

- He eats grass like an ox; behold the strength of him is in his loins,
and the might of him in the muscles of his paunch.
[So far, God's work]
- 17 But his tail is as stiff as a cedar!
The sinews of his thighs are (all) intertwined!
His ribs are as tubes of copper!
His backbone as a bar of iron!
[This is Job's contribution]
- 19 Shall *this* be the fruit of the work of a "God"?
Will his "Maker" then bring near companions for him?
Why, even the cattle of the mountains would howl at him,
and every beast in the field laugh (in scorn),
- 21 (Saying): "There doth he lie under the lotus trees,
in the shelter of rushes and marsh,
the lotuses covering him with their shadow,
the willow trees compassing him about.
"Behold, if the river breaks its bank, *he* will not run off:
he would stay hidden in his lair, though all Jordan were rushing forth!"
- Thus far Job being invited to be a "creator god"; next, 40:24–41:34, he is invited to be a "hero god" and to carry out God's second most important work after creation, the defeat of the chaos monster, Leviathan. The answer to God's initial questions, however, being clearly "No", the re-enactment of the battle, with Job in the hero role, never takes place.

"Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head:" Some psychological reflections on Mary in Christian Thought

Brendan Callaghan SJ

Let me begin by thanking in the first instance Dr Sarah Jane Boss for the honour of being invited to give this inaugural lecture, celebrating the establishing of the Marian Study Centre here at LSU College of Higher Education. In offering such thanks, I would like to extend them beyond that invitation to include thanks for the establishing of the Marian Study Centre itself. Without having any sort of "inside track" information, I imagine that thanks for such a timely and courageous move are due not only to the interests and commitment of Dr Boss, but also to the creativity and energy of Professor Mary Grey and the innovative drive

and support of the Principal of LSU, Dr Anand Chitnis.

If you remember the terms introduced into our national vocabulary by “Yes Minister”, my characterisation of the founding of the Marian Study Centre as “courageous” may begin to sound a little ambiguous. If my memory serves me accurately, bold decisions cost you votes, while courageous decisions cost you elections... But I would wish to stay with the term “courageous”, because I think that in its unambiguous sense it does apply. The doyenne of Jungian analysts in the UK, the Baroness Vera von der Heydt, points out the sensitivities that may be involved:

To some people it is sheer blasphemy to see Mary other than in white and light blue, untouchable, and unapproachable, and unaware of human suffering, sin or temptation. In others negative emotions are aroused at the mere thought of her: it makes them indignant that a mere human creature should have such privileges...¹

In such a context, a centre for research in Marian Studies runs the risk of offending two distinct groups of people, possibly simultaneously. The first group is comprised of those for whom Mary is such an object of devotion that she is beyond the reach of “research” conceived of as objective and critical study. The second group is comprised of those for whom the notion that Marian Studies should be taken seriously within an academic setting gives undue weight to a particularly aberrant aspect of specifically Catholic Christian piety. But it seems to me that only through the sorts of study and reflection that this Centre can make possible will we come to a clearer awareness of the ways in which Mary, and Mariology, have a particular and necessary place in Christian tradition.

A historian would have been chosen, had the Centre wished to offer you a historical inaugural lecture, or a theologian, for a theological lecture. From either, you could expect a fascinating exploration, on the one hand perhaps of the paths and patterns through which Marian imagery has developed, on the other perhaps of the language used about Mary in key documents of the Christian tradition. (One of the unexpected delights of preparing this lecture was the discovery of some at least of the material in print). As a psychologist of religion, I would like to take a different approach, one more concerned with the significance of those images and of that language for the people for whom they form part of their culture. As a lapsed behaviourist with a profound if guarded respect for depth psychology, I would like to focus largely on what depth psychology has to offer to our understanding of that significance. As a Jesuit and a Catholic priest, I see the context for that focused reflection as being a world in which and through which men and women grow towards the fullness of life desired for us by God.

The depth psychologists, whose approach to the deepening of our understanding of human nature and experience has focused on the less-than-conscious aspects of our functioning, have changed our everyday thinking about ourselves. Words that evolved in one or other 'technical language' have found their way into everyday speech, and continue to influence our self-articulation in ways that may not always reflect their original "technical" meaning: "extrovert/introvert", "superego", "inferiority complex" and the like have long since cut loose from their origins within fairly defined language-sets. We have become familiar with the possibility that our emotional or affective lives are more complex and more hidden than is apparent to simple introspection: perhaps more than any *particular* term, the notion of the unconscious itself has changed our self-understanding.

From among the many schools of thought within depth-psychology I would like to draw mainly on the insights of two: that of the awkwardly-named object relations theorists, and that which can generally be characterised as Jungian. In deciding to concentrate on these schools of thought, I am deliberately not giving great weight to the arguments of what might loosely be called "classic" Freudian scholars. The journals that publish in the area of the psychology of religion have seen various hypotheses put forward by Freudian scholars concerning Mariology. Some of these make intriguing suggestions, for example of links between Marian apparitions and the intensification of certain aspects of the Oedipal process, but the level of interpretation in many of them exemplifies the type of use of psychoanalytic theory that gives psychoanalysis a bad name, and recalls the master himself having to point out that "sometimes a cigar is just a cigar." But more seriously, I would like to suggest that in their focus on the oedipal stage of development, around the fourth or fifth year of life, the Freudians arrive on the Marian scene simultaneously too early and too late. The significant events, it seems to me, occur before and after that time: the events, that is, which have a particular significance for our attitudes and feelings towards Mary.

My suggestion, scarcely original but well worth pursuing in the context of the establishment of a Marian Study Centre, is that the ways in which Mary is thought of and represented on the one hand have a definite effect on how individual men and women develop, and on the other reflect changes and differences within those very processes of development. We can understand a little better how and why this is so by bringing to bear appropriate aspects of depth psychology.

Ann Belford Ulanov speaks of how our inner images, in this instance images of the feminine and the spirit, are influenced:

We are shaped by those who love us, those who leave us, by what happens right around us in our family and town and country. The spoken and unspoken rules, the teaching, the politics and the weather all go into us. This is what we take in — introject: our cultural setting, the temper of the times, the languages and social images of the sexes. All these “objects” not only help to form our images of the feminine and the spirit, but take up permanent residence in ourselves. They are what comprise our inner life. ...

The object-relations map outlines this clearly. Our interior life is made up of bits and pieces of others — the objects that we have taken into ourselves and combined with our emotions, body feelings, perceptions. What is inside is certainly ours — it is after all inside “us” — but it is comprised of bits of “them”, not only specific other people, but also images of our culture and historical time. ...²

In what is often referred to as ‘Western’ culture, the images and language of Christianity play a major role. Whether belief is on the decline or not, whether or not church membership figures tell us anything very significant about levels of commitment, the “objects” which we internalise are shaped by the symbols of Christianity. Like it or not, our individual processes of development are caught up in cultural processes, both influencing and being influenced by the constant evolution of the symbol-structures we cannot help shaping around us. In “the west” these symbol-structures cannot be understood without reference to Christianity. This is not simply to say that the history of these nonspecifically-religious symbol-structures is rooted in a now-vanished “christendom”, but also and more importantly that their life today is in constant dialogue with the development and life of Christian symbols.

D.H.Lawrence saw this in his day, and put it like this in *The Rainbow*:

The cycle of creation still wheeled in the Church year ... So the children lived the year of Christianity, the epic of the soul of mankind. Year by year the inner, unknown drama went on in them, their hearts were born and came to fullness, suffered on the cross, gave up the ghost and rose again to unnumbered days, untired, having at least this rhythm of eternity in a ragged, inconsequential life.

In attempting to understand a little better the symbols and language relating to Mary, we are necessarily exploring aspects of our wider culture. The founding of a Marian Studies Centre is perhaps courageous, for the reasons I have touched on earlier: it is certainly timely, since in a period of rapid cultural transition we have a particular need for a clearer

sense of how our symbol-structures function, and among the more central and rapidly-changing symbols are those of the feminine, of woman, and hence of the relationships between women and men.

Object-relations theory and Jungian analytic psychology complement each other well. As Ann Belford Ulanov has pointed out:

Both the object relations school and the Jungian concern themselves with inner objects, but the first puts its emphasis on those objects that originate outside ourselves while Jungians stress those objects that spontaneously emerge from the layers of the unconscious which Jung calls collective or objective. ...³

As we turn our attention to Mary in Christian thought, we find that it is not always possible to see whether we are dealing with objects arising from outside ourselves or from within. Certainly, the early debates about Mary, such as those of the 4th Century in which the understanding of her perpetual virginity was hammered out, can be understood as turning as much on a priori assumptions about marriage, sexuality, virginity and asceticism as on any firmer ground. As Rosemary Radford Ruether comments:

He [Jerome] believed that sexual intercourse was debasing, even in marriage. ... Thus Jerome cannot say that Mary, the model of virginity, could relapse into the inferior state of marriage, sexual relations, and childbearing. The true followers of the Lamb are those who have not defiled their virgin state.(Rev 14.4)⁴

Prior to these debates, Mary was already being spoken of as “the new Eve”, and as paralleling “the new Adam”, Christ. With the Church also being spoken of as the new Eve, the Mother of Christians, and the Bride of Christ, and Mary being identified with the Church, the language begins to get very complex, especially as it depicts the relationship of Mary to Christ. Much later, we find Dante, speaking through Bernard of Clairvaux in *The Divine Comedy*, and delighting in this long-extant multiform symbolism:

Vergine madre, figlia del tuo figlio
Maiden yet a mother Daughter of thy Son.

In our own century, we find Pius XII, in *Munificentissimus Deus*, reaching back to and citing John Damascene, in writing of Mary as

The bride whom the Father had espoused [who] had to abide in the heavenly bridal-chambers.⁵

Daughter, virgin, mother, bride: add to these relational words, already complex and contradictory in relational-symbolic terms, the further image of queen, and it is small wonder that we find confusion when we try to get to grips with Mary's symbolic significance. Marina Warner's weighty study *Alone of all her sex* takes 400 elegant pages to survey "The myth and the cult of the Virgin Mary", and anyone looking for a systematic treatment of how various terms and symbols came to be used of and associated with Mary could do much worse than turn to that book. What I would wish to note here is that this confusion of relational symbolism leaves no one central image which might "govern" any subsequent developments in Marian symbolism.

I would like to turn our attention to a particularly significant period in the development of Western culture, that of the emergence of "courtly love" or the cult of the Lady. Marie-Louise von Franz highlights its significance in psychological terms.

In the Middle Ages there took place a perceptible spiritual differentiation in religious, poetical, and other cultural matters; and the fantasy world of the unconscious was recognised more clearly than before. During this period, the knightly cult of the lady signified an attempt to differentiate the feminine side of man's nature in regard to the outer woman as well as in relation to the inner world.⁶

At this point allow me a brief *excursus*, to touch on a key notion in Jungian psychology, that of the archetype. As with many Jungian terms, grasping quite what Jung meant would be significantly more easy if he himself had been even slightly more consistent. As one critic remarks, the truly irritating quality of Jung's work is not that he is inconsistent, but that he is so adamant at each point of his inconsistency. Perhaps a good point of departure is the observation already referred to in Ann Belford Ulanov's comparison of object relations and Jungian approaches: "Jungians stress those objects that spontaneously emerge from the layers of the unconscious which Jung calls collective or objective...." Jung's view was that each of us inherits capacities to respond to aspects of our lives by forming/discovering symbolic images that have clear patterns of kinship across individuals and across cultures. While the particular symbolic images are unique and distinct, there are sufficiently strong "family resemblances" for us to recognise them as belonging to one or other archetype, of which archetype they are a particular expression. My dreams are my dreams uniquely, but the shadow figure that I meet in them is sufficiently akin to the shadow figure manifest in your dreams, and both of those to the shadow figures given "external" form in mythologem and folk-story, for us to be able to recognise this

“collective” element of our unconscious.

Just as we each (severally and collectively) have the possibility of encountering all that we cannot accept in ourselves (severally and collectively) in the form of the shadow, so says Jung we each (severally and collectively) have the capacity to encounter that within us which is characteristic of the opposite sex. For the man this finds form in the “anima”, for the woman, in the “animus”. And just as we encounter the shadow not only in inner dream and fantasy but also in outer reality, so also we encounter the anima both within and outwith. Just as it is impossible adequately to reflect on the experience of evil without taking some note of mythological shadow figures, so it is impossible adequately to reflect on how Mary has occupied Christian thought without taking some note of how she has been caught up in the personification of the anima. If I can now repeat a view I stated earlier:

the ways in which Mary is thought of and represented on the one hand have a definite effect on how individual men and women develop, and on the other reflect changes and differences within those very processes of development.

And, I would now like to add, one way of exploring this inter-relatedness is by means of a Jungian approach to the anima. There is, of course, another whole lecture waiting to be written and delivered on the subject of the inter-relationship of representations of Christ and the animus — a moment’s reflection on the powerful imagery experienced by some of the great woman mystics suggests that this is in its turn a fascinating and important topic.

However, Marie-Louise von Franz takes us back to the cult of the Lady in the Middle Ages:

The lady to whose service the knight pledged himself, and for whom he performed his heroic deeds, was naturally a personification of the anima. The name of the carrier of the Grail in Wolfram von Eschenbach’s version of the legend, is especially significant: *conduir-amour* (“guide in love matters”). She taught the hero to differentiate both his feelings and his behaviour towards women.⁸

Von Franz points out that this was, in terms of Jungian psychology, a particularly appropriate system:

the knight chose the lady of his heart whom he then served like a goddess, yet she was a woman with individual qualities, a personification, not of *the* anima — but of *his* anima, and thus he had a chance to realise the special traits of his own inner feminine nature.⁹

In serving his Lady, he encountered the *particular* femininity that was his, that could be spoken of as *his* anima, and in that encounter, implicitly or explicitly he came to accept them as aspects of himself, thus integrating those elements into his Self.

But before long, this cult of the Lady, which, (if you will allow me a Jesuit aside), we find clearly present in the early life of my Master Ignatius, became caught up in the developing cult of Mary, an observation which, for a Jesuit at least, irresistibly conjures up the image of the older penitent pilgrim Ignatius keeping vigil before the Black Madonna of Montserrat. The writers in this area point out that one consequence of the fusion of the cult of “my Lady” with that of “our Lady” is precisely that loss of the particular and the personal in the anima reflected in the shift from “my” to “our” Lady. If the only object where I can find the representation of the anima is in Mary, then it is less likely that the particular qualities of my anima will be represented there, or even that they are able to be projected there. I sense a certain ambiguity in how Jungian writers evaluate this. On the one hand:

This projecting of anima and animus onto religious figures was in some ways very useful: it protected the individual from overestimating and deifying the other sex and thus created some room for a simple and reasonable human relationship.¹⁰

On the other hand, we find the suggestion that, as Mary becomes more and more perfect, so it becomes less and less possible to speak of “everyday” women in the same sorts of terms: the representation of Mary becomes more and more divorced from the lived experience both of women and of men. Further, suggest the Jungians, as the representation of Mary becomes more and more “exalted”, “spiritualised”, and “sexless”, so the qualities which do not fit within such an ethereal representation come to be seen initially as imperfections. Thus women are denigrated for (literally) “embodying” these imperfect characteristics. In their “pure form” the same characteristics become seen as evil, and are represented under the aspect of evil in projections onto “witches”. Jung himself puts it like this:

Since the psychic image of woman was expressed in the collective worship of Mary, the image of woman lost a value to which human beings had a natural right. This value could find its natural expression only through individual choice, and it sank into the unconscious when the individual form of expression was replaced by a collective one. In the unconscious the image of woman received an energy charge that activated the archaic and infantile dominants.

And since all unconscious contents, when activated by dissociated libido, are projected upon external objects, the devaluation of the real woman was compensated by daemonic traits. She no longer appeared as an object of love, but as a persecutor or witch. The consequence of increasing Mariolatry was the witch hunt, that indelible blot on the later Middle Ages.¹¹

Thus, in what might appear as paradoxical, the exaltation of Mary contributed to the denigration of women. But it is, I suggest, important to see in what way Mary was “exalted”, as exemplified in this medieval cult. We have already noted how, as Mary becomes more and more “perfect”, those qualities not acceptable in such a vision of perfection are projected onto other objects. What we need to recognise is the degree to which this “perfectionising” reached (and reaches). Jung himself puts it like this, looking as it were at the creation of the Immaculate Mother of God:

Remarkable indeed are the unusual precautions which surround the making of Mary: immaculate conception, extirpation of the taint of sin, everlasting virginity. The Mother of God is obviously being protected against Satan’s tricks ... Mary must at all cost be protected from these corrupting influences. The inevitable consequence of all these elaborate protective measures is something that has not been sufficiently taken into account in the dogmatic evaluation of the Incarnation: her freedom from original sin sets Mary apart from mankind in general, whose common characteristic is original sin and therefore the need of redemption.¹²

Jung suggests that this process leaves Mary a powerful and influential symbol of the taking-up of the material into the realm of the spiritual, but an incomplete symbol, since it is precisely that which is material, physical, earthly and earthy which seems to have been stripped away from Mary in an attempt to make her a model of perfection.

The Christian “Queen of Heaven” has, obviously, shed all her olympian qualities except for her brightness, goodness, and eternity; and even her human body, the thing most prone to gross material corruption, has put on an ethereal incorruptibility. ...¹³

So, as the cult of the perfect Mother of God gained ground, the gap between her and the real woman widened. This, suggests Jung, is true not only in terms of the denial of the physical which was (and is) involved, but also in the assimilation of Mary to an essentially masculine value scale — that of perfection.

Perfection is a masculine desideratum, while woman inclines by nature to *completeness*. And it is a fact that, even today, a man can stand a relative state of perfection much better and for a longer period than a woman, while as a rule it does not agree with women and may even be dangerous for them. If a woman strives for perfection she forgets the complementary role of completeness, which, though imperfect by itself, forms the necessary counterpart to perfection. For, just as completeness is always imperfect, so perfection is always incomplete, and therefore represents a final state which is hopelessly sterile. "Ex perfecto nihil fit," say the old masters, whereas the *imperfectum* carries within it the seeds of its own improvement. Perfectionism always ends in a blind alley, while completeness by itself lacks selective values.¹⁴

Here allow me a second *excursus*, this time to our own day and the work of Carol Gilligan and her associates at the Harvard Graduate School of Education¹⁵. In a highly significant set of studies, Gilligan has provided support for the view that, within Western culture at least, there are two significantly different modes of relating to others. These, she suggests, rest on two very different styles of self-description. On the one hand, we have a stress on the separate, objective self, grounded in relationships in which reciprocity and "do as you would be done by" have a determining value. On the other, we have a stress on the connected self, grounded in relationships where response to the other on their own terms is dominant. Associated with the separate/objective self, we observe styles of moral choice that rest ultimately on rights and the supreme value of equity: treating each individual equitably is essential, even at the cost of rupturing social relations. Associated with the connected self, we observe styles of moral choice that rest ultimately on response to the other and the supreme value of care: treating each individual according to their needs, in such a way as to maintain whenever possible the social relationships involved, takes precedence over equity of treatment.

The studies emanating from Carol Gilligan's group at Harvard strongly suggest that in western society the separate/objective self and its associated ethics of equity are characteristic of men, while the connected self and its associated ethics of care are characteristic of women. (Note that Gilligan does not claim that either mode of relating is limited to one sex: what the studies so far indicate is that a small proportion of men operate within the "connected self" mode, and a small proportion of women within that of the "separate, objective self" mode). If we then note that it is the latter self-understanding and ethical value-system which seems to be more characteristic of non-western societies, I suspect that

we are finding reflected in these modern social/developmental studies, a far cry from analytic psychology in content and method, a pointer to the same problematic — the dominance in western culture of a masculine, “perfectionist” model of relating, over against a feminine “completeness” model. The image of Mary, the perfect Mother of God, has been shaped by this dominant “perfectionist” masculine model at the cost of its completeness, and the same image has in turn helped to maintain that model in its dominance.

Yahweh’s perfectionism is carried over from the Old Testament into the New, and despite all the recognition and glorification of the feminine principle it never prevailed against the patriarchal supremacy. We have not, therefore, by any means heard the last of it.¹⁶

Thus Jung, in the *Answer to Job*, and even within the confines of this lecture we have not yet heard the last of it. While there is sufficient Jungian material to keep us going for a good few hours yet, I will resist the temptation to pursue a simply Jungian line of reflection and at this point, prompted by the reference to patriarchy, bring in the relevant observations of some of the object-relations theorists.

The development of the object-relations school, (as it is known in the UK, where it developed), is perhaps less well-known than it might be by comparison with the “classical” Freudian approach from which it originates. Focusing on our experienced need to relate to others outside ourselves, (the “objects” of object-relations referring to that in my experience which is other than I/me), it has provided what I consider to be a necessary balance to the biological drive foundations of Freudian motivational theory. According to these post-freudian theorists, the basis of my motivations is not a drive for physical satisfaction, (albeit sometimes transformed into symbolic rather than direct form), but a drive to form satisfying relationships. The first focus of attention shifts from the conflicts of the oedipal period to those earlier and more inchoate struggles by which we come to recognise ourselves as distinct and potentially isolated individuals, and establish our first tentative relationship, with “mother” in the shape of whoever is “mothering” us.

Feminine religious imagery typically relates to the unconscious material deriving from this stage of our development:

... pre-oedipal material, of affect and instinct, of multiple longings and meanings not yet clearly enough differentiated from each other to be organised into specific agencies of id, ego, and superego.¹⁷

Ann Ulanov goes on to say that the kinds of experiences such imagery puts us in touch with

compensate for a too dry, too schizoid and rationalistic a distortion of religion, one too distant from embodied experience with all its pushes and pulls and mixtures of conscious and unconscious.¹⁸

Ian Suttie, one of the earlier writers on religion within the object relations tradition, suggests that while matriarchal religious elements involve the projection of pre-oedipal wishes, fears, and conflicts, so in those religious elements which are patriarchal in origin we can see the projection of oedipal wishes, fears, and conflicts. Christianity, he suggests, attempts to combine both. David Wulff, in his massive survey of the psychology of religion, sums up Suttie's views thus:

The attitude of Christ that is expressed in the New Testament stories, parables, and miracles is largely that of the loving, compassionate, and generously nurturant parent who at the same time declines to exercise the power that would meet "the profound infantile craving for the comforting belief in parental omnipotence", a craving that belongs to an earlier stage of maturation. With these themes that are suggestive of the dynamics of the matriarchal cults, Christianity combines another, the patriarchal theme of confidence in God. This seeking of reconciliation with the parent implies that the child is overcoming feelings of guilt and self-denigration and rooting out unconscious fear and hostility toward the parent.¹⁹

So far, we may want to say, so good: here is a way of relating to God which can draw us onward in our growth as human beings. Unfortunately but inevitably, it is also a way of relating to God which, by what might seem to be subtle shifts in emphasis, can be distorted into a neurotic defence. The church might have found itself continuing to support an image of God that enables us to become free and autonomous individuals, that is, an image corresponding to that transitional phase in which we move out from our secure parental base into a wider world. But instead, at one critical point in the development of western culture, the church found itself supporting an image of the feminine in particular which related to an earlier, pre-oedipal stage, and which led, in what might seem paradoxical fashion, to a setting to one side of a father in whom we might place confidence. Wulff again provides a useful summary of Ian Suttie's views:

Even when the maternal element was restored to the Godhead, through the European cult of the Virgin Mary, the cost was a

thoroughgoing desexualisation, imposing celibacy on its priests — who are, of course, addressed as “father” — and removing every possible sexual association from the Virgin Mother. In thus re-creating the mother imago of early childhood, the Catholic tradition promoted its “avowed ideal of regression to a sexless infancy” (*‘Except ye become like little children ...’*). Suttie argues that setting aside the father not only “seriously impaired the repressive and propitiatory value of that portion of the faith that was inherited from Judaism, viz. the Jehovah imago,” but also led to several regrettable consequences: glorification of the Pope-father, the accepting expectation of purgatorial suffering, and increasingly violent attempts to convert the heathen and root out the heretics upon whom Christians projected their own Oedipal longings²⁰.

I find this an intriguing analysis, as much for its appositeness in the present as for its explanatory power in accounting for the past. It brings us full-circle, I would like to suggest. Suttie seems to imply that, in getting our image of Mary wrong, we inevitably get our image of God wrong also. Recreate the pre-oedipal sexless mother, and we lead ourselves into a setting where we have inadvertently disposed of a God in whom we can put our trust, in whom we can have confidence. We find ourselves searching for the pre-separation bliss of the passively dependent infant, a state in which our adult realities of competence and relational life find no positive place. React against this warped matriarchal religion, and we risk finding ourselves face to face with a wrathful patriarchal God in the obedient service of whom our embodiment, our sensuality, our bodiliness itself, can have no place. Take each to its extreme, and we can see caricatures of infantilising authoritarian Catholicism and doctrinaire repressive protestantism: “pray, pay and obey” over against “the word made flesh is here made word again”. In neither does the feminine have a healthy place.

Let me attempt to pull together the various strands of thought we have examined.

- I suggested that the images of Mary have both influenced and been influenced by the ways in which women and men have understood and experienced themselves.
- The complexity of the multiple symbolic relationships attributed to Mary (virgin, mother, bride, daughter, and so on) makes it possible for developments to take place unchecked by a common “reference image”.
- In medieval Europe, the image of Mary becomes fused with the

anima-image previously expressed in the cult of the Lady.

- In the process Mary loses any traces of imperfection or of genuine embodiment, in a context where the embodied, and the sensuous in particular, are seen as of less worth than the purely spiritual.
- This view in its turn both supports and is supported by a cultural favouring of perfection over completeness, to be understood as a masculine ‘bias’ taking precedence over its feminine counterpart.
- A parallel was observed between this understanding of masculine and feminine predispositions, derived from depth psychology, and the research findings of Carol Gilligan and her colleagues at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, supporting the existence of quite distinct ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ modes of self-description and relating, and implicit ethical models, characterised respectively by the “separate, objective self” and an ethic of equity, and by the “connected self” and an ethic of care.
- Object-relations theorists, notably Ian Suttie, provide us with the tools to discriminate between imagery and unconscious material deriving from pre-oedipal, oedipal and post-oedipal stages of development, and enable us to relate matriarchal and patriarchal elements of religious language and experience to the needs and meanings originating in these different phases.
- Making use of these tools, we can observe how the potentially integrative combination of matriarchal and patriarchal elements within Christianity was supplanted by a re-working of the symbolism of Mary which removed any element of materiality, recreating a pre-oedipal mother-figure and effectively setting aside the father.
- From that position developed both an infantilising “Catholicism” and a repressive “protestantism”, elements discernable today within the church communities, even if no longer to be seen represented “in pure form” in one or other tradition.

By this stage you may be thinking that the news from the psychological front is not good. Allow me to correct that impression in

concluding these reflections. It seems to me that there are a number of indicators that more appropriate representations of Mary are finding expression, suggesting that in turn more adequate ways of representing God are emerging.

The first of these indicators takes us back to the old wizard of Zurich himself, and his response to the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption. Seeing the birth of the atomic age as both introducing a new and appalling threat of human self-destruction and heralding a new relationship to matter — the material — Jung understood the Assumption to symbolise the union of heaven and earth, of matter and spirit. Recognising that the image of the woman in Mary had been almost completely “dematerialised”, and that the contemporary approach to the material world left it completely “de-souled”, Jung was nonetheless confident that “the way will be cleared for a union of the two principles.” He was also very clear that the most powerful if unrecognised motive for the proclamation of the Assumption was “the popular movement and the psychological need behind it.”²¹ Vera von der Heydt sums up the Jungian perspective here:

The Incarnation is the descent of spirit-man, thereby spiritualising matter, earth, woman. The Assumption is the ascent of woman, earth, matter, thereby materialising heaven.²²

The second indicator is the way in which the issue of the feminine in religion is coming to greater centrality, in arguments and debates about gender-linked symbolic language about God, in the spread of women’s access to positions of leadership and service within the eucharistic communities of the Christian family, as well as in the emergence of similar pressures towards change within the various traditions of Judaism and of Islam. It seems to me that the foundation of the Marian Study centre here at LSU Southampton, which will enable the further development of Marian studies, has a major part to play in this process. Breaking down the notion that only the masculine and males can image God seems to me to go hand in hand with recovering Mary as a real human person rather than effectively if not dogmatically a demi-goddess.

The third indicator draws directly on the experience of Jungian-based therapy. Vera von der Heydt has observed that over the course of her long experience of working as a Jungian analyst women’s internal worlds have changed in a way that men’s have not: while the symbols of the animus have developed to reflect the changing relationship between men and women, the symbols of the anima have generally stayed static. I suggest that that stasis is on the brink of breaking-up, and that as it

does, the counterproductive fusion of Mary and the anima will be unravelled.

Fourthly, finally, and perhaps arrogantly, I would propose as an indicator the development of our self-understanding brought about by the accumulating insights of science in general and psychology in particular. It seems to me that we are being led by these insights away from a "Newtonian" model of perfection, where given time we would work out all the rules that governed the universe, into a world-view which recognises a completeness beyond our comprehension. I am grateful that I came across an interview with William Golding on the occasion of his being awarded the Nobel Prize:

The Newtonian universe which went on forever is the ultimate damnation. And we now know that's not true. We know that, in every direction, we come to the end of what our human nature can discover, describe, or even feel, and this seems to me to be a kind of boundless mercy.

And he continues,

We understand that we are not only mysterious in ourselves but in a situation of bounded mystery.²³

Depth psychology in particular, it seems to me, confronts us with being "mysterious in ourselves", and makes it clear that it is even, or above all, in an inward direction that "we come to the end of what our human nature can discover, describe, or even feel". Ann Ulanov puts it like this:

Depth psychology unshackles us, so that we cannot avoid, repress, defend against, intellectualise, politicise or psychologise the fact that the transcendent exists beyond categories. Depth psychology brings home to us the full experience of being finite, contingent, transitory, fragmentary. Our images and names for God, so precious and so empowering, so real as images, are only images ...²⁴

It seems to me that we are being led to a clearer understanding of the feminine, of the place of perfection and completion, of the bounded mystery in which we live, and of Mary, and that each of these movements encourages, empowers, enlivens the others. Deepening and clarifying our understanding of the place Mary has and has had in the Christian heart, psyche, soul can only lead us closer to the God beyond all projections and images. So I end where I began, welcoming the inauguration of this Marian Study Centre, which can help us grasp for

our day what my brother Jesuit Robert Southwell sang in his, the particular encounter of the divine and the human, the creator and the creature in Mary:

For God in earth she is the royal throne,
The chosen cloth to make his mortal weed;
The quarry to cut out our corner-stone,
Soil full of, yet free from, all mortal seed;
for heavenly flower she is the Jesse rod,
the child of man, the parent of a God.

- 1 Vera von der Heydt, *Prospects for the Soul*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1976, p.75.
- 2 Ulanov, A.B. "The objectivity of subjectivity" in *Jung & Christianity in Dialogue*, ed RJ Moore & DJ Meckel, Paulist Press, New York, 1990, p.143.
- 3 *ut sup*, p.144.
- 4 Rosemary Radford Reuther, *Mary: The Feminine Face of the Church*, SCM Press, London, 1979, p.44–45.
- 5 §22: "Oportebat sponsam, quam Pater desponsaverat, in thalamis caelestibus habitare." St John Damascene, *Encomium in Dormitionem*, Homily II, 14.
- 6 Marie-Louise von Franz in *Man & his Symbols*, ed. C G Jung & M-L von Franz, Aldus, London, 1964, p.187.
- 7 c.f. note 3.
- 8 Marie-Louise von Franz, *Man and his Symbols*, p.187.
- 9 Marie-Louise von Franz, "Jung and Society", in *In the Wake of Jung*, ed Molly Tuby, Coventure, London, 1983, p.28
- 10 *ut sup*, p.28
- 11 C G Jung, *Aspects of the Feminine*, Ark/Routledge, London, 1986, p.20
- 12 C G Jung, *Answer to Job*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1954, pp.56–59
- 13 C G Jung, *Aspects of the Feminine*, p.137.
- 14 C G Jung, *Answer to Job*, pp.52–53
- 15 Carol Gilligan et al, *Mapping the Moral Domain*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1988.
- 16 C G Jung, *Answer to Job*, pp.56–59
- 17 A B Ulanov, "The objectivity of subjectivity" in *Jung & Christianity in Dialogue*, pp.162–163
- 18 *ibid*
- 19 David Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views*, Wiley, New York, NY, 1991, p.121, citing Suttie, *The Origins of Love & Hate*, Julian Press, New York, 1935, p.118.
- 20 Wulff, *op cit*, pp 330–333, citing Suttie, *Religion: Racial Character and Mental and Social Health*, British Journal of Medical Psychology, (289), 1932, p.298
- 21 C G Jung, *Answer to Job*, p.165
- 22 Vera von der Heydt, *Prospects for the Soul*, p.76
- 23 Interview in *The Independent*, date not to hand
- 24 Ann Belford Ulanov, "The objectivity of subjectivity" in *Jung & Christianity in Dialogue*, pp 165–166

*A lecture to celebrate the inauguration of the Marian Study Centre at
LSU Southampton. February 6th 1996*