

- 35 'Mysterium Paschale', art. cit. pp. 227—255. Balthasar speaks of a 'contemplative Holy Saturday' as the centre of theology, in contra-distinction to G.W.F Hegel's 'speculative Good Friday'.
- 36 See J. Chaine, 'La Descente du Christ aux enfers', *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément II*.
- 37 G. Marchesi, op. cit. p. 351.
- 38 The French translation of *Herrlichkeit* is entitled 'La Gloire et la Croix'.
- 39 Newman's affirmation in verse four of the angelic chorus in the 'Dream of Gerontius' that what refined flesh and blood in the Incarnation and Atonement was a 'higher gift than grace' recalls Balthasar's insistence that the divine Son did not come primarily to teach (*verum*), or to help us (*bonum*) but to show us himself (*pulchrum*).

The Liberation of Christology from Patriarchy

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The doctrine of Christ should be the most comprehensive way that Christians express their belief in redemption from all sin and evil in human life, the doctrine that embraces the authentic humanity and fulfilled hopes of all persons. The theological categories adopted by early Christianity to define the doctrine of Christ—early Christology, in other words—would seem to be inclusive of women. And yet, of all Christian doctrine, it has been the doctrine of Christ that has been most frequently used to exclude women from full participation in the Christian Church. How is this possible?

Early Christianity used the word 'logos' to define that presence of God which has become incarnate in Jesus Christ. This term drew on a long tradition of religious philosophy. In Greek and Hellenistic Jewish philosophy, the divine Logos was the means by which the transcendent God came forth in the beginning to create the world. The Logos was simultaneously the immanence of God and the ground of creation. Through the Logos God created the world, guided it, was revealed to it and reconciled the world to God.

The Logos was particularly related to the rational principle in each human soul. By linking the term Christ, the Messiah, through which God redeemed the world, to the Logos, early Christianity prevented a split between creation and redemption threatened by early

gnosticism. The God revealed in Christ was the same God who created the world in the beginning, the authentic ground of creation manifest in fulfilled form over against the alienation of creation from its true being. The term Logos as the divine identity for Christ should have been a term that pointed all humans to the foundation of their true humanity.¹

Yet the Greek and Hellenistic Jewish tradition was shaped in a patriarchal culture which gave the terms Logos and Christ an androcentric bias. Since rationality was presumed by these patriarchal cultures to be normatively male, all the theological reference points for defining Christ were defined androcentrically. Essential humanity, the image of God in humanity and the Logos of God were interrelated in androcentric definitions. These definitions re-enforced the assumption that God was male and that Christ must therefore be male in order to reveal the male God.

Although Christianity has never said that God was literally a male, it has assumed that God represents pre-eminently the qualities of rationality and sovereignty. Since men are presumed to have these qualities and women not to have them, the male metaphor has been seen as appropriate for God, while female metaphors have been regarded as inappropriate. The Logos or Word which reveals the 'Father' therefore also has been presumed to be properly imaged as a male. The title 'Son of God', an inadequate metaphor for divine immanence, imagined as something like a parent begetting an offspring, has also been taken literally and seen as further indication that the Logos is male. These notions of the maleness of God, in turn, affected the Christian interpretation of the *imago dei*.

Genesis 1, 27—28 says 'So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.' This passage leaves open the possibility that the term man (Adam) is to be understood generically and that Gen. 27b teaches that this image of God is possessed equally by both sexes (which would also mean that women share in the sovereignty of 'man' over the earth referred to in Genesis 1, 26).² But practically the whole patristic and medieval tradition rejected the possibility that women were equally theomorphic. It split the concept of *imago dei* from gender difference. This might also suggest that the *imago dei* was asexual or spiritual and therefore was neither male nor female. Gregory of Nyssa reads the text this way.³ But most of the Church fathers concluded that it was the male who possessed the image of God normatively, whereas women in themselves did not possess the image of God, but rather were the image of the body, or the lower creation, which man was given to rule over.⁴

This view is found in Augustine's treatise on the Trinity where he says:

How then did the apostle tell us that the man is the image of God and therefore he is forbidden to cover his head, but that the woman is not so, and therefore she is commanded to cover hers? Unless forsooth according to that which I have said already, when I was treating of the nature of the human mind, that the woman, together with her own husband, is the image of God, so that the whole substance may be one image, but when she is referred to separately in her quality as a helpmeet, which regards the woman alone, he is the image of God as fully and completely as when the woman too is joined with him in one.⁵

Augustine and other Church Fathers never denied that women had a redeemable soul. But, nevertheless, they believed that the female in her specific femaleness, psychic and bodily, was the opposite of the divine. So they concluded that the woman was not theomorphic; in other words, she could not image God. This idea was carried further in the scholastic appropriation of Aristotelian biology. This biology (which we know today to be false) asserted that the male alone provided the seed or genetic form of the child, while the female provided only the material substratum which was formed. Since the seed from the father is male, a fully-formed offspring would also be male. Females are the result of a defect in gestation by which the maternal matter is not fully formed, and so a female, or 'defective' male, is produced who is inferior in body, intelligence and in moral self-control.⁶

The female is defined by medieval theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas, who use this Aristotelian tradition, as a non-normative human who does not possess human nature fully. The male is the 'perfect' or normative expression of the human species. Aquinas concluded from this anthropology that the maleness of Christ was an ontological necessity and not just a historical accident. In order for Christ to represent generic humanity, he must be male, because only the male has the fullness of human nature. The female cannot represent the human species either for herself or generically.⁷

These notions of the maleness of God, the Logos, the *imago dei* and of Christ threaten to undermine the basic Christian faith that Christ indeed possesses a humanity which includes the humanity of women and that women are included in the incarnation and redemption of Christ. The Church Fathers assumed that she was included in redemption while, at the same time, being non-normative and non-theomorphic. This assumption was based on the patriarchal ideology that women lack equally human capacities for intelligence and leadership and that female humanity is included within the lower part of male humanity, ruled over by male rationality. As these assumptions are refuted by the actual incorporation of women into

higher education and public leadership today, and Aristotelian biology is shown to be false, all the androcentric biases of this theological construct are thrown into question. Today a Christology which elevates Jesus' maleness to ontologically necessary significance suggests that Jesus' humanity does not represent women at all. Incarnation solely into the male sex does not include women and so women are not redeemed. That is to say, if women cannot represent Christ, then Christ does not represent women. Or, as the women's ordination movement has put it, 'either ordain women or stop baptizing them.' Some women believe that women should leave Christianity and seek another religion which genuinely includes their humanity in its theology of the divine-human relationship.⁸

In order to reassess the relationship of the doctrine of Christ and gender, we need to examine alternative possibilities within the Jewish tradition that shaped early Christianity. Jewish tradition thinks of God as beyond gender. God is thought of in terms of sovereignty and power. This power is expressed in wrathful and judgmental ways and also in compassionate and long-suffering ways. Male social roles predominate in the image of God. But, when speaking of God's compassion and long-suffering, Jewish thought sometimes uses female images, especially that of a mother.⁹ No images for God are to be taken literally, a taboo which includes the spoken names of God as well as pictorial images. From this tradition it should be clear that the female can be taken as imaging God, while no gender images for God can be taken as literal or exclusive.

Most notably, in the Wisdom tradition of Hebrew Scripture, the immanence of God in creation, revelation and redemption is imaged in the female personification of God's Wisdom.¹⁰ This concept of divine Wisdom is the same theological idea that is expressed in the Christian tradition by the Logos or Word of God. At times, the two words are used interchangeably. Thus the idea that the immanence of God is 'like' a male offspring in relation to a male parent cannot be taken literally, either in the sense that God's immanence is a 'second God', or in androcentric descriptions of this immanence as a 'son'. The Logos-Sophia of God is neither male nor female, and was imaged in the major Jewish tradition that lies behind Christian Trinitarian thought in female personification.

The Jewish tradition thought of the Messiah as a future King of Israel. In a patriarchal society this was presumed to be a male, although the key idea here is an elect human person who exercises God's sovereignty. Jesus preferred as his title for the coming One (whom he did not identify with himself) the term 'Son of Man'. But this term, drawn from the book of Daniel and other apocalyptic literature, makes the Messiah a collective expression of Israel, in turn representing generic humanity. (Since generic humanity cannot today

be seen as normatively male, the Inclusive Language Lectionary, presently being prepared by the National Council of Churches in the United States, has chosen to translate this messianic title used by Jesus as 'the Human One'.¹² Moreover, it is important to recognize in the teachings and practice of the historical Jesus (as interpreted by early Christianity) a prophetic vision that stands in judgment on social and religious systems that exclude subordinated and marginated people from divine favour. Jesus sees his divine mission as one which is to bring 'good news' to these despised people who are regarded by the priestly and clerical classes of his day as unworthy of redemptive hope. Central to the Jesus story is a prophetic practice that stands in judgment on these priestly and clerical classes for their pretenses of special privilege with God and their exclusion of the unlearned and 'unclean'. It is often women among the despised groups who become the example of those who are able to hear God's new prophetic word and be converted, while the religious elites not only close their hearts against it, but plot to destroy God's Messenger.

Precisely because women were at the bottom of those systems of privilege which Jesus decries in the gospel stories, they often become the representatives of the 'last who will be first in the Kingdom of God'. Thus Luke in the Magnificat makes Jesus' mother, Mary, the representative of the new or Messianic Israel as servant of God who will be lifted up as the mighty are put down from their thrones.¹³ All four gospels tell the Jesus story as a drama of mounting conflict in which the messianic prophet is rejected first by his family and hometown folks, then by the religious leadership, then by the crowds, then by his own male disciples, in the upper room.¹⁴ Much has been made in modern (male) scholarship of the secondary and unhistorical character of the 'empty tomb' story,¹⁵ but this begs the question. Why do all four gospel traditions tell the story of Jesus in this way, if not to make the point, in ultimate dramatic form, that those who are last in the present social order are the faithful ones who will be first in the Kingdom, the first to witness the resurrection and bear the good news to others? Luke further stresses the inclusion of women in his account of Pentecost, where he uses the text of the prophet Joel to say that the spirit of prophecy, restored to the messianic community of the last days, is given to the 'menservants and maidservants', and 'your sons and your daughters shall prophecy'.¹⁶ Women were included in the prophetic office in Hebrew Scripture, as well as early Christianity.¹⁷ We know from the Church order, the Didache, that there were still Christians in the late second century who thought that the prophet was the normative leader of the local Christian community.¹⁸

If the praxis of Jesus mediated in the vision of early Christianity was one that saw itself as overturning established hierarchies and as including women as first among the believers, why did this

inclusiveness seem to vanish so quickly? To answer this question we must realize that the early Christianity which interpreted the Jesus story in this prophetic and gender-inclusive way also understood this message in the context of a world view which was inherently unstable and could not endure historically in that form. Seeing itself as the messianic community of the last days of world history, it had no basis for its own historical institutionalization. Its concept of the Lordship of Christ was that of an alternative foundation of being, transcendent to the present systems of society and 'this world', upon which those powerless within this world could stand. Moreover, since it assumed that the patriarchal hierarchy of family, religion and state was inherent in 'this world', early Christians could only imagine a new humanity in which women were included as equals as one where the reproductive role of women was abolished. Already in St. Paul those who belong to the messianic community of the redeemed are believed to be no longer under that divine mandate to marry and reproduce which belongs to the order of nature and the historical perpetuation of the human species.¹⁹

Thus, by the end of the first century, we find Christianity splitting into two contrary interpretations. One branch of Christianity incorporated its social structure back into the patriarchal family and interpreted its normative leadership as that of the male who is a proven *paterfamilias*.²⁰ This patriarchal Christianity was engaged in a polemic with an alternative Christianity which enjoined its members not to marry and also promoted the participation of women in public teaching. To combat this alternative Christianity, the texts of Genesis 2 and 3 were evoked to declare that woman's place is both second in nature and under punishment due to sin. Therefore, she is to keep silence and will be saved by childbearing (1 Tim. 2:12—15).

The alternative Christianity is represented by the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, where Paul's authority is claimed for precisely the opposite view. Here the conversion of a woman is expressed in her embrace of chastity and her renunciation of marriage, a choice which is rewarded, after a series of adventures, when Paul commissions Thecla to preach and to return to her home town as an evangelist.²¹ This alternative Christianity was expressed in the second century in both millennialist and in spiritualist groups who affirmed the inclusion of women, but did so by interpreting the Church as the messianic community of the redeemed who had transcended the reproductive order of sexuality and childbearing.²² Such eschatological sects could only survive historically by either converting new adults in every generation or drawing upon a population of married Christians who they then drew into what was seen as the higher and more authentic Christianity of the celibate.

What we find is that, by the fourth century, those sects which

demanding that all Christians be celibate have been declared heretical,²³ while the patriarchal Church and a modified version of eschatological Christianity are merging into a new synthesis. In this synthesis, married people are regarded as the lower order of the Church, while a celibate elite is regarded as its higher and fuller expression. But since this church also assumes that ordained leadership follows the patriarchal order of creation, celibate women are deprived of pastoral ministry and marginalized into convents, while celibacy, drawn from the monastic (and, originally, non-clerical) tradition is imposed on married priests and bishops.²⁴ This synthesis of patriarchal and eschatological Christianity is passed on to the Middle Ages as normative Christianity.

The Reformation represents a revolt against the eschatological counter-culture institutionalized in monasticism. It abolished monasteries for either men or women and also clerical celibacy. But this meant that it rooted itself all the more exclusively in the patriarchal type of Christianity. The patriarchal family is now stressed as the nucleus of the Church, to be modelled by the married pastor and his obedient wife and children. However, this reform did not abolish the eschatological counter-culture from Christianity. It only meant that it popped up again as separate mystical and millennialist sects that declared the Church to be the messianic community living in the last age of world history. They anticipated the Kingdom by withdrawing from the evil social structures of this world. For some of these mystical and millennialist sects, this also led to the further conclusion that the redeemed had transcended the procreative order of history. Thus freed from gender roles, they were equal in the new order of redemption. Some combinations of ideas about the androgyny of God, the inclusion of women in teaching and church administration and the adoption of the celibacy of all the redeemed is found in many of these sects.²⁵

These two different lines of Christianity lend themselves to two alternative Christologies, although most Christologies have contained elements of both traditions. On the one hand, patriarchal Christianity moved toward a total integration of the Lordship of Christ into the lordships of worldly hierarchies. Christ as the divine Logos is seen as the apex of a hierarchical social order baptized as Christendom. Coming forth from the Father, Christ reigns over the cosmos. He, in turn, is the font of both the ecclesiastical and political hierarchies of Christendom and is imaged on the more personal level by the headship of male over female in the family and the rule of reason over the body in the human (male) microcosm. Women as subjects, as laity, as wives and as the image of the body, represent that which is to be ruled over by the male Christological principle in all these systems of dominance and submission.²⁶

In the mystic and millennialistic Christologies, by contrast, Christ represents a transcendent ground of being for the redeemed who have departed from this present world and its social systems and are awaiting and anticipating the redeemed order beyond history. Christ is either beyond gender (i.e. is asexual) or encompasses both genders on a level transcendent to the split into separate genders and reproductive roles (i.e. is spiritually androgynous). The redeemed participate in this eschatological life of Christ by transcending sexuality and reproduction (becoming celibate, in other words), thereby also recovering their spiritually androgynous humanity that existed prior to the fall into sin and death, and the consequent need for sex and reproduction. All sex hierarchy is thereby overcome, and women may participate equally with men in the leadership of the community of the redeemed.²⁷

Although these two views appear opposite, they are both based on a common presupposition; namely, that patriarchy is the order of creation. So, in order to transcend gender hierarchy, one must also transcend the order of creation which is the order of the reproduction of the species. A definition of redemption that transcended patriarchy, without abolishing one's relation to reproduction, was inconceivable until this presupposition was overcome. One had to be able to imagine an original order of nature that was egalitarian, rather than patriarchal, an original order of nature regarded as our natural embodied state, and not some spiritual existence prior to embodiment. In relation to this egalitarian order of nature, patriarchy would then be able to be named as a distortion of nature. The vindication of equality between the sexes could then be seen as a restoration of authentic humanity through historical reforms of culture and institutions, rather than as an a-historical departure from history and embodied existence.

The basis for this new anthropology was laid between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe and America. On the one hand, the patriarchal types of Christianity, of established Christendom, were increasingly repudiated as representative of unjust moribund social orders, rather than bearers of a redemptive future. On the other hand, the radical millennialist wing of Christianity began to naturalize itself into movements, such as the Levellers and Diggers in the English Puritan Revolution, that saw the egalitarian future as a new historical future, rather than as an eschatological future beyond history.²⁸ This led to further secularization of millennialist Christianity in the Enlightenment and the liberal and socialist movements of the nineteenth century.²⁹

These movements rejected the hierarchies of church and society of the *ancien régime* as contrary to true humanity. Instead they declared them to be unjust departures from an original egalitarian

order of nature. They set about creating new societies that would give equal citizenship to all 'men' (i.e. white propertied males). This would restore that 'order of nature' where all 'men' were 'created equal'. These liberal movements originally only sought to abolish the social hierarchy that divided the feudal classes of nobility from the merchants. But the universalist language they used lent itself to more radical efforts at inclusion of others in this promised future, such as workers (socialism), slaves (abolitionism), and women (feminism). Thus feminism expresses the explicit application of the new egalitarian theology of creation to gender, and hence a judgment on patriarchy as unjust and evil, rather than as the order of nature and the will of God.

We are now in a position to ask what effect it would have on Christology if this egalitarian anthropology was applied to all aspects of our understanding of the God-human relationship. First of all, it would mean a dismantling of that anthropology (with its false biological underpinnings) which regarded women as less complete expressions of human nature than men. This would further mean that we would have to affirm that women are equally theomorphic. They share equally in the image of God and the joint responsibility of humans for rule over creation (or, more correctly, care of creation). They do not symbolise that which is to be ruled over as body or non-human nature. If women are equally theomorphic, this also means that God is to be imaged equally as male and female. God, as transcendent source of being, and God's manifestation as Logos-Sophia, can be imaged in metaphors drawn from maleness and femaleness, without any subordination of the female symbols to the male symbols.

Thus we must say that the maleness of the historical Jesus has nothing to do with manifesting a male 'Son' who, in turn, images a male 'Father'. The divine 'Father' is equally mother. The 'son' is equally daughter. Perhaps the parental language for transcendence and immanence itself should be relativized by some metaphor other than parent and child to better state this relationship between God transcendent and God manifest in creation and history.

Turning to the historical Jesus, as the particular and paradigmatic expression of God's Logos-Sophia for the Christian Church, what is necessary is not a further evacuation of his particularity. Rather, we need a fuller ability to accept his particularity, without confusing one aspect of that particularity, his maleness, with the essence of Christ as God's word incarnate. What we find in most Christology is an effort to dissolve most aspects of Jesus' particularity (his Jewishness, as a first-century messianic Galilean) in order to make him the symbol of universal humanity; yet an insistence that the historical particularity of his maleness is essential to his ongoing representation. This idea, as we have seen, has

been based on the assumption that maleness could indeed represent universal generic humanity, an androcentric anthropology which must now be rejected. How then should we understand the relationship of Jesus as a historical individual in all his particularity, not only as male, but as first-century messianic Galilean Jew, and yet also make these particularities no longer limits on his representation as the embodiment of God's universal new word?

We should do that, not by emphasizing biological particularities, but rather by emphasizing his message as expressed in his ministry. This message was the revolutionary word of good news to the poor. Good news to the poor means that favor with God and hope of redemption is not based on social status in the hierarchies of unjust society, but is a free grace available to all who respond to it by repenting of their hardness of heart and being open to each other as brothers and sisters. In this perspective we see that the emphasis on Jesus' maleness as essential to his ongoing representation not only is not compatible but is contradictory to the essence of his message as good news to the marginalized *qua* women.

This means that we, the Church, who know Christ no longer after the flesh but after the spirit, carry on his presence in our midst, not by imitating any of his particularities of race or gender, but rather by preaching his word and living it in our lives. We must live as those who preach good news to the poor and repent of our false privileges of gender, race, class or culture. When we open our hearts to all persons as bearers of God's image, we also must be prepared to incur the hostility of those of this world, including those who call themselves 'church', committed to the opposite view. This means we can and must be able to encounter Christ, as one early Christian martyr text puts it, 'in the form of our sister'.³⁰

- 1 For the development of Logos Christology in the New Testament, particularly the gospel of John, see C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge U.P., 1963, pp. 263–285. For Logos Christianity in second century Christianity, especially the theology of Justin Martyr, see Erwin Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr*, Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1968, pp. 139–175.
- 2 Phyllis Bird, 'Male and Female He Created Them: Gen. 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation', *Harvard Theological Review* 74:2 (1981), pp. 129–159.
- 3 Gregory Nyssa, *De Opif*, *Hom.* 16.7; see Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church', in R. Ruether, ed., *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974, pp. 153–155.
- 4 Kari Bórresen, 'God's Image: Man's Image; Female Metaphors Describing God in the Christian Tradition', *Temenos* 19, Helsinki, 1983, pp. 17–32.
- 5 Augustine, *De Trinitate* 7.7.10.
- 6 Aristotle, *Gen An.* 729b. 737–738.
- 7 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, pt. 1, q. 92, art. 1.
- 8 This is the view taken by post-Christian feminists such as Naomi Goldenberg, *The Changing of the Gods*. Boston: Beacon, 1979.
- 9 For example, Is. 42:13, 14 and Is. 49: 14:15. See Leonard Swidler, *Biblical*

- Affirmations of Women. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979, pp. 21—50.
- 10 Swidler, *ibid*, pp. 36—48.
 - 11 Luke 11:49, Matt. 11:18—19: See James M. Robinson, 'Jesus as Sophos and Sophia: Wisdom and Tradition in the Gospels', and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Wisdom Mythology and the Christological Hymns of the New Testament', in Robert L. Wilkin, ed., *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*, South Bend, Indiana: Notre Dame U.P., 1975, pp. 35ff.
 - 12 See entry on 'Son of Man' in *An Inclusive Language Lectionary: Readings for Year A*, by the Inclusive Language Lectionary Committee, appointed by the Division of Education and Ministry, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983, appendix.
 - 13 Luke 1:46—55.
 - 14 Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40; Lk. 23:49, John 19:25. John alone has the tradition of the mother of Jesus at the cross, as well as the disciple John, but he too affirms the presence of Mary Magdalene there. In the resurrection traditions, Matthew says that the angel told the women to announce it to the disciples. Luke says only that they told it to the 'eleven and to all the others', and Mark says that they told no one of their experience. John has the most extended account of Mary Magdalene's presence, saying that first she told Peter and John of the empty tomb and then later she spoke to the risen Lord and was told by him to impart her revelation to the brethren: Matt. 28:1—8; Mark 16:1—8; Lk. 24:1—9; John 20:1—18. The gnostics elaborated the gospel stories of Mary Magdalene's role in the resurrection, and made her a key figure in interpreting the message of the resurrection to the male apostles. For the gnostics, this also affirms women's place in apostolic ministry and teaching. See the Gospel of Mary, in the *Nag Hammadi Library in English*, John Robinson *et al*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977, pp. 471—474.
 - 15 See Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus, an Experiment in Christology*, New York: Seabury, 1979, p. 703, ns. 31—33.
 - 16 Joel 2: 28—32: Acts 2: 17—21.
 - 17 See Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities', *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979, pp. 39—44.
 - 18 Didache 11:3—13:7.
 - 19 I Cor. 7:25—31.
 - 20 I Tim. 3: 1—12.
 - 21 See Denis R. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983, who argues that I Timothy was written by a second generation Christian representing a patriarchal view of Paul, to combat an alternative view of Paul found in the oral traditions of the story of Paul and Thecla.
 - 22 The Montanist women prophets were accused of abandoning their husbands, which suggests that they shared the view of the Acts of Paul and Thecla that women converts to Christ transcend their marital obligations. Gnostic women also believed that spiritual rebirth transcended marriage and procreation in a new state of androgynous existence. Both groups supported women in leadership, following the early Christian traditions of a leadership of apostle, prophets and teachers. See Fiorenza, 'Word, Spirit and Power', *op. cit.*, p. 42, and Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, New York: Random House, 1979, pp. 48—69.
 - 23 It became formulaic for the fourth century advocates of asceticism, such as St. Jerome and St. Athanasius, to affirm the three levels of blessings on states of life: thirty fold for marriage, sixty fold for continent widowhood and one hundred fold for virginity, in order to both affirm the superiority of chastity to marriage and yet also separate themselves from groups that forbade marriage altogether to the baptized. See Athanasius, Ep. 48 and Jerome, Ep. 48.2.
 - 24 Samuel Lauechli, *Power and Sexuality: The Emergence of Canon Law at the Council of Elvira*, Philadelphia: Temple U.P., 1972. The Council of Elvira in 400 A.D. was the first to mandate continence for the clergy, and shows the emerging connection between clerical celibacy and an obsession with control over female sexuality.

- 25 See Rosemary Ruether, 'Women in Utopian Movements' in R.R. Ruether and R.S. Keller, *Women and Religion in America: The Nineteenth Century*, New York: Harper and Row, 1981, pp. 46—100.
- 26 Eusebius, *Oration on Constantine*, 10.7.
- 27 The fullest development of the union of mystical and millennialist theology, together with the affirmation of sexual equality, is found in the theology of the Anglo-American sect, the Shakers, or the United Society of Christ's Second Appearing. See especially their Bible, *The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing*, United Society: 1856.
- 28 On the Leveller party in the Puritan Civil War, see especially William Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution*. New York: Columbia U.P., 1955, pp. 254—358; also Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: radical ideas during the English Revolution*, London: Temple Smith, 1972.
- 29 A secularised millennialism is typical of much of Enlightenment writing. See, for example, Antoine-Nicolas de Condorcet, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (June Barraclough, trans.), London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1955.
- 30 Acts of the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, in Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1972, p. 75.

Catharsis

Joan Armytage

They are those
Who are seen through glass.
I cannot touch their rib-cages
Or the hollows of their eyes.
Distant as fiction,
They are not real,
Though no author invents them,
No actor plays their tragedy,
To purge me
With my pity and my fear.
They are not real!
Suspend my disbelief
And, dried into bone,
Their children cling to me.
Dried into bone,
I cannot succour them.
Their dry land saps me,
Flies that crawl in their mouths
Crawl in mine.
They are those
Who are seen through glass,
Images that come from afar,
Vibrations that disturb,
Insisting on my pain
To make them real.