

embody Habermas's principles of communicative action; and that he considers it legitimate to believe in the objective superiority of one's own metanarrative, provided one does not use it to submerge or colonize the other.

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THEOLOGY AS A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

- Topic: Perfecting Sodomy:
 The History of a Category from Antoninus to Alphonsus
 Convener: Paul Giurlanda, Saint Mary's College of California, Moraga
 Moderator: Jack A. Bonsor, Santa Clara University
 Presenter: Mark D. Jordan, Emory University

Mark Jordan sees his presentation as part of a conversation between historians of Catholic moral theology and practitioners of the emerging discipline of "gay and lesbian studies." To attempt discussion of same-sex relations without engaging these inquiries and their techniques for analyzing moral speech would betray a lack of seriousness. The growth of meticulous taxonomies and classifications of *sodomia* as category in Catholic moral theology during and after Trent, taxonomies used by elaborate ecclesiastical and secular bureaucracies struggling for jurisdiction over "sodomites," especially in the clergy, can thus be seen as a particularly interesting case study of how assertions of "development" can serve to conceal deep changes of theological purpose.

Jordan starts with St. Thomas's authoritative definition of the *peccatum contra naturam* and then demonstrates how a single verbal formula can change meanings across different rhetorical programs of moral theology. This demonstration is intended to support and illustrate three hypotheses Jordan wants to set before us: First, there are important contradictions hidden under the categories and identities used by theologians to condemn same-sex desires. Second, there are important contradictions hidden under claims for an unbroken Catholic tradition of moral theology. Third, the hidden contradictions in sexual matter and the practice of moral theology are curiously *linked*. These three hypotheses mark one intersection between moral theology and gay and lesbian studies, one episode in their conversation.

Thus, what in Aquinas is part of a larger rhetorical program leading to beatitude, becomes, for the Dominican Antoninus of Florence, a highly colored and even hysterical condemnation of what Antoninus likens to a political and ethnic community ("Sodomites") who have a "captain" and a "king." Where for Thomas, the way to deal with sodomy is to see it as a sin linked to a larger understanding of the end of human living, for Antoninus, the way to deal with

sodomy is to mass together into a vivid and aggressive sermon dozens of precedent texts, including those of Aquinas. Antoninus quotes Thomas with respect, but refuses the structural point of Thomas's moral teaching.

Jordan then traced the further transformations of St. Thomas through Bernardino of Siena, Cardinal Cajetan, Francisco de Toledo, and several others, ending with St. Alphonsus Liguori, detecting an increasing tendency to detach the taxonomy of specific sexual sins from the whole of moral teaching conceived as spiritual formation and toward ever more precise, even atomizing, classifications. Jordan concludes by linking his three hypotheses about moral theology with three working hypotheses used in lesbian and gay studies, i.e., that homosexuality is conventional and constructed rather than natural and essential, that historical study will show the plasticity of gendered identities, and that the projection of gendered identities will be one of the most important of the speeches of power—family power, state power, church power.

Among the issues raised in the discussion period were the following: What is the source of the invective against homosexuals in Bernardino of Siena and others? Was it linked to similar language against witches and Jews? Does the social constructionist position eradicate gay people? Can we employ Pope John Paul II's recent discussions of the language of the body here? What about a cross-cultural perspective? Does the lack of hysteria in, for example, Vietnamese culture, about homosexuality reflect a focus on the "social self" in that culture rather than the "individual self" prevalent in Western culture, and does this latter emphasis in Western culture lead to unfortunate attempts to shore up the identity of that individual self by eradicating, or attempting to eradicate, all ambiguity? Finally, how can we move to a subtler and deeper understanding of human nature in moral theology and move beyond the concern for the classification of physical acts?

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