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# Toward a Queer Ecofeminism

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Although many ecofeminists acknowledge heterosexism as a problem, a systematic exploration of the potential intersections of ecofeminist and queer theories has yet to be made. By interrogating social constructions of the "natural," the various uses of Christianity as a logic of domination, and the rhetoric of colonialism, this essay finds those theoretical intersections and argues for the importance of developing a queer ecofeminism.

Progressive activists and scholars frequently lament the disunity of the political left in the United States. Often characterized as a "circular firing squad," the left or progressive movement has been known for its intellectual debates and hostilities, which have served to polarize many groups that could be working in coalition: labor activists, environmentalists, civil rights activists, feminists, animal rights activists, indigenous rights activists, and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender (GLBT) activists. Meanwhile, it is observed, the conservative right in the United States has lost no time in recognizing the connections among these various liberatory movements and has launched a campaign (most recently articulated in the "Contract with America") to ensure their collective annihilation. As a result, the future of progressive organizing may well depend on how effectively scholars and activists can recognize and articulate our many bases for coalition. In theory and in practice, ecofeminism has already contributed much to this effort.

At the root of ecofeminism is the understanding that the many systems of oppression are mutually reinforcing. Building on the socialist feminist insight that racism, classism, and sexism are interconnected, ecofeminists recognized additional similarities between those forms of human oppression and the oppressive structures of speciesism and naturism. An early impetus for the ecofeminist movement was the realization that the liberation of women—the aim of all branches of feminism—cannot be fully effected without the liberation

of nature, and, conversely, the liberation of nature so ardently desired by environmentalists will not be fully effected without the liberation of women: conceptual, symbolic, empirical, and historical linkages between women and nature as they are constructed in Western culture require feminists and environmentalists to address these liberatory efforts together if we are to be successful (Warren 1991). To date, ecofeminist theory has blossomed, exploring the connections among many issues: racism, environmental degradation, economics, electoral politics, animal liberation, reproductive politics, biotechnology, bioregionalism, spirituality, holistic health practices, sustainable agriculture, and others. Ecofeminist activists have worked in the environmental justice movement, the Green movement, the antitoxics movement, the women's spirituality movement, the animal liberation movement, and the movement for economic justice. To continue and build on these efforts toward coalition, I would like to explore in this essay the connection between ecofeminism and queer theory.

"We have to examine how racism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, and sexism are *all* related to naturism," writes ecofeminist author Ellen O'Loughlin (1993, 148). Chaia Heller elaborates: "Love of nature is a process of becoming aware of and unlearning ideologies of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism so that we may cease to reduce our idea of nature to a dark, heterosexual, 'beautiful' mother" (1993, 231). But as Catriona Sandilands astutely comments, "It is not enough simply to add 'heterosexism' to the long list of dominations that shape our relations to nature, to pretend that we can just 'add queers and stir'" (1994, 21).[1] Unfortunately, it is exactly this approach that has characterized ecofeminist theory to date, which is the reason I believe it is time for queers to come out of the woods and speak for ourselves.[2]

The goal of this essay is to demonstrate that to be truly inclusive, any theory of ecofeminism must take into consideration the findings of queer theory; similarly, queer theory must consider the findings of ecofeminism. To this end, I will examine various intersections between ecofeminism and queer theory, thereby demonstrating that a democratic, ecological society envisioned as the goal of ecofeminism will, of necessity, be a society that values sexual diversity and the erotic.

## Sexualizing Nature, Naturalizing Sexuality

The first argument linking ecofeminism and queer theory is based on the observation that dominant Western culture's devaluation of the erotic parallels its devaluations of women and of nature; in effect, these devaluations are mutually reinforcing. This observation can be drawn from ecofeminist critiques that describe the normative dualisms, value-hierarchical thinking, and logic of domination that together characterize the ideological framework of Western culture. As Karen Warren explains, value dualisms are ways of conceptually organizing



the world in binary, disjunctive terms, wherein each side of the dualism is "seen as exclusive (rather than inclusive) and oppositional (rather than complementary), and where higher value or superiority is attributed to one disjunct (or, side of the dualism) than the other" (1987, 6). Val Plumwood's 1993 critique of Western philosophy pulls together the most salient features of these and other ecofeminist critiques in what she calls the "master model," the identity that is at the core of Western culture and that has initiated, perpetuated, and benefited from Western culture's alienation from and domination of nature. The master identity, according to Plumwood, creates and depends on a "dualized structure of otherness and negation" (1993, 42). Key elements in that structure are the following sets of dualized pairs:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| culture | / | nature |
| reason | / | nature |
| male | / | female |
| mind | / | body (nature) |
| master | / | slave |
| reason | / | matter (physicality) |
| rationality | / | animality (nature) |
| reason | / | emotion (nature) |
| mind, spirit | / | nature |
| freedom | / | necessity (nature) |
| universal | / | particular |
| human | / | nature (nonhuman) |
| civilized | / | primitive (nature) |
| production | / | reproduction (nature) |
| public | / | private |
| subject | / | object |
| self | / | other (Plumwood 1993, 43) |

Plumwood does not claim completeness for the list. In the argument that follows, I will offer a number of reasons that ecofeminists must specify the linked dualisms of white/nonwhite, financially empowered/impoverished, heterosexual/queer, and reason/the erotic.[3]

Ecofeminists have uncovered a number of characteristics about the interlocking structure of dualism. First, ecofeminist philosophers have shown that the claim for the superiority of the self is based on the difference between self and other as manifested in the full humanity and reason that the self possesses but the other supposedly lacks. This alleged superiority of the self, moreover, is

used to justify the subordination of the other (Warren 1990, 129; Plumwood 1993, 42–47). Next, ecofeminists have worked to show the linkages within the devalued category of the other, demonstrating how the association of qualities from one oppressed group with another serves to reinforce their subordination. The conceptual linkages between women and animals, women and the body, or women and nature, for example, all serve to emphasize the inferiority of these categories (Adams 1990; 1993). But while all categories of the other share these qualities of being feminized, animalized, and naturalized, socialist ecofeminists have rejected any claims of primacy for one form of oppression or another, embracing instead the understanding that all forms of oppression are now so inextricably linked that liberation efforts must be aimed at dismantling the system itself.

There is a theoretical gap, however, when we find that those few ecofeminists who do mention heterosexism in their introductory lists of human oppressions have still not taken the dualism of heterosexual/queer forward to be analyzed in the context of their lists of dualized pairs, and consequently into the theory being developed. In some cases, the same could be said for the dualism of white/nonwhite. This omission is a serious conceptual error, for the heterosexual/queer dualism has affected Western culture through its "ineffaceable marking" of these normative dualisms, according to queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990, 11). In her book *Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick finds that these normative dualisms (or "symmetrical binary oppositions") "actually subsist in a more unsettled and dynamic tacit relation according to which, first, term B is not symmetrical with but subordinated to term A; but, second, the ontologically valorized term A actually depends for its meaning on the simultaneous subsumption and exclusion of term B; hence, third, the question of priority between the supposed central and the supposed marginal category of each dyad is irresolvably unstable, an instability caused by the fact that term B is constituted as at once internal and external to term A" (1990, 10). Sedgwick's findings bear a neat resonance with Plumwood's theorizing of the linking postulates that connect such dualisms both "horizontally" (one member of a dyad with the other) and "vertically" (groups of dyads with each other; my terms). These linking postulates include

1. Backgrounding, in which the master relies on the services of the other and simultaneously denies his dependency;
2. Radical exclusion, in which the master magnifies the differences between self and other and minimizes the shared qualities;
3. Incorporation, in which the master's qualities are taken as the standard, and the other is defined in terms of her possession or lack of those qualities;
4. Instrumentalism, in which the other is constructed as having no ends of her own, and her sole purpose is to serve as a resource for the master;



5. Homogenization, in which the dominated class of others is perceived as uniformly homogeneous (Plumwood 1993, 42–56).[4]

Queers experience backgrounding, radical exclusion, incorporation, and homogenization. As Sedgwick argues, the heterosexual identity is constituted through a denied dependency on the homosexual/queer identity (backgrounding). In terms of radical exclusion, queers find that the erotic (a particularly perverse erotic) is projected onto queer sexuality to such a degree that this quality is seen as the only salient feature of queer identities. When queers come out, heterosexuals frequently conclude they know everything there is to know about us once they know our sexuality. In terms of incorporation, it is clear that heterosexuality and its associated gender identities are taken as the standard in dominant Western culture, and queers are defined primarily in relation to that standard, and our failure to comply with it.

But the problem of oppression based on sexuality is not limited to the heterosexual/queer dualism. As queer theorists have shown, the larger problem is the erotophobia of Western culture, a fear of the erotic so strong that only one form of sexuality is overtly allowed, only in one position, and only in the context of certain legal, religious, and social sanctions (Hollibaugh 1983, 1989; Rubin 1989). The oppression of queers may be described more precisely, then, as the product of two mutually reinforcing dualisms: heterosexual/queer, and reason/the erotic.

As Plumwood has ably demonstrated, Western culture's oppression of nature can be traced back to the construction of the dominant human male as a self fundamentally defined by its property of reason, and the construction of reason as definitionally opposed to nature and all that is associated with nature, including women, the body, emotions, and reproduction (Plumwood 1993). Feminists have also argued that women's oppression in Western culture is characterized by our association with emotion, the body, and reproduction, and feminists have responded to these associations in different ways. Some have rejected these associations and attempted to align themselves with the public male sphere of rationality (liberal feminists); others have reversed the valuation and embraced these associations while devaluing the male rational culture (cultural feminists). In contrast, ecofeminists have argued for a "third way," one that rejects the structure of dualism and acknowledges both women and men as equal parts of culture and nature (Warren 1987; King 1989; Plumwood 1993; Gruen 1993; Gaard 1994b). As a logical development of ecofeminism, a queer ecofeminist theory would build on these analyses using both queer theory and feminist theories about the oppression of the erotic. Though the reason/erotic dualism seems to be an aspect of the original culture/nature dualism, the heterosexual/queer dualism is a fairly recent development, as it is only in the past century that the concept of homosexual and heterosexual identities has developed

(Smith 1989; Katz 1990). A queer ecofeminist perspective would argue that the reason/erotic and heterosexual/queer dualisms have now become part of the master identity, and that dismantling these dualisms is integral to the project of ecofeminism.

Bringing these dualisms into the list of self/other and culture/nature dualisms offered by Plumwood is one step toward queering ecofeminism. With this added perspective, ecofeminists would find it very productive to explore "vertical" associations on either side of the dualisms: associations between reason and heterosexuality, for example, or between reason and whiteness as defined in opposition to emotions and nonwhite persons; or associations between women, nonwhite persons, animals, and the erotic. From a queer ecofeminist perspective, then, we can examine the ways queers are feminized, animalized, eroticized, and naturalized in a culture that devalues women, animals, nature, and sexuality. We can also examine how persons of color are feminized, animalized, eroticized, and naturalized. Finally, we can explore how nature is feminized, eroticized, even queered.

The critical point to remember is that each of the oppressed identity groups, each characteristic of the other, is seen as "closer to nature" in the dualisms and ideology of Western culture. Yet queer sexualities are frequently devalued for being "against nature." Contradictions such as this are of no interest to the master, although they have been of great interest to feminists and queer theorists alike, who have argued that it is precisely such contradictions that characterize oppressive structures (Frye 1983; Mohr 1988; Sedgwick 1990).

Before launching into a discussion of queer sexualities as both "closer to nature" and "crimes against nature," it is crucial to acknowledge that sexuality itself is a socially constructed phenomenon that varies in definition from one historical and social context to another. As scholars of queer history have shown, there was no concept of a homosexual identity in Western culture before the late nineteenth century (Faderman 1981; Greenberg 1988; Katz 1990; Vicinus 1993). Until then, people spoke (or did not speak) of individual homosexual acts, deviance, and sodomy; the persons performing those acts were always presumed to be "normal" (the word "heterosexual" had no currency). Those homosexual acts were castigated as sinful excesses, moral transgressions of biblical injunctions.

The shift from seeing homosexual behavior as a sin to seeing it as a "crime against nature" began during the seventeenth century. As early as 1642, ministers in the American colonies began referring to the "unnatural lusts of men with men, or women with women," "unnatural acts," and acts "against nature" (Katz 1983, 43). "After the American Revolution," however, "the phrase 'crimes against nature' increasingly appeared in the statutes, implying that acts of sodomy offended a natural order rather than the will of God" (D'Emilio and Freedman 1988, 122). The natural/unnatural distinction had to do with procreation, but



even "natural" acts leading to procreation could be tainted by lust and thus not free from sin. Procreative lust was preferable to "unnatural" lust, however (Katz 1983, 43). Finally, a third shift in the definition of homosexuality occurred toward the end of the nineteenth century. Through the work of sexologists such as Havelock Ellis, Magnus Hirschfeld, and Richard von Krafft-Ebing, the sexual invert became a recognizable identity, and the origins of sexual inversion were believed to lie in an individual's psychology. The word heterosexual first appeared in American medical texts in the early 1890s, but not in the popular press until 1926 (Katz 1983, 16).[5]

Today, nearly thirty years after the Stonewall rebellion, which launched the movement for gay liberation, the definition of queer identities is still evolving. "Homosexual" has changed to "gay," and "gay" to "gay and lesbian"; bisexuals have become more vocal; and most recently, transgender liberation has also reshaped queer communities, changes that have prompted many organizations to replace "gay and lesbian" with "gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered" or simply "queer" in their self-definitions. The recognition of varying sexual identities and practices has inspired a rereading of not only straight history or queer history but the history of sexuality itself. Based on these historical developments, queer theorists have determined that queer sexualities (both practices and identities) have been seen as transgressive in at least three categories: as acts against biblical morality, against nature, or against psychology. Thus, queer sexualites have been seen as a moral problem, a physiological problem, or a psychological problem (Pronk 1993). Though all three arguments are used against all varieties of queer sexuality today, the "crime against nature" argument stands out as having the greatest immediate interest for ecofeminists.

Queer theorists who explore the natural/unnatural dichotomy find that "natural" is invariably associated with "procreative." The equation of "natural" with "procreative" should be familiar to all feminists, for it is just this claim that has been used in a variety of attempts to manipulate women back into compulsory motherhood and the so-called women's sphere. From a historical perspective, the equation of woman's "true nature" with motherhood has been used to oppress women just as the equation of sexuality with procreation has been used to oppress both women and queers. The charge that queer sexualities are "against nature" and thus morally, physiologically, or psychologically depraved and devalued would seem to imply that nature is valued—but as ecofeminists have shown, this is not the case. In Western culture, just the contrary is true: nature is devalued just as queers are devalued. Here is one of the many contradictions characterizing the dominant ideology. On the one hand, from a queer perspective, we learn that the dominant culture charges queers with transgressing the natural order, which in turn implies that nature is valued and must be obeyed. On the other hand, from an ecofeminist perspective, we learn that Western culture has constructed nature as a force that must be

dominated if culture is to prevail. Bringing these perspectives together indicates that the "nature" queers are urged to comply with is none other than the dominant paradigm of heterosexuality—an identity and practice that is itself a cultural construction, as both feminists and queer theorists have shown (Chodorow 1978; Foucault 1980; Rich 1986).

There are many flaws in the assertion that queer sexualities are "unnatural." First among them is that such an assertion does not accurately reflect the variety of sexual practices found in other species. For example, female homosexual behavior has been found in chickens, turkeys, chameleons, and cows, while male homosexual behavior has been observed in fruit flies, lizards, bulls, dolphins, porpoises, and apes (Denniston 1965; Pattatucci and Hamer 1995). An examination of insect sexual behavior reveals that the female scorpion kills the male after mating, the black widow spider eats the male after mating, and the praying mantis may eat the male while mating. Some animals are hermaphrodites (snails, earthworms), while other species are entirely female (toothcarp). Mating behavior also varies across mammal species. "Some pairs mate for life (jackals), some are promiscuous (zebras, most whales, chimpanzees). In some species, males and females travel together in herds, packs, or prides (musk ox, wolves, lions); in others, family groups are the basic unit (coyotes, gibbons); in others, males and females spend most of their time in same-sex groups and get together only for mating (hippopotamuses); in still others, all are loners who seek out members of their species only for the purpose of procreation (pandas)" (Curry 1990, 151).

The equation of "natural" sexual behavior with procreative purposes alone is conclusively disproven by both the evidence of same-sex behaviors and the observations of sexual activity during pregnancy, which have been reported for chimpanzees, gorillas, rhesus macaques, stumptailed macaques, Japanese monkeys, and golden lion tamarins (Pavelka 1995). In his study of the bonobo (pygmy chimpanzee), a species that, together with the chimpanzee, is the nearest relative to *Homo sapiens*, Frans de Waal (1995) found that sexual behavior served a variety of reproductive and nonreproductive functions. In effect, research on nonhuman primate sexual behavior indicates that nonhuman primates "engage in sexual activity far more than they need to from a reproductive point of view and thus much of their sexuality is nonreproductive" (Pavelka 1995, 22). As Jane Curry concludes, "If we look to nature for models of human behavior, we are bound, are we not, to value tolerance and pluralism" (1990, 154). This, however, is the second flaw in the assertion that queer sexualities are "unnatural": norms for one species cannot be derived from the behaviors and seeming norms of other species.

By attempting to "naturalize" sexuality, the dominant discourse of Western culture constructs queer sexualities as "unnatural" and hence subordinate. As Jeffrey Weeks writes in *Against Nature*, "appeals to nature, to the claims of the



natural, are among the most potent we can make. They place us in a world of apparent fixity and truth. They appear to tell us what and who we are, and where we are going. They seem to tell us the truth" (1991, 87). Arguments from "nature," as feminist philosophers of science have repeatedly argued, are frequently used to justify social norms rather than to find out anything new about nature (Bleier 1984; Fausto-Sterling 1985; Hubbard et al. 1982; Keller 1985; Lowe and Hubbard 1983). Attempts to naturalize one form of sexuality function as attempts to foreclose investigation of sexual diversity and sexual practices and to gain control of the discourse on sexuality. Such attempts are a manifestation of Western culture's homophobia and erotophobia.

Returning to the list of dualisms that ecofeminists have shown to characterize Western culture, and examining how qualities are distributed across each side of the disjuncts to enhance that disjunct's superiority (that is, the association of culture, men, and reason) or subordination (the association of nature, women, and the erotic), we can see that the eroticization of nature emphasizes its subordination. From a queer ecofeminist perspective, then, it becomes clear that liberating women requires liberating nature, the erotic, and queers. The conceptual connections among the oppressions of women, nature, and queers make this need particularly clear.

## Erotophobia and the Colonization of Queer(s)/Nature

The rhetoric and institution of Christianity, coupled with the imperialist drives of militarist nation-states, have been used for nearly two thousand years to portray heterosexuality, sexism, racism, classism, and the oppression of the natural world as divinely ordained. Today, although twentieth-century Western industrialized nations purport to be secular, those countries with Christian and colonial origins retain the ideology of divinely inspired domination nonetheless. This section will first examine how Christianity has been used to authorize the exploitation of women, indigenous cultures, animals, the natural world, and queers. It will conclude by examining twentieth-century colonial practices.

Many feminists and ecofeminists who have examined Western culture's hierarchical and oppressive relationship with nature date the problem of human separation from nature (the necessary precedent to hierarchy and oppression) back to 4000 B.C.E., the Neolithic era, and the conquering of matrifocal, agricultural, goddess-worshiping cultures by militaristic, nomadic cultures that worshiped a male god (Eisler 1987; Spretnak 1982; Starhawk 1979). The agriculturalists' view—that spirit was immanent in all of nature, that sexuality and reproduction were like the earth's fertility, and that both were sacred—was replaced by a worldview that conceived of divinity as transcendent, separate from nature, with humans and nature as God's creation rather than as equal parts of God. The female, bisexual, or hermaphroditic Goddess was replaced by the male, heterosexual God

the Father, and the matrifocal trinity of Maiden, Mother, and Crone became the patriarchal trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Evans 1978; Sjoo and Mor 1987). Thus, in searching for origins of the conceptual linkages among women, nature, persons of color, and queers, along with their collective oppression, many feminists and ecofeminists would argue that it is more relevant to look at the shift in social organization from matrifocal to patriarchal structures and values than to explore how a particular form of patriarchal religion (historically antecedent to that shift by centuries or even millennia) has authorized the subordination of women, nature, and their associates.

For other ecofeminists, however, the theories of a matrifocal past remain just that—anthropological theories rather than historical facts. So much of anthropology is based on a few pieces of broken pottery, scattered bones, and the remnants of buildings that some ecofeminists are reluctant to develop additional ecofeminist theory based too heavily on these interpretations alone. All ecofeminists who have addressed the topic of spirituality, however, have observed that Christianity has been used as both an authorization and a mandate for the subordination of women, nature, persons of color, animals, and queers—and it is this agreement that I will take as my point of departure.[6]

Christianity orginated as a small, ascetic cult, one among many such cults in the Roman Empire. It was from the start an urban religion, shaped in the context of urban, secular philosophies rather than in the context of earth-based, rural agriculturalism. The beliefs of the early Christians included the conception of Adam as both male and female, and of Christ as the restored androgynous Adam (Ruether 1983, 100); and the critical opposition between reason and passion (Greenberg 1988, 225), with the power of reason (*logos*) as the unique characteristic distinguishing humans from animals (Evans 1978, 86). Comparing some of those beliefs with the context in which they originated, one can surmise that the proponents of Christianity were influenced both by the beliefs of earlier, earth-based cultures and by popular philosophies of their time, such as Stoicism and Gnosticism. Moreover, their ability to incorporate aspects of these other popular beliefs into Christianity may have enhanced its appeal and ensured its survival.

The early Christian perspective on sex and the erotic also suited the temper of the time. Christianity appeared during a time of increasing militarization in the Roman state. It was preceded by a "wave of grim asceticism" (Evans 1978, 41). For Stoic and Epicurean philosophers of the period, sex and other erotic pleasures were seen as distractions from the contemplative life. Stoic morality held out chastity as an ideal, with heterosexual intercourse allowed only for procreation within marriage; other Greek and Roman writers also held that procreation was the only legitimate reason for intercourse (Greenberg 1988, 219). According to David Greenberg, "To be like the angels was to be spiritual; to be carnal, unspiritual. Sex was the essence of carnality, hence the antithesis of



spirituality" (1988, 224). During the first two centuries of Christianity, leading bishops and theologians required celibacy of all Christians, but later recanted (possibly from fear of alienating potential converts) and allowed limited sexual behavior within marriage for the sole purpose of procreation (1 Corinthians 7:1–2, 9; Greenberg 1988, 216, 228; Ranke-Heinemann 1990). From the second through the fourth centuries C.E., church leaders gave the topic of sex more attention and rejected it more vehemently than did the authors of the New Testament (Greenberg 1988, 223). Thus it would be inaccurate to argue that Christianity opposed queer sexuality per se; rather, Christianity opposed all sexual acts that were not purposely procreative (Ranke-Heinemann 1990). What distinguished Christianity from the many other ascetic cults of its time was the severity of its asceticism, its complete intolerance of other religions, and the high degree of organization among its adherents (Evans 1978, 42).

Hierarchy—the organizational structure and religious belief that characterized Christianity—may also have contributed to its survival because this belief matched that of the Romans, who praised "the virtues of self-sacrifice to the state, obedience to hierarchical authority, and suspicion of pleasure and sex" (Evans 1978, 37). As Elizabeth Dodson Gray has observed, the two accounts of creation in Genesis have been used in Christianity to legitimate both human/nonhuman hierarchy (the human dominion over nature, as described in Genesis 1) and anthropocentrism (man as the center of creation, as described in Genesis 2). Gray reminds us, moreover, that *hierarchy* itself means *holy order* (1979, 7). Her work shows that Christianity originally interpreted all social or economic ranking as reflecting a holy order, as the Apostle Paul explained: "Let everyone obey the authorities that are over him, for there is no authority except from God, and all authority that exists is established by God" (Romans 13:1–2). The conceptual symmetry between Christianity and the Roman state made it possible for Christianity to spread gradually throughout the Roman army, where it incorporated additional elements of a contending religion (Mithraism). Finally, under Emperor Constantine, "the cross was adopted as a military symbol and placed on shields and banners" (Evans 1978, 43). In the fourth century C.E., the Roman Empire became the Holy Roman Empire, and the union of church and state as representing the reign of God's will on earth was sealed. The inferiority and subordination of women, animals, the body, nature, the erotic, and all their associates was proclaimed by law, decreed by religion, and relentlessly enforced. From the fourth through the seventeenth centuries, all those perceived as "nature" were persecuted through a series of violent assaults: the Inquisition, the Crusades, witch burnings, and the "voyages of discovery."

In his underground classic, *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*, Arthur Evans writes of the similarities between the Inquisition and the witch burnings, particularly in their pursuit of victims. From the fourth through the thirteenth centuries, the church was plagued with pagan influences, resurgences of the old

religions attempting to combine with some of the tenets of Christianity: Gnosticism, Manichaeism, Massalianism, Bogomilism, Catharism, the Free Spirit, and others. According to Evans, these movements displayed five prominent features: "(1) belief in more than one deity; (2) a prominent leadership role for women; (3) a pagan sense of asceticism, including both self-denial and self-indulgence; (4) hostility to the wealth and power of the church; and (5) a tolerance for Gay sex" (1978, 61).

Unable to repress these continual resurgences, the church declared such beliefs heresy and commanded their eradication. The Holy Inquisition was created by Pope Gregory IX between 1227 and 1235, and in 1233 one of his famous bulls, the *Vox in Rama*, accused heretics of practicing sex rites that were "opposed to reason" (Evans 1978, 91–92). The Inquisition used the property of the accused to pay for the costs of trial and execution, and heresy hunting became a major industry in the Middle Ages. Economic motivations surely explain the persecution of a particular monastic military order of crusaders, the Knights Templars. In 1307, King Philippe of France brought charges of same-sex sexual behaviors against the entire order. Five thousand of its members were arrested, and over the next few years, those remaining free were hunted down all over Europe until the order was abolished. As Evans explains, the Knights Templars had accumulated vast amounts of wealth and had become the chief bankers of the Middle Ages: "Both Pope Clement and Philippe were in debt to them" (1978, 92–94). In this one example of many, the church can be seen as using antierotic and homophobic rhetoric to mask the economic motivations of church and state.

If the *Vox in Rama* was the launching point of the Inquisition, the appearance of the *Malleus Maleficarum* in 1486 was surely the codification for witch burnings. Written by two Dominican monks, the "hammer of witches" explicitly links witchcraft to women and women's "inferior nature," claiming that women are "more carnal" than men (Ruether 1983, 170). The spiritual practice of witchcraft was popularly seen as implicitly sexual: persons arrested on suspicion of witchcraft were always questioned about their sex lives, for witches were thought to hold wild and bawdy rituals that culminated in the witches kissing the devil's anus or having intercourse with the devil (Merchant 1980, 132–40). Same-sex sexual behaviors and gender nonconformity were also linked to witchcraft: the phrase "women with women" recurs throughout the Inquisition's reports on witches' sexual behaviors, and because the majority of witches were women, the charge of "wild orgies" in effect suggests that women were engaging sexually with one another (Grahn 1984, 96). Men who engaged in same-sex behaviors were often strangled and burned on bundles of sticks called "faggots," which were tied and stacked in the kindling at the "witches'" feet (Grahn 1984, 218; Evans 1978, 76). And in the earliest notorious example of what might today be called transgender persecution, nineteen-year-old Joan of Arc



was burned at the stake as a witch in 1431, condemned to death for the sin of wearing men's clothing (Evans 1978, 5–8).[7] Older, economically independent women and those unprotected by a man were especially vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft. Like those convicted by the Inquisition, their property and assets were seized and used to pay the cost of their executions (Starhawk 1982, 185–88). Estimates of the number of witches executed range between one hundred thousand and 9 million; some say that approximately 83 percent of those executed as witches were women (Merchant 1980, 138).

What is known of the linkages between the "burning times" and the colonization of the Americas? Arthur Evans unequivocally asserts, "The widespread homosexuality of the North American Indians was given as an excuse by the invading Christian whites for their extermination" (1978, 101). In *Gay American History*, Jonathan Ned Katz writes, "the Christianization of Native Americans and the colonial appropriation of the continent by white, Western 'civilization' included the attempt by the conquerors to eliminate various traditional forms of Indian homosexuality—as part of their attempt to destroy that Native culture which might fuel resistance—a form of cultural genocide involving both Native Americans and Gay people" (1976, 284). And in his study of *The Zuni Man-Woman*, Will Roscoe finds, dating back to the sixteenth century, numerous reports on the "sinfulness" of native sexual behavior—the lack of inhibition, the prevalence of sodomy, and the tolerance or even respect for transgendered persons—all of which fueled the Spanish explorers' argument for the colonization of native peoples and their lands in the name of Christianity.[8]

It is interesting that both the monarchs and the explorers felt the need to justify their colonialist desires for more land, more wealth, and more slaves. From medieval theologians, Christianity had inherited the message that the "fruits of any conquest could only be legitimate if the war that won them had been just"; conveniently, through the Crusades, Christianity developed the principle that "war conducted in the interests of the Holy Church was automatically just" (Jennings 1975, 4). Because the church had been engaged in persecuting the erotic since its inception, choosing the sexual behaviors of indigenous peoples as proof of their heathenism and lack of civilization seemed adequate justification for their colonization.

Katz's valuable research in *Gay American History* offers numerous observations of native sexual practices, dating from the sixteenth-century explorers on. These records clearly express the explorers' erotophobic, imperialist attitudes. "The people of this nation [the Choctaw] are generally of a brutal and coarse nature," wrote Jean Bernard Bossu. "They are morally quite perverted, and most of them are addicted to sodomy. These corrupt men . . . have long hair and wear short skirts like women" (Katz 1976, 291). "The sin of sodomy prevails more among them than in any other nation, although there are four women to one man," wrote Pierre Liette about the Miamis in 1702 (Katz 1976, 288). The

role of the *nadleeh*, or transgendered person, particularly offended western European sensibilities.[9] Of the Iroquois, the Illinois, and other tribes in the Louisiana area, Jesuit explorer and historian Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix wrote in 1721, "these effeminate persons never marry, and abandon themselves to the most infamous passions" (Katz 1976, 290). When Jesuit father Pedro Font found "some men dressed like women" among the California Yumas, he inquired about their clothing and learned that "they were sodomites, dedicated to nefarious practices." Font concluded, "there will be much to do when the Holy Faith and the Christian religion are established among them" (Katz 1976, 291). The Franciscan missionary Francisco Palou reported with shock that "almost every village" in what is now southern California "has two or three" transgendered persons, but prayed "that these accursed people will disappear with the growth of the missions. The abominable vice will be eliminated to the extent that the Catholic faith and all the other virtues are firmly implanted there, for the glory of God and the benefit of those poor ignorants" (Katz 1976, 292). In the rhetoric of Christian colonialism, the Europeans filled the role of benevolent culture "civilizing" savage nature—and this "civilizing" involved taking the natives' homelands, eliminating their cultural and spiritual practices, and raping and enslaving their people.

A specific example of the role erotophobia played in authorizing colonization may be of use. In his book *The Elder Brothers: A Lost South American People and Their Wisdom*, Alan Ereira reports on the Kogi, who live deep in Colombia's Sierra Nevada mountains, and who may be "the last surviving high civilisation of pre-conquest America" (1992, 1). In 1498, the land around what is now the Colombian city of Santa Marta was discovered by the Spanish in their search for gold, and on June 12, 1514, a Spanish galleon arrived and began the process of colonization. That process involved reading a decree declaring the natives' new servitude to King Ferdinand and the Christian God, in both Spanish and Carib languages, although the native people did not speak either one. The Spanish conquistador Pedrarias Davila concluded his proclamation with the warning that if the native people did not submit to this rule,

> I assure you that with the help of God I will enter powerfuly against you, and I will make war on you in every place and in every way that I can, and I will subject you to the yoke and obedience of the church and their highnesses, and I will take your persons and your women and your children, and I will make them slaves, and as such I will sell them, and dispose of them as their highnesses command: I will take your goods, and I will do you all the evils and harms which I can, just as to vassals who do not obey and do not want to receive their lord, resist him and contradict him. And I declare that the deaths and harms which arise from this will be your fault, and not that of their highnesses, nor mine, nor of the gentlemen who have come with me here. (Ereira 1992, 74)



The Spanish invasion proceeded accordingly.

As Ereira observes, gender and sexuality played a prominent role in the rhetoric and the justification of colonial conquest. "The Spanish could not endure the Indians' relationship between the sexes," he writes. "It was so fundamentally different from their own as to be an outrage. The men did not dominate the women" (Ereira 1992, 136). The Spanish were horrified, moreover, by the acceptance of homosexual behaviors and transgendered identities: "it was an inner fear, a fear of their own nature. And so they set out to eliminate sodomy among the Indians" (137, emphasis added). After nearly a century of colonial enslavement and missionary zeal, the Spanish concluded their most vicious assault on the native population in 1599. The governor of Santa Marta called together all the native chiefs at the base of the Sierras and told them he would put an end to their "wicked sinfulness" (138). The native population planned a revolt, but news of their plans was leaked to the Spanish through two missionaries, and the Spanish were prepared. For three months, the Spanish carried out their own plan of torture and genocide against the indigenous people. When it was over, the governor declared, "And if any other Indian is found to have committed or to practice the wicked and unnatural sin of sodomy he is condemned so that in the part and place that I shall specify he shall be garrotted in the customary manner and next he shall be burned alive and utterly consumed to dust so that he shall have no memorial and it is to be understood by the Indians that this punishment shall be extended to all who commit this offense" (Ereira 1992, 140). Those persons "who wish to live" were required to pay a fine of "pacification" amounting to fifteen hundred pounds of gold (Ereiera 1992, 140). Gender-role deviance and the accepted presence of nonheterosexual erotic practices had become the rhetorical justification for genocide and colonialism.

Not only did transgender practices and sodomy disturb the colonizers; even heterosexual practices devoid of the restrictions imposed by Christianity were objectionable. Among the Hopi of the Southwest, for example, those who had been successfully converted to Christianity were forbidden to attend the traditional snake dance because there, "male cross-dressing, adultery, and bestiality could be observed publicly" (D'Emilio and Freedman 1988, 93). Missionaries objected to the heterosexual practices of the Pueblo Indians, calling them "bestial" because "'like animals, the female plac[ed] herself publicly on all fours'" (Gutiérrez 1991, 72–73). What became known as the "missionary position" was advocated by the seventeenth-century Spanish theologian Tomás Sánchez, in his *De sancto matrimonii sacramento*, as the "natural manner of intercourse. . . . The man must lie on top and the woman on her back beneath. Because this

manner is more appropriate for the effusion of male seed, for its reception into the female vessel" (Gutiérrez 1991, 212). Sánchez likened the phallus to a plow and the woman to the earth; the missionary position would be the one most conducive to procreation and hence the most "natural." In contrast, the *mulier supra virum* (woman above man) position was "absolutely contrary to the order of nature" (Gutiérrez 1991, 212).

Appeals to nature have often been used to justify social norms, to the detriment of women, nature, queers, and persons of color. The range of colonial assaults on sexuality—from gender role to same-sex behaviors to heterosexual practices—is the reason I name the colonizers' perspective erotophobic rather than simply homophobic. This colonial erotophobia remained intact through the arrival of the Pilgrims, the establishment of the United States, and the waves of westward expansion that followed. In the twentieth century, narratives of colonialism and exploration continue to bear the stamp of erotophobia, as feminist critiques reveal.

In her study of race and gender in international politics, Cynthia Enloe finds important connections between the conceptions of nationalism and of masculinity. In colonialist discourses of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the subordinated countries are feminized, the subordinated men are emasculated, and the colonized women are often depicted as sex objects by foreign men. One male writer described colonialism as the condition wherein a man's women are "turned into fodder for imperialist postcards. Becoming a nationalist requires a man to resist the foreigner's use and abuse of his women" (Enloe 1989, 44). In her study of U.S. polar expeditions, Lisa Bloom finds that "the explorations symbolically enacted the men's own battle to become men," and the recorded narratives left by the explorers present "U.S. national identity as essentially a white masculine one" (Bloom 1993, 6, 11).

Both Enloe's and Bloom's texts reprint popular colonial postcard images of naked or partially clothed native women reclining on the ground in what Bloom calls the "odalisque pose" (Bloom 1993, 104). Like the colonizers of three and four centuries past, the explorers and imperialists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries used the perceived eroticism of native peoples as a justification for their colonization.

Serving as a foundation for all imperialist exploits, colonial nationalism offers a definition of identity that is structurally similar to the master identity. Enloe defines a nation as "a collection of people who have come to believe that they have been shaped by a common past and are destined to share a common future. That belief is usually nurtured by a common language and *a sense of otherness* from groups around them" (Enloe 1989, 45; emphasis added). Nationalism, then, is "a set of ideas that sharpens distinctions between 'us' and 'them'. It is, moreover, a tool for explaining how inequities have been created between 'us' and 'them'" (Enloe 1989, 61). Similarly, the editors of *Nationalisms*



***and Sexualities*** explain that "national identity is determined not on the basis of its own intrinsic properties but as a function of what it (presumably) is not" (Parker et al. 1992, 5). Inevitably "shaped by what it opposes," a national identity that depends on such differences is "forever haunted by [its] various definitional others" (Parker et al. 1992, 5).

Looking at these definitions of nationalism from an ecofeminist perspective, it becomes apparent that national identity bears a structural similarity to the master model as defined by Plumwood. National identity participates in two of the five operations characteristic of the master identity—radical exclusion and incorporation. Colonialist nationalism, however, depends on all five operations of the master model, including the linking postulates of backgrounding, instrumentalism, and homogenization. Throughout the documents of explorers and colonists, native peoples are constructed as animallike: they are perceived as overly sexual, and their sexual behaviors are described as sinful and animalistic. The indigenous women are eroticized while the men are feminized—and all these associations are used to authorize colonization.

The feature of masculine identity that Enloe and Bloom seem to overlook and that Plumwood does not explicitly address is sexuality. Here again, feminist and ecofeminist theories fall short without a queer perspective. As Gayle Rubin has noted, "Feminism is the theory of gender oppression. To automatically assume that this makes it the theory of sexual oppression is to fail to distinguish between gender, on the one hand, and erotic desire, on the other" (1989, 307). Queer theorist Eve Sedgwick argues that gender and sexuality are "inextricable . . . in that each can be expressed only in terms of the other . . . in twentieth-century Western culture gender and sexuality represent two analytic axes that may productively be imagined as being as distinct from one another as, say, gender and class, or class and race" (1990, 30).

From a queer ecofeminist perspective, then, it is clear that notions of sexuality are implicit within the category of gender. Simply stated, the masculinity of the colonizer and of Plumwood's master identity is neither homosexual, bisexual, nor transgendered. Heterosexuality—and a particular kind of heterosexuality as well, a heterosexuality contained within certain parameters—is implicit in conceptions of both dominant masculinity and Plumwood's master model. In the preceding examples, the discourse of nationalist colonialism contains specific conceptions not only of race and gender but also of sexuality. The native feminized other of nature is not simply eroticized but also queered and animalized, in that any sexual behavior outside the rigid confines of compulsory heterosexuality becomes queer and subhuman. Colonization becomes an act of the nationalist self asserting identity and definition over and against the other—culture over and against nature, masculine over and against feminine, reason over and against the erotic. The metaphoric "thrust" of colonialism has been described as the rape of indigenous people and of nature because there is

a structural—not experiential—similarity between the two operations, though colonization regularly includes rape.

Western ecofeminists have repeatedly argued against the feminization of nature in metaphors such as "Mother Nature" because of the subordination implicit in these gendered constructions given the context of Western patriarchal culture. Elizabeth Dodson Gray may be the first ecofeminist writer to challenge the "tyranny of the straight white male norm," in her book *Green Paradise Lost*, when she shows how the "Mother Nature" metaphor leads to subordination. In patriarchal Western culture, Gray explains, masculinity is defined not only as independence but as "not-dependent." The process of socializing boys into men involves denying dependence on the mother; that dependence is then transferred to the wife. Male superiority is preserved by the social construction of a "wife" as "submissive . . . economically impotent, and in many other ways . . . inferior and non-threatening to her man. In short, a wife is to be *below* her man, *not above*" (1979, 41; emphasis added). According to Gray, the same transference is at work in Western culture's relationship with nature. "Men have done with Mother Nature this same dominance/submission flip-flop. They have by their technologies worked steadily and for generations to transform a psychologically intolerable dependence upon a seemingly powerful and capricious 'Mother Nature' into a soothing and acceptable dependence upon a subservient and nonthreatening 'wife.' This 'need to be above' and to dominate permeates male attitudes toward nature" (Gray 1979, 42).[10] As I have argued elsewhere, when nature is feminized and thereby eroticized, and culture is masculinized, the culture-nature relationship becomes one of compulsory heterosexuality (Gaard 1993). Colonization can therefore be seen as a relationship of compulsory heterosexuality whereby the queer erotic of non-Westernized peoples, their culture, and their land, is subdued into the missionary position—with the conqueror "on top."[11]

## Toward a Queer Ecofeminism

Salient events in Western history reveal the foundations for a queer ecofeminism. More than any other period, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries clarify the conceptual links between the oppression of women, the erotic, and nature. As Carolyn Merchant (1980), Susan Griffin (1978), and Evelyn Fox Keller (1985) have so clearly demonstrated, in a patriarchal system that conceives of nature as female, there is a clear and necessary connection between the development of science as the rational control of a chaotic natural world and the persecution of women as inherently irrational, erotic, and therefore evil creatures. Such connections have provided the conceptual foundations for ecofeminist theories. The foundations for queer ecofeminism, then, are established by restoring and interrogating other aspects of that historical period: that women



accused of witchcraft were accused not only for their gender but for their perceived sexuality and erotic practices; that such women were frequently burned with men who had sex with other men; that the colonial conquest of indigenous peoples in the Americas was authorized partly on the basis of the natives' sexual behaviors. I am not suggesting that "co-occurrence equals causality"; rather, I am arguing that a careful reading of these several movements of domination—the persecution of women through the witch burnings, of nature through science, and of indigenous peoples through colonialism—which reached a peak during the same historical period in western Europe, will lead to the roots of an ideology in which the erotic, queer sexualities, women, persons of color, and nature are all conceptually linked.

Today, all those associated with nature and the erotic continue to experience the impact of centuries of Western culture's colonization, in our very bodies and in our daily lives. Rejecting that colonization requires embracing the erotic in all its diversity and building coalitions for creating a democratic, ecological culture based on our shared liberation.

To create that culture, we must combine the insights of queer and ecofeminist theories. As feminists have long argued, the way out of this system of endemic violence requires liberating the erotic—not in some facile liberal scheme, which would authorize increased access to pornography or child sexual encounters, but through a genuine transformation of Western conceptions of the erotic as fundamentally opposed to reason, culture, humanity, and masculinity. A queer ecofeminist perspective would argue that liberating the erotic requires reconceptualizing humans as equal participants in culture and in nature, able to explore the eroticism of reason and the unique rationality of the erotic. Ecofeminists must be concerned with queer liberation, just as queers must be concerned with the liberation of women and of nature; our parallel oppressions have stemmed from our perceived associations. It is time to build our common liberation on more concrete coalitions.

### NOTES

Written during my 1995–1996 sabbatical, and originally published in *Hypatia* (winter 1997), published by Indiana University Press, this essay responds to social justice questions in both theory and activism. As an ecofeminist member of the Green Party, I had listened to the distress of Lavender Greens who felt alienated by our premature presidential candidate, Ralph Nader, whose cavalier responses to questions about queer rights undermined the four pillars of the Green movement. (Nader has since become more educated on this issue, and many queers see him as an ally.) Three years after the passage of Proposition 2 in Colorado, Lavender Greens from Boulder and Denver were still quick to detect any lack of commitment to their human rights at the August 1995 presidential nominating convention of the U.S. Greens, and some debated whether to stay in the movement or withdraw in order to spend more time working directly on civil rights. As members of a queer caucus within the Greens, we were holistic, multi-issue activists with a clear "first emergency" of survival as gays,

lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people fighting for our lives and our rights—and yet we had developed no argument for explaining our conflicting commitments to other Greens. What we needed, I felt, was a clear, systematic exploration of the potential intersections of ecofeminist and queer theories. By interrogating social constructions of the "natural," the various uses of Christianity as a logic of domination, and the rhetoric of colonialism, this essay exposes those theoretical intersections and argues for the importance of developing queer ecofeminisms.

In 2003, progressives of all kinds still struggle to build a cohesive movement capable of confronting corporate globalization, defending environmental justice, and reclaiming the earth. They ask each other, "Why can't we sustain the kind of unity in diversity that we saw in Seattle, at the 1999 World Trade Organization protests?" And they are given an answer over and over again—but are these progressive activists really listening? What is it that prevents progressives from working together?

As part of the national "Rolling Thunder Down Home Democracy Tour" intended to energize and unite progressives of all types on Labor Day 2002, the St. Paul Area Trades and Labor Assembly hosted a Labor Day Picnic on Harriet Island, inviting activists and pundits of local and national fame to converse on panels and mobilize participants. Author Barbara Ehrenreich joined Mark Ritchie from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Larry Weiss of Minnesota's Fair Trade Coalition, former legislator Tom Hayden, Senator Paul Wellstone, poet and indigenous activist John Trudell, and over a thousand activists committed to social and environmental justice. During the panel discussion on "Building a Progressive Movement," a woman from the audience challenged the three privileged male panelists—Cornel West, a scholar in history and African American studies from Princeton; Joel Rogers, founder of the New Party; and Tom Hayden, activist and former legislator—to put their progressive democratic theory into practice by refusing speaking invitations unless they were assured that other places on their panels would be given to less dominant groups such as women of color, gays and lesbians, and youth. Cornel West, whose talk had focused on the importance of building a multigenerational movement, replied that what was most important on these panels was the democratic ideology of the speakers, and not the specific features of their embodiment. Here, as a community, we lost another practice opportunity for "Building a Progressive Movement," and the audience discussion dissolved into shouting after West's reply.

The conceptual, economic, and historic links between the oppression of queers, people of color, and the earth can readily be detected using the analytic frameworks of ecofeminism, environmental justice, and other inclusive movements for a radical, economic, and ecological democracy. Yet these movements fall short, in practice, of delivering the democracy they espouse in theory. This essay is still as urgently relevant in 2003 as it was when it was written in 1995.

1. The May 1994 special issue of the Canadian journal *UnderCurrents* was the first to address the topic of "Queer Nature." In addition to Sandilands, two other contributors to this special issue explicitly recognize a relationship between ecofeminism and queer theory. In "Lost Landscapes and the Spatial Contextualization of Queerness," Gordon Brent Ingram writes that "an understanding of the intensifying juncture of environmentalism, radical ecology, ecofeminism, and queer theory is becoming crucial for the expansion of political activism in the coming decade" (5). And J. Michael Clark compares ecofeminism and ecotheology in his essay, "Sex, Earth, and Death in Gay Theology," asserting that "we can construct a gay ecotheological analysis in contradistinction to primarily male 'deep ecology' and as a further extension of ecofeminism" (34). The essays in the special issue initiate explorations of a queer ecofeminist geography and a queer ecofeminist theology, respectively; none, however, develops the connections between queer theory and ecofeminism.



2. I use the term queer as a shorthand for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender, but I use more specific terms as the context warrants. I use first-person plural pronouns when speaking of queers (us and we) to make my subject position clear. I am fully aware that queer is a contested term, generally popular among urban, under forty, academic queers, but generally unpopular among rural, over forty, community-based people; again, I use the term to reflect my own situatedness in a particular historical moment and geographic and cultural location.

3. Two definitions are in order. First, I define the dualism as heterosexual/queer rather than heterosexual/homosexual in order to reference and to emphasize the many and various combinations of gender and sexual identity that are constructed as aberrant under the hegemony of heterosexuality; I do not believe that a dualism of monosexualities (hetero/homo) captures my meaning quite as precisely. Second, by erotic I refer not exclusively to sexuality but also in a more general way to sensuality, spontaneity, passion, delight, and pleasurable stimulation; I also expect the erotic to be variously defined in accordance with specific historical and cultural contexts.

4. I use the pronoun his for the master self and her for the subordinated other because these identities are gendered; I do not mean, however, to essentialize either position. Many privileged women benefit from participating in various structures of oppression, and many men are subordinated through those structures.

5. According to Smith, the word homosexual was coined in 1869 by a little-known Hungarian doctor, Karoly Maria Benkert (1989, 112); according to Katz, heterosexual was first used publicly in Germany in 1880 (1990, 12). In the United States, the words heterosexual and homosexual were first used in 1892 by a Chicago medical doctor, James G. Kiernan (Katz 1990, 14).

6. Note that my argument rests on the ways Christianity has been used or interpreted historically; I leave for others the actual interpretation of Christianity as a religion.

7. I am defining transgender as persons who feel that their gender identity is different from their biological sex. Some transgender persons wish to change their anatomy to be more congruent with their self-perception. Others do not have such a desire. There is no correlation between sexual orientation and transgender issues. Transgender persons can be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Zemsky 1995).

8. Roscoe's earlier work has been criticized for focusing on indigenous sexuality to the exclusion of race (Gutiérrez 1989). Roscoe addresses these criticisms in a concluding chapter of his 1991 book.

9. The more common term, berdache, I reject here on the basis of its original meaning as "a boy kept for unnatural purposes." The word originated with the European colonizers, and reflects their erotophobic perspective just as it erases the various cultural, spiritual, and economic aspects of this particular gender role. Male and female transgenders have been found in more than 130 North American tribes (Roscoe 1991, 5), and have been named accordingly in each culture. I prefer the Navajo term *nadleeh* both for its indigenous rather than colonial origins and because the Navajo used the same term for both men and women transgenders (Gay American Indians 1988).

10. This excerpt should not be read to imply that all men are heterosexual and have wives; rather, as Gray's context makes clear, she is referring to the construction of