology*, ed. Porter C. Taylor and Khalia J. Williams (Wiley Blackwell, 2025).

Bibliography

Althaus-Reid, Marcella. “Demythologising liberation theology: reflections on power, poverty and sexuality.” In *Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, edited by Christopher Rowland. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Althaus-Reid, Marcella. “Doing a Theology from Disappeared Bodies: Theology, Sexuality, and the Excluded Bodies of the Discourses of Latin America.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*, edited by S. Briggs and M. M. Fulkerson. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Althaus-Reid, Marcella. *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics*. Routledge, 2000.

Althaus-Reid, Marcella. “‘Pussy, Queen of Pirates’: Acker, Isherwood, and the Debate on the Body in Feminist Theology.” *Feminist Theology* 12 no. 2 (2004): 157–167. https://doi.org/10.1177/096673500401200204.

Althaus-Reid, Marcella. “Queer I Stand: Lifting the Skirts of God.” In *The Sexual Theologian: Essays on Sex, God and Politics*, edited by Marcella Althaus-Reid and Linda Isherwood. T&T Clark International, 2004.

Althaus-Reid, Marcella. *The Queer God*. Routledge, 2003.

Althaus-Reid, Marcella and Lisa Isherwood. “Thinking Theology and Queer Theory.” *Feminist Theology* 15, no. 3 (2007): 302–314. https://doi.org/10.1177/0966735006076168.

Bardata, Kornelius Supranoto. *A Descriptive Assessment of Sacrament as Language Events in Louis-Marie Chauvet and David Noel Power*. PhD diss., University of St. Joseph Macau, 2017. https://files01.core.ac.uk/download/pdf/84689402.pdf.

Beaton, Rhodora E. *Embodied Words, Spoken Signs: Sacramentality and the Word in Rahner and Chauvet*. Fortress Press, 2014.

Behr, John. “Our mother church: Mary and ecclesiology.” *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 22, no. 4 (2022): 333–334. https://doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2023.2168868.

Bersani, Leo. “Is the Rectum a Grave?” In *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays*. The University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Brintnall, Kent L., Rhiannon Graybill, and Linn Marie Tonstad, eds. *Lee Edelman and the Queer Study of Religion*. Routledge, 2024.

Brintnall, Kent L. “Who Weeps for the Sodomite?” In *Sexual Disorientations: Queer Temporalities, Affects, Theologies*, edited by Stephen Moore, Kent Brintnall, and Joseph Marchal. Fordham University Press, 2018.

Buechel, Andy. *That We Might Become God: The Queerness of Creedal Christianity*. Cascade Books, 2015.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1999.

Carrier, James G. and Achsah H. Carrier. *Wage, Trade, and Exchange in Melanesia: A Manus Society in the Modern State*. University of California Press, 1989.

Chauvet, Louis-Marie. *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*. Translated by Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont. Liturgical Press, 1995.

Chauvet, Louis-Marie. *The Sacraments: The Word of God and the Mercy of the Body*. Translated by Madeleine Beaumont. Liturgical Press, 2001.

Cheng, Patrick S. *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology*. Seabury Books, 2011.

Coakley, Sarah. “The Woman at the Altar: Cosmic Disturbance or Gender Subversion?” *Anglican Theological Review* 86, no. 1 (2004): 75–93. EBSCOhost.

Cornwall, Susannah. *Controversies in Queer Theology*. SCM Press, 2011.

F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds., “Impanation,” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 2005), https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780192802903.001.0001.

do Vale, Fellipe. “Linn Marie Tonstad. *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitud*e.” *Journal of Analytic Theology* 6, no. 1 (August 2018): 710–715.

Driggers, Taylor. “Feasting at the Threshold: Eucharistic Eroticism and Homonationalism in Diane Duane's *The Tale of the Five*,” *Mythlore* 43, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2025): 109–124. https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol43/iss2/8/.

Durheim, Benjamin. *Christ’s Gift, Our Response: Martin Luther and Louis-Marie Chauvet on the Connection between Sacraments and Ethics*. Liturgical Press, 2018.

Edelman, Lee. *Bad Education: Why Queer Theory Teaches Us Nothing*. Duke University Press, 2022.

Edelman, Lee. “Ever After: History, Negativity, and the Social.” In *After Sex? On Writing since Queer Theory*, edited by Janet Halley and Andrew Parker. Duke University Press, 2011.

Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Duke University Press, 2004.

Ewara, Eyo. "For Estrangement: Queerness, Blackness, and Unintelligibility." *Philosophy Compass* 18, no. 3 (March 2023): 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12897.

Foerstel, Lenora and Angela Gilliam, eds. *Confronting the Margaret Mead Legacy: Scholarship, Empire, and the South Pacific*. Temple University Press, 1992.

Freeman, Elizabeth. *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Duke University Press, 2010.

Glaser, Chris. *Coming Out as Sacrament*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Greenough, Chris. *Queer Theologies: The Basics*. Routledge, 2020.

Hawthorne, Sîan Melvill and Adriaan S. van Klinken. "Catachresis: Religion, Gender, and Postcoloniality." *Religion & Gender*, 3, no. 2 (2013): 159–167. https://doi.org/10.18352/rg.9170.

Jordan, Mark D. *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*. University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Jordan, Mark D. *Transforming Fire: Imagining Christian Teaching*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021.

Justaert, Kristien, "Dancing in the Dark: Marcella Althaus-Reid and Negative Queer Theory." *Feminist Theology* 26, no. 3 (2018): 229–240, https://doi.org/10.1177/0966735018759450.

Kline, Peter. "Against Innocence: Feminism and Original Sin." In *Feminist Theologies: Interstices and Fractures*, edited by Rebekah Pryor and Stephen Burns. Fortress Academic, 2023.

Kubicki, Judith M. "Sacramental Symbols in a Time of Violence and Disruption: Shaping People of Hope and Eschatological Vision." In *Sacraments: Revelation and the Humanity of God; Engaging the Fundamental Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet*, edited by Philippe Bordeyne and Bruce T. Morrill. Liturgical Press, 2008.

Larson-Miller, Lizette. *Sacramentality Renewed: Contemporary Conversations in Sacramental Theology*. Liturgical Press, 2016.

Loughlin, Gerard. "Introduction: The End of Sex." In *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*, edited by Gerard Loughlin. Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1966.

Mauss, Marcel. “Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques.” *Sociologie et anthropologie* 4 (1968): 143–279.

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 5th ed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Montecel, Xavier M. *Communion in Hope: Liturgy and Ethics in the Key of Virtue*. PhD diss., Boston College, 2021. https://ur.bc.edu/system/files/2025-04/bc-ir109303.pdf.

Moore, Stephen, Kent Brintnall, and Joseph Marchal. “Queer Disorientations: Four Turns and a Twist.” In *Sexual Disorientations: Queer Temporalities, Affects, Theologies*, edited by Stephen Moore, Kent Brintnall, and Joseph Marchal. Fordham University Press, 2018.

Moore, Stephen. “Queer Theory.” In *The Oxford Handbook of New Testament, Gender, and Sexuality*, edited by Benjamin H. Dunning. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Theory*. New York University Press, 2009.

Ruiz, Ish. “Queer Theology and a Synodal Catholic Church.” *Feminist Theology* 32, no. 3 (May 2024): 283–304. https://doi.org/10.1177/0966735024123.

Slater, Jack. “Turned queerly inwards: sin, queerness and Leo Bersani’s homo-narcissism.” *Theology & Sexuality* 29, no. 1 (2023): 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13558358.2023.2242269.

Syndicate Theology. “God and Difference by Linn Tonstad.” May 14, 2017. https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/god-and-difference/.

Tonstad, Linn Marie. “Ambivalent Loves: Christian Theologies, Queer Theologies.” *Literature & Theology* 31, no. 4 (December 2017): 472–489. https://doi.org/10.1093/litthe/frw043.

Tonstad, Linn Marie. “Everything Queer, Nothing Radical.” *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* 92, no. 3–4 (2016): 118–129, https://journals.lub.lu.se/index.php/STK/article/download/17214/15591.

Tonstad, Linn Marie. *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude*. Routledge, 2016.

Tonstad, Linn Marie. “Response to Sarah Coakley,” *Syndicate Theology*, May 14, 2017, https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/god-and-difference/.

Tonstad, Linn Marie. “The Limits of Inclusion.” *Theology & Sexuality* 21, no. 1 (2015): 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/13558358.2015.1115599.

Vitz, Paul C. “Introduction: Women and Men and Their Complementarity: The Rationale and Evidence.” In *The Complementarity of Women and Men: Philosophy, Theology, Psychology & Art*, edited by Paul C. Vitz. The Catholic University of America Press, 2021.

Williams, Khalia J. “Encountering Christ: A Womanist Exploration of Chauvet’s Symbolic Exchange in Communion.” In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Liturgical Theology*, edited by Porter C. Taylor and Khalia J. Williams. Wiley Blackwell, 2025.