

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

CLEAR HISTORY:

10 CONFESSIONS OF SEX, SCRIPTURE, AND SUBJECTIVITY

AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE

A Graduate Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts in Communication Studies

By

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Dedication

To John and Stacy, under whose instruction I became a scholar, under whose care I became myself. To Andrew, in whose love I am safely hidden.

To my God, for Whom I live.

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ABSTRACT

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Applying Foucault's theories of discursive formations and confessions to contemporary Fundamentalist Christianity, this work seeks to determine how female sexuality is constructed within this community.

Butler's theory of giving an account of oneself, which employs Foucault's constructs of discursive formations and confessions, is used to present the idea that personal narration, although powerful as a tool for cultural critique, is not successful unless the goal of such critique is to move others in the direction of change. The change being encouraged in this work is a movement in the Church toward understanding that female sexuality has been misrepresented in literature, in relationships, and in the pulpit.

Providing a personal account of participation in this community through the lens of Foucault's suggestion that the act of confession has the power to call into being one's

subjectivity, this work employs autoethnographic research displayed through the performance of ten confessions about sex related issues from the female fundamentalist Christian perspective that are vulnerable, honest, and true.

The critical review of this literature draws attention to the fact that female sexuality is misrepresented in many cultures, not just the Fundamentalist Christian culture. As a sub-culture, Fundamentalist Christianity influences and is influenced by the larger culture, which is why a sampling of secular literature is included in this work.

The conclusion concisely states three findings: 1) The discursive formations that are born out of the Church's presentation of sex in general, and female sexuality in particular, generate a hostile atmosphere within which female subjectivity is constructed. 2) Regardless of this hostility, the act of confession allows females within the fundamentalist Christian community to vocalize their subjectivity as a means of critiquing the blatant disparities between the ways male Christians and female Christians are allowed to interact with their respective subjectivities. 3) This critique challenges the Church to alter its constructed rules, roles, and norms, so that female Christians who speak about sex freely or confess that they struggle with sexual temptation/sin are not viewed as vulgar, and, essentially, subhuman beings. Finally, questions are posed and suggestions are provided for continued research on this topic.

Introduction

Sex and Fire

Loving sex is like loving fire.

Without it,

our blood turns to ice

and our breath freezes cruelly.

But get too close,

Or let it burn unhindered

and our skin turns to ash

as selves and relationships vanish in smoke.

Eons ago, and in another life, I was a poet. Sitting under trees and in coffee shops, crouched singularly on park benches, and in dark, private places, my heart bled truth and error on scraps of A7¹ paper. The words, embodiments of my anguished soul, gave life to hopes, fears, questions, confessions that I couldn't bring myself to say in common conversation. I needed a protected place to store truths about myself and poetry became that place for me, a haven for all the things I wanted to say but, paralyzed in fear, could not.

As I think back on lost poems, poems I wish I could re-read with the eyes of my current self, one stands out above the rest, "Waiting for my Hosea." I wrote the words as a sophomore in college, months before I met my one-day husband, Andrew. I lost that scribbled plea long ago, but its agonized prayer I will never forget.

At 20 years old, after squandering countless first, second, third, and almost fourth

¹ A7 is a standard paper size, measuring 2.91 inches by 4.13 inches.

base encounters,² knowing full well that my identity as a life-long Fundamentalist Christian dictated rules for sexual conduct that I simply had not followed, I considered myself a slut. No, it was more than that. I considered myself a Gomer,³ a harlot who had sold her body to men in return for what she thought she needed. I'm ashamed of it now, but at the time, all I thought I needed was a boyfriend. Someone to call me worth keeping. Someone who would hold my hand in public and be proud to show me off to all his friends. Someone who'd be just as excited to see me clothed as he was to see me naked.

For all my trying, I hadn't pulled it off. By the time I was 20, the string of men who'd seen me naked and kissed my lips and breasts and thighs, had grown to a number I shudder to admit even to myself. By the time I was 20, I began begging God to send me a Hosea.⁴ A man who would love the harlot I'd become and bestow upon me the right to be a good man's wife.

To my shame, it wasn't enough that God answered my plea. When Andrew and I started dating I confessed all. And he forgave me. He called me his own and made me a good man's future-wife. His love, which looked past all the ways I'd failed to keep

² Slang for the spectrum of sexual activity. First base includes kissing and heavy, clothed petting. Second base involves heavy, unclothed petting in addition to first base. Third base involves the giving and receiving of oral copulation in addition to first and second base. Fourth base involves engaging in sexual intercourse, or "going all the way," in addition to first, second, and third base.

³ The wife of Hosea, a prophet whose life is recounted in the 28th book of the Holy Bible. She is first mentioned in Hosea 1:3 (see Appendix A) and is used by God to symbolically represent how His people (Israel) sold their souls to other gods in acts of idolatry, becoming spiritual harlots themselves.

⁴ Hosea, as a Christ-type, is used by God to demonstrate His love for Israel, despite her infidelity. God loves his people so much that He is willing to draw them to Himself even though their past is marked by a string of other lovers – even though they are harlots (Hosea 1:2-3; see Appendix A).

myself a secret for only him to know,⁵ granted me the only thing I thought I'd ever needed: value. Andrew's love made me someone worth wanting, worth having, worth keeping. Andrew's love erased my past and provided something for me I thought I didn't deserve: a future.

But in true Gomer form,⁶ I made a mistake that nearly cost me the incomparably compassionate love of my Hosea.⁷ After a year of dating, I, like Gomer, chose lust over love. In a moment of utter selfishness fueled by hidden insecurities, I gave away another second base to someone else. He was drunk and I was reliving an unrequited desire from years before. Although I was faithful enough to refuse first base, and guilty enough to stop before reaching third base, even as I walked away from him, I knew that my mistake had changed my life forever. In my foolishness, I wagered the priceless love of a good man for ten minutes of drunken affirmation from a man I'd only known in passing.

Wrought with the shame of my actions, and painfully aware of their high cost, I confessed myself to Andrew, convinced that he could not forgive me. But the character of my Hosea transcended the cruelty of his wretched Gomer. As I stood before him, destitute and pleading, pitifully in need of redemption, Andrew purchased that which was already his. Just as Hosea had done for Gomer, having purchased her freedom from

⁵ The term "to know" in Scripture is used to describe the act of sexual intercourse, in which a man, by entering a woman, comes to understand her in the most intimate of ways, as in Genesis 4:1, which states, "Now Adam knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain (See Appendix A*).

⁶ As a harlot, after having been granted the gift of marriage by a respectable man, something that would have been unheard of in Biblical times, Gomer did the unthinkable and returned to a life of prostitution (Hosea 2:2; see appendix A).

⁷ Hosea's love of Gomer, as a representation of God's love for His people, was lavish, faithful, kind, just, righteous, and compassionate (Hosea 2:14, 19-20; see Appendix A).

those who had enslaved her,⁸ Andrew bought my heart back from the guilt and shame that my rebellion and foolishness had produced. Despite the ugliness of my actions, and the truths about me they laid bare, Andrew took me back. He became my Hosea for a second time, and “loved a woman who was loved by her [future] husband, yet an adulteress.”⁹

In writing the story of being a female member of the fundamentalist¹⁰ Christian community, I have learned what it means to call forth my own subjectivity, to, in the tradition of Foucault and Butler, become an *I*. In this quest for subjectivity, nothing has had so powerful an impact on my being as the way the Church (from my experience) has presented female sexuality. As Foucault explains, Christian metanarratives about sexuality have long defined the ways in which moral subjects may approach sex,

⁸ In Biblical times, women did not generally have professions. They relied on their husbands to provide food, clothing, shelter, protection, etc. As a harlot, Gomer would have needed to rely on her lovers for the provision of these things. After leaving Hosea and returning to prostitution, Scripture makes it clear that her services did not produce enough of these resources to sustain her. Thus, Gomer fell into debt. Not being able to pay this debt, Gomer was sold into slavery. Hosea had already made Gomer his own in marrying her, yet, although he did not have to, he made her his own a second time by purchasing her debt, worth 15 shekels of silver and a homer and a half of barley (Hosea 3:2; see appendix A), restoring her to the protection, sustenance, and position accorded the married women of her time. This second act of redemption is used to convey God’s willingness to restore His followers to Himself despite their eagerness to run from Him, a waywardness that results in destitution, ruin, and subservience.

⁹ Hosea 3:1 (see Appendix A).

¹⁰ The Fundamentalist Church is a denomination (branch) of Christianity which is set apart from other religions (such as Catholicism, Mormonism, Buddhism, etc.) as well as other denominations of Christianity (such as Methodists, Episcopalians, Nazarenes, Pentecostals, etc.) by a set of theological standards which are provided in the doctrinal statement of Fundamentalist Christian churches; standards such as: the authorship of Scripture by God; God as three persons in one (a.k.a. the Holy Trinity); Salvation by faith alone through Christ alone; eternal security of the saints (“once saved, always saved”); the existence of only two religious ordinances: baptism and communion; Dispensationalism: adherence to Scripture as read in its “natural, literal sense;” etc. (<http://ffbc.net/beliefs/>). The distinction between Christianity and Catholicism is pertinent to this work because Foucault’s theories predominantly critique Catholic ordinances and religious traditions/sacraments. Though Foucault uses the term “Christianity” almost exclusively to label what is actually unique to Catholic religious beliefs, it is important to point out that my work draws a distinction between these two religions. This distinction is based on one fundamental difference: the Christian doctrine of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9; see Appendix A). However, Foucault’s work still applies to mine in that his emphasis on religious rules, roles, and norms transcends religious distinctions and can be applied to any religious denomination.

sexuality, and pleasure; a definition which powerfully acts upon the way a subject's subjectivity is allowed to create itself.¹¹

Though Foucault's arguments challenge the Christian notions of monogamy, heterosexuality, and matrimony as the only acceptable sites of sex and pleasure, challenges which I, as a willful member of the Christian community, cannot echo, I find myself drawn to his explanation of the history of sexuality because of how its struggles relate to the struggles I have faced as a contemporary Christian woman. Having been raised in the church, I know full well that God's standards for sexual morality¹² provide comprehensive instructions for human thought and action, namely, sexual purity (physical¹³ and mental¹⁴), heterosexuality,¹⁵ fidelity,¹⁶ and conjugal, as opposed to pre-marital, sex.¹⁷

But what if you are someone who struggles with temptations to move outside of these standards? What if you are someone who engages in sexually intimate activities before marriage, with someone of the same sex, or by yourself in front of a computer screen? What if you are tempted to cheat on your husband? What if you actually do? What if you struggle with an addiction to pornography, or consistently do battle with lusting after the countless men and women who cross your path? How would knowing

¹¹ Foucault, M. (1986). *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

¹² Galatians 5:19-21. See Appendix A.

¹³ 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; Ephesians 5:5. See Appendix A.

¹⁴ Matthew 5:28. See Appendix A.

¹⁵ Genesis 2:22-24; Leviticus 20:13. See Appendix A.

¹⁶ Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 22:22; Matthew 19:9. See Appendix A.

¹⁷ Hebrews 13:4. See Appendix A.

these things about yourself affect your subjectivity? How would your *I* view itself if it knew it was living a lie? If it knew no one else knew anything about that lie?

This work attempts to answer these question—from the perspective of my subjectivity, from the perspective of my *I*. It's a risky move, I know. My stance is not popular amongst fundamentalist Christians. Although I do not call into question Scripture—God's Word—or the standards for sexual conduct and purity that He, as a Holy God, has every right to demand, I do question the way the Church has presented these standards. The experience of my subjective *I*, as a life-long member of the Fundamentalist Christian community, the preference given from the pulpit¹⁸ to certain passages of Scripture (concerning sex, desire, and sexual morality) over others, and the myriad books written specifically for members of the Christian community concerning the role of sex before and during marriage construct what Foucault calls a discursive formation,¹⁹ the conceptual amalgamation of information connected with a given phenomenon—in this case, sex and sexuality. That is, discursive formations include all the symbols, language, images, denotations, connotations, and histories of a particular object or idea, all of which determine how, why, and by whom that object or idea is able to act upon the world.

The discursive formation regarding female sexuality, both inside and outside the Church, is painfully narrow-minded. Among others, the secular²⁰ books I read as an

¹⁸ The place from which the pastor, the spiritual leader, addresses those within the Christian community for whom he is spiritually responsible.

¹⁹ Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

²⁰ Non-religious and specifically non-Christian.

adolescent and young adult portrayed female sexuality as victimized,²¹ as ugly in the wake of poor life choices,²² as incestuous and as a result of Stockholm's syndrome,²³ as induced by lovelorn mysticism,²⁴ and as brutally aggressive in self-proclaiming guiltless transgression.²⁵ As Sandra Cisneros (2004) puts it

I am evil. I am the filth goddess Tlazolteotl.

I am the swallower of sins.

The lust goddess without guilt.

The delicious debauchery. You bring out
the primordial exquisiteness in me.

The nasty obsession in me.

The corporal and venial sin in me.

The original transgression in me (p.122).

Is it any wonder that the Church's view is flawed concerning female sexuality if it is misrepresented so egregiously in the wide world beyond the Church?

But how does this misrepresentation manifest itself within the Church specifically? Well, first, it begins with an overall misrepresentation of sex in general. Given the fact that there are countless Scriptural references that (literally) sing the praises of God-ordained sexual activity, the Church (in my experience) places an inappropriate emphasis on verses in Scripture that reproach sexual misconduct. Presented as a source of

²¹ Turner, A. (2000). *Learning to Swim: A Memoir*. New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

²² Anonymous. (1971). *Go Ask Alice*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

²³ Marillier, J. (2001). *Son of the Shaddows*. New York, NY: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC.

²⁴ Esquivel, L. (1992). *Like Water for Chocolate*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

²⁵ Cisneros, S. (2004). *Vintage Cisneros*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

delight,²⁶ as a deprivation in its absence,²⁷ as a gift from God,²⁸ as torture to be without,²⁹ and as the source of unparalleled pleasure,³⁰ more emphasis should be placed on sex as a wondrous, pleasing, delightful, desirable human activity that, when abiding by God's standards of purity, has the potential to bring great honor to God and great joy to the members of His Church.

This rings true all the more when the double standard between the way male and female sexuality is presented in the Church is called into question. Whereas Christian men are expected to be pleasure-seekers and are allowed to struggle with sexual temptation and sin—an allowance which manifests itself in Church conversations, literature, and pulpit messages—women are largely portrayed as neither pleasure seeking nor pleasure enjoying beings, and are altogether viewed as incapable of struggling with lust, desire, and sexual temptation.³¹ Literature written for Christian men specifically—and in great detail—address topics such as sexual addiction,³² pornography,³³ male sexual desire (as heightened),³⁴ lust,³⁵ and masculinity as determined by expectations of sexual

²⁶ Proverbs 5:18-19. See Appendix A.

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 7:5. See Appendix A.

²⁸ Genesis 2:24. See Appendix A.

²⁹ Song of Solomon 3:1; 5:3-6, 8. See Appendix A.

³⁰ Song of Solomon 1:1; 2:14; 4:1, 5, 9, 11; 5:10, 13, 14-16; 7:6-9. See Appendix A.

³¹ Harris, J. (1997). *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc.

³² Gallagher, S. (2000). *At The Altar of Sexual Idolatry*. Dry Ridge, KY: Pure Life Ministries.

³³ Powlison, D. (1999). *Pornography: Slaying the Dragon*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

³⁴ George, J. (2004). *A Husband After God's Own Heart: 12 Things That Really Matter in Your Marriage*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

³⁵ Hughes, R.K. (2001). *Disciplines of a Godly Man*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

dominance.³⁶ As Harris (1997) states, “First we must realize that girls don’t struggle with the same temptations we struggle with. We wrestle more with our sex drives while girls struggle more with their emotions (p. 97).”

On the other hand, books written for Christian women skirt the issue of sex almost entirely, or omit it altogether. At nearly 1,000 pages, a three-in-one, quintessential Christian female work entitled, *A Woman’s Walk with God/Beautiful in God’s Eyes/Loving God with All Your Mind* (George, 2007), says absolutely nothing about female struggles with sexual temptation—physical or mental. The silence speaks volumes. In not addressing sexuality as a component of the Christian female subject, George states that Christian women are not supposed to nor are they capable of having a bent toward sexual temptation, let alone having lust/sexual desire represent a thorn in her flesh.³⁷ Sadly, George is not the only author misrepresenting the reality of the female Christian’s struggle with sexual temptation.

Many other authors contribute to the discursive formation of female Christian sexuality by drawing the distinction between male and female sexual desire in a way that promotes a double standard. The Church, through its literature, propagates the notion that male sexual desire is more prominent than female sexual desire,³⁸ that female sexual

³⁶ Boyd, S.B. (1996). “Masculinity and Male Dominance: Martin Luther on the Punishment of Adam,” in *Redeeming Men: Religion and Masculinities*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

³⁷ A reference to the Apostle Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 12:7 (see Appendix A), in which he states that “a messenger of Satan” visits him continually to keep him humble. In the fundamentalist Christian church, Paul’s “messenger of Satan” is generally interpreted as a besetting sin, a recurring temptation that bewilders, discourages, and frustrates followers of Christ in its persistence and difficulty to overcome.

³⁸ Peace, M. (2005). *The Excellent Wife: A Biblical Perspective*. Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing Incorporated.

desire is inextricably linked to perceived levels of emotional intimacy,³⁹ and that female sexual desire is prompted solely in response to feelings of romantic love.⁴⁰ In her book entitled, *The Excellent Wife* (2005), Martha Peace states

Men and women both have sexual desires. However, since the man's desires tend to be stronger, it may be difficult for men to think about anything other than sex when they experience physical longing. So, God instructed the wife to meet her husband's physical needs (p.121).

Although Peace goes on to explain that God calls husbands to meet their wives' physical needs as well, her statement about the degree to which men and women experience sexual desire paints women with heightened sexual desire (such as myself) as abnormal and men with decreased sexual desire (such as my husband, Andrew) as un-masculine. This double standard works to create a system of subjectivity-creation that is damaging if one does not view him/herself—especially his or her sexuality—according to the same roles and/or standards that those speaking with authority say he/she must fill and/or follow.

This double standard is furthered in works intended for married Christian couples. Instructions for successful marital relations include a call for men to understand that they are visually stimulated, but their wives, for the most part, are not.⁴¹ In their book entitled, *Love That Lasts*, Gary and Betsy Ricucci (2006), Gary provides the following example

Women are stimulated by *inward emotions* as well as by *gentle and*

³⁹ Jones, D. & Kendall, J. (1995). *Lady in Waiting: Developing Your Love Relationships*. Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House.

⁴⁰ Elliot, E. (1984). *Passion and Purity: Learning to Bring Your Love Life Under Christ's Control*. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell.

⁴¹ Ricucci, G. & Ricucci, B. (2006). *Love That Lasts: When Marriage Meets Grace*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

affectionate physical contact. As a rule, men are sexually stimulated by what they see. The following bedtime scenario illustrates the difference. You're in bed reading an interesting and inspiring biography when your wife enters the room. As she begins to undress, you find yourself rather distracted and your reading drifting...drifting. Within seconds you have forgotten what page you were on, and even what book you were reading. As she slips under the covers you're interested all right, but that book isn't even on the radar screen.

Hopping out of bed the next morning, you step on the book, still lying where it fell, and smile.

Now if the tables are turned and it's the wife whose is reading in bed, sometimes she will respond to visual stimulation. But many times she will just continue to read until you begin to pursue her tenderly and affectionately. Don't take it personally, guys. Women are just different than we are (pp.139-140).

It's a harmless enough anecdote, right? Most Christians will view it that way, but what about female Christians (like me) who are constantly visually stimulated? What about men (like my husband) who are not? What if Christian marriage guides are prescribing the way I ought to feel and experience sexuality but their way is as foreign to me as it is to my husband? What if these books are telling us which roles we ought to be filling, but in actuality we are filling the other's role? Why would I want to talk about sex with my female friends if I knew they were reading all the same books as me and all of those books were telling them that my way of experiencing sex was abnormal? Beyond that, if I was struggling with more than just understanding my own sexuality, if I was struggling with sexual sin, why would I ever want to talk about that with anyone, if the

way the Church was talking about sex created a double standard that I found myself on the wrong side of?

As I stated earlier, the double standard affects Christian men and women alike. Another author similarly states that wives require tender affection in order to reach sexual climax, regardless of how superfluous husbands consider affection to be.⁴² Yet another author states that wives do not think sex is important, whereas husbands consider it to be of paramount importance.⁴³ Still another author states that wives dislike sex in general, which works in stark opposition to the preferences of their husbands.⁴⁴ As Eggerichs (2004) states

Often the answer to the problem [of not getting along with one's spouse] lay in the fact that she wanted intimacy and affection without all the sexual touching, while he wanted sex and was not being too patient with moments of affection. Sex for him and affection for [her] is a two-way street (p.250).

Essentially, Christian wives are painted as having indifferent feelings about sex, as having to force themselves to engage their husbands sexually—as some sort of fulfillment of marital obligation—and as only being able to reach sexual climax when expectations of emotional intimacy are met. What a damaging portrayal of Christian women! This type of discursive formation places abominable restrictions upon the sexual desires of today's Christian wives. And it does the same thing to Christian men. To tell men that they may not be sexually indifferent is just as damaging as it is to tell women

⁴² Eggerichs, E. (2004). *Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires, The Respect He Desperately Needs*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

⁴³ Schlessinger, L. (2004). *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

⁴⁴ Piper, J. & Taylor, J. (2005). *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

that they are abnormal for having intense sexual desire for their spouse. This double standard is damaging because it sets up a construct within which male and female Christians are *supposed* to experience, respond to, interact with, and feel sexual, and any deviation from this construct forces male and female Fundamentalist Christians to perceive themselves as an outsider within a culture to which they have spent years devoting their time, efforts, energy, and allegiance.

If all the books I read, and all the messages I hear at church, and all my married, female, Christian friends tell me that sex is nothing more than an act of obedience and submission, both to God and to my husband, it's no wonder I feel ashamed that I've taken great pains to understand sexual pleasure—or why I find it so hard to admit that I love sex. Andrew is a phenomenal lover and produces in me such intense sexual pleasure that I often turn to him after the completion of an orgasm and say, “YOU. ARE. THE. KING.” It is so painful to think that Christian wives have sex on a relatively regular basis yet neither know nor care to know how to derive from it great pleasure.

This is an unnecessary travesty when there are two books which act as instructional manuals to aid Christian couples in the pursuit of enhanced sexual pleasure, both by the husband and the wife. The first, entitled *Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage* (Wheat & Wheat, 1977), is a comprehensive medical explanation of the way God created both male and female bodies to experience pleasure, as well as instructions on how to properly stimulate pleasure in both genders, was assigned reading in my and Andrew's premarital counseling program.⁴⁵ Due to the fact that a medical doctor tastefully wrote it, this book is made

⁴⁵ In most Fundamentalist Christian churches, pastors will generally not marry engaged couples unless they have completed a premarital counseling program, which covers topics such as communication, submission

available to young Christian couples on the verge of marriage, but not before. In the Church, it is taboo for unmarried Christians to express curiosity about sex or sex-related issues because such an expression might indicate a desire to start engaging in sexual activities.⁴⁶

The second book, only recently released into Christian society, has been met with mixed reviews. Providing graphic and specific details about sexual intercourse, the authors' sex life, and the sexual struggles faced by dating, engaged, and married Christian couples, *Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship, and Life Together* (Driscoll & Driscoll, 2012) has received reviews ranging from "boldly refreshing,"⁴⁷ to "risky, but necessary,"⁴⁸ to "controversial and outrageous,"⁴⁹ to "unbiblical."⁵⁰ These reviews are important to consider because, whether or not they are accurate, they represent the hesitant shift on behalf of the Church to speak openly about sex.

This hesitance on behalf of the church to provide a safe environment within which

(wives), leadership (husbands), and some sort of introduction to sex within marriage. *Intended for Pleasure* (Wheat & Wheat, 1977) is very often used as the means of discussing the topic of sex during the premarital counseling program.

⁴⁶ Williams-Paris, J. (2003). *Birth Control for Christians: Making Wise Choices*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

⁴⁷ "Real Marriage: The Truth about Sex, Friendship, and Life Together." (2011, November 14). *Publishers Weekly*, 258(46), 48. Retrieved on March 3, 2014, from <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA272739657&v=2.1&u=mast12569&it=r&p=LitRC&sw=w&asid=cd513c3ab3e1a3fadf78ba324ddfc6d>

⁴⁸ Armstrong, A. (2014). "Real Marriage: Mark Driscoll and Grace Driscoll." Book Review. *The Gospel Coalition*. Retrieved March 3, 2014, from http://thegospelcoalition.org/book-reviews/review/real_marriage

⁴⁹ "Driscoll at Liberty?" (2012). *The Mark Driscoll Controversy*. Retrieved March 3, 2014, from http://www.driscollcontroversy.com/?page_id=723

⁵⁰ Lambert, H. (2012). The Ironies of "Real Marriage: A Review of Mark Driscoll, *Real Marriage: The Truth about Sex, Friendship, and Life Together*" in *Gender Studies in Review*. Retrieved March 3, 2014, from <http://www.dennyburk.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/8-Lambert.pdf>

to discuss sex in general, along with its inaccurate misrepresentation of female sexuality in particular, has been challenged—albeit shyly and at a glacial pace—by a handful of authors, one of whom admits he as wrong to state (in prior works) that women do not struggle with issues of lust,⁵¹ another of whom writes that sex is neither dirty nor immoral within the bonds of marriage,⁵² and a final author who writes that female Christians can (and do) in fact engage pornography and masturbation,⁵³ a fact which is rarely addressed in writing, in conversation, or from the pulpit.

My work hopes to discourage this hesitance and provide solidarity for those brave souls bringing awareness to the dangerous atmosphere within which female, Christian subjectivities have been and are being created. To realize this hope, I have chosen to bear my soul, in the tradition of confession, to provide the Church with truths about myself that I feel reflect truths about other Christian women who are bound in silence by paralyzing fear. These truths that I will speak about, that I will confess, have the power, as Foucault states, to constitute my subjectivity.⁵⁴ That is, the act of confessing a truth about myself is that which calls my subjectivity into being. I cannot be a subject, I cannot be an *I*, unless I confess the truth about myself. Confession cannot bring about subjectivity unless the self, my *I*, is the referent of the confession, of the truth being confessed. It is only in this act of confessing a truth about myself that my subjectivity can

⁵¹ Harris, J. (2003). *Not Even A Hint: Guarding Your Heart Against Lust*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc.

⁵² George, E. (2004). *A Wife After God's Own Heart: 12 Things That Really Matter In Your Marriage*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

⁵³ Wilson, P.B. (1995). *Knight In Shining Armor: Discovering Your Lifelong Love*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

⁵⁴ Foucault, M. (2001). *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College De France*. New York, NY: Picador.

come into existence. My work is my confession, and in my confession I am able to call myself into being.

Confession in the Fundamentalist Christian church carries with it a different theological consequence than that which Foucault addresses in his early works on confession in the Catholic church. In his first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1978), Foucault argues that confession is used as a means of “transforming sex into discourse (p.20)” so that—through the act of speaking, of confessing—power relations might be established and the act of confession might be used as a means for those in positions of power (priests) to “judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile (61-62)” those who lacked power (confessors). Confession in the Fundamentalist Christian church operates differently. Whereas the Catholic sacrament of confession requires the use of intermediaries to access God’s forgiveness through the act of confessing to priests,⁵⁵ Christianity maintains a very different theological stance.

In the Christian religion, confession manifests itself in two ways: first—in keeping with the requirements of receiving the gift of salvation—as the initial confession that Jesus Christ is Lord⁵⁶ and that one understands the gravity of his/her sin which necessitates forgiveness by a Holy God,⁵⁷ and, second, as an accompaniment to the ongoing sanctification process in the life of every Christian, whereby one uses his or her words to speak the same truth about sin that God does in the presence of his/her fellow

⁵⁵ Council of Trent, 1551, Section XIV. Retrieved April 8, 2014, from <http://www.americancatholictruthsociety.com/docs/TRENT/trent14.htm>

⁵⁶ Romans 10:9-10 (see Appendix A).

⁵⁷ 1 John 1:9 (see Appendix A).

Christians as a means of gaining support in his/her struggles with temptation and sin.⁵⁸

This work does not address initial confession, nor does it speak to Foucault's statements about confession in his early works. Rather, it draws parallels between Foucault's later theory of confession as that which constitutes subjectivity by way of truth-speaking (as discussed above) and the aspect of truth-telling within the Christian religion as a means of garnering support from other Christians who are also in the process of sanctification. Truth-telling, or confession, is the means by which I am able to say the truth about myself—the truth about my sin—not as a means of salvation or forgiveness, but as a means of obeying God's commands to live in truth-relationships with other Christians as we struggle with temptation and sin. As we confess to one another, we live in obedience to God, AND (in the tradition of Foucault's later work) we call ourselves into being as a result of telling the truth about ourselves.

In light of this, I stress the fact that I do not call myself into being alone. In her explication of Foucault's presentation of subjectivity, Butler⁵⁹ details the relational view of subjectivity—that subjects are born into a web of historical relationships that have long determined the norms by which subjects are allowed to seek and receive recognition from Others. These norms provide instruction for subjects as to how they may seek recognition from another, from whom they may seek recognition, to what extent they may seek recognition, and the extent to which recognition may be granted by said Other. Distress is caused, however, when these norms prevent recognition from occurring. In frustration, subjects seek recognition according to sanctioned structures of relationality,

⁵⁸ James 5:16 (see Appendix A).

⁵⁹ Butler, Judith (2005). *Giving and Account of Oneself*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press.

but, in many instances, achieve no success. When failure occurs, so too does the moment of critique—the “critical point of departure for the interrogation of available norms (Butler, 2005, p. 24).”

This work, then, is a response to the failures of relationality currently operating in the Fundamentalist Christian community concerning female sexuality. In time I pray the Church will understand that sexual desire as something *human*, not something gendered. That engagement with sexual sin is not solely a male issue, but a Christian issue. That confession of sin should not incite fear and silence, but should produce support and encouragement. That urging Christians to tell the truth about and give an account of themselves is just as valuable an undertaking within the Church as it is outside of the Church. This work is my honest, vulnerable, self-endangering attempt to critique a normative structure which distresses my subjectivity in its unwillingness to grant that which subjects—which I— so desperately need: recognition.

However, to call my subjectivity into being is not sufficient. To be an *I* is not enough. I must take great care of myself, of the subjectivity I have struggled and sacrificed to call into being as I move relationally through this world with others that have influenced me and that I have influenced. To take care of myself, I must give an account of my subjectivity, as directed by Butler (2005) in *Giving an Account of Oneself*. Butler explains: when cultural norms cease to provide an adequate structure within which members of that culture can exist freely and with ease of self-understanding, a moment of “violence (p. 136)” occurs. This moment of violence forces members into a state of “unknowingness (p. 136)” in which they must negotiate their ways of and purposes for being. These negotiations occur when members tell about themselves or give an account

of themselves to others as a means of doing up what has been “undone (p. 136).” This telling assumes not only the subject itself, but the Other to whom the story, the confession, will be told. The one doing the hearing—either granting or refusing recognition—influences the formation of the subject to the same extent the subject does. Subjectivity does and cannot occur in a vacuum. Subjectivities develop responsively; that is, in response to the norms and narratives that existed long before the physical entrance of the subject into the world that will so violently, so continually attempt to inform the emergence of his or her mental-spiritual subjectivity.

In response to these norms and narratives, in order to give an account of oneself, the subject must necessarily produce narratives of his or her own that are pointedly persuasive. They have the power to call the self into being and to alter the nature and function of both the Other and all Others. Others, those who constitute the “social world that is beyond us and before us (Butler, 2005, p. 64),” are just as responsible for the emergence of the subject as the subject is him/herself. This may sound like an accusation, but it is not. It is merely the acceptance of a truth: that subjectivities neither emerge nor are sustained without the persistent acting upon them by Others. By accepting this truth, a subject giving an account of his or herself must then be willing to take responsibility for the reality his or her account creates. The subject’s reality, in turn, impacts the emerging and subsisting subjectivities of all the Others to whom he or she is relationally connected. Simply to speak from the perspective of self is not to give an account of oneself. To speak, though, with the aim of persuasion, with the aim of constructing self, Other, and culture anew, and to take responsibility for what happens in the creation of self, Other, and culture is to account for oneself. And it is in this process of persuasive, responsible

account-giving, at the moment when one is undone before another in the midst of cultural violence, that the self has the "chance of becoming human (p. 136)."

This very humanness is what I long for, what I aim to attain, what I hope to present as a gift to other Christian women—and anyone else who is living in a state of fear or shame which prevents them from telling the truth about themselves responsibly. Women who, like me, have been hiding behind closed doors and cleared search histories. Women who feel as alone as I have felt battling sexual temptations that women in the Church are not prepared to face. While Christian men experience the expectation that they will struggle with lust, immoral sexual desires, and addictions to pornography and masturbation as normal, women who struggle with these same temptations, or, worse yet, have the audacity to enjoy sex, are met with a wall of silence. No help. No hope. No nothing.

Why do I confess these things? Because I can't go on like this any longer. Because I am a Christian and I love my God, but I love Him imperfectly, and I need help to overcome the sexual sins I am tempted to commit on a daily basis. Because God, in His Word, presents a view of sex that is glorious, enjoyable, powerful, and yes, intensely pleasurable—not just for men, for women too! I confess these things because I believe in the power of my confession to create a me, an *I*, that is free to honor God and love sex at the same time. To create a subjectivity that understands the boundaries God places on physical and mental sexuality, but is not afraid to say that, sometimes, the Church presents a flawed view of those boundaries. And this view, in its unfair presentation of both sex and female sexuality, creates a hostile atmosphere within which female subjectivities have been and are being formed.

That is why I do this work. That is why I confess. And that is why autoethnographic performance is the perfect method for my confessions. Autoethnography, as a research methodology, combines personal narrative and critical practice. It endeavors to “critique cultural practice (Holman-Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013, p. 22)” by questioning cultural norms, traditions, and metanarratives. It does so by providing intimate, personal accounts of what it means to be a member of a given cultural group. But the purpose of autoethnography is not simply to provide personal accounts. In addition to critiquing cultural practices, successful autoethnographies aim to provide the field with a better understanding of a given culture (i.e., Fundamentalist Christianity) by adding to existing research. Finally, the autoethnographic methodology aims to “to embrace vulnerability with purpose, and to create a reciprocal relationship with audiences in order to compel a response (p. 22).”

With these goals in mind, performance autoethnography presents an ideal application of critical research as it depicts the themes of confession, giving an account of oneself, and discursive formations. As Conquergood⁶⁰ explains, there are four key aspects of performance theory that enable it to cast a critical eye on cultural phenomena: play, poetics, process, and power. First, performance seeks to understand the way cultural norms and hierarchies are created, and to transgress those structures as a means of bringing awareness to the ways they are broken, ineffective, harmful, and incomplete (play). Second, through a dedication to artistic, inventive, imaginative, inspiring, moving presentations of cultural critique, performance seeks to convey the ways in which human realities are constructed, and the way those constructions allow human beings to create

⁶⁰ Conquergood, D. (1989). Poetics, Play, Process, And Power: The Performative Turn In Anthropology. *Text & Performance Quarterly*, 9(1), 82.

and recreate their reality and the reality of others (poetics). Third, performance emphasizes this construction as a multi-layered, multi-consequential series of interactions across individuals and across time, interactions which break from traditionally accepted/propagated rules, roles, and norms within the culture, and then rebuild them anew (process). Finally, these traditionally accepted rules, roles, and norms are publicly critiqued by performance, which requires an account of the ways these standards came into being, and the ways those who interact with them accommodate and/or resist them, reproduce and/or challenge them, uphold and/or subvert them (power).

Will you come with me, then, as I aim to do these things? As I lay myself bare and show myself to you? Will you hear my confessions? For as I speak these truths about myself, and as they resonate with likeness in your own soul, together we will call ourselves into being. In their telling, we will become human. In the telling, *we* will emerge.

Confession #1:

My work is rated PG-13

An installation.

Located in the performance program.

This confession will be placed in each performance program. The audience will read it while they wait for the performance to start.

In all honesty, I am afraid to do this work. The thought of my voice crashing into the serenity of proper, Christian silence like the Tasmanian Devil, chaos and disapproval spewing out in all directions, almost makes me want to close my mouth. To bury my longing for change deep within the recesses of my heart, and fall neatly back into the line that stands so warmly, so welcomingly just on the other side of this work.

In all honesty, if I did, I would be ashamed to know me, ashamed to call myself my own. This work is difficult and it is painful. But it is work that must be done. I must do it for myself. To give myself a voice, for I have lived in silence much too long. The words I speak, I speak for me. But I also speak these words for women who are just like me: faithful, flawed, fearful, and frustrated women who need help, and hope, and to be seen for what they really are. Women who wish only to be free. Like me.

However, before I can free myself, I feel the urge to state that my work is greater than the sum of its parts. To advertise it as PG-13 so that people know what they're getting themselves into. Hard as I try, I can't just let the work be what it is. I can't just let

is seek out its audience and be okay with whomever it chooses to adopt. I cannot fight the fear that this work will not be viewed as I intended and that it might not make the changes I had hoped it would. The thought of saying something other than what I'd hoped scares me. I hope for greatness, but I expect ruin. I hope for change, but I expect reproach.

And yet, this work comes from the strongest, sincerest place inside of me. This work is my confession, my blood and shame in 12-point font. It must work as it will, and I must let it. So be good to me, sweet confession. For I have loved thee dearly, and with all.

Confession #2:

There are two *I*'s

A live performance.

Located center stage down.

This confession is performed live. As an audio recording of the narrative below plays, I will be seated on a chair in front of a large, blank bed sheet. I will have a black pen in my left hand, and a red pen in my right hand. As the recording plays, I will use both hands to write down the terms it uses to describe both sides of my subjectivity: the side fully invested in Christian standards of morality and conduct, and the side that struggles to live according to those morals and standards. As I write down these terms, I will construct the shape of a heart: ragged on the left, elegant on the right. Once the recording ends, the bed sheet will remain center stage, down for a few moments so that the audience can have time to consider the final product.

My story is long

And sometimes it's hard to tell

As a Christian, I have a standard to live by

But there are many hidden ways that I don't

I know all the right words to say

And all the right ways to act

To hide what I don't want others to see

To keep my own secrets

And save face

And keep friends

That might not want to know me if I tell them

Who I really am

It's hard keeping up that kind of façade

It's a struggle

And it's tiring

And I don't want to keep it up anymore

I want to be free

I want to confess myself

So I can become the person I want to be

The true me

Without secrets

Without fear

I don't want to hide anymore

I don't want to just pretend I'm okay

I want to *be* okay

I want to be a Christian

But I don't want to pretend I don't sin

I want to live by God's rules

But question the imperfect ways his people present those rules

I want to understand myself

I want to be brave

And vulnerable

Because the price of honesty is nothing

And is not squandered

Is hard

And tiring

May cost me everything.

I want others to understand me too

Even if it costs me everything

Compared to the change it can produce

I pray my honesty produces change

Because telling the truth

And telling the truth

Confession #3:

Confessions of subjectivity

A video presentation.

Located on the screen, upstage.

This confession will be presented as a video which will play on the screen, upstage. The video will present the way subjectivity is called into being, according to Foucault and Butler.

The setting of the film will be my living room. I will be sitting Indian style at the foot of my couch. Andrew will be sitting on the couch. The camera will be panned to capture Andrew's feet and half of my body, cutting me off at the chin so the audience won't be able to see my eyes for most of the video. The presumption will be that Andrew and I are in conversation, but Andrew will provide no commentary. I will be explaining the mental process I went through to understand Foucault's theories of discursive formation and confessions, and Judith Butler's theory of giving an account of oneself.

The discourse presented in the video is:

Sophie:

So what Foucault is talking about here is what he calls discursive formations. Discursive formations are the habitual ways that a culture interacts

with a given concept or idea, and they are built on the texts, the language, all of the symbols, all of the explicit and implicit ways the concept is represented within the culture. This has a lot to do with questions of who is allowed speak, and what are they allowed to speak about, how often are they allowed to speak, who is given the privilege of information, and who isn't.

If we were going to use an example, for instance, we could use sexuality, and we could even use the Fundamentalist Christian church as the culture we are talking about. So questions we could ask are: who's allowed to talk about sex and how often are they allowed to talk about it, what credentials do they have to have to be able to talk about it? Are you allowed to express that you enjoy sex, and to what degree are you allowed to express it.

And so these relationships continually build toward the discursive formation such that the worldview of those within that culture is determined by the way that culture habitually represents and interacts with that concept.

This relates to Foucault's theory of confession. Now, in his early work, he was talking about how the Catholic church used it as a means of brining sex into discourse, because for so long, nobody was allowed to talk about sex. But when confession was initially used in the Catholic church, it was used as a means of reproach, or as punishment, or shaming of those who were being honest, and very honestly speaking about sexual deviancy, or lust, or anything that had to do with sex in general. There was this power disparity between those being confessed to, or the hearers of the confession, and those who were confessing, or the tellers of the confession.

Now that's not necessarily what my work deals with. Instead, my work deals with Foucault's later work, which doesn't necessarily view confession as a means of power play. What it discusses, or what it considers, is confession as a means of calling forth one's own subjectivity. What one is doing in the act of confession is truth-telling, or telling the truth about oneself, and it's through this process of truth-telling, that one is able to say "I am this," or, "I am that." Calling forth one's own subjectivity is so important because it's only through that process that we are able to become who we really are. If we're walking around, living life, not telling the truth about ourselves, then we are not actually interacting truthfully with others. And, They don't know us, and we don't know them, and it's not a good way to interact.

Judith Butler talks about this so well in her theory, *Giving and Account of Oneself*, because what she says is that it's not good enough just to be a truth teller of yourself. You can't just walk around saying, "This is me," or "I am this." You have to have responsibility, and you have to be responsible for the ways you tell the truth about yourself. We're all seeking recognition from others. We are all seeking camaraderie and understanding. And so we are all walking around this world and we are conveying who we are to others. It's so important that as we are doing that, we are telling the truth about ourselves. We hope, yes, that we will be accepted by others, but it's in that moment, when we tell the truth about ourselves, and we're not accepted, that critique happens.

We sought acceptance and it wasn't given to us, so the system we are working in no longer fits our needs, it is no longer suitable for us, and so it's in

that moment that we become critical.

But we can't just be critical with no aim. We have to be critical with a hope or an aim toward persuasion, because we have to understand that as we call our own selves into being, as we call forth our own subjectivity, and as we're being critical, we have the power to change the world. Our words are phenomenally powerful, and we have the capacity to change the way others view the world. We have the capacity to alter the way that others view themselves, and others within the world, and their own cultures, and honestly, that's what I want to do.

CAMERA PANS UP, CENTERS ON MY FACE. I LOOK DIRECTLY INTO THE CAMERA.

I want to be able to say, there are things about my culture that don't meet my needs, and don't meet the needs of others, I want to be critical, but I want to be responsible. I want to work with others and help them. I want to help them see that they can claim their own subjectivity, but I don't want to do it recklessly, and I don't want to cause harm to anyone. I just want to live in a world where calling forth my own subjectivity is done responsibly and I can help others call forth their own subjectivity as well.

Confession #4:

Where it all takes place

An installation.

Located upstage and on the walls.

This confession will take the form of an installation. Background music will be playing songs that relate specifically to my work. There are three stations in this piece, two which are included in this confession, and one which is included in Confession #5.

The first station is constructed of stacked stage boxes covered in gold tablecloths. Theory books, Christian living books, and secular books with strong female leads will all be bookmarked to the sections the audience should read. Passages on bookmarked pages will be highlighted, and those passages will also be displayed in larger format on the wall directly to the right of this piece. Some books will be open to encourage the audience to flip to the passages they are intended to read. The majority of books displayed were chosen because they construct the discursive formation of female sexuality within the Fundamentalist Christian church that my work critiques

The second station will be built on a table with a gold tablecloth. On this table, my desktop computer (iMac), laptop, iPad, and iPhone will be displayed to convey the conduit through which many of my sins (which have need of being confessed) have been committed. Each device will be outfitted with a definition that contains a key term discussed throughout the performance.

For information on station three, please see Confession #5 in the next section.

Station 1

The list of titles to be included in this installation are:

1. Knight in Shining Armor: Discovering Your Lifelong Love
2. A Wife After God's Own Heart: 12 Things That Really Matter in Your Marriage
3. Not Even a Hint: Guarding Your Heart Against Lust
4. Birth Control for Christians: Making Wise Choices
5. Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage
6. Sex and the Supremacy of Christ
7. Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship, & Life Together
8. The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands
9. Love and Respect: The Love She Most Desires, The Respect He Desperately Needs
10. Love That Lasts: When Marriage Meets Grace
11. Passion and Purity: Learning to Bring Your Love Life Under Christ's Control
12. Lady in Waiting: Developing Your Love Relationships
13. The Excellent Wife: A Biblical Perspective
14. A Woman's Walk with God/Beautiful in God's Eyes/Love God with All Your Mind
15. I Kissed Dating Goodbye
16. Redeeming Men: Religion and Masculinities

17. Disciplines of a Godly Man
18. A Husband After God's Own Heart: 12 Things That Really Matter in Your Marriage
19. Pornography: Slaying the Dragon
20. At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry
21. Respectable Sins
22. The History of Sexuality, Volume 1
23. The History of Sexuality, Volume 3
24. The Hermeneutics of the Subject
25. The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language
26. Giving an Account of Oneself
27. The Handbook of Autoethnography
28. Like Water for Chocolate
29. Vintage Cisneros
30. Learning to Swim
31. Go Ask Alice
32. Daughter of the Forest

The quotes selected for display from these books are:

1. "When we choose to obey God and give our bodies to our husbands—even if we don't like it—God will reward us with pleasure (Piper, 2005, p. 206)."

2. “First we must realize that girls don’t struggle with the same temptations we struggle with. We wrestle more with our sex drives while girls struggle more with their emotions (Harris, 1997, p. 97).”
3. “God intricately and delicately formed women with emotional characteristics that differ from men. A woman cannot separate her emotions from her physical state (Jones, 1995, p. 91).”
4. “This book addresses the issue of sexual addiction and its powerful hold on countless Christian and non-Christian men alike (Gallagher, 1986, p. 13).”
5. “Men and women both have sexual desires. However, since the man’s desires tend to be stronger, it may be difficult for men to think about anything other than sex when they experience physical longing (Peace, 1995, p. 121).”
6. “Over the years many Christian books (my own included) have emphasized that men struggle with physical desire and guarding their eyes, while women deal with their emotions. But if these generalizations aren’t qualified, people might get the impression that women never struggle with lust as raw physical desire, or that their struggle against lust is less real (Harris, 2003, p. 81).”
7. “As a single Christian, talking about contraception seemed dangerous because it might imply that I was having sex, planning to have sex, or thinking about planning to have sex. Sex is taboo in word and deed, and this hushed climate contributed to my naiveté about birth control (Paris, 2003, p. 11).”
8. “One extreme believes that being a Christian should eliminate a struggle like this, immediately or totally (Powlison, 1999, p. 11).”

9. “It is the development of an art of existence that resolves around the question of the self, of its dependence and independence, of its universal form and of the connection it can and should establish with others, of the procedures by which it exerts its control over itself, and of the way in which it can establish a complete supremacy over itself (Foucault, 1986, p. 238).”
10. “Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a discursive formation (Foucault, 1972, p. 38).”
11. “...sometimes calling into question the regime of truth by which my own truth is established is motivated by the desire to recognize another or be recognized by one (Butler, 2005, p. 24).”
12. “On the contrary, in his lectures on Tertullian and Cassian, Foucault reads confession as an act of speech in which the subject “publishes himself,” gives himself in words, engages in an extended act of self-verbalization—*exomologesis*—as a way of making the self appear for another (Butler, 2005, pp. 112-113).”
13. “I have a relation to myself, but I have it in the context of an address to an other. So the relation is disclosed, but it is also, to borrow from Foucault’s work on confession, published, brought into the realm of appearance, constituted as a social manifestation (Butler, 2005, p. 131).”

14. "...in Christian spirituality it is the guided subject who must be present within the true discourse as the object of his own true discourse (Foucault, 2001, p. 409)."

Station 2

The following definitions will be provided on each of the devices:

iMac: Pornography

"Printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings."⁶¹

iPad: Sex Addiction

"Sexual addiction is a conceptual model devised in order to provide a scientific explanation for sexual urges, behaviors, or thoughts that appear extreme in frequency or feel out of one's control."⁶²

iPhone: Masturbation

"Manual stimulation of the genital organs (of yourself or another) for sexual pleasure."⁶³

⁶¹ Retrieved March 3, 2014, from <http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=lust&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#q=pornography+definition&rls=en>

⁶² Retrieved March 3, 2014, from <http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=lust&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#q=sex+addiction+definition&rls=en&spell=1>

⁶³ Retrieved March 3, 2014, from <http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=lust&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#q=masturbation+definition&rls=en>

MacBook: Lust

“Very strong sexual desire.”⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Retrieved March 3, 2014, from <http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=lust&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#q=lust+definition&rls=en>

Confession #5:
Confessions of Scripture

An installation.

Located on the walls of both performance rooms.

In the installation room, verses will be displayed on the wall for the audience to read as they also consider the other two sections of the installation from confession #4.

In the performance room, a selection of verses has been chosen to convey the juxtaposition of passages that present sex as pleasurable and desirable, and those that warn against the dangers of sexually sinful acts. These verses will be displayed upstage right, pinned to deep red, satin curtains.

Background music will be playing with songs that relate specifically to my work

The verses displayed in the installation room are:

Genesis 2:22-24

The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Proverbs 5:18-19

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love.

Hosea 1:2-3

When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord.” So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

Hosea 2:2

Contend with your mother, contend, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband; and let her put away her harlotry from her face and her adultery from between her breasts.

Hosea 2:14, 19-20

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness and speak kindly to her. [To her I will say,] “I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in loving-kindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord.”

Hosea 3:1-3

Then the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.” So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a half of barley. Then I said to her, “You shall stay with

me for many days. You shall not play the harlot.”

The verses displayed in the performance room are:

Song of Solomon 1:1

May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine.

Song of Solomon 2:14

O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret place of the steep pathway, let me see your form, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your form is lovely.

Song of Solomon 3:1

On my bed night after night I sought him whom my soul loves.

Song of Solomon 4: 1, 5, 9, 11

How beautiful you are, my darling, how beautiful you are! Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies. You have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes, Your lips, my bride, drip honey; Honey and milk are under your tongue, and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

Song of Solomon 5: 3-6, 8

I have taken off my dress, how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet, how can I dirty them again? My beloved extended his hand through the opening, and my feelings were aroused for him. I arose to open to my beloved; and my hands dripped with myrrh, and my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the bolt.

I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and had gone! My heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched for him but I did not find him; I called him but he did not answer me...I am lovesick.

Song of Solomon 5:10, 13-14, 16

My beloved is dazzling and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand. His lips are lilies dripping with liquid myrrh. His hands are rods of gold set with beryl; His abdomen is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires. His mouth is full of sweetness. He is wholly desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend.

Song of Solomon 7:6-9

How beautiful and how delightful you are, my love, with all your charms! Your stature is like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. I said, 'I will climb the palm tree, I will take hold of its fruit stalks.' Oh, may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the fragrance of your breath like apples, And your mouth like the best wine! It goes down smoothly for my beloved, flowing gently through the lips of those who fall asleep.

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

Matthew 19:19

And I say to you, "Whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Matthew 5:27-30

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion.

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 7:5

[Husbands and wives] stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

The songs included in this video are:

Hosea⁶⁵

Come let us return

He has torn us into pieces

He has injured us

Come let us return to the Lord

He will heal us

He will bandage our wounds

In just a short time He'll restore us

In just a short time He'll restore His church

So we might live

We might live in His presence

In His presence

Oh that we might know the Lord

Oh that we might know the Lord

Oh that we might know the Lord

Let us press on to know Him

Let us press hard into Him

Then as surely as the coming of the dawn

He will respond

⁶⁵ Barnard, S. (2002). Hosea [Recorded by Shane & Shane]. On *Psalms* [CD]. Franklin, TN: Inpop Records.

Acres of Hope⁶⁶

He will allure her, He will pursue her and call her out
To the wilderness with flowers in His hand
She is responding beat up and hurting deserving death
But offerings of life are found instead
She will sing, she will sing oh, to You
She will sing as in the days of youth
As You lead her away to valleys low
To acres of hope, acres of hope
Here in the valley walk close beside me don't look back
For love is growing vineyards up ahead You have called me master
And though You're in the dark here call me friend
And call me lover and marry me for good
She will sing, she will sing, oh, to You
She will sing as in the days of youth
As You lead her away to valleys low
To acres of hope, acres of hope
How the story ends is love and tenderness in Him
Not safe, but worth it so in the valley's up ahead
Or the ones, we live we'll sing together, we'll sing together
We will sing, we will sing oh, to You
We will sing as in the days of youth

⁶⁶ Barnard, R.S. (2004). Acres of Hope [Recorded by Shane & Shane]. On *Clean* [CD]. Franklin, TN: Inpop Records.

As You lead us away to valleys low

To acres of hope, acres of hope

Confession #6:

If I could, I would pluck out my eye and cut off my hand

A live performance.

Located center stage down.

This confession is performed live. As an audio recording of the narrative below plays, I will toss and turn in, and leave and return to the bed that is set up center stage. The lights will be dimmed to represent nighttime.

I've tried to stop. Believe me, I have. I'd give anything not to have these images in my mind. If I thought plucking out my eye and cutting off my hand⁶⁷ would do any good, I'd do it. If I could wrench an entire adolescent life's worth of folly from my heart and erase the spindled web of erotic images that cling to the recessed places in my mind, I would. But it's too late. The images are already there. And you can't pluck out a mind's eye, its vision is perfect and eternal. But God I wish I could. I don't even remember how I let this happen. How did THIS become who I am? I wish there was someone I could talk to, someone I could ask for help. But who would I confess this to?

Once you tell people you're struggling with an addiction to porn, you're branded a sicko, and people don't know how to interact with you anymore. And it's worse for women because women don't struggle with things like this. Only men do. All the books

⁶⁷ This analogy, which appears in Matthew 5:27-30 (see Appendix A), is used to illustrate the idea that if a Christian is serious about obeying God, he or she will not allow his mind, heart, body, or soul to keep him from doing so. If any aspect of him or herself poses a perpetual threat to his or her ability to live a life of obedience to God, he is to (metaphorically) cut that part of himself out so that he can have victory over besetting sins.

and pastors and female silences say men are the ones with the overactive sex drives and insatiable desires for sex. Someone forgot to give Andrew that memo. I'd love it if he were insatiable. I'd love it if I weren't. I wish I could give other Christians an understanding of what it's like to have an insatiable hunger for sex. I mean, I would never wish this struggle on them. I would never wish this mental hell on anyone. But I do wish I could trust that those I tell would understand the process, the missteps I took that lead me to this place.

At first, watching pornography is exhilarating. Oh, THAT'S how it works! I couldn't quite figure it out before, but now I get it. At first, you know it's wrong, but you can at least comfort yourself with the lie that you aren't aroused by it. You're just...curious. Yes, that's it. Curious. But then, because it's easy and because there's no one around to stop you, and because this adds a whole new level of intensity to that orgasm you've been perfecting, you begin to watch more, and more, and more. You tell Google not to filter your searches and you learn which words will get you the goods without raising an alarm because "boo" is just something you say at Halloween, and "Pocahontas" was just a historical Native American turned Disney princess. "There's nothing fishy going on here. I'm just innocently browsing the web." You practice the lie so often you begin to believe it yourself. But soon, you get bored, and itchy. You yearn to see the next new thing, searching for perfection. You have preferences and standards and types. "He's too fat." "She cusses too much." "That's just gross..."

And it doesn't end. The search for the perfect couple, the perfect acting, the perfect scenario. You're hungry for the scene that does it every time. The scene that answers all your hidden desires and provides that sweet, sweet release.

And then, you find it. She's perfect. Everything about her is...exquisite. How did I find her? How do I remember the name of this video because I can't write it down and I can't hide it in some digital file no one will ever find? Don't forget this, Sophie. Don't forget. Got it. Now, it's time for cleanup. Clear history? Check. Delete cookies? Check. Google search settings returned to moderate? Check. Alright, we're good. Time to hit the books. Roomie will be back soon so I have to look like I've been productive. Undergraduate work at a private Christian college is no walk in the park and I can't fall behind in my studies. Clean up, zip up, sit up. Until tomorrow, then, you ugly little secret. Until tomorrow.

I learned to keep my own secrets. No one asked, so I didn't tell. But then I started to delve into darker pornography and I began to feel uncomfortable, even with myself. I felt sick. I began to hope I'd get caught. I hoped someone would see and be disgusted with me as I was with myself. Maybe I would forget to clean up properly. Maybe I would forget to clear my search history and someone using my computer would figure out that I'd been watching porn. Maybe that person would tell on me and I'd get sent to the Dean. She'd tell me I needed to change and, honestly, I'd just be so excited that someone else knew my secret that I'd willingly accept any demands placed upon me by those who "love my soul," those who "want to see me reconciled to a right relationship with God."

I even worked up the courage to fill out that survey asking for topics to discuss at split chapel.⁶⁸ I wrote a page's worth of a response saying that men aren't the only ones who struggle with pornography and masturbation and someone should address that.

⁶⁸ Christian colleges generally hold chapel meetings three times per week. Throughout the semester, special chapels are scheduled to deal with gender specific issues. To address these issues, males are gathered in one location and females are gathered in a separate location. These separate meetings are referred to as split chapel.

Someone should bring up the topic that no one, NO ONE is talking about. I know I'm not the only one. I can't be. Or can I? Am I the only one who wonders what that cute guy looks like naked? The only one who masturbates to pornographic videos? The only one who worries she might be bisexual? Or lesbian? Or an addict? Am I the only woman in the entire fundamentalist Christian church with an insatiable desire to feel and be sexual?

Am I the only one? I wish I knew. In all of my acquaintance, I only know one other Christian woman who struggles the same way I do. We know without a doubt that we are saved, and we can go for days, weeks, months, even years without the slightest bent toward engaging lustful and pornographic thoughts or actions, but then, out of the blue, without warning, the smallest flicker of an image starts us down that path again. The images are different for each of us because we are tempted differently. For me, it's always women. I don't know why. I think it's because the female body is phenomenally beautiful. There's just something about the way women's bodies are soft, and fragile, and unique that gets me every time. No two women are the same. It's striking. In the moment I see her fully for the first time, I want to protect her, to tenderly approach her, to enjoy her.

But then, I don't. I'm not sure how it happens, but before I actually touch her, I become her. Before we connect, a man enters the scene. I don't know where he comes from or how he gets there or who he is. But at first it's me and her, then, I am her, and he's with me. And this is how it goes every single time.

When I talk to myself frankly I say, "If I wasn't a Christian, I'd be bisexual." And I believe that to be true. Falling into sexual sin of any kind is the least acceptable form of fallenness in the fundamentalist Christian community, especially if you are a woman, be

it living a lustful mental life, or watching pornography, or engaging bi or homosexual fantasies, or cheating on your spouse, or masturbating to the thought of anyone you aren't married to, or fornicating. But in the eyes of God, sin is sin.⁶⁹ The Church jokingly instilled a hierarchical sin structure⁷⁰ that has actually been taken quite seriously. Christians who struggle with being unkind or impatient or unfaithful stewards of God's money have "heart issues," while Christians who struggle with temptations or actions on temptations of masturbation, pornography, pre-marital sex, adultery, or homosexuality have "filthy minds." "You'd better lock up your wives and daughters. Someone who struggles with sexual sin is among us."

We talk freely about how our pride has cost us a relationship, or how not using our money well has caused us to be in debt, or how we struggle with bitterness toward our in-laws for making us feel unwanted, and the response to this is, "sanctification is a process, and Rome wasn't built in a day. You have to give yourself time to overcome the hurt so you can grow into the person God has called you to be." Before long comforting arms are thrust about you and friends are lining up to gift you hand made verse cards and tell you that they have added you to their prayer list.

But confess that you struggle with sexual sin and whoa, whoa, whoa. "You need to see the Pastor. Now. Are you in ministry? You need to step down until we can decide what to do with you. Are you repentant? Do you know how serious your sin is? You're

⁶⁹ Bridges, J. (2007). *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

⁷⁰ Although Scripture clearly states that God views all sin equally, the culture of the Church has long upheld a hierarchical sin structure which Jerry Bridges (see footnote 60, above) specifically challenges, in which sins such as pride, gluttony, gossip, slothfulness, etc. reside on the respectable side of the sin spectrum, whereas adultery, homosexuality, licentiousness, premarital sex, murder, etc. reside on the egregious side of the sin spectrum.

going to have to meet with a discipler⁷¹ three times a week until we deem you cured from your, you know, illness.”

And even in their “care for you,” they show themselves to be utterly under qualified for the task. Don’t they know? These struggles...you never fully heal from them. You are never fully free. And you are never fully clean...in the eyes of others. Regardless of the fact that Christ’s salvific blood allows you to stand before Him in purity, if the sins you struggle with are not respectable, some Christians will always treat you as though the filthiness of your sin can never be washed clean. The Bible says God’s forgiveness cleanses your sins, yet some Christians insist on covering you in a veil of disgrace, first to mark you, then to remind themselves never to get too close.

I’ve escaped this veil because I have confessed so little to so few people. But as I get older, and share snippets of conversation with other Christians who too see the lunacy in pretending Christian women don’t struggle with lust, fantasy, and engagement in sexual conduct unbecoming the regenerate soul, I can no longer remain silent. Even if my confession only ever serves to call forth a subjectivity that isn’t suffocatingly fearful, that will be enough for me. But I hope that’s not the only work my confession does.

Living a life of personal holiness is hard, but I’m not here to argue that God’s standards are anything other than perfect. What I am here to argue, though, what I do hope is challenged by my confession, is a fundamentalist Christian community that pretends women are not sexual beings. A community that blindly or willfully misrepresents female sexuality as vulgar, misplaced, and abnormal. If the Church will not

⁷¹ Relationally speaking, Scripture encourages Christians to seek wisdom and accountability from other Christians. When one Christian, usually an older Christian, meets with another Christian, usually a younger Christian, on a regular basis to discuss God’s Word and provide insight as to how it can best be applied to their lives, discipleship takes place. The older, wiser Christian is the discipler. The younger, less wise Christian is the disciplee.

take an active role in producing messages about sex in general and female sexuality in particular that are God-honoring, and if they will not eagerly help Christians struggling to maintain personal holiness to deal with the temptations that beset them, then the church can have no influence on its members, can provide no help for its oppressed, and can offer nothing markedly superior than that which is offered by the world.

But that's not how I want to view the Church—my Church—because that's not what God wants of the Church. I believe He wants His Church to overcome its incorrect views of male and female sexuality that create harmful double standards and make confession a fearful and painful event. God's design for confession is quite the opposite. We are called to confess to one another specifically for the purpose of receiving support and prayer from our fellow Christians.⁷² That women fear confessing the truth about themselves regarding their sexuality and the struggles they face with sexual temptations just go to show how very dire the situation is. Only when Christian women are courageous enough to confess their sexual sins, and only when the Church proves itself capable of not being judgmental and self-righteous will change actually occur.

Perhaps it is a pipe dream. Perhaps the road to change is laden with far too many years of silence concerning Christian female sexuality. Perhaps I hope for too much. But so what if I do? As far as I'm concerned, I've got no where to go but up. I've been living at the bottom of the barrel for so long, mired in the stench and agony of defeat, that hoping for change is all I can do.

How will my hope be repaid? I'm asking you? If you are a Christian, and you're in the Church, will you confess your sins? Will you brave the possibility of loveliness and abandonment that has kept you silent for so long? And if another Christian confesses to

⁷² James 5:16 (see Appendix A).

you, will you love them as you did before? Will you help them on their way to recovery or will you make them regret their honesty?

The power to make change is in our hands. The question is: what will we do with that power.

Confession #7:

My Hosea

A live performance.

Located center stage down.

This confession will be delivered on a stage box center stage. Andrew will sit behind me with his head down and his hands folded. I will recount an important story from our dating relationship to the audience.

The story that will be recounted to the audience is:

My Hosea

People like to ask you things.

They like to know about you.

And we all hope that when we ask others about themselves that they'll tell the truth.

Someone once asked me what my favorite book in the Bible was.

It's Hosea.

I don't know if you guys know about Hosea.

He was a prophet that God called to marry a harlot.

I've never had sex with anyone for money,

But for a long time I considered myself a harlot

Because I went looking for fulfillment through physical contact with men

In exchange for love.

So it's a form of harlotry, you might say.

I thought that I was over it when I met my sweetheart, Andrew.

He's just such a wonderful man, and he's always been so good to me, and so kind.

You would think that with love that abounding,

You could never think to harm someone that much.

You would think.

When Andrew and I had been dating for a year, I cheated on him.

It was the ugliest thing I've ever done to anyone in my entire life,

And I regret it bitterly.

But just like in the Bible, when Hosea chooses to marry a harlot to honor God,

Andrew chose to forgive me, and to make me his bride,

And to cover me with his love and his forgiveness in a way that I will never,

Ever be about to fully thank him for.

When I think about the relationship between Hosea and his wife, Gomer,

I think about the relationship between me and Andrew.

And I think about how forgiveness, following confession, is God's design,

And how, although we shouldn't aim to hurt people,

We should feel free to confess, openly, about the things that we have done in our past.

Andrew is my Hosea.

I will always be thankful to my Hosea, for forgiving me, for accepting my confession,

And for moving past it.

We were only dating at the time.

He didn't have to take me back.

He didn't have to put a ring on my finger,

And he didn't have to marry me.

But he did.

It is the most loving act I have ever had anyone bestow upon me,

And I will be forever grateful.

Confession #8:

Confessions of sex

A live performance.

The location of this performance will be upstage left.

This performance will involve a live presentation of 10 confessions from my life, confessions which embody vulnerability as a means of cultural critique. I will hold my confessions close to my heart, and Andrew will draw them from me. He will act as my counter in this piece, showing the audience my confessions. Confessions will be presented on large pieces of flannel bed sheet.

The confessions included in this segment are:

I am a Christian

but I'm not sinless

I love sex

but saying it out loud is taboo

I am ashamed of myself

but I wish I wasn't

I've been addicted to porn

and I fear I'll always be tempted by it

If I wasn't a Christian, I'd be bisexual

And I believe that to be true

I cheated on Andrew while we were dating

but he forgave me and took me back and made me his bride

I feel very alone in my struggle against lust

especially as a married, Christian woman

I often wonder if other Christian women struggle the same way I do

because it seems like they don't

I hope my work inspires change

but I fear it will not

I was afraid to confess these things

but I'm glad I did

Confession #9:

The confessional/A call to confess

A live performance.

Located center stage right.

This confession will involve audience participation. I will invite audience members to join me in the act of confession. Confession cards will be provided to them and instructions will be given for them to provide their signature on the back if I have permission to use their confessions in the submission of my thesis electronically. Both the confession and the signature will be scanned and provided in Appendix C of my thesis document. “Something More” by Secondhand Serenade will be playing in the background.

Will invite audience to join me upstage right to share their confessions.

The song playing in the background will be:

Something More⁷³

I lie awake again

My body's feeling paralyzed

I can't remember when

⁷³ Vesely, J. (2010). Something More [Recorded by Secondhand Serenade]. On *Hear Me Now* [CD]. New York, NY: Glassnote Records.

I didn't live through this disguise
The words you said to me
They couldn't set me free
I'm stuck here in this life
I didn't ask for
There must be something more
Do we know what we're fighting for?
Breathe in, breathe out
Breathe in, breathe out
With all these masks we wore
We never knew what we had in store
Breathe in, breathe out
Breathe in, breathe out
The storm is rolling in
The thunder's loud, it hurts my ears
I'm paying for my sins
And it's gonna rain for years and years
I've fooled everyone
And now what will I become
I have to start this over
There must be something more
Do we know what we're fighting for?

Breathe in, breathe out
Breathe in, breathe out
With all these masks we've wore
We never knew what we had in store
Breathe in breathe out
Breathe in breathe out
I've fooled everyone
Now what will I become
I have to start this over
I have to start this over
There must be something more
Do we know what we're fighting for?
Breathe in, breathe out
Breathe in, breathe out
With all these masks we wore
We never knew what we had in store
Breathe in, breathe out
Breathe in, breathe out
There must be something more
Breathe in, breathe out
Breathe in, breathe out
There must be something more

Confession #10:

We emerge

A live performance.

Located center stage.

This confession will be delivered as a form of spoken word to provide a conclusion to my performance.

We Emerge

The power to *be* is wondrous

But it doesn't happen accidentally

You have to say the words

And you have to be willing to confess

Are open to those around you

Who are you confessing to?

Who are you letting in?

Who are you keeping out

The power to be who you want to be is already inside of you

But you have to be brave enough to say the words

As we confess to one another

And as we take safety in the truths that one another confess

We emerge.

Conclusion

Eons ago, and in another life, I was a poet. I still write today, but the words lack feeling and conviction. Just another thing about me I wish I could change. That's what this work is about, really. I want to be different. I want to change. And I want the changes in myself to be reflected in the world around me. I want my life to leave a mark on the lives of others that they will choose not to erase, or cover, or fear.

I want to challenge the discursive formations that misrepresent female sexuality in the Church, but I don't want it to leave a sour taste in the mouth of those who are not ready to see how damaging an inaccurate discursive formation can be for the subject that is trying to call forth her own subjectivity. I want to show hesitant Fundamentalist Christians that I am capable of playing by their rules, by their forced silences and truth-telling restrictions, but that in this instance, I won't.

I want to encourage female Fundamentalist Christians to fearlessly confess truths about themselves that have the potential to be viewed negatively, but I don't want them to just transfer their ideological submission from one tyrant to another. If they confess, I want them to do so because they believe that in doing so they are taking responsibility for their own lives, and words, and actions. I want them to ask for help because they know they need it, not because I told them they need it. I want their voices to be raised in isolation before they are raised in community. I want them to believe they can stand on their own before they decide they'll stand behind a fearless leader. I want them to be fearless for themselves, not for me.

But their standing out, their fearlessness, their calling forth of their own subjectivities must not be done aimlessly. If they care only to change themselves, and aim

never to allow their transformed selves to act upon their world, their transformation was achieved in vein. They must be responsible in their subjectivity. They mustn't squander it, nor must they neglect it. As they claim their subjectivity, their humanness, they must give an account of the ways they intend their subjectivities to challenge, rupture, critique, create, alter, and transform their world. Not just the world of sexuality my work addresses. Their entire world!

The principles presented in this work emphasize the female Christian community, but they transcend it as well. Foucault's tradition of confession, of truth-telling for the purpose of claiming one's subjectivity is applicable to anyone who is living a lie. There will always be rules to follow, structures to scale. There will always be silences where there should be honesty. The question is: do those who refuse to practice truth-telling about themselves know how to critique the system in which their silence is demanded? Do they know how to overcome that which they have been too afraid to question? Will they be brave enough to use performance autoethnography as a means of critiquing the world in which they live to create a more honest, open, vulnerable, true version of themselves?

Through my research, three conclusions were drawn. First, discursive formations that are born out of the Church's presentation of sex in general, and female sexuality in particular, generates a hostile atmosphere within which female subjectivity is constructed. Second, regardless of this hostility, the act of confession allows females within the fundamentalist Christian community to vocalize their subjectivity as a means of critiquing the blatant double standard between the ways male Christians and female Christians are allowed to interact with their respective subjectivities. Finally, this critique

challenges the Church to alter its constructed rules, roles, and norms, so that female Christians who speak about sex freely or confess that they struggle with sexual temptation and sin (i.e. unnatural sex addiction, lust, adultery, pornography viewing, etc.) are not viewed as vulgar, and, essentially, subhuman beings. Whether or not the Fundamentalist Christian community heeds this challenge is yet to be seen.

In taking a moment to reflect upon my performance, I am filled with pride and relief. I was scared to do this work, but I knew it was necessary. As I created my performance, I hoped that it would inspire change and open eyes, and it did. Audience members from within and outside of the Fundamentalist Christian community were moved by my work and were astounded at the depth of emotion and critical thought it inspired within their own minds. As I watched the video recoding of audience members taking in my installation, I was in awe of the intensity with which they considered my work. As I looked into their eyes after providing a call to confession and saw the same fear and hesitance that I experienced before deciding to do this work, I saw my own self in them, and shared an understanding with them that was both affirming and sorrowful. Affirming because I knew my work was being understood, but sorrowful because I knew fear was holding them back from doing that which could offer them freedom: confession.

This was confirmed during the questions segment at the end of the performance. Many audience members stated that they were in awe of my bravery, honesty, and vulnerability, but confessed they were not brave enough to join me in front of the room to confess their own truths. The fact that they realized they lacked confidence to tell the truth about themselves is a step in the right direction. A tiny movement toward a time when they will perhaps be courageous enough to—in the spirit of my work—call forth

their own subjectivities by responsibly telling the truth about themselves. And it must occur not just for themselves, but with and for others as well, because subjectivities do not emerge outside of one's relationship to others. The fact that we are all born into relationships with others means that we cannot be who we are without first being influenced by others. And the act of confession—with and for others—is one important step toward shedding the fear and restraint that accompanies self-silence.

And so—if a year and a half's worth of work can be stated this simply—I understand my work to have been a success. The feedback from the audience affirmed the necessity of my work, its individual significance in the lives of those who viewed it, and the appropriateness of autoethnographic performance as both a critical approach and a catalyst for change. I am very pleased with my work. And I am humbled by the response it received. I bled into this work, and gave much of my soul to it. I opened up my heart and my life to strangers and loved ones alike, both of whom could have been offended by my work, but neither was. The process of turning my autoethnography into a performance was grueling as I considered the space, time, color, discourse, theory, Scripture, audio, visual, and symbolic elements of the work, but the effort was repaid tenfold as I watched eyes widen, hearts open, and souls unite in recognition. My performance was more than a success; it was the very personification of love.

This work was but a stepping-stone. The work I did was important, but it is not the only work that needs to be done. Additional research opportunities include a comprehensive analysis of the history of discourse on sexuality within the Fundamentalist Christian church. Providing a deeper level of inquiry, this type of analysis differs from Foucault's work in that Fundamentalist Christianity differs in theology and

tradition from the Catholic perspective presented in his work.

Furthermore, a specific analysis of the discursive formations created by Fundamentalist Christian women regarding female sexuality would provide additional insight into power relations that determine which women may speak about sex, how they may speak about sex, and what they may speak about when they speak about sex.

Finally, quantitative research methods could be applied to the topic of female sexuality, to determine if and how female members of the Fundamentalist Christian community perceive themselves as sexual beings. Broadening the scope of this study to include a large sampling of women from within the Fundamentalist community would allow researchers to gauge the readiness level of the Church to implement changes that would aid in the achievement of the goals presented in this work.

The story I wrote is not the only story worth writing. Nor is it the only story that matters. May many, many more Fundamentalist Christian women write their own stories. And, together, may our stories change the world.

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Appendix A

A Comprehensive List of Scripture References

The reference information for the verses below, save one (as indicated by an *), is:

The Lockman Foundation (Trans.). (2002). *New American Standard Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

1 Corinthians 7:5

[Husbands and wives] stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion.

2 Corinthians 12:7

Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

Deuteronomy 22:22

If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.

Ephesians 5:5

For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

Genesis 2:22-24

The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 4:1*

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the Lord.”

*Reference information: *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*. (1982). Grand Rapids, MI: Thomas Nelson.

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

Hosea 1:2-3

When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord.” So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

Hosea 2:2

Contend with your mother, contend, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband; and let her put away her harlotry from her face and her adultery from between her breasts.

Hosea 2:14, 19-20

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness and speak kindly to her. [To her I will say,] “I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in loving-kindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord.”

Hosea 3:1-3

Then the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.” So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a half of barley. Then I said to her, “You shall stay with me for many days. You shall not play the harlot.”

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Romans 10:9-10

That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Leviticus 20:13

If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

Matthew 5:27-30

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body,

than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

Matthew 19:19

And I say to you, “Whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

Proverbs 5:18-19

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love.

Song of Solomon 1:1

May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine.

Song of Solomon 2:14

O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret place of the steep pathway, let me see your form, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your form is lovely.

Song of Solomon 3:1

On my bed night after night I sought him whom my soul loves.

Song of Solomon 4: 1, 5, 9, 11

How beautiful you are, my darling, how beautiful you are! Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies. You have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes, Your lips, my bride, drip honey; Honey and milk are under your tongue, and the fragrance of your garments

is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

Song of Solomon 5: 3-6, 8

I have taken off my dress, how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet, how can I dirty them again? My beloved extended his hand through the opening, and my feelings were aroused for him. I arose to open to my beloved; and my hands dripped with myrrh, and my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the bolt. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and had gone! My heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched for him but I did not find him; I called him but he did not answer me. I am lovesick.

Song of Solomon 5:10, 13-14, 16

My beloved is dazzling and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand. His lips are lilies dripping with liquid myrrh. His hands are rods of gold set with beryl; His abdomen is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires. His mouth is full of sweetness. He is wholly desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend.

Song of Solomon 7:6-9

How beautiful and how delightful you are, my love, with all your charms! Your stature is like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. I said, 'I will climb the palm tree, I will take hold of its fruit stalks.' Oh, may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the fragrance of your breath like apples, And your mouth like the best wine! It goes down smoothly for my beloved, flowing gently through the lips of those who fall asleep."

Appendix B

Performance Program

About the Artist



Sophia Taylor was born and raised in California, having spent her childhood in Sacramento and recent years in Los Angeles. When asked, she says the most important thing about her is her faith. As a Christian, she thanks God for redeeming her soul and granting her His precious and sacrificial gift of salvation.

Sophia met her sweetheart, Andrew, while earning her B.A. in Communications at The Master's College, and they were married in 2009. In 2010, Sophia returned to school to pursue her M.A. in Communication Studies at California State University, Northridge, for which this performance is her culminating experience. Sophia began teaching as an adjunct professor in the Communications department at The Master's College in 2011 and hopes one day to pursue her doctorate in Communication Studies at the University of Southern California. Andrew and Sophia welcomed their first child in 2012 and are expecting their second in December of this year.

Sophia has a love of studying both Rhetoric and Performance Studies and hopes to continue researching the fascinating way these two emphases intersect in the future.

Sophia would like to thank Dr. Stacy Holman Jones for giving her a deep love of Performance Studies and guiding her as she created, revised, and perfected this work. Sophia would also like to thank Dr. John Kephart III for introducing her to Rhetoric, a field of study which has changed her life. Sophia thanks both Stacy and John for their patience and encouragement as she struggled to understand how her faith and her scholarship could be united under a common purpose. This work is a labor of that love.

Sophia would also like to thank her family and closest friends for their love and encouragement, without which, earning her Master's degree would have been impossible.

Sophia would also like to thank you all for coming to her thesis performance. Without your support, her work would be incomplete.

Finally, Sophia would like to thank God, without Whose salvation her life would be forfeit, without Whose guidance her life would be reckless, without Whose love her life would be meaningless.

A photograph of a smartphone with a pink case lying on an open book. The book's pages are filled with text, and some words are highlighted in pink. The phone's screen shows a list of items, possibly a calendar or a to-do list.

**Clear History:
Ten Confessions of
Sex, Scripture, and Subjectivity**

An Autoethnographic Performance

Aronstam Library
Manzanita Hall, Second Floor
April 30th, 2014
7:30pm

Clear History: 10 Confessions of Sex, Scripture, and Subjectivity
An Autoethnographic Performance
By: Sophia Taylor

Our Performance Journey

- Confession #1: My My Work is Rated PG-13
- Confession #2: There are Two I's
- Confession #3: Confessions of Subjectivity
- Confession #4: Where it all Takes Place
- Confession #5: Confessions of Scripture
- Confession #6: If I Could, I Would Pluck out my Eye and Cut Off My Hand
- Confession #7: My Hosea
- Confession #8: Confessions of Sex
- Confession #9: The Confessional/A Call to Confession
- Confession #10: *We* Emerge

Confession #1:
My Work is Rated PG-13

In all honesty, I am afraid to do this work. The thought of my voice crashing into the serenity of proper, Christian silence like the Tasmanian Devil, chaos and disapproval spewing out in all directions, almost makes me want to close my mouth. To bury my longing for change deep within the recesses of my heart, and fall neatly back into the line that stands so warmly, so welcomingly just on the other side of this work.

In all honesty, if I did, I would be ashamed to know me, ashamed to call myself my own. This work is difficult and it is painful. But it is work that must be done. I must do it for myself. To give myself a voice, for I have lived in silence much too long. The words I speak, I speak for me. But I also speak these words for women who are just like me: faithful, flawed, fearful, and frustrated women who need help, and hope, and to be seen for what they really are. Women who wish only to be free. Like me.

However, before I can free myself, I feel the urge to state that my work is greater than the sum of its parts. To advertise it as PG-13 so that people know what they're getting themselves into. Hard as I try, I can't just let the work be what it is. I can't just let it seek out its audience and be okay with whomever it chooses to adopt. I cannot fight the fear that this work will not be viewed as I intended and that it might not make the changes I had hoped it would. The thought of saying something other than what I'd hoped scares me. I hope for greatness, but I expect ruin. I hope for change, but I expect reproach.

And yet, this work comes from the strongest, sincerest place inside of me. This work is my confession, my blood and shame in 12-point font. It must work as it will, and I must let it. So be good to me, sweet confession. For I have loved thee dearly,

Appendix C
Performance Pictures





I feel very alone in my
struggle against lust
especially as a married,
Christian woman

If I wasn't a Christian
I'd be bisexual
And I believe that
to be true

I often wonder if other
Christian women struggle
the same way I do
because it seems like
they don't

I cheated on Andrew
while we were dating
but he forgave me and took
me back and made me
his bride

I've been addicted
to porn
and I fear I'll
always be tempted by it

I am a Christian
but I am not
sinless

I hope my work inspires
change
but I fear it won't

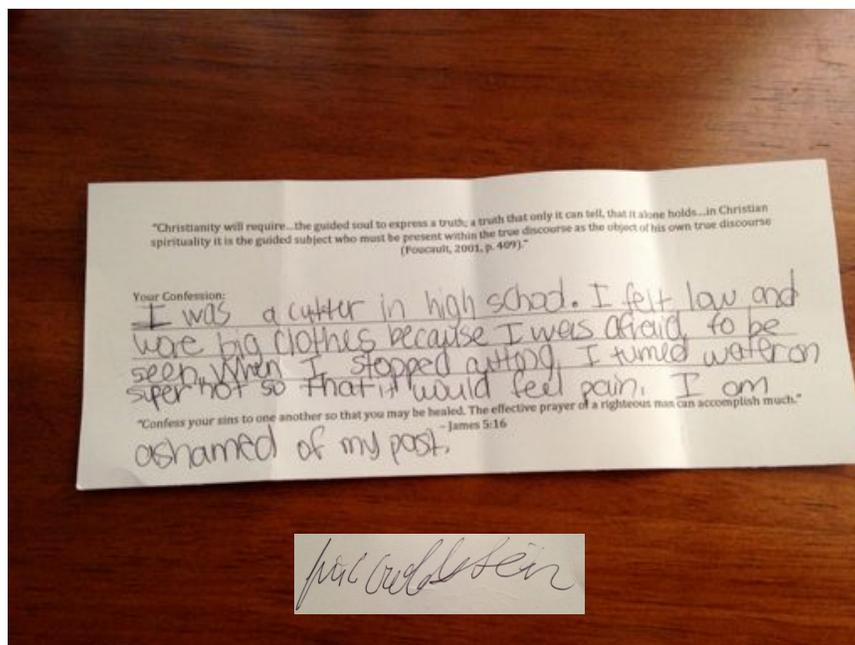
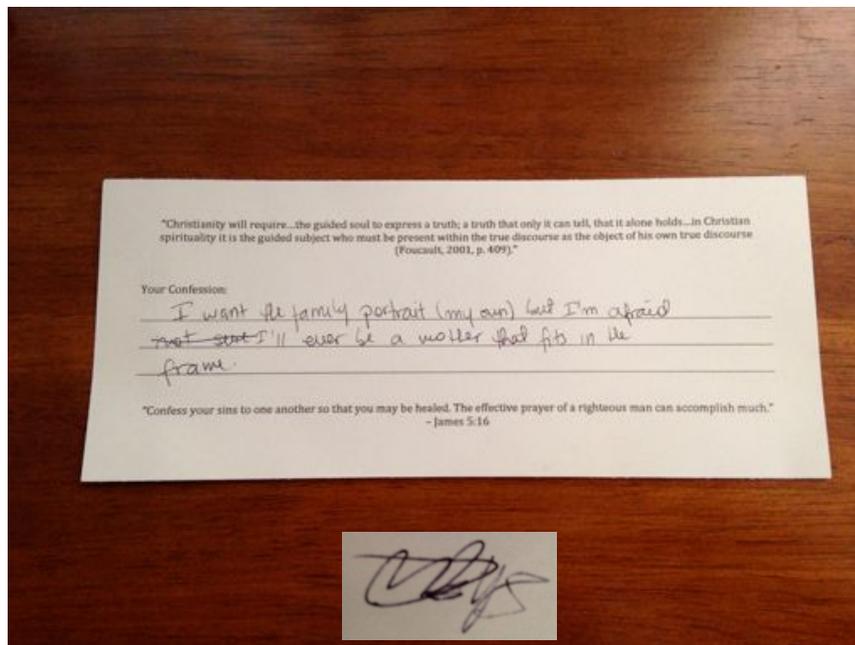
I love sex
but saying it out
loud is taboo

I am ashamed of
myself
but I wish I wasn't

I was afraid to confess
these things
but I'm glad I did

Appendix D

Audience Confessions



"Christianity will require...the guided soul to express a truth, a truth that only it can tell, that it alone holds...in Christian spirituality it is the guided subject who must be present within the true discourse as the object of his own true discourse (Foucault, 2001, p. 409)."

Your Confession:

I feel like I have to be perfect, so I don't think I can be vulnerable enough to share. I was an alcoholic, did years sober. I don't really struggle with drinking anymore, but I struggle

"Confess your sins to one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."
- James 5:16

every day with the shame of what I did while drinking.



"Christianity will require...the guided soul to express a truth, a truth that only it can tell, that it alone holds...in Christian spirituality it is the guided subject who must be present within the true discourse as the object of his own true discourse (Foucault, 2001, p. 409)."

Your Confession:

I fear discussing issues of sex and pleasure with my future children as a future Christian father

"Confess your sins to one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."
- James 5:16

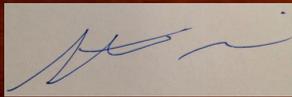


"Christianity will require...the guided soul to express a truth, a truth that only it can tell, that it alone holds...in Christian spirituality it is the guided subject who must be present within the true discourse as the object of his own true discourse (Foucault, 2001, p. 409)."

Your Confession:

Need to find balance
I can never show fear
freedom means never giving up.
only the weak give in to power.

"Confess your sins to one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."
- James 5:16



"Christianity will require...the guided soul to express a truth, a truth that only it can tell, that it alone holds...in Christian spirituality it is the guided subject who must be present within the true discourse as the object of his own true discourse (Foucault, 2001, p. 409)."

Your Confession:

I did a journey out of the system
no one knew

"Confess your sins to one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."
- James 5:16

