The Fifth Wound of Christ: A Trans_feminist Theology of the Eucharist

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Dedication

With abundant thanks,

to the Reverends Steve Jacobson, Lew Mills, Joy Mills, Rudy Moore, Vicki Smith, Frank Allen, Alison Harrity, Caroline Stacey, Mary Foulke, Hugh Grant, and Steve Paulikas, my many priest-parents who each prodded some part of this project,

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"We cannot live our lives in the folds of old wounds. It's not healthy, it's not life-giving, it doesn't bring in justice, it doesn't bring in the next generation. That's what the moral imperative is for black women: to live life beyond those old wounds—those old, old folds."
-Emilie Townes[1]

"In white society's mind, heroes and blackness are always individualized, brutality and blackness are always collectivized. The same way all women are responsible for the violence they suffer and responsible for freeing themselves from that violence."
-Esther Armah[2]

"Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehoods. The liturgical movement must become a revolutionary movement, seeking to overthrow the forces that continue to destroy the promise, the hope, the vision."
-Abraham Joshua Heschel[3]

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[1] *Journey to Liberation: The Legacy of Womanist Theology*, 2014. Dir. Annika Gibbons. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjhtUGqFCWg&feature=youtube_gdata_player. Emilie Townes alludes here to the film *Daughters of the Dust*. Dir. Julie Dash, 1991.
[2] *Frank Wilderson & Esther Armah - The Lady with the Whip*, 2013. Conference at Barnard College, April 2013. http://vimeo.com/61345252.
[3] Heschel, Abraham Joshua. "No Religion is an Island." *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity: Essays*. Macmillan, 1997. 262-263.

Introduction

The gradual mingling of two separate events shaped the work for this thesis—a visit to The Morgan Library last summer and a sermon I preached last fall.

As with many art exhibits which make their way through New York City, I had heard about the latest exhibit at The Morgan but had not found the time to go check it out. An extended visit from an out-of-town guest prompted us to do a bit of museum hopping, and we ended up at "Illuminating Faith: the Eucharist in Medieval Life and Art" on the final weekend of the presentation, in September 2013. Walking through the display of various pages of illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages, I stopped short at an image the likes of which I had never seen before. With a caption that read "The Wound of Christ in Actual Size," there was a bright orange mandorla about three inches tall, with a red stripe down the center. [4] The image bore a striking resemblance to a vulva; the sort of vibrant "feminine" imagery that has one blushing and mumbling something about Georgia O'Keefe.[5] My friend and I gasped, peering at each other with a mixture of delight, embarrassment, and curiosity.

The description of the image was particularly arresting, containing theology I had never encountered:

> Of Christ's five wounds, the one in his side was the focus of its own cult. After Christ's death, this wound miraculously issued both water and blood when his body was pierced. (For this reason water is mixed with the wine that is consecrated at Mass.) Theologically, the Church was thought to have been born from this wound. The water had baptismal significance; the blood was, of course, the Eucharist. Medieval images of Christ's wound had special potency if they

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[4] Plate 1.

[5] Known, of course, for her suggestive depictions of flowers, though the artist historically denied the connection. See Shimamura, Arthur. *Experiencing Art: In the Brain of the Beholder*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

> were the exact size of the original. Such is the case here, as indicated by the inscription around the image.[6]

All of a sudden, my mind was awash with the implications of this wound as "birthplace" of the church—this overlapping conflation of wounds with vulvas and vulvas with wombs, and what potential (perhaps problematic, perhaps dangerous) that might hold for a feminist interpretation of Eucharistic theology. Moreover, I could not believe what I was reading—that the blood of this womb/wound could be the blood of the Eucharist. How many times had I heard someone say, as the chalice was placed to my lips, "This is the blood of Christ?" After twenty-eight years on this earth, all as an Episcopalian, I could not begin to count. What if this very same "blood of Christ" was also blood from a vulva? Or blood from a womb? Or blood from anatomically female reproductive organs in any sense? The exhibit's note beside the image—establishing this site as the birthplace of the church—drew a clear connection between this blood and menstrual blood, or amniotic fluid and placenta, or both—in other words, the effusions of "blood and water" associated with motherhood, with the childbearing potential of the female body. Further, what does it mean that this blood comes from Jesus, ostensibly a man—a male body? For the first time in my life, the blood of the Eucharist—and by extension the whole sacrament—became a site of potential challenge to gender norms and expectations. For as long as I had felt daunted by the laborious task of dismantling the hundreds of years of patriarchy which plagued my faith tradition, I finally felt hope. Instead of needing the fixing and undoing itself, could Christianity actually be a *source* for undoing gender? Could the mystery of the Eucharist, by which I had been spiritually fed *despite* its many clear (to me) problems for so long, actually be more deeply explored through the implications of this womb/wound? I felt sure that it could.

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[6] Roger Wieck, curator. Notes for Book of Hours, Verdun use, in Latin and French, France, Verdun? and Paris, ca. 1375, Illuminated by the Master of the Bible of Jean de Sy, MS M.90, fol. 130, Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1902.

The second encounter was unrelated in any direct sense to the museum exhibit, but served to further compel me to begin to answer the questions that this image of the wound had raised. It occurred after I had preached a sermon on a Sunday morning in October 2013. Before I describe exactly what happened, I need to explain a bit about the context for the sermon. As part of my work towards both the Master of Divinity degree at Union Theological Seminary and also priestly ordination in the Episcopal Church, I have been a ministry intern at a small Episcopal church in Park Slope, Brooklyn. All Saints' Church (founded in 1867 and continuously worshipping since then), like many Episcopal churches in the United States, has been through various phases of congregational life; periods of booming attendance and periods without even a priest on staff. The population has evolved as well, from a group comprised mostly of Canadian immigrants, to Caribbean immigrants, to its current eclectic mix of members. Today, many hail from Belize, Jamaica, Guyana, and St. Vincent; others are from Cuba, the UK, Hong Kong, or Poland. There are those whose families have lived in Brooklyn for several generations. There are babies and 100 year-olds, LGBTQ members, Republicans, and Democrats. There are single, married, or partnered members, and people who live with partners of other faiths; there are adopted and biological children, single parents, former Catholics, former Evangelicals, and lifelong Anglicans. Parishioners may be un-domiciled or own multiple homes; some are in the military; several have been themselves or have family in the prison system. All of these various identity classifications and sociological descriptors appear in a congregation whose average Sunday attendance is (growing, but) just around 80 people.

When I began work there in the summer of 2013, I was the first seminarian in over 20 years. The congregation had recently called a new full-time priest who was about to be named rector (or lead clergy person). They had not had a full-time priest in over 5 years; he would be

only the 15th rector in the church's history. Of those rectors, all were men; in fact, the congregation has never had a female priest on staff. Anecdotally, I have heard that a woman preached "once" many years ago, but it is fair to say that women have never been immediately visible in the pastoral role that I would be taking on as an intern. In fact, during my first visit, I overheard a man ask the priest if the Episcopal Church even ordained women. The man was surprised to hear they had been doing so for forty years.

The women of the congregation hold the community together, however; they especially did so during the most recent period without a full-time clergy person on staff. The vestry is almost entirely women, as is the altar guild, the Sunday School program, the outreach program, the finance committee, the audit committee, the choir, and the lay reader and Eucharistic minister guild. Most of these women tend to be over 50, born in a Caribbean or South American country, single, and the matriarchs of large, successful broods of children and grandchildren.

It was for this community that my supervisor invited me to preach in October, just a few months after I had begun my internship. After two years of studying theology at Union—convicted by the work of scholars and authors like James Cone, Mary Daly, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Elizabeth Johnson, Sallie McFague, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, and Marcella Althaus-Reid—and in the midst of discerning a call to the priesthood, I was grappling with how to apply what I found to be liberating and radical theology in a "real world" context—that is, preaching to this diverse congregation. I felt that this assembly—weekly surrounded by Tiffany windows of white apostles and Jesuses, always worshiping with uninterrogated patriarchal language and male images of God—*should* be craving something more. And yet, that was not what I had been experiencing. The congregation, though diverse, seemed mostly content in its

stale symbols and liturgy. More than content, many seemed spiritually fulfilled and, in fact, sustained in their daily lives by the work of the church and their role in it.

The Gospel text in the lectionary for the week I was to preach happened to be Luke 18:1-8, the story of the persistent widow and the unjust judge. I chose to preach about fair compensation for hourly workers in the US, and told the story of a McDonald's employee who spoke up to the CEO and demanded a living wage. The message of my sermon was that the judge in the parable is not God, though we might be conditioned to see him as such; rather, God is on the side of the widow. God is on the side of the widows at All Saints', too. As I stepped down from the pulpit and sat back into my seat, the woman next to me (who would be leading the intercessory prayer later in the service) leaned over. She took my hand in hers with force and looked right into my eyes as she said, "I am that woman. $8.00 an hour. I'll tell you about it."

The purpose of recalling this event is not to claim some sort of preaching prize or boast about my ability to connect with the people in the congregation. (And, in fact, as with most sermons, there were certainly some parishioners who did not love my message.) Rather, the point is what I witnessed that day: people are hungry for connection in worship. People want to relate to the symbols; people want to be seen and represented. In the traditional Episcopal context, it is easiest for this to happen during the sermon, where the preacher has control and flexibility. But I have so often witnessed the preacher step down from the pulpit and step behind the altar to rehash the same, tired Eucharistic formula each week. Its allusions to substitutionary atonement, its exclusive feeding policy, its abundance of male images and dearth of female ones—here is where the fifth wound of Christ begins to emerge as a possible site of exploration for liberating the Eucharistic tradition in an exciting and practical way. The intended recipient of this experimentation is the person who might actually be the most shocked (or even offended) by

frank discussion of female anatomy and the body of Jesus, but who might spiritually benefit from a Eucharist which takes into account the ways in which Jesus loves and nourishes historically marginalized people.

Mimicking the basic structure of a service of Holy Eucharist in the Episcopal Church, this paper will explore the "texts" of this wound (The Liturgy of the Word), respond to those texts through constructive theology (The Sermon), and then offer a new and usable liturgy (The Communion). The overarching project will explore and define the "trans_feminist," queer, and intersectional implications of this "Fifth Wound of Christ" and how it may be used within worship as a tool of liberation. I will begin by exegeting the primary "texts" of the fifth wound: John 19-20 and medieval imagery. I will then introduce the German "gender gap" and its potential use in the English language, as well as its relation to "trans_feminism," to race theory, and finally how it relates to the theology of Jesus' wound. I will then give a trans_feminist and intersectional understanding of the wound, explicitly. The result of this theological work will allow a close reading of a poem by Ntozake Shange ("we need a god who bleeds now") and its call for intersectional, anti-racist worship, which I will find particularly applicable to The Episcopal Church. I will conclude with this project's relation to Episcopal Eucharist and how this work might call for change within the Eucharistic structure. The final section will be a new Eucharistic prayer for use in the Episcopal Church and beyond.

The Wound and Its Sources

Jesus' death sits in the midst of the Christian story; many would say right at the center, both rhetorically and theologically. Innumerable layers of scriptural interpretation, theology, church history, art, and doctrine inform the collective imagining of Jesus' crucifixion and its implications. Within any one of those layers, it is difficult to isolate a singular and/or linear narrative understanding of the crucifixion story; within the scripture canon alone, there are four separate accounts and various epistolary references to Jesus' death which simultaneously corroborate, elaborate on, and contradict each other's stories. This richness of scripture—its complications and irregularities—compels the vast number of different manifestations of Christianity across the world. Though current U.S. American culture may have, in variously expressed ways, an obsession with "literal" truth, "fundamental" understanding, or finding "just the facts,"[7] the search for these with regard to the Christian faith are not only impossible endeavors, but also misguided. Due to phenomena such as conflation of cultural contexts, canon formation, and imperfect source texts, "fact-based" Christianity encourages the propagation of the oppression of women, of any perceived social "minorities," and of non-Christians world-wide. A closer look at the intricacies of our various "source texts," both scriptural and otherwise, opens up, however, the liberative possibilities of the Christian faith.

One space holds particular interest to me as a potential site of liberation for historic and present victims of spiritual abuse or, in other words, those who have been denied full

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[7] See, for example, Fox News TV host Bill O'Reilly's two latest books *Killing Jesus: A History* (O'Reilly, Bill, and Martin Dugard. *Killing Jesus: A History*. Macmillan, 2013.)and the young adult version *The Last Days of Jesus: His Life and Times* (O'Reilly, Bill. *The Last Days of Jesus: His Life and Times*. Henry Holt and Co., 2014.) both of which claim to tell the "fact-based" account of Jesus' life. In *Last Days*, O'Reilly declaratively states the date and time of the crucifixion: "Chapter 28: CRUCIFIED, Friday, April 6, AD 30, Golgotha, Mid-morning to afternoon."

participation in communities due to their gender, sexuality, or race. The wound in Jesus' side—also known as the "fifth wound," "final wound," or "spear wound," from which flowed blood and water—can participate in an intersectional, queer, and (ultimately) "trans_feminist" theology of Jesus' body and of, therefore too, the sacrament of the Eucharist. I will explore two general "primary sources" for understanding the wound and its implications: the wound as introduced in scripture, and the wound as depicted in medieval art (and subsequent devotions to it). This is by no means a comprehensive list of all of the wound's occurrences in writing or art, nor an exploration of all its possible interpretations; I do present, however, its origin in canonical scripture and a place to begin looking at the wound in images.[8]

The Wound and the Bible

A Johannine creation, the side wound appears within the canonized New Testament books only in the Gospel of John. It appears in two contexts: as it is inflicted on the body of Jesus by a Roman soldier and upon the resurrected body of Jesus when he visits his disciples. The wound first appears in Chapter 19, after Jesus has been served sour wine on a sponge, has declared "It is finished" (τετελεσται), has bowed his head, and has given "up his spirit."[9]:

> Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath, especially because that Sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. **Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.** (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he

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[8] Aaron Spencer Fogleman has written a fascinating book documenting the wound's devotions from Moravians in Early America, which has particular historical significance to protestant interpretations. See Fogleman, Aaron Spencer. *Jesus Is Female: Moravians and the Challenge of Radical Religion in Early America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, c2007.
[9] John 19:28-30, NRSV. (All biblical citations from NRSV unless otherwise noted.)

> knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."
> After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.[10]

The passage includes several significant and key points about this wound of Christ. The first is that the soldiers pierce Jesus' body with a spear to create the wound after Jesus has already died. Sandra M. Schneiders, IHM notes that the language of John 19:30's apparent initial indication of Jesus' death ("he gave up his spirit") appears nowhere else in scripture nor any contemporary Greek as a reference to death.[11] A rhetorical invention of the Johannine author, the verse immediately sets apart Jesus' death as atypical. As described, Jesus' death is different than the others' deaths surrounding him. The business of the guards, to rid the bodies from the crosses in preparation for the Sabbath, establishes a context for Jesus' death in comparison to these other bodies. The guards must break the legs of the men beside Jesus in order to speed up their deaths, but Jesus' legs need not be broken because he is already dead. (We are told this also fulfills scriptural prophecy, as will the piercing of the spear wound.) His death has been faster than the others, and it has involved a separation of his spirit.

The spear wound is then different from the wounds of Jesus' hands and feet because the spear wound occurs after Jesus is dead. Commentator Raymond Brown parses the verb

[10] John 19:31-42
[11] Schneiders, Sandra M., I.H.M. "The Resurrection (of the Body) in the Fourth Gospel." Brown, Raymond Edward, and John R. Donahue. *Life in Abundance: Studies of John's Gospel in Tribute to Raymond E. Brown, S.S.* Liturgical Press, 2005. 179.

(νυσσειν) as more akin to "stabbed at" with the connotation of "pricking or prodding, sometimes lightly (so as to waken a sleeping man)." Acknowledging that the soldier knew that Jesus was already dead, Brown figures, "the soldier gave an exploratory jab to see if the apparently dead body would react and thus be still alive; there is no intelligible reason why he should want to inflict a wound if he was positive Jesus was dead."[12] Moreover, the piercing happens upon Jesus' side. Brown notes, "the word for side (πλευρα), used in the singular here, is more normal in the plural. Some … have suggested that John is recalling the use (singular) in Gen 2:21-22 where God takes a "πλευρα" (LXX) from Adam and forms it into a woman."[13] The oddness of this piercing is linked to Jesus' divinity—his quick death upon the cross and his spirit's disembodiment—and it is also linked to a scriptural precedent of the formation of life, specifically related to gender. (This will be further explored in medieval illuminations.) From the perspective of this wound as potential womb, it is curious that the piercing, or penetrating, is not an act of insemination, but rather an act of formation. The soldier through his act (and is it violent if it is merely probing?) creates the vulva—and potentially, behind it, a womb—from which flows forth this blood. The "birth" here—of the Eucharist, or of the church—is not created by the penetrative act but rather revealed through the creation of the wound. From the very outset, there is a conflation of violence and creation—perhaps best seen as an acknowledgment of the suffering endured in the act of creation.

A second key point about this wound is that it pours forth blood and water. Biblical scholars have worried and wondered about this point for years—many adamant that this is *not* a miracle, that this is simply what *would* pour forth from a crucified body pierced in the side

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[12] Brown, Raymond Edward, ed. *The Gospel according to John*. 1st ed. The Anchor Bible 29-29A. Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1966. 935.
[13] Ibid, 935.

moments after death.[14] Many are just as adamant that this *is* a miracle; this is Jesus' blood poured out with the spirit.[15] Regardless of its veracity (and, again, what is veracity in the context of a story, anyway?), it is full of symbolic potential. The water, linked particularly in the Gospel of John with baptism and cleansing—the ritual baths being so important to the Jewish community out of which this Gospel came—can be interpreted as mixing with the blood to make it holy, to make it spiritual, to make it clean. In fact, the "Last Supper" narrative in the Gospel of John does not include the words of "institution" of the Eucharist, nor any blessing over bread and wine, nor any indication that Jesus' body is bread, nor that his blood is wine. Rather, Jesus and his disciples wash feet—cleansing each other with water. In this Gospel, then, the blood and water from Jesus' side become a sort of institution in itself. Whereas in the synoptic gospels it is Jesus' words which link the elements with his flesh and blood, in John, there is a fleshly embodiment—broken skin and an outpouring of blood and water. Jesus does not speak to implore a ritual act of remembrance, but the water becomes a symbol of the spirit's presence in this bodily act. It should be noted that it is the Catholic and Anglican custom to include water in the wine that is consecrated at the Eucharist. Whether or not this might also have some practical genesis, its biblical precedent certainly explains it theologically.

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[14] In *The Last Days of Jesus,* Bill O'Reilly's "fact-based" description of this moment claims that "blood and *body fluid*" poured out of Jesus' side. The most common source for this theory (that water-like liquid flowed from a burst pericardial sac) is the work of a London-based doctor and theologian named William Stroud who published *A Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ* in 1847. Though the theory has since been mostly debunked, there are other medical hypotheses about how this "water" could have been anatomically accurate. (Interestingly, I had never heard of William Stroud before researching this project and do not know if we are related, though that is my father's name. I do like to think, however, that I might be continuing a family business of sorts by exploring the theological implications of this wound.)

[15] See, for example, the explanation of the wound imagery at The Morgan Library previously cited: "After Christ's death, this wound *miraculously* issued both water and blood when his body was pierced."

This water, which pours forth with blood, has further associations than merely symbolic ones; visually, one could interpret its connection to bodily fluids specifically associated with women. This blood includes menstrual blood mixed with cervical mucus, blood from a broken hymen, and bloody fluid associated with birth (amniotic fluid, placenta). The blood that comes from the body of a woman is often more than just blood—it can have the quality of comingling elements, clear and red, like water and blood. These "bloods" are, mostly, signs of life. Whereas blood from a wound is the result of violence, evoking fear and invoking a journey towards death, blood from the female reproductive organs indicate ongoing life, sexual activity, and the creation of new life. By exuding blood and water, this wound of Jesus calls these womanly, life-giving "bloods" to mind.

A third note of significance regarding the wound is the presence of Nicodemus in the narrative. Exclusive to the Johannine gospel, the character first appears in John 3, a skeptical "leader of the Jews." Jesus explains to him:

> "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.'"[16]

Here Jesus first introduces the concept of birth through "water and spirit." It is distinct from birth of the "flesh." In the creation of the fifth wound, blood and water comes, however, from flesh. The miracle of the water and blood is, in effect, a conflation of these fleshly and spiritual births. The presence of Nicodemus at the body, with Joseph of Arimathea who appears also in the synoptics, reminds the reader of the importance of this spiritual birth.

[16] John 3:3-7

The wound appears again after Jesus' body has resurrected. In a scene made infamous by Caravaggio's "The Incredulity of St. Thomas," Jesus visits the disciples. He has already been resurrected for at least a week; the rest of his disciples have begun to believe the miraculous event that has taken place, but Thomas remains incredulous. Jesus implores him, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."[17] That Jesus' wound should remain open on his resurrected body is crucial to the theological implications of this space. It reinforces its use as a site of feminine reproduction when it transcends the function of wound and becomes a healed and open space, a space of regeneration. The Johannine author reveals that healing, in resurrection, does not mean erasure. The wounds of Jesus remain present, constantly hearkening backward and yet always reaching forward into new life. It is a mystery that is only embodied through Jesus—through this wound/womb—that is large enough to hold Thomas' hand and all of his incredulity.

The fifth wound of Christ, as presented in the Johannine Gospel account, holds a special power in the popular artistic representations of the crucifixion for its bold, fleshliness. For all of its symbolic power, it is grounded in a literal reality of tactile bodily elements. Whereas this wound allows the reader into the space of Jesus' body and into the mystery of his quick death and life-giving blood, in the synoptic accounts of Jesus' crucifixion, the verse immediately after Jesus' death is rather the tearing of the curtain in the temple: Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38, and Luke 23:45, all substantially saying, "the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom." It is a visual that is nearly impossible to illustrate, as it takes place in a separate arena—far away. Practically, to attempt to render the action at the temple along with the crucifixion would be difficult; artistically, it is a separate action. And so, though it takes up relatively little

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[17] John 20:27

space in the Gospel itself, because of popular interpretation and symbolic fortitude, the wound becomes a cherished "entry" into the passion of Jesus Christ.

The Wound in Images

There are numerous methods to use in one's approach to an analysis of medieval renderings of Jesus' fifth wound. Scholars of medieval art and religion have made exemplary efforts in the realms of both church and art history in attempting to uncover the particular uses of these images to their contemporaneous viewers, most notably Caroline Walker Bynum in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages.*[18] To try to reconstruct either viewer reception or artist intent is a difficult and sometimes (perhaps always?) futile effort, which is not the purpose of this project. Though it is safe to say, due to both the nature of the writing and also of the images of this medieval period, that the connection between this wound and a birthplace was probably intentional and clear,[19] it is *necessary* to say that the connection exists today, to the modern viewer. This project looks at these images from that perspective, with an eye toward their liberating potential. Further, though the images are steeped in scriptural origin, I will look at them as their own primary sources; in the words of Leo Steinberg in *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and In Modern Oblivion*, "There are moments, even in a wordy culture like ours, when images start from no preformed program to become primary texts.

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[18] Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. University of California Press, 1982.

[19] See, as one example, Flora Lewis's essay "The Wound in Christ's Side" in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*. Smith, Lesley, and Jane H. M. Taylor, eds. The British Library Studies in Medieval Culture. University of Toronto Press, 1997. "The womb shapes in images [of the era] vary, but the most common version is a pointed oval, often with a border running around it." See also Plate 5. *Three phalluses carrying a crowned vagina*, a parody of a "pilgrim badge" (devotional objects carried by pilgrims) in which the vagina is mandorla-shaped.

Treated as illustrations of what is already scripted, they withhold their secrets."[20] I do not want these images to withhold their secrets.

Of the numerous interpretations of the fifth wound that peppered medieval illustrations, I will focus on three—one from an illustrated Bible Moralisée c1225 and two from Parisian, personal, devotional prayer books, c1345 and c1375. The two Parisian illustrations have striking similarities; both contain close-up, mandorla-shaped images of the standalone wound. In this period, the wound makes a move away from the body of Jesus (as originated in scripture) and becomes an entity in and of itself which lived in images on its own. The wound comes to inhabit a space between the body and the symbolic; it is of the body and yet not of the body. The illustration from a Bible Moralisée is an entirely different interpretation of the wound. Still on Christ's distinctly male body, it is a site of the birth of the church. "Ecclesia" in female form protrudes from the wound of Christ, holding a chalice and handing the Eucharist to Jesus Christ. Both types of medieval representations of the wound serve as places to explore feminist implications for theologies of the Eucharist, through their various gendered embodiments and disembodiments of this wound.

The particular rendering of the wound that is of interest on folio 2v (Plate 3) comes in the second column and second row. Three figures are central to the action of the illumination, which is an image full of movement and potential. Jesus, bare-chested with a cloth covering his genitalia hangs upon the cross. His eyes are open, and he wears a gold halo. From his right side, poking through and implying exit from an angled-mandorla, a figure protrudes. This figure is "Ecclesia," the embodied rendering of "the church" historically signified as female. The primary indicator of gender here is Ecclesia's lack of beard, which would look odd on a figure being

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[20] Steinberg, Leo. *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

born—though Ecclesia is also fully-clothed, so realism is certainly not the central effort. Still, the image links youth with femininity, emphasizing the virginal, diminutive, and pure characteristics of ideal womanhood. At the same time, Ecclesia holds a chalice in her outstretched arms. It is in her youth and womanhood that she offers forth a powerful and central image—the Eucharist. Ecclesia delivers the cup into the hands of a second man—sturdier than Jesus and unhindered, standing tall, this man represents "God the Father." It's a striking family image, ripe for a queer critique: God the Father begets ecclesia through the womb of Jesus. This is the origin of the Eucharist as depicted in this panel. Interestingly, this smaller panel is part of a page that is titled "Genesis." Just above it, the birth of Eve mirrors this later image. The same "God the Father" pulls a woman (this time a naked Eve) from the side of (an also) naked Adam, who reclines as if in the throes of labor. The doubling of the image establishes the scriptural basis of the illumination, calling upon John's allusion to the birth of Eve through his depiction of Jesus' pierced side. What seems radical to a modern viewer—these family units that distort gender and generational relationships—actually directly align in certain key symbolic ways with their scriptural counterparts. The "wound" on Jesus' side in this panel is barely a wound at all—there is no blood, there is no water, there is no emphasis on its having been pierced. There is only the life-giving potential—the birth of the central symbol of the church. This birth of symbol occurs from the body of what is clearly proscribed in other ways as "male." The gender of Jesus then becomes a place of tension and in-betweenness.

The two images from Parisian prayer books present a different view of the wound. Most often, in Paris in the middle of the 14th century, women were the primary audience for personal prayer books, as a literary form. Women would use the books for personal devotions; as such, the art and prayers of the books were tailored for the eyes of women. Typically, each book would

be for a specific patron. In the case of "Christ's Wound, Christ as Man of Sorrows" (Plate 1), it is unclear who the intended recipient was. We do know, however, about Fol 331r (Plate 3), which is from prayer book and psalter of Bonne of Luxembourg. Married to Jean of Valois, a French royal, Bonne could have afforded an expensive book, as this one surely was. The wealthier the patron, the more specific the tailoring of devotions could be. The books generally broke into three basic sections: The psalms, the prayers for the day (or book of hours), and additional, accessory prayers. The image of the fifth wound comes from this third section, the most individualized. It is the final illustration in the book, so it is of particular importance and magnitude within the context of the other accessory prayers—it was a special place of devotion. Its composition is primarily focused around the deep, dark sliver of maroon in the midst of an orange mandorla shape. This seeming abyss drips just a bit out of its pre-set line, imitating a restrained trickle of blood into the folds of flesh that surround it.

The *arma Christi* (or the tools of the crucifixion) surround the mandorla, as does a poem in the colloquial French. The *arma Christi* anchor the wound within the context of the passion, clearly indicating that this *is* the fifth wound, and not some other bleeding gap. Similarly, "Christ's Wound, Man of Sorrows" (from a book which we know much less about than the Bonne's) anchors the wound in a panel beside the torso and head of Christ. In both images, there is very little blood, however, and there is no water pouring from them—distancing them somewhat from their scriptural basis. The wounds sit on the page vertically, representing a rotation from the most typical previous depictions of the wound upon the body of Jesus; as we see in *The Incredulity of St. Thomas*, it will once again flip itself back onto the body in future artistic representations. The new, singular angle of the wound alludes, however, to the vertical tear in the temple curtain of the synoptic Gospels; the symbol of the wound therefore becomes

one that destabilizes socially-created modes of being. (A human hangs a curtain, but only God can tear it top to bottom.) These standalone wounds are *of* the body but not *on* a body; they allude to the human vulva that acts as a set of walls for a potential womb space. The darker stripe down the center of the image gives glimpse to this space. And through their connection to the torn temple curtain, these womb/wounds provide destabilizing power to systems in place that need reform. In conjunction with the womb/wound as birthplace in the earlier illumination, these wounds challenge gender expectations and expressed gender through the body of Jesus. Just as Jesus is fully human and fully God, Jesus is fully feminine and fully male. Jesus' womb, hidden behind the vulva that these images depict, aligns with the "holy of holies" made visible by the tearing of the curtain in the temple. Reading the wound this way separates it from necessarily clinging to proscriptive female roles of menstruation and childbearing. The power of the wound is, rather, in its life-giving space. As, also, a starting point for an understanding of Eucharistic elements, this space has massive implications for a new feminist theology of the Eucharist—the space where Christians come together to meet God and be fed by God.

The Trans_feminist Project

It seemed that just as soon as I had embraced the moniker "feminist," several years into my time as an undergraduate at Barnard College in the early 2000s, I realized the term's many problems. Ideally, the word would describe any person who believes in the full equality of women. The word is not that simple; the word is (like so many identity-defining words) caught up in stereotypes and political battles between different, competing identity groups. Any one of these descriptors might be leveled at a feminist, and not just from conservatives, but also from some people of color, liberal relativists, and universalists: Bra-burning, man-hating, essentialist, cis-privileged,[21] white, classist, elitist, lesbian, or simply "privileged." And any one of those may be true, for better or for worse. At the risk of venturing too far into relativism myself, many critiques of "feminism" (wherever the center of that word may lie) are absolutely correct and many are filled with fear and misogyny. It becomes impossible both to use the word and also impossible not to use the word. For example, I would never claim not to be a feminist, nor (as a white, cisgender woman) am I proud to claim to be a feminist. The dilemma of naming—so central to the feminist project—can begin to compel silence. Where can discourse around dismantling patriarchy, particularly within church contexts, go to be anti-racist and aware of the problems inherent to any serious conversation about gender?

Several new categories have arisen from feminism, or from feminism and movements along its margins. Notably, author Alice Walker coined the term "womanism" which was subsequently embraced by black women (particularly in the field of theology) as a response to the lack of representation of black women in the mainstream feminist project. There are also the "waves" of feminism—1st, 2nd, 3rd, and post-—so often used as rejoinder against an attempt at

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[21] Privileging cisgendered people, or those whose experienced gender matches the one assigned at birth.

feminism—"Your critique of the pornography industry is *so* second wave." Post-feminism, of course, refers to a notion that we might be "beyond" the needs of the original feminist project—look no farther than the continued, significant wage gap for evidence to refute that claim.[22] And then there is "transfeminism," a word with the potential to hold loosely the goal of this particular theological project.

Transfeminism appeared as a word around the year 2000 through the creation of the website "transfeminism.org" by the transgender activists Diana Courvant and Emi Koyama in response to ongoing antagonism from "womyn born womyn" feminists (including Mary Daly) who did not see room for transwomen in the feminist movement. Koyama elucidated the transfeminism movement in her work, *The Transfeminist Manifesto.*[23] It is a word intricately linked to the situation of transgender people, and specifically transwomen; as created and used by that group of people.

In 2013, the theologian Catherine Keller uses the word in an article for *Feminist Theology,* the academic journal: "'And Truth—So Manifold!'—Transfeminist Entanglements." She employs the term both to distinguish the feminism of the article (what she intends to do in the piece) from the (previously explained) problems of the word "feminism" and also to avoid (by abandoning feminism) traversing into the land of "postfeminism" which, she wisely points out, can "in the vicinity of theological symbols (God the Father & Co.) … revert quickly to

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[22] "The [US Government's] Office of Personnel Management's study showed an overall gender pay gap for white-collar occupations of 12.7 percent in 2012." In Yoder, Eric. "Pay Gap: How Salaries Compare by Gender for Federal Employees." *Washington Post*. Accessed April 11, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2014/04/11/how-salaries-compare-by-gender-for-federal-employees/.

[23] Koyama, Emi. "Transfeminist Manifesto" in *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century*. Dicker, Rory Cooke, and Alison Piepmeier, eds. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003.

prefeminism."[24] This leaves Keller with "transfeminism," or "a discourse and a practice in transition, transversing the andromorphic closures of rule or habit; it is transgression in service of transformation."[25] I find this definition all well and good, and probably potentially useful in the sense that it holds onto the massive trajectory of "ecofeminism" and might provide some sort of beginning of a bridge to the gap between white feminists and feminists of color and womanists. It retains something of "feminism" while leaning into an always-moving, transitive future.

I do think, however, that there is a huge problem in this "transfeminist" project begun by Keller—which is (as far as I can see), the first mention of transfeminism within the walls of the theological academy. That is, of course, that it does not name explicitly any connection to the lives of transgender people, nor does it acknowledge its other life as a rallying word for the transwoman community. For Keller—who is certainly aware of queer theology and even names queer sexuality in her umbrella heading for transfeminism—to miss this logical association is very problematic. To me it speaks to the invisibility of transfolk, at least within theology, and probably (by extension) contemporary culture.

The Gender Gap

In order not to throw out Keller's entire project, and actually to build off of it as a site for reconciling feminisms, I offer a solution that has its basis in current German-language Queer theory. In German, plural nouns are necessarily gendered; therefore, a group of male theologians is *theologen* and a group of female theologians is *theologinnen*—but once 99 female theologians are joined by a man, that group becomes *theologen*. How can German speakers refer to those

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[24] Keller, Catherine. "'And Truth—So Manifold!'—Transfeminist Entanglements." *Feminist Theology* 22, no. 1 (September 1, 2013): 78. doi:10.1177/0966735013498052.
[25] Ibid, 78.

who do not identify within the gender binary, and how can German speakers assure that female embodiment is recognized in language? The solution is to employ a "gender gap," represented by an underscore or _. The result is a word like *theolog_innen* which refers to a group of theologians of any or no gender. The gap holds a space for those who reject the gender binary. Philosopher Gudrun Perko explains the new method in an interview with *Die Standard*:

> The gap as an absence actually refers to its dialectical opposite, i.e., instead of an absence it is a thing. In the case of the underscore, the "thing" is a space for people who are otherwise invisible, i.e., transgender, intersex, etc. The underscore illuminates the necessity of a new category of speech that recognizes people who are otherwise not recognized. The gap includes those who are not mentioned (*mitmeinen*), as in, trans*inter people or people of color.[26]

I propose that this gap may be used to widen the space in transfeminism in order to create "trans_feminism." The word retains the movement of transfeminism, but adds a powerful space of both recognition and creation.

The Gap and Racism

This is particularly important in regards to addressing racism within current feminisms and the ways in which women of color are underrepresented, or given no voice at all. The gap does not force speech from anyone, but it does offer the space (for example) for Womanism to reside. It does not rename or remove Womanism; rather, trans_feminism holds open a space for its important and necessary work. This space may prove particularly helpful for transwomen of color, whose litany of identities is at great risk of being silenced or oppressed.

In a conversation at Barnard College last year, Frank Wilderson and Esther Armah spoke about the intersection between race violence and gender violence. Wilderson's presentation

[26] Beate Hausbichler, Raum für _!, dieStandard.at (2008), http://diestandard.at/1224776349439/GenderSprache-Raum-fuer-_, March 15, 2014. (Translated into English.)

revolved around the comparable presentations of slavery in the films *Manderlay* and *Django Unchained*. Wilderson drew a connection between white ownership of black bodies and violence against women, who are also treated as property. Armah's response was to present it in this way: "In white society's mind, heroes and blackness are always individualized, brutality and blackness are always collectivized. The same way all women are responsible for the violence they suffer and responsible for freeing themselves from that violence."[27] Armah's and Wilderson's inquiries into the overlapping space between racist violence and gender violence highlight the inadequacy of comparing identity-based suffering, at the same time that they are able to draw some equivalencies. It is a paradox of intersectionality which may be held in the gap of trans_feminism, where the unnamed is always also named.

The gap I have identified as necessary to trans_feminism, stemming from this German gender gap, is embodied through the gap on Jesus' side. The wound/womb space becomes the space that holds—instead of absence—a thing. That thing is (liturgically) the Eucharist; pragmatically, it is the identity of those who remain unnamed in cultures of oppression. In order for a liturgy of the Eucharist to serve its purpose (outlined explicitly in the final section), it must then respond to the gap of trans_feminism—the very same gap that is on Jesus' side.

[27] *Frank Wilderson & Esther Armah - The Lady with the Whip*, 2013. Conference at Barnard College, April 2013. http://vimeo.com/61345252.

we need a god who bleeds now

In order to address the need for intersectional liturgy (that which could come out of this theological space of inquiry; this space which is not an absence), one must respond to an actual, realized desire from the people. (Liturgy is, of course, the work of the people.) This is where the project began—from a perceived desire within my own liturgical context. But that desire extends beyond specific parishes and into contemporary society.

In 1985, Ntozake Shange published her choreopoem *From Okra to Greens: A Different Kinda Love Story*. In it, Shange explores the dynamics in three black male/female couples, through the repeated lens of the characters Okra (the woman) and Greens (the man). The different stories, staged with dance and verse in her unique choreopoem style, explore themes of the black experience in the U.S. At one point, Okra speaks a poem into the room. The words are an urgent call to those people who hold the social power to name and control the image of God in contemporary society. It is a demand for different ways of framing the God experience; one that can speak directly to the Episcopal Church, who so often stands with closed ears to the calls for interrogating the many different intersections that may both exist in the world it serves and may also reside within its own communion:

> we need a god who bleeds now
> a god whose wounds are not
> some small male vengeance
> some pitiful concession to humility
> a desert swept with dryin marrow in honor of the lord
>
> we need a god who bleeds
> spreads her lunar vulva & showers us in shades of scarlet
> thick & warm like the breath of her
> our mothers tearing to let us in
> this place breaks open
> like our mothers bleeding
> the planet is heaving mourning our ignorance
> the moon tugs the seas

> to hold her/to hold her
> embrace swelling hills/i am
> not wounded i am bleeding to life
>
> we need a god who bleeds now
> whose wounds are not the end of anything[28]

Okra calls out for an acknowledgment of the blood of God—of this blood as life-giving, of this blood as feminine blood which pours forth from wounds. These wounds cannot be wounds that mean nothing; further, these wounds must represent the wounds of her community, and those wounds are wounds that are still bleeding. Those wounds cannot race to resurrection and skip the suffering of the day. Those wounds must tell the truth of their existence. Through this recollection of suffering, Okra invokes the power of mothers and their blood. Though not explicit, the blood alludes to the blood of Jesus as a specific "motherly" blood. Shange erases the worry of the conflation of feminine anatomic imagery and wounds: "i am/ not wounded i am bleeding to life." It is the blood of life, that blood which Jesus also bleeds.

Crucially, the wounds of Jesus as explored in this project are "not the end of anything." Jesus' wounds remain a devotional tool, a presence even on his resurrected body, and a space in which we are held. Jesus' wounds are healed, but Jesus' wounds do not disappear. In his work *Against Celus,* Origen addressed this life-giving, ever-pouring blood: "With other dead bodies the blood congeals and pure water does not flow. But in the case of Jesus' dead body, the miraculous feature was that both blood and water flowed from his side."[29] Origen's words are an antidote to Judith Butler's worry over "congealing" gender in her theory on the performativity of gender: "Even when gender seems to congeal into the most reified forms, the "congealing" is

[28] Shange, Ntozake. *From Okra to Greens: A Different Kinda Love Story : A Play with Music & Dance*. Samuel French, Inc., 1985. 37.
[29] Origen, *Against Celus* 2.36.

itself an insistent and insidious practice, sustained and regulated by various social means."[30] Jesus' blood does not congeal, however; there is no stickiness to the performance of Jesus through this wound—Jesus' performance of gender is never static. In fact, it is transitory, transient, and (in a blow to the hundreds of years of patriarchal oppression that plague our culture) Jesus' performance of gender is trans_feminist. Jesus holds open the possibility of a rejection of our culture's gender proscription in an act of more life. Experiencing the suffering of the world, Jesus begins the process of healing wounds in order that the broken people of earth may be held in the space of his wound.

This is why " we need a god who bleeds;" because we need a God who will not congeal, but will, rather, be in a constant state of emptying. At its best, the liturgy of the Eucharist can reflect the ultimate desire of both its people and also of God by coming forth through this womb/wound space in constant movement. This is the trans_feminist theology of the Eucharist, based in and upon Christ's fifth wound. The crux of this theology is, of course, the work—the liturgy. In order that the work should stand alone, this will be the conclusion of the project. The annotated Eucharist follows, standing alone—as it would in worship, and as the wound stands on the pages of devotional books, and on the body of Jesus.

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[30] Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 2011. 45.

A New Eucharistic Prayer (intended for regular use in the Episcopal Church),[31] Annotated

This prayer is intended to follow a liturgy of the word. The required elements for the full liturgy of Holy Eucharist are as set out in pages 400-401 of the Book of Common Prayer: celebration by an ordained priest, gathering in the Lord's name, proclamation and response to the word of God which includes a Gospel selection, prayer for the world and church, an exchange of the peace, and a table with bread and wine.[32]

Explanation

I have chosen for this liturgy to follow as many "rubrics"[33] as possible, so that it may participate in a lineage of Anglican prayer. This includes following a basic four-fold Eucharistic pattern of taking, breaking, blessing, and giving.[34] It also requires several theological check marks: an eschatological promise or invocation of the future reign of God, anamnesis through the words of institution, epiclesis through the invocation of the Holy Spirit onto the gifts and the community, and exploration of themes of self-offering and self-emptying. The intention, here, is to make accessible the work of this paper through this Eucharistic prayer, to an assembly who engages with the Eucharist (and therefore, this basic structure) on a regular basis.

There are several proscriptive rubrics regarding the Eucharist, which I will address individually. The issue of whether or not an ordained priest must celebrate the communion (or whether lay consecration is even possible) is not the aim of this project and is a topic worthy of

[31] Technically, use of this prayer on a regular basis during Sunday worship would be in violation of the rubrics of the *The Book of Common Prayer*. Intentional and civil disobedience and/or permission from the diocesan ordinary is required for appropriate use of this liturgy.
[32] *The Book of Common Prayer*. Church Publishing, Inc., 1979.
[33] Literally, "red words," or the rules of the prayer book which delineate the liturgical action.
[34] As identified in Dix, Gregory. *The Shape of the Liturgy*. London, 1945; New York: Continuum, 2005.

much more discussion than this brief introduction allows. For the purposes of this exercise, the celebrant of this Eucharist should be ordained and in full communion with the Episcopal Church.

There are also rubrics that require that the consecrated drink be alcoholic wine (not grape juice) and that the bread be wheaten (not gluten-free). Since, theologically, Episcopalians believe that the sacrament of body and blood is present fully in each kind, the argument is made that a "recovery chalice" or non-alcoholic chalice is not necessary; the communicant may just eat the bread. Perhaps relatedly, Episcopal priests seem more likely to break the second rubric and consecrate gluten-free bread. In my opinion, valid cases can be made on either side of this issue, which deserve consideration beyond the work of this thesis. Practically speaking, the sheer number of vessels and different menu items that require consecrating removes power from the simple symbolism of bread and a cup on the altar. That said, hospitality is key. I would advise the presider using this prayer to serve their congregation as best seen fit, with all of this in mind.

There are rubrics, however, which I believe require civil disobedience of canon guidelines within the framework of this prayer. The first is outlined in the heading to this section. The function of this prayer is a reworking of both the way communities experience the symbol of the Eucharist and also the vantage from which a community accesses this story of Jesus, bread, and wine. There have been successful examples of "special" liturgies for the commemoration of specific moments in the church; for example, an anniversary of the ordination of women or a time of intention towards social issues such as domestic violence, human trafficking, or the HIV/AIDS crisis.[35] Those prayers serve a specific, and necessary, purpose but do not function on a more regular, repetitive basis. The advantage of weekly—or even more frequent—communion

[35] See, for example, the liturgical options in Geitz, Elizabeth Rankin, Marjorie A Burke, and Ann Smith. *Women's Uncommon Prayers: Our Lives Revealed, Nurtured, Celebrated*. Harrisburg, Pa.: Morehouse Pub., 2000.

is the toning of one's faith muscles, the patterning of the grooves that form as community recites prayer corporately again and again. For too long, prayers which recognize the humanity of those on the margins, those left out of many hundreds of years of patriarchal church and society, have been relegated to special occasions. A result of trans_feminist explorations of Jesus' body, this prayer is, rather, for the every day.

The final rubric concerns who is welcome at the table. In keeping with a general reorganizing of who is represented in the Eucharist through this new Eucharistic prayer, it is imperative that everyone present be welcome to partake of the food and drink served from the table where this prayer has consecrated. The issue of "open table" or "open communion" is a topic of much heated debate in the Episcopal Church—again, a topic that deserves much more attention than the confines of this project allow. In quick summary, the current canons of the Episcopal Church clearly state that one must be a baptized Christian in order to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion.[36] Though very good arguments about the centrality of the baptismal symbol and the necessary organizing of inclusive and exclusive rites can be—and have been—made,[37] I believe that the current Eucharistic practices of the Episcopal church require radical hospitality at the table. Gone are the days when only baptized people were allowed into sanctuaries where consecration occurred. Gone are the long stretches between celebrations of communion, wherein one might begin preparation for entry into the sacraments. Today, Episcopalians practice liturgical micro-narratives in each service; in many worship spaces, congregants enter the space past the waters of baptism, perhaps dipping fingers in to a full font

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[36] See *Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church (*New York: Church Publishing, 2012), Title I, Canon 17, Sec. 7.
[37] See Farwell, James. "Baptism, Eucharist, and the Hospitality of Jesus: On the Practice of 'Open Communion.'" *Anglican Theological Review* 86, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 215–38.

before making the sign of the cross. Priests may begin services with stations at the font; often priests sprinkle the congregation with water from an aspersorium before beginning the service, particularly in the Easter season. This water, symbolically at the very least and often literally, touches everyone present. The words of the Eucharistic prayer invite the community to partake of the nourishing food; to deny that food to anyone goes against a constructive idea of what this food represents. Until baptism is as readily available as communion (and I am not convinced that it could or should be), the table must be open. This prayer will work best in a community that practices "open table."

The words of this Eucharistic prayer are inspired by The Book of Common Prayer, The New Zealand Prayer Book, Enriching Our Worship 1, Ntozake Shange, and Emilie Townes. My own annotations and explanations regarding similarities to a typical Eucharistic rite follow along in the right hand margin. (An unannotated version, for ease of reading, is in the appendices.)

An Annotated Liturgy

(The celebrant leads the Eucharistic prayer. The entire assembly reads together the non-parenthetical, italicized words.) God (1) be with you. *And also with you.*	(1) I have removed all instances of the word "Lord." Unnecessarily gendered, invoking slave/master relationships, and a poor translation of the Hebrew "adonai" ("*my* Lord," implying some agency in submission), the word deserves much more interrogation from Episcopalians than it has received. It was surprisingly easy to write this prayer without using it.

Let us lift up our hearts. (2) *We lift them up to God.*	(2) The sursum corda ("hearts lifted") is a standard opening greeting between celebrant and congregation, with roots in the most ancient liturgies. I have re-translated the dialogue from the typical "Lift up *your* hearts" to an inclusive and corporate "Let us lift up *our* hearts."
Let us give thanks. (3) *We give God our thanks and praise.* (4)	(3) Eucharist, in its most basic translation, is "thanks-giving" invoked here, in the opening dialogue.
There is joy and goodness in our thanks to you, most precious God, the ground of our being and the fountain of our love. (5)	(4) Often the first place for overtly gendered language (forgetting *Lord*) in a Eucharistic rite: "It is right to give *him* thanks and praise." This prayer refuses thoughtless gender associations.
(A preface may be inserted as appropriate to the liturgical season or circumstance of the day. The following preface is suitable at all times.)	(5) An affirmation of the good in each person ("goodness"), an invocation of Paul Tillich's "ground of being" and his clever, potentially liberating work with symbols,[38] and a flowing, watery allusion to love—our first subtle

[38] As a symbol, for Tillich, the ground of being exemplifies "the mother quality of giving birth, carrying, and embracing, and at the same time, of calling back, resisting independence of the created, and swallowing it." See Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology, Vol. 3*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976. 293-294.

[Because in the mystery of Word becoming flesh, of flesh dying and living again, you shape us and give us birth.] (6)	reminder of the water and blood flowing from Jesus' side. (6) A spot where the liturgy has flexibility to address the context of the day. This generic preface introduces resurrection and God's birthing potential.
Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels, with saints and sinners, (7)	(7) My addition, in order to open the table, to address the realities of everyone's potential (and simultaneous) virtue and sin.
and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your name. (8)	(8) The introduction to the Sanctus (retained here as a standard posture within Eucharistic prayer which glorifies God) reminds us of the ongoing liturgical line in which we take part.
Holy, holy, holy One, (9) *God of power and might,* *Heaven and earth are full of your glory.* *Hosanna in the highest.* *Blessed is the One* (10) *who comes in your name.* *Hosanna in the highest.*	(9) Removed "Lord" for "One." (10) Changed "he" to "One." Removing the male pronoun emphasizes gender trouble within Jesus, and opens the potential for a feminine image of God.
(The Celebrant continues) God, you made the skies and the wind, the earth and all that is in it. You made us, too, in your womb, and through water and blood we entered this world. (11)	(11) Directly calling upon the blood and water that pour from Jesus' wound as symbols of the waters of birth. Linking God's birthing with the implied "fatherhood" of God the creator ("skies and wind, earth and all that is in it")

You made Jesus, fully divine and fully human, (12) to share our human nature, to bring us closer to you. (13) Upon the cross, Jesus suffered the wounds of the world and gave us life. Like Jesus, our wounds are not small; our wounds are still bleeding. (14) *(At the words concerning the bread and then the wine, the Celebrant holds or places a hand upon each element to be consecrated.)* (15) Before he was arrested (16) and put to death, Jesus had dinner with his friends. At the table, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. He broke the bread and passed it around to share, saying, "Take, eat: This is my Body; it is for you. Do this and remember me." (17) He took a cup of wine and blessed it. He passed it around to share, saying "Drink this, all of you: This is my blood and a new covenant with God. Whenever you drink it, remember me."	(12) Not merely "man." (13) The purpose of Jesus, here, is not as a sacrifice for the world, but as a connector. (14) Reference to Ntozake Shange's poem and call for a God who bleeds *now*. Links the wounds of the world with Jesus' suffering. Again, the suffering is not akin to "substitutionary atonement," but rather an acknowledgment—embodied through Jesus—of the present suffering. (15) The following words of institution ensure an orthodox Eucharistic prayer and participate in the required anamnesis of this liturgical act. (16) Subtle, but intentional, nod to the problem of mass incarceration in the U.S. Jesus' suffering was at the hands of institutions, as is so much suffering today. (17) A standard choice here is the words from Matthew 26:28: "for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." I chose to remove traces of "substitutionary atonement" from this

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of our faith: *Christ has died.* *Christ is risen.* *Christ will come again.* (18)	prayer, in order to avoid implying that the sins of Eve, aka "original sin" were the aim of Jesus' atonement. The words here combine the anamnesis, "This is my blood … remember me" from The Book of Common Prayer with Luke 22:20, "The cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (18) A crucial moment in the Eucharistic prayer. The mystery of faith names the liturgical importance of Eucharist—that everything has already happened, is happening, and will happen. That nothing is too large or small—too past, present, or future—to be held by the table around which we gather.
(The Celebrant continues) Holy Jesus, your suffering is not the end of anything. (19) Your wounds remain open as they fully heal; you hold each of us in the folds of your body. (20) Recalling your death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer these	(19) From Shange, "we need a god who bleeds now, whose wounds are not the end of anything."[39] (20) Recalls both John 20:27 (A resurrected Jesus invites Thomas to put his hand in his side, emphasizing the importance of resurrection—it does not erase wounds, but

[39] Shange, Ntozake. *From Okra to Greens: A Different Kinda Love Story : A Play with Music & Dance*. Samuel French, Inc., 1985. 37.

gifts to God and to each other. Mighty God, send your spirit to make this food holy, to make it the body and blood of your child Jesus. Send her to make us holy, too, and to nourish us; send her to embolden our path towards justice and peace; send her to feed us as we work to see your reign on earth. (21) Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, God our parent, God the spirit pouring through us, from before time and forever. Amen. And now, as Jesus taught us, we are bold to say, (22) *Eternal Spirit, Earth-Maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver* *Source of all that is and all that shall be,*	heals them) and Emilie Townes's moral imperative for black women in the film, "Journey to Liberation: The Legacy of Womanist Theology" to live beyond old wounds and outside of old folds.[40] (21) The epiclesis, or invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the elements and upon the people, in effect consecrating them. The Spirit here is overtly feminine, recalling its feminine Hebrew (רוח) and its neuter Greek (πνευμα). It should not be masculine in English translation. This epiclesis also names a central purpose of the Eucharist—God's feeding us, our bodies ingesting God in order that we may be nourished and sustained in work towards the Reign of God. (22) Version of the Lord's prayer comes substantially from the New Zealand prayer book.[41] As a part of the Anglican communion, the Episcopal Church is in full communion

[40] *Journey to Liberation: The Legacy of Womanist Theology*, 2014. Dir. Annika Gibbons. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjhtUGqFCWg&feature=youtube_gdata_player.
[41] *A New Zealand Prayer Book: The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia*. Genesis Publications, 2005. 181.

Father and Mother of us all, *Loving God who is in heaven:* *The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!* *The way of your justice be followed by people of the world!* *Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!* *Your kin_dom* (23) *sustain our hope and come on earth.* *With bread we need for today, feed us.* *In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.* *In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.* *From trials too great to endure, spare us.* *From the grip of all that is evil, free us.* *For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.* *May it be so. Amen.*	with this church; thus, this is a liturgically authorized version of the Lord's prayer which removes the word *Lord* and the centrality of the Father image. (23) This replaces "commonwealth of peace and freedom." It is more succinct and references Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz's "kin-dom,"[42] but adds a visual gender gap to this prayer by using an underscore instead of a hyphen.

[42] Isasi-Diaz, Ada Maria. "Solidarity: Love of Neighbor in the 1980s," *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*. Thistlethwaite, Susan Brooks, and Mary Potter Engel. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990. Note 4: p. 304.

(The celebrant breaks the consecrated bread.) (24) *(A period of silence is kept.)*	(24) In accordance with Episcopal Eucharistic tradition, the bread is not broken during the words of institution but only after the consecration. This emphasizes the ritual act and minimizes the theatrical quality; the celebrant does not pretend to be Jesus as if an actor in a play.
This broken bread heals us and holds us open; *This drink brings us into life.* (25)	(25) The fraction anthem avoids substitutionary atonement and directs focus to an understanding of resurrection (also, healing) which does not deny the existence of wounds, though they may be healed.
This is holy food for holy people. Feed on it in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving. (26) *(The ministers receive the Sacrament, and*	(26) The invitation to communion combines a phrase used in the Orthodox church (and often in ELCA churches, as well), "holy food for holy people" with Thomas Cranmer's Zwinglian addition to the 1552 Book of Common Prayer (in order to avoid association with transubstantiation and the Catholic church), "feed on it (originally "him") in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving" which invokes the metaphysical—the food is not just physical, it is also spiritual.

then immediately deliver it to the people.) (27) *(The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words)* The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven.	(27) The ministers feed themselves first in a ritual that ensures that the food is not poisoned or harmful; it mimics a chef tasting the food before serving it.
The Blood of Christ, the cup of life. (28) *(After Communion, the Celebrant says)*	(28) Removed "salvation" and replaced with "life." The blood of the wound—and therefore the Eucharist—is life-giving blood.
Let us pray. (29)	(29) Closing prayer modeled after the closing prayer from Eucharistic Prayer A, with key additions.
Eternal God, mother of us all, (30) *You see us in Jesus and you see Jesus in us.* *You invited us to a restorative meal,* *And fed us with holy food, a sacrament of Jesus' body and blood.* *Send us now into the world in peace,* *And grant us strength and courage* *To love and serve you,*	(30) Emphasizes creative power of God. Resides in a space that expects reference to God the "father," problematizing the gender binary.
To live in hope for what is to come, (31) *With gladness and singleness of heart.* *Amen.* *(The presider blesses the people with a blessing appropriate to the day. The following blessing is suitable at all times)*	(31) Added eschatological promise.

[May the blessing of God who made you, Of Jesus' body both broken and healed, And of the Spirit's outpouring grace, Create a space in you, and hold it open for the daily work of justice, freedom, and peace. *Amen.*] (32) *Dismissal* Let us go forth into the world, renewed and rewritten in the perfect love of God. (33) *Thanks be to God.*	(32) I wrote this prayer with a nod to Trinitarian blessings, emphasizing the creator God, the breaking and healing of Jesus, and the spiritual outpouring which structures this Eucharistic prayer. (33) Added "renewed and rewritten" as an explanation of the project and a chiasmic hearkening back to the opening "Word" that is Jesus.

Appendices

- Eucharistic Prayer, for use
- Images
- Works Cited

Eucharistic Prayer

Intended for regular use (with permission from the Ordinary) in the Episcopal Church. Inspired by prayers from The Book of Common Prayer, The New Zealand Prayer Book, Enriching Our Worship 1, Ntozake Shange, and Emilie Townes. By Julia Macy Stroud, 2014.

Celebrant
God be with you.

People
And also with you.

Celebrant
Let us lift up our hearts.

People
We lift them up to God.

Celebrant
Let us give thanks.

People
We give God our thanks and praise.

Celebrant
There is joy and goodness in our thanks to you, most precious God, the ground of our being and the fountain of our love.

A preface may be inserted as appropriate to the liturgical season or circumstance of the day. The following preface is suitable at all times.

[Because in the mystery of Word becoming flesh, of flesh dying and living again, you shape us and give us birth.]

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels, with saints and sinners, and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your name.

Celebrant and People
Holy, holy, holy One, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the One who comes in your name.
Hosanna in the highest.

The Celebrant continues

God, you made the skies and the wind, the earth and all that is in it. You made us, too, in your womb, and through water and blood we entered this world.

You made Jesus, fully divine and fully human, to share our human nature, to bring us closer to you. Upon the cross, Jesus suffered the wounds of the world and gave us life. Like Jesus, our wounds are not small; our wounds are still bleeding.

Before he was arrested and put to death, Jesus had dinner with his friends. At the table, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. He broke the bread and passed it around to share, saying, "Take, eat: This is my Body; it is for you. Do this and remember me."

He took a cup of wine and blessed it. He passed it around to share, saying "Drink this, all of you: This is my blood and a new covenant with God. Whenever you drink it, remember me."

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Celebrant and People
Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

The Celebrant continues
Holy Jesus, your suffering is not the end of anything. Your wounds remain open as they fully heal; you hold each of us in the folds of your body. Recalling your death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer these gifts to God and to each other.

Mighty God, send your spirit to make this food holy, to make it the body and blood of your child Jesus. Send her to make us holy, too, and to nourish us; send her to embolden our path towards justice and peace; send her to feed us as we work to see your reign on earth.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, God our parent, God the spirit pouring through us, from before time and forever. Amen.

And now, as Jesus taught us, we are bold to say,

People and Celebrant
Eternal Spirit,
Earth-Maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver
Source of all that is and all that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God who is in heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by people of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your kin_dom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.
May it be so. Amen.

The celebrant breaks the consecrated bread.

A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant
This broken bread heals us and holds us open;
People
This drink brings us into life.

Celebrant
This is holy food for holy people. Feed on it in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving.

The ministers receive the Sacrament, and then immediately deliver it to the people.

The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words

The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven.
The Blood of Christ, the cup of life.

After Communion, the Celebrant says
Let us pray.

Celebrant and People
Eternal God, mother of us all,
You see us in Jesus and you see Jesus in us.
You invited us to a restorative meal,
And fed us with holy food, a sacrament of Jesus’ body and blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
And grant us strength and courage
To love and serve you,
To live in hope for what is to come,
With gladness and singleness of heart.
Amen.

The presider blesses the people with a blessing appropriate to the day. The following blessing is suitable at all times

[May the blessing of God who made you,
Of Jesus' body both broken and healed,
And of the Spirit's outpouring grace,
Create a space in you, and hold it open
for the daily work of justice, freedom, and peace. *Amen.*]

Dismissal

Deacon or other minister
Let us go forth into the world, renewed and rewritten in the perfect love of God.

People
Thanks be to God.

Images

Plate 1. 1) Christ's wound. 2) Christ as Man of Sorrows. Pierpont Morgan Library. MS M.90, fol. 130r. From France, perhaps Verdun and Paris, ca. 1375. Image Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library.

Plate 2. Caravaggio. The Incredulity of St. Thomas. 1601-1602. Oil on canvas. 107 cm x 146 cm. Sanssouci, Potsdam.

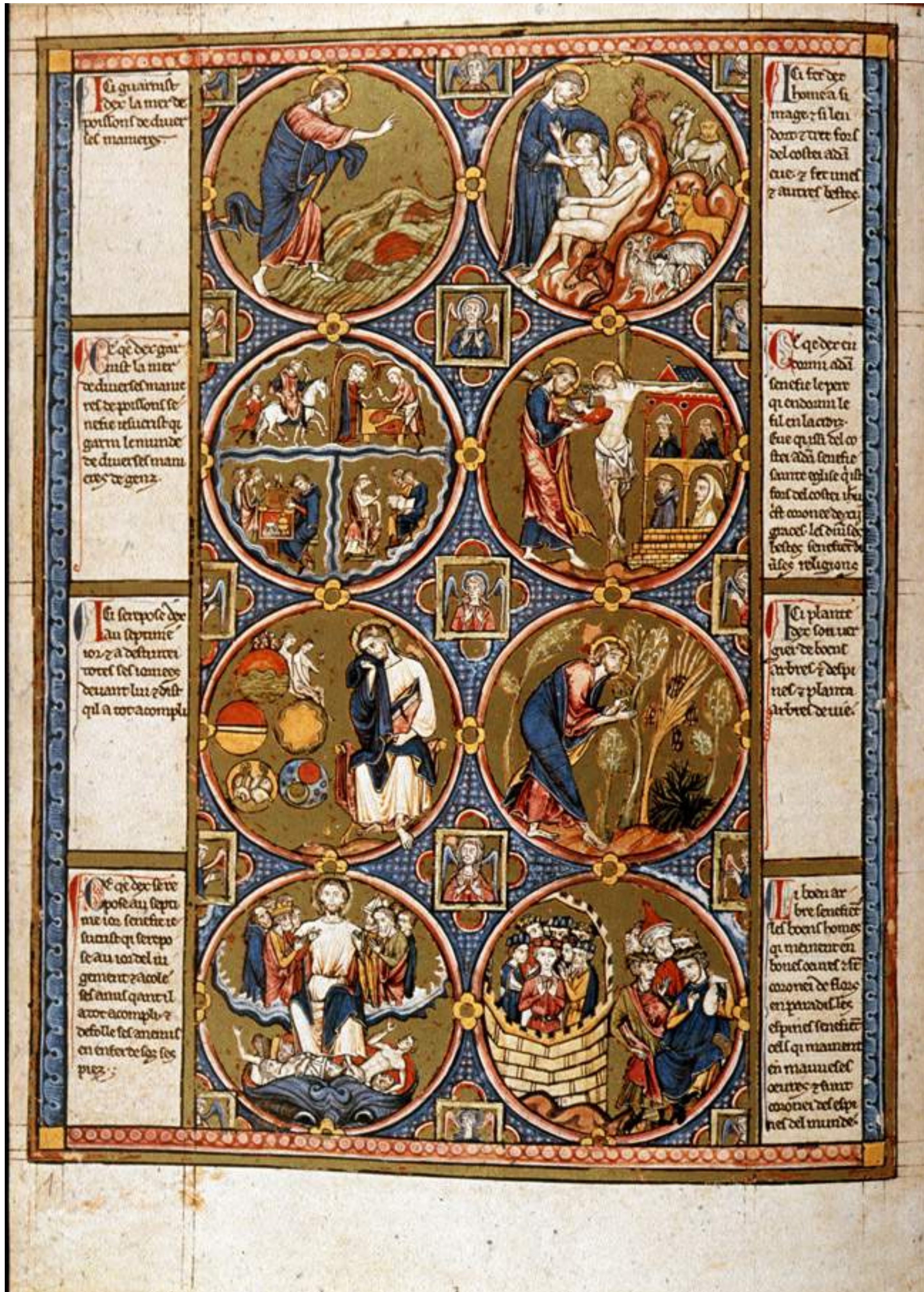

Plate 3. Bible Moralisée: Genesis, French Gothic, ca. 1225. Vienna, ONB, Cod. 2534, folio 2v, Image courtesy of Oberlin College, Department of Art on Oberlin.edu.

Plate 4. Prayer Book and Psalter of Bonne of Luxembourg, New York, Cloisters Museum, MS 69.86, fol. 331r. From Paris, c. 1345-49. Image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Plate 5. Three phalluses carrying a crowned vagina. Lead pilgrimage badge found in Bruges, Belgium, c. 1375-1425. H.J.E. van Beuningen Collection. Image courtesy of University of California, Berkeley on ARTstor.

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