1

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395 rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services

Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

LEARNING, HOLINESS AND POWER
THE CULTURE OF THE CONVENT
FROM THE FOURTH TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY

by

Rebecca Sullivan

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts

School of Journalism and Communication

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario**

May, 1994

© 1994. Rebecca Sullivan

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your title - Votre référence

Your title - Votre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-92969-3

Canada

Name _____

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four-digit code in the spaces provided.

U·M·I

SUBJECT TERM

SUBJECT CODE

Subject Categories

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

Architecture 0729
Art History 0377
Cinema 0900
Dance 0378
Fine Arts 0357
Information Science 0723
Journalism 0391
Library Science 0399
Mass Communications 0708
Music 0413
Speech Communication 0459
Theater 0465

EDUCATION

General 0515
Administration 0514
Adult and Continuing 0516
Agricultural 0517
Art 0273
Bilingual and Multicultural 0282
Business 0688
Community College 0275
Curriculum and Instruction 0727
Early Childhood 0518
Elementary 0524
Finance 0277
Guidance and Counseling 0519
Health 0680
Higher 0745
History of 0520
Home Economics 0278
Industrial 0521
Language and Literature 0279
Mathematics 0280
Music 0522
Philosophy of 0998
Physical 0523

Psychology 0525
Reading 0535
Religious 0527
Sciences 0714
Secondary 0533
Social Sciences 0534
Sociology of 0340
Special 0529
Teacher Training 0530
Technology 0716
Tests and Measurements 0288
Vocational 0747

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS

Language 0679
General 0289
Ancient 0290
Linguistics 0291
Modern 0291
Literature 0401
General 0294
Classical 0295
Comparative 0297
Medieval 0298
Modern 0316
African 0591
American 0305
Asian 0352
Canadian (English) 0355
Canadian (French) 0593
English 0311
Germanic 0312
Latin American 0315
Middle Eastern 0313
Romance 0314
Slavic and East European 0314

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

Philosophy 0422
Religion 0318
General 0321
Biblical Studies 0319
Clergy 0320
History of 0322
Philosophy of 0469
Theology 0323

SOCIAL SCIENCES

American Studies 0323
Anthropology 0324
Archaeology 0326
Cultural 0327
Physical 0310
Business Administration 0272
General 0770
Accounting 0454
Banking 0338
Management 0385
Marketing 0501
Canadian Studies 0503
Economics 0505
General 0508
Agricultural 0509
Commerce Business 0510
Finance 0511
History 0358
Labor 0366
Theory 0351
Folklore 0366
Geography 0351
Gerontology 0578
History 0578

Ancient 0579
Medieval 0581
Modern 0582
Black 0328
African 0331
Asia, Australia and Oceania 0332
Canadian 0334
European 0335
Latin American 0336
Middle Eastern 0333
United States 0337
History of Science 0585
Law 0398
Political Science 0615
General 0616
International Law and Relations 0617
Public Administration 0814
Recreation 0452
Social Work 0626
Sociology 0627
General 0938
Criminology and Penology 0631
Demography 0628
Ethnic and Racial Studies 0629
Individual and Family Studies 0630
Industrial and Labor Relations 0700
Public and Social Welfare 0344
Social Structure and Development 0709
Theory and Methods 0999
Transportation 0453
Urban and Regional Planning 0453
Women's Studies 0453

THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Agriculture 0473
General 0285
Agronomy 0475
Animal Culture and Nutrition 0476
Animal Pathology 0359
Food Science and Technology 0476
Forestry and Wildlife 0479
Plant Culture 0480
Plant Pathology 0817
Plant Physiology 0777
Range Management 0746
Riology 0306
General 0287
Anatomy 0308
Biostatistics 0309
Botany 0379
Cell 0329
Ecology 0353
Entomology 0369
Genetics 0293
Limnology 0410
Microbiology 0307
Molecular 0317
Neuroscience 0416
Oceanography 0433
Physiology 0821
Radiation 0778
Veterinary Science 0472
Zoology 0786
Biophysics 0760
General 0786
Medical 0760

EARTH SCIENCES

Biogeochemistry 0425
Geochemistry 0996

Geodesy 0370
Geology 0372
Geophysics 0373
Hydrology 0388
Mineralogy 0411
Paleobotany 0345
Paleoecology 0426
Paleontology 0418
Paleozoology 0985
Palynology 0427
Physical Geography 0368
Physical Oceanography 0415

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Environmental Sciences 0768
Health Sciences 0566
General 0300
Audiology 0992
Chemotherapy 0567
Dentistry 0350
Education 0769
Hospital Management 0758
Human Development 0962
Immunology 0564
Medicine and Surgery 0347
Mental Health 0569
Nursing 0570
Nutrition 0380
Obstetrics and Gynecology 0354
Occupational Health and Therapy 0381
Ophthalmology 0571
Pathology 0419
Pharmacology 0572
Pharmacy 0382
Physical Therapy 0573
Public Health 0574
Radiology 0575
Recreation 0575

Speech Pathology 0460
Toxicology 0383
Home Economics 0386

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Pure Sciences 0485
Chemistry 0749
General 0466
Agricultural 0487
Analytical 0488
Biochemistry 0738
Inorganic 0490
Nuclear 0491
Organic 0494
Pharmaceutical 0495
Physical 0754
Polymer 0405
Radiation 0605
Mathematics 0986
Physics 0606
General 0608
Acoustics 0748
Astronomy and Astrophysics 0607
Atmospheric Science 0798
Atomic 0759
Electronics and Electricity 0609
Elementary Particles and High Energy 0610
Fluid and Plasma 0752
Molecular 0756
Nuclear 0611
Optics 0463
Radiation 0346
Solid State 0981
Statistics 0346
Applied Sciences 0981
Applied Mechanics 0346
Computer Science 0981

Engineering 0537
General 0538
Aerospace 0539
Agricultural 0540
Automotive 0541
Biomedical 0542
Chemical 0543
Civil 0544
Electronics and Electrical 0348
Heat and Thermodynamics 0545
Hydraulic 0546
Industrial 0547
Marine 0794
Materials Science 0548
Mechanical 0743
Metallurgy 0551
Mining 0552
Nuclear 0549
Packaging 0765
Petroleum 0554
Sanitary and Municipal 0790
System Science 0428
Geotechnology 0796
Operations Research 0795
Plastics Technology 0994
Textile Technology 0994

PSYCHOLOGY

General 0621
Behavioral 0384
Clinical 0622
Developmental 0620
Experimental 0623
Industrial 0624
Personality 0625
Physiological 0989
Psychobiology 0349
Psychometrics 0632
Social 0451

**THESIS ACCEPTANCE FORM
M.A. CANDIDATE**

The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research acceptance of the thesis

**LEARNING, HOLINESS AND POWER:
THE CULTURE OF THE CONVENT FROM THE 4TH
TO THE 12TH CENTURY**

submitted by Rebecca Sullivan, B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

M. L. D. M. J.

Thesis Supervisor

Paul Attalla

Chair, School of Journalism and Communication

Carleton University

I am the one whom they call Life,
and you have called Death.
I am the one whom they call Law,
and you have called Lawlessness.
I am the one whom you have pursued,
and I am the one whom you have seized.
I am the one whom you have scattered,
and you have gathered me together.
I am the one before whom you have been ashamed,
and you have been shameless to me.
I am she who does not keep festival
and I am she whose festivals are many.
I, I am godless,
and I am the one whose God is great.
I am the one whom you have reflected upon,
and you have scorned me.
I am unlearned
and they learn from me.
I am the one whom you have despised,
and you reflect upon me.
I am the one whom you have hidden from,
and you appear to me.
But whenever you hide yourselves,
I myself will appear.

The Thunder, Perfect Mind (excerpt)
Nag Hammadi Library

manjue Adam!

Adam and Eve
12th c. Morality Play

ABSTRACT

The goal of this thesis is to advance understanding of certain cultural, epistemological and political foundations of medieval education. Generating an alternative history from themes of feminist materialist-postmodernism and epistemology, *Learning, Holiness and Power* locates its object of study in the medieval convent, a pre-eminent centre of learning from the fourth to the twelfth century. Medieval women attained education and independence from theological and philosophical tenets of gender equality and ontological duality. However, their unique positions and experiences within successive societies point towards different ways of describing the world that can influence feminist strategies for change in present material and ideological conditions. At a time when our sense of history is at risk, it seems vital that we continue to examine from new positions our circumstances across not only fields of space but also time and thought in order to build networks of knowledge satisfying in their complexity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis could not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many people both inside and out of Carleton University.

For his guidance and enthusiasm, I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Michael Dorland, whose original and intriguing approach to communications history motivated me to attempt this project in the first place. Prof. Eileen Saunders also provided much valued advice and direction at times when even I didn't know where I was heading. Darlene Zaremba and Carole Crasswell generously offered assistance in traversing the often mired path of university administration. Prof. Joe Ramisch's insightful comments and suggestions for continued research are deeply appreciated and will certainly be incorporated in future work.

Father Costello and Mr. Tetreau, from Regis College (University of Toronto), were kind enough to take time out of their busy schedules and personally assist me in my research. My sisters, Louise and Diane, helped me at every turn in the road, from proof-reading to crisis intervention, giving me a lifeline to the outside world. Finally, I especially want to thank my parents, Bob and Alice Sullivan, whose faith (and faith in me) has been a source of strength and love all my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
 INTRODUCTION	 1
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
A PARTIAL HISTORY OF HISTORY	12
The Choices of Histories	14
New Cultural History	25
NEW CULTURAL HISTORY AND MEDIEVAL EPISTEMOLOGY	32
Organicism	34
The Four Ways of Reading	37
The Numinous and Salvific Experience	42
Hierarchy and Equality	44
CONCLUSION	46
 ASCETICISM AND COMMUNITY	 48
THE LATIN TRADITION	49
Asceticism	50
Heresies	57
A Monastic Dynasty	68
THE CELTIC TRADITION	79
Druidic Christianity	80
In the Name of the Mother: Saint Brigid of Kildare	82
CONCLUSION	86
 THE CONVENT AS KINGDOM	 88
THE EMBRYONIC SELF IN A DISPLACED WORLD	90
THE BATTLE FOR BRITAIN	94
The Court of Hilda	96
THE DAUGHTERS OF MEROVECH	100
Queens and Pawns: Radegund and Bathild	101
THE CAROLINGIAN DARK AGES	107
Lioba's Holiness in Love	111
THE CONVENTUAL RENAISSANCE IN SAXONY	114
Hrotsvit: The Loud Cry of Gandersheim	117
CONCLUSION	119

INSTRUMENTALITY AND IDENTITY	122
LOVE, NATURE AND THE WOMEN QUESTION	125
The Death of the Idea	125
The Breakdown of Interpretive Knowledge	127
The Cult of Our Lady/ies	130
ORDERS AND DISORDER	134
The Monastic Experiments	136
Sisters of Eve	139
TWILIGHT IN THE CONVENT:	
THE LIVES AND WORKS OF HERRAD, HILDEGARD AND HÉLOÏSE	143
Herrad's Garden of Delights	144
Hildegard's Cosmology of Sex	149
The Ethica of Héloïse	154
CONCLUSION	157
 CONCLUSION: THE SECOND COMING	 161
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 167
 APPENDIX A: TABLE OF NUNS AND THEIR PLACE IN HISTORY	 179
 APPENDIX B: SELECTED SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES ON WOMEN	 183
 APPENDIX C: ILLUMINATIONS	 186

INTRODUCTION

Modern notions of epistemic authority derive from an historic tradition of women's inferiority and impurity which can be said to have originated in a Christian context from western European civilization of the medieval age. Today, feminist scholars working in both materialist-postmodern cultural critique and epistemology suggest that we look back to the origins of modern institutions and discourses in order to reveal the historical specificity and political arbitrariness of knowledge construction. Even as they write, they can also see looming in their own themes and praxis historical shadows of forgotten women.

This thesis begins at the intersection between a history of epistemologies, sociological investigation of women's structures and representations, and feminist critical theories of learning and culture. Under this inter-disciplinary framework, the study of the medieval convent from the fourth to the twelfth century and its relations with sacerdotal, temporal and scholastic culture releases a cascade of intricate subjects and issues about both our past and present, organized around three central questions. How has knowledge been legitimated to erase women's scholarly achievements from history and how did some women overcome their limitations to build empowering epistemic communities of their own? How has patriarchy been manifested across great spans of time and space, re-defining and re-asserting itself in both the material conditions and ideologies of successive

societies? And what are the subversive possibilities for women to re-read history and discover the medieval convent in the gaps between the combined hegemonic power of religious, governmental and educative forces?

Applying feminist epistemologies to intellectual history destabilizes the once-unquestioned authority of propositional knowledge. Feminist theories of practical and experiential knowledges can revitalize the dominant order of epistemology with normative and communal dimensions. Facts and objective realities based on observation can be analyzed according to their contexts of justification that have re-constructed women's lives in marginalized cultural locations (Code, 1991, p. 32). The medieval convent is one such space, marked with distinct limitations and possibilities for its inhabitants. Women in the convents were from the upper echelons of society -- queens and wealthy aristocrats. They brought their dowries to the establishments but they also brought their learning, their sophisticated leisure pursuits and their political acumen. In light of their socially situated, partial perspectives of knowledge formation, it can be proposed that women's educational, spiritual and political culture has a significantly different history than men's and, therefore, leaves different impressions on what we view as truth today. However, the expanding of the epistemological model is not new. As far back as Plato and Aristotle, philosophers have argued that knowledge is formed both practically and propositionally (Dalmiya & Alcoff, 1993, p. 220). The two forms of knowledge have been conveniently separated into the ontological categories of

feminine and masculine: a division which, although repeatedly criticized and queried from both feminist and patriarchal positions, continues in ongoing debates about gendered experience and sex roles. Appeals to the feminine include subjective, emotive and embodied understandings of the world; while the masculine represents the objective, rational and distanced aspects. That the division of the world is gendered does not presuppose that the categories of gender are isolated at the biological, psychological and cultural level in women and men (Newman, 1987, p. 266). To state that there is nothing essential or natural to being a woman is an attack not on the ontologies of gender but the ideologies. For when some scholars today proffer a new interest in immanent dynamics and synergies between the self and the world to work alongside objectivity in knowledge construction, they are larkening back to the medieval aesthetic and philosophical imagination when philology was the bride of science (Bordo, 1986, p. 446).

Materialist theories of knowledge, culture and society call attention to the organizing arrangements of patriarchy and its systematic suppression of women's practices and experiences from the centres of power (Hennessy, 1993, p. 25).

There are real, structural reasons for the relatively few numbers of "great women" in the pages of history. Denied full access to education, awareness of the women who worked before them and opportunities to apply their knowledge in the political, economic and social spheres, each generation of women has spent

considerable energy asserting their desire and their right to participate in the world (Lerner, 1993, p. 166). Re-focusing the lens upon the few who did overcome great obstacles to realize learning, holiness and power in the medieval age is a cause for celebration but not without remembering the vast numbers of lost and frustrated women who were cheated out of their intellect. In the course of eight hundred years, patriarchal rationalization has shifted from the late-classical patristic doctrine of men's ritual purity against the essential uncleanness of women to a falsely naturalized theory of women's intellectual inferiority expounded in twelfth-century scholasticism. That the secular medieval model has remained with us for so long is evident in the works of the distinguished historian, Henri Marrou, who could only understand the stress upon reading and education for nuns in sixth-century monastic rules by what it meant for men:

If all this was so important for women -- *who naturally did not go in for education to the same extent* -- it was obviously just as important for men (Marrou, 1956, p. 444, italics mine).

Unfortunately for Marrou, it was not just as important. Women received a much more intensive education in literature and language theory than their monastic and noble brothers (Heinrich, 1924, p. 85). Their legacy of texts and translations has been perpetually under fire in modern interpretations that attempt to deny their authorship, preferring to credit male companions or assistants (Dronke, 1984, p. ix). There will be no such debate in this thesis.

The efforts of male religious, political and scholastic leaders to prevent women from entering their structures collude and collide into an ambiguous sense of historical reality. Hegemonic order has been in a constant state of flux, requiring revision, re-adjustment and re-evaluation to maintain its precarious hold not only on past societies but also on the way we view the past today (Hennessy, 1993, p. 76). Thus, there is a second, inter-related strand of patriarchy that is concerned with meaning-making and language exploitation. This discursive element implies that hegemony can never be without contradiction but leaves gaps in its logics for women to enter and transfigure knowledge. In the medieval age, women's sphere was limited but the equal weight given to feminine aspects of cosmic reality in hegemonic discourse accorded them a dignity and autonomy that has since fallen into obscurity (Cantor, 1963, p. 13). Accessing both rational and spiritual philosophies from a theology of gender equality supported by original biblical texts, although not always by scholarly exegesis, women in the convent generated a potent fusion between nature and the divine, practices and mentalities that bespoke their unique lives. It is not intended, however, to enter into the debate on the veracity of theological and philosophical tenets that determined women's scholarship. The strategy of this thesis is to examine how those tenets were practically applied, validated and simultaneously undermined in an alternative epistemology within women's monastic communities. It unfolds from three different locations. The earliest Christian women first created monastic establishments in the late-fourth century. Later, medieval queens

maintained and strengthened the monastery as centres of learning and temporal power during the initial phase of Christianizing and nation-building across western Europe. In the aftermath, when Church and state stabilized, women lost their hard-earned positions of authority and the convent began its slow decline into obscurity. In all these periods, women's ways of learning and thinking operated as alternatives to the hegemonic discourses and institutions of knowledge construction. They can, therefore, appeal to feminist utopian dreams of other, holistic ways of thinking and knowing the world.

The general structure of the thesis is historical, with three chapters in the main body of the text dedicated respectively to the late classical antiquity, early medieval and high medieval ages. However, this is not a history but a study of the medieval convent as a site from which to launch a feminist critical investigation into certain epistemological, material and ideological aspects of western European culture. Thus, while some original sources are used in translation, much interpretation derives from synthesizing aspects of the different bodies of scholarship used. It is a necessary approach in order to conceptualize not just a relatively unknown past but new directions and problematics for future research.

Chapter One, the *Literature Review*, outlines three different paradigms of history: exemplary, evolutionary and social. A discussion of how they are used by medievalists and can be used here leads to a deeper investigation of new cultural history. When this history receives an injection of feminist epistemological and materialist-postmodern cultural theories, the field of inquiry expands and reflects upon itself in time and space. To illustrate this intellectual framework and its ability to alter our perspective on the past and present, the chapter concludes with a review of hegemonic medieval epistemology and its influence on women's access to education and conception of the self as 'woman.'

A lengthy prologue into the medieval age is vital to this study because the origins of ascetic monasticism derive from the decline of the Roman Empire. Chapter Two, *Asceticism and Community*, looks at two traditions in early Christian organization, the Latin and the Celtic, to show how the residual patriarchy of pagan-Roman and Hebraic cultures was challenged not so much by their women as by an alien culture, Ireland, which envisioned another way of living, thinking and believing. On the continent, the codification of Roman canon law was pressured by challenges from heretical cults to the Latin Fathers' theories of ritual purity, offering women roles as teachers, priests and scriptural interpreters. Nevertheless, the Catholicism did attract many noble women for whom the traditional roles of marriage and motherhood held few advantages for their intellectual interests. Three women in particular, Marcella, Paula and Melania,

joined with famous men to found the first official monasteries, dedicated to Christian learning and communal piety between the sexes. On the other side of the world to them, a young farm girl became the patron saint of Ireland. Brigid introduced the double monastery with the abbess as leader and promoted a simple piety based on good works and contemplation.

The Convent as Kingdom spans four dynasties in Britain, Frankland and Saxony. It will focus on the secular canonesses and royal abbeys of the Northumbrian, Merovingian, Carolingian and Ottonian empires from the sixth to the tenth century. As the feminine arm of imperial power, the royal abbeys were the households of queens and their women companions for all but a brief period during Charlemagne's empire. They exerted a significant influence upon the Church and state and controlled education for men as well as women, adhering to principles set by the Celtic Church of Ireland. Isolated in remote communities on the frontiers of western civilization, women in the convent forged their own sense of reality and claimed authority from the man who was most sympathetic to their needs -- Christ. Visions and relics asserted an other-worldly connection of their mental and sensorial faculties with divine love emanating from the heavens. Included in this chapter will be a look at the Abbey of Whitby, Northumbria and its leaders, Hilda and Aelfled. The continental achievements will be reviewed through the pioneering efforts of the Merovingian queens Radegund and Bathild, the visionary appeals of Lioba to divine love, and the earliest extant writings of a

medieval nun, the Ottonian dramatist and historian, Hrotsvit. This extended period of Christian conversion and nation-building was the apex of power for women religious, followed by a final outburst of creative energy.

The transition into what is called the high medieval age, the eleventh and twelfth centuries, is marked by a division of society into the sacerdotal, temporal and scholastic spheres. It was a period of incredible intellectual creativity, spurred by the discovery of classical texts and Arabian science during the Crusades. These new forms of learning asserted women's inferiority over spiritual equality in competing logics of subordination based on a dichotomization of the rational and the emotional. The collapse of empires and rigorous monastic reforms weakened royal nuns' ranks while the founding of quasi-secular cathedral schools usurped the convents as the centres of high learning. *Instrumentality and Identity* examines the implications that these revolutions in faith and knowledge had for women's sense of position and purpose and shows that, despite new theories of their weakness of mind and body, some women were still able to claim authority through appeals to Christ. Two women forged remarkable reputations for their literary, artistic and scientific endeavours. Hildegard of Bingen, considered one of the greatest mystics in Catholic history, exploited her papal-sanctioned position as a mouthpiece of God to speak publicly on political, social and intellectual issues of her time. Herrad of Landsberg presided over a major convent in Alsace, renowned for its learning and prosperity. She is best known for the *Hortus*

Deliciarum, an encyclopedic account of the knowledge of her time which was used as a teaching guide for her nuns. A final woman plays counterpoint to her peers, and illustrates the declining status of the convent. Héloïse, renegade lover of the great thinker Pierre Abélard, and a reputed scholar herself, was coerced into taking the veil following the tragic end of their affair. Her passionate protests indicate not only that the convent was ceasing to be an intellectual refuge for women but also that new, illicit spaces for revolutionary thinkers to work, learn and pray were developing.

Exploring this large historical narrative in the context of our present-day concerns about knowledge, culture and identity will, hopefully, suggest other potential sites where women and men have realized empowering alternatives to the modern rationalist project. It, therefore, tends towards "presentist issues" which, admittedly, have a masculine model built-in after centuries of prominence. In other words, the questions about religion, gender and knowledge have generated largely from issues of male religiosity that have provided unsatisfactory theories for a feminist praxis (Bynum, 1987, p. 29). The emphasis here on institution-building and text authority are traditionally male preserves but the intention of this thesis is neither to footnote hegemonic history nor rarefy women's experiences as wholly divided from men's. Rather, it is to re-acquaint the emotional with the rational so that women and men together can enjoy the promises of both realms without gendered reprisal.

LEARNING, HOLINESS AND POWER

LITERATURE REVIEW

A PARTIAL HISTORY OF HISTORY

History is narrative not only of the past but also of the present and its imaginings of possible futures. The strategy of historical investigation best succeeds when it reflects upon current ideas, relationships and structures in a multi-dimensional context of civilizations and cultures in process across fields of time and space. Delving into past moments of changing societies and focusing on specific phenomena, history can begin to query the conditions of instabilities and alliances in the social structure that propelled the course of human thought and activity. In that it acknowledges the potential of change and that it uses the past to underline the present, history can be invaluable for exposing the roots of embedded ideologies -- those struggles over meaning and the systems which generate and disperse knowledge in any society -- that tend toward naturalization and stasis. This thesis uses all of the above stated purposes of history to examine the dawn of Christian monasticism and its gradual marginalization of women from the realm of knowledge construction over the course of eight hundred years. History, it is often said, begins first with a sense of wonder, then a clearly formulated question (Cantor, 1963, p. 6). The culture of the convent from the late antiquity of the fourth century to the twelfth century's 'medieval renaissance'

is certainly breathtaking in achievements and scope. What remains, then, is to determine the extent and direction of the inquiry.

History obscures as much as it reveals: choices in topic, parameter and methodology are subjective, made not to prove the truth of history but to illuminate one of many possible truths. When a history has been hidden for so long that its very existence begins to be doubted, original, propositional questioning is the vital first step. Just to return women to the study of medieval social and ecclesiastical life is an ambitious project undertaken by a community of scholars that has grown considerably in the past twenty years. An extensive library of works now documents historical evidence that women did most brilliantly and devotedly contribute to the wealth of knowledge in a burgeoning civilization we now call Christendom. Their marginalization and eclipse in the recorded history of their male contemporaries is a topic for much philosophical and theological, not to mention historical, debate. As well, feminist epistemologists seek to uncover the historical shifts in women's struggles and the potential for change not just of current systems but also of the past and how it is ordered to legitimize ideologies of knowledge construction. That the system of power relations in western civilization has been, and remains, patriarchal reflects both material conditions and ideologies which operate inter-actively to relegate women's labour and intellectuality to the margins, denying them full rights and opportunities in successive societies (Hennessy, 1993, p. 25). A medieval history

need also look at another face of patriarchy. Misogyny, the male fear of female sexuality, perpetually informed the representations of women as both lauded and vilified figures according to sex roles established to serve the shifting needs of a patriarchal regime. However, women's choices of positions and self-direction in an ambivalent system that related their identities to their use-value by male authority were undermined by alternative discourses and representations fostered by the convent (Bynum, 1987, p. 15). The questions to be asked, therefore, are about the often-dissonant form patriarchy took in the medieval age. How did a patriarchal regime provide a space for women to study, learn, write and teach? How did the misogynist language of medieval culture both support and weaken male positions of power? And how did particular women subvert the dominant teaching that marked them as inferior to administer great institutions and produce texts revered in their time and still worthy of scrutiny today?

The Choices of Histories

Attempts to understand aspects of medieval civilization from different perspectives constitute varying approaches. Three paradigms, exemplar, evolutionary and social history, offer an overview of the changing pressures, doubts and critiques that have been applied to medievalism in particular and history in general (Stoianovich, 1976, p. 10).

Exemplar or Devotional-Personal

Looking at history through the eyes of great figures affords a view from the inside of institutions and creative innovations (Cantor, 1963, p. 12). These histories tend to be illustrative, usually through the lives of leaders or mavericks in the prevailing thought of the age. For medievalism, the emphasis tends to be on ecclesiastical and cultural history rather than that of political or legal institutions (ibid., p. 11). Devotional-personal history has an instructional-rhetorical undercurrent in that the historian attempts to elucidate, by example, what comprised and, by implication, continue to comprise personal, spiritual and intellectual greatness according to a subjective valuation of present thought systems (Stoianovich, 1976, p. 26). There is a tendency for medievalists from this school to over-stress social consensus in their drive to explicate a better way, at the expense of the often bloody conflicts and internal debates between the competitive spheres of Church and state during this era (Cantor, 1963, p. 13). Exemplar history includes three frameworks: chronicle offers a re-telling of the events and conditions of a life, with little explanation or social context; narrative does attempt to place the biography into a limited social context, offering some kind of systemic explanation for the person's life; and critical-explanatory heightens the relationship between individual and society by a methodological

application of pre-existing theories of structures and systems to an explanation of the historical context (Stoianovich, 1976, p. 27)¹.

Evolutionary or Developmental

There are two directions for evolutionary history, the universalist and particularist, which encompass three different frameworks for medievalism. Both traditions are nationalistically inclined and informed by a notion of progress. They begin with the assumption that all geographical constructs will inevitably evolve into a nation-state, and consider the modern democratic state as the perfect vehicle for progress (Cantor, 1963, p. 33). The universalist historian is largely concerned with myth-building. Evoking the general flavour of an era, this history suggests that there is some essence guiding the systems and structures which composed the era (Stoianovich, 1976, p. 29). The German school of *Geistesgeschichte*, literally 'spirit history,' inquires into the soul of medievalism. It attempts to build history through a dialectical-spiritual approach that is more concerned with the ideals of the age -- such as the crusading ideal, the monastic ideal or the ideal of kingship -- than an actual record of deeds (Cantor, 1963,

¹Stoianovich refers to two texts which further develop these three different applications. For chronicle and narrative, see Morton White. 1963. "The Logic of Historical Narration," in Sidney Hook, ed. *Philosophy and History: A Symposium*. New York: New York University Press. pp. 5-6 (pp. 3-31). The critical-explanatory model is developed in Wilhelm Dilthey. 1962. *Pattern and Meaning in History: Thoughts on History and Society*. New York: Harper & Row. pp. 142-44.

p. 10). Including scholars such as Carl Erdmann and Percy E. Schramm², this paradigm tends to evade any critical assessment or explanation for the success and failures of the ideals and so, it is often said that it "describes a history that happened to no one" (ibid., p. 11).

Particularist studies examine the varieties of historical experiences, including social, political, economic and technological (Stoianovich, 1976, p. 32). There are two strains in medievalism. State-building is a largely American tradition that investigates the medieval contribution to the machinations of the modern state (Cantor, 1963, p. 13). Economic and technological determinism is a further abstraction that seeks to explain large social and cultural transformations by minute changes in these aforementioned spheres (ibid., p. 14). Studies concentrate on tracing the patterns of trade and commerce, the inventions of new tools, the rise of urbanism and new classes, and the delineation of public and private life.

Quasi-Sociological or Social History

The quasi-sociological school owes a certain debt to neo-marxism in that it contains a broad concern with the notion of totality. With that, the tendency is

²Carl Erdmann (1898-1945). 1977. *The Origin of the Idea of the Crusade* (original title: *Die Entstehung des Kreuzzugsgedankens*), trans. by Marshall W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Percy E. Schramm (1894-1970). 1968. *Kaiser Koenige und Papste. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Geschichte des Mittelalters* (Emperors, Kings and Popes: A Collection of Essays on the History of the Middle Ages). Stuttgart: Hiersemann. vol. 1-4.

toward a view of society as something more than the sum of individuals, and civilization as more than the collection of fragments from social, political, economic and cultural spheres (ibid., p.14). There are two prominent and interrelated traditions within this paradigm, the functional-structural and the Annales school.

Perhaps the most important scholar from the functional-structural tradition is Emile Durkheim. In Durkheim's model of history, there are four major stages. First, the object under investigation, in its original moment of historical consciousness, is analyzed by its theoretical distinctions from its predecessors. The second stage synthesizes the change in direction by re-uniting the two conjunctive theories of social action that were previously in conflict. The third stage of history relates the arising theory to the social function that was being problematized. Finally, the theory's historical relevance is assessed in terms of its structural and functional successes and failures. These four stages -- conflict, debate, application and appraisal -- presuppose a fluid relationship between ideas and actions at any historical moment.

Durkheim is especially pertinent to this thesis because his chief concerns are broadly, ours: the functions of religion and the history of education. According to Durkheim:

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden -- beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, and all those who adhere to them (Durkheim, 1976, p. 47).

The function of religion, therefore, is to identify, classify and ultimately establish identity within a social body (Erickson, 1993, p. 5). It provides the substance, that is the theology and philosophy, as well as the form or epistemology of knowledge (Durkheim, 1976, p. 9). Theology is the analysis of faith, its doctrines, principles and values. Philosophy is the critical investigation of reality and the nature of existence. Epistemology details a theory of knowledge, especially its methods and forms of validation or logics. Durkheim himself believed religion to be eternal and ontological (ibid., p. 427). To him, religion was a pre-existing state that gathered force through the communion of ideas or the *représentations collectives* of social groups (Pickering, 1984, p. 313). It was both action, a system of practices and rituals, and thought, a system of ideas or speculations which would enrich and organize communities (Durkheim, 1976, p. 428). Therefore, this two-fold expression was itself scientific in that it attempted to explain and apply ways of understanding human beings in dynamic action with the world (Pickering, 1984, p. 302). Providing a logic, a language, supposition and presupposition, religion was the science of science or even the science before science (Durkheim, 1976, p. 430).

As the affectual function, action performed a salvific role; that is, through taboos like paedophilia and customs like marriage, it would prevent moral decay of the collective spiritual body. Thought, the intellectual function, was the greatest faculty of the human race. It assigned values and declared truths in the pursuit of an ideal end to civilization (Pickering, 1984, p. 316). Secondary functions complemented both action and thought. The ascetic or controlling function inhibited the individual ego and curbed impulsive desires that might damage the whole. The integrative function maintained equilibrium and regulated society by drawing individuals into personal relationships that strengthened the entire community (ibid., p. 209). This model implied that there existed two elements to humanity. The first was the sacred, or the communally based "moral remarking" that represented rationality and the mysterium (Erickson, 1993, p. 12). The second was the profane or irrational and intelligible element that concerned itself with the pragmatic and material things of this world (ibid.). Both were integral to human history but, conceded Durkheim, the sacred was somehow more 'dignified' and, therefore, the profane must be subjugated (Durkheim, 1976, p. 37). This hierarchical relationship was further complicated because Durkheim attributed the profane to the roles of women in society. Sacralization rituals involved the repudiation of women, either in their role as mother/nurturing force or lover/sexual force (Erickson, 1993, p. 21). His dichotomous arrangement generates an oppositional relationship between sacred and profane; that is, profanity cancels out the sacred and the sacred implies the absence of the profane

(Code, 1991, p. 29). However, the usefulness of his categories and definitions need not be denied because of Durkheim's own evaluations and delimitations. The potential for conflict in using Durkheim's theories in a feminist context can be assuaged by acknowledging their gendered bias as historically relevant to pre-existing norms and relationships and incorporating that bias into the critical understanding of how this sacred/masculine - profane/feminine dichotomy has permeated theories of religion.

Work from the Annales school, named for a journal founded by French social historians Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre in 1929, inquires into one of any number of systems or structures of a society and surveys its integration into the totality of culture and civilization (Stoianovich, 1976, p. 237). Known also as the French historical method, the Annales approach is indebted to the functional-structural sociology spearheaded by Durkheim and neo-marxist theories of the ongoing relationship between the way a society structures itself and its economic base. The Annales school has used for its foundations the Gramscian notion of hegemony and neo-marxist definitions of civilization, culture and society, which are useful for understanding the history of the medieval convent. According to Fernand Braudel, one of the school's leaders, civilization is a totality of long duration, a series of networks of communication across time and space and a system of realities that exceeds the lifespan of any specific society (ibid., p. 148). Culture is a construct that incorporates collective regimes of knowledge,

representations and ideals. In its action of sense-making and imagination-ordering, culture is discursive; that is, it is an articulation or narrative understanding of how the world and human lives interact. Thus, in this way, gender roles become culturally determined, as do class, race and ethnicity. To the Annales scholar, therefore, culture is a generalized phenomenon, plastic in form and spatially fluid (ibid., p. 142). Society is the amalgamation of those subsystems and structures which concretize the process of making sense and providing order to a culture (ibid., p. 138). Finally, hegemony is described as the diffusion of one concept of reality through a society manifested in both its institutions and ideologies. It surreptitiously informs all sense of moral, traditional, religious and political principles and, thus, saturates all social relations (ibid.) However, if culture is discursive, then hegemony cannot be absolute but must contain gaps and fissures which need constant justification and elaborate re-definition (Hennessy, 1993, p. 77). This four-tiered model allows for linkages across subsystems and theories about culture in general. Ultimately, Annales history is about the visible and invisible, the literal and interpretive functions of human communication and its forms across fields of time and space (Stoianovich, 1976, p. 237). Its greatest danger is its tendency to be reductionist. It eschews individuals and personalities in favour of roles and positions (Stuard, 1976, p. 1). This is particularly problematic when applied to the history of women. The unending feminist struggle for women to be recognized as *people* is elided and

large psychological and epistemological questions are often overlooked in the meticulous emphasis on a single social factor.

Feminist Social History

Adherents to the feminist offshoot of the Annales school study the daily life and mentalities of women in order to integrate women's positions into the fabric of social history (ibid., p. 2). By their work, they hope to uncover and assess some of the many roots of sexism that have pervaded throughout history (Rosenthal, 1990, p. x). However, the narrowness of any one approach to a general sense of 'culture' suggests that it is not the roots but the branches they investigate. For example, the conflict and confluence of medieval ecclesiastical laws with residual household codes of pagan Roman society resonated through all moral, social, legal, theological and political debates about women's roles and positions in early Christendom. Susan Mosher Stuard, a staunch advocate of feminist social history, suggests that "there is no better issue in which to weigh this problem than contraception" (Stuard, 1976, p. 6). The history of this medical tool is certainly a legitimate and potentially fascinating topic, but it is not necessarily the best way and, in fact, is precariously close to technological determinism. There seems to be an inclination toward assessing -- estimating the value or quality of an object to the totality of culture -- rather than analyzing or examining in detail not just the material conditions but also the ideological properties of contraception that could be used to control women both physically and philosophically. Thus, the

work generated tends towards footnoting a hegemonic sense of history rather than peering into the gaps to undermine the practice of legitimating present societies with historical precedents (Hennessy, 1993, p. 111). Even the most critical assaults on past systems cannot sufficiently rupture the dominant discourse because they rarefy women's subordinated, marginalized position and do not consider alternative networks of understanding as co-existing subversively with hegemonic society.

Most of the existing work on medieval women resides in this academic territory. As a body of scholarship, it is comprehensive in scope and exhaustive in primary research. Studies include book ownership and family seals³, education⁴, and episcopal authority of women⁵. However, their conclusions do not often move very far from their thesis. In other words, they only ask if women owned books, used seals, received an education or exercised limited church power and they answer in the affirmative. Questions as to how women used their property, their schooling or their administrative opportunities need to be brought to the forefront

³Susan Groag Bell. 1993. "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, edited by Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski. Athens: University of Georgia Press. pp. 149-187.

Brigitte Bedos-Rezak. 1990. "Medieval Women in French Sigillographic Sources," in *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History*, edited by Joel T. Rosenthal. Athens: University of Georgia Press. pp. 1-36.

⁴Joan Ferrante. 1980. "The Education of Women in the Middle Ages in Theory, Fact and Fantasy," in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*. pp. 213-229.

⁵Joan Morris. 1973. *The Lady Was a Bishop*. New York: The MacMillan Company.

in order to link the history of medieval women not only with their particular culture and civilization but also with a larger totality of women's cultures and civilizations throughout history and their ongoing, fluid relationship with hegemonic order. A fourth paradigm can now be added to historical research, but it is a pseudo-paradigm which combines the elements outlined from the others with aspects of materialist-postmodern cultural theory into an alchemical mix of history, critique and primary research.

New Cultural History

New cultural history in the feminist vein is a synthesis of feminist critique and diverse aspects of the three paradigms, exemplar, evolutionary and quasi-sociological. It takes a position that acknowledges women's integration as much as their exploitation in regimes of cultural order and systems of social production and suggests the historic possibility of alternative civilizations (Haraway, 1991, p. 163). From this tradition, a study of the culture of the medieval convent weaves the daily lives of monastic women in general with the exemplary lives of particular women; the construction of institutions and even cities by women with the construction of alternative thought networks; and the contributions of women to the modes of production with their intellectual pursuits in literature, illumination and other art crafts. Finally, it entails gathering these three strands

together inside an historical and epistemological frame that continually reaffirms their collective dynamic relationship to the dominant or hegemonic order.

Alternative Theories of Alternative History

The project here is resolutely feminist but is not about a feminist culture. For a culture to be deemed feminist, it must include five elements: the awareness of women's subjugation with a concomitant sense of injustice; a denial of naturalized arguments for women's subordinated social positions; a bonding of groups of women across theoretical and materialist boundaries; a condition of autonomy and political strategy for change; and the development of an alternative vision of the world (Lerner, 1993, p. 281). Therefore, as it will be shown, while the medieval convent was not itself feminist, by re-imagining its contribution to women's culture and consciousness framed by these five conditions, it can become the cornerstone for a feminist history of western civilization.

Theories of feminism are best used to provide the support for an alternative history, rather than an 'other' history outside of hegemonic discourses (Hennessy, 1993, p. 86). This alternative history should attack dichotomies instead of simply focusing on the other side, and acknowledge their historical bias. As well, it should assert the materiality of past consciousness networks by evidencing the entwinement of intellectuality or cultural conditions with social, economic and political subsystems. In this way, structure and language become the two-fold

themes in feminist cultural history, informed by materialist and postmodern theories of women's bodies, experiences and knowledges. Missing from the other paradigms of history is a critical understanding of how power operates across economic, political and ideological systems that perpetually marginalize women (Hennessy, 1993, p. 25). Materialist feminism attends to the structural forces that suppress women's voices. It posits a real and knowable world that inhibits opportunities and achievements for women to theorize their historical conditions (Code, 1991, p. 57). While it acknowledges other alternative positions and attempts to decipher the intricate interdependency of class, race and ethnicity with gender, it nonetheless privileges gender as the transgressive link because the oppression of women co-exists in almost all societies, cultures and civilizations (Pollock, 1988, p. 5). Since materialist feminism is framed by history, it theorizes women's positions as localized phenomena subject to revolutionary and evolutionary change (Hennessy, 1993, p. 13). Thus, feminist cultural history intervenes in hegemonic discourses to expose gendered power relations and the mechanisms of patriarchy as hegemony. To produce an adequately nuanced understanding of these structural realities, however, demands a critical investigation of the discursive practices that perpetuate a dichotomous ordering of sexual difference and the oppressive representations of that ordering (Pollock, 1988, p. 9). A feminist postmodern praxis engages in a contest with the language that binds women in an alternative, subversive relationship with the hegemony and attempts to re-map 'our' way of knowing the world (Code, 1991, p. 61). This

politicized re-writing of women's bodies and knowledges challenges the core of the hegemonic regime which stresses dichotomized categories, fixed social positions and externalized relationships of the individual with the world.

Thus, materialist theories about the lived experiences of women become conjoined with the representations and stories of women as differentially and discursively constructed (Hennessy, 1993, p. 69). Realities and 'facts' are not denied but are continually under examination to retrieve all that we can know from them in all their diverse faculties. Thus, epistemological questions seep into cultural history, challenging the historian to look both beyond and within the propositional knowledge of observation and data to disclose how knowledge has been constructed, justified and claimed for hegemonic and subversive possibilities alike (Benhabib, 1991, p. 118). Feminist theorizing as outlined, then, can question how subjective and objective, or discursive and structural, conditions together produce historically-bound epistemologies. However, the relationship between history and epistemology is reciprocal. In order to refocus the lens of history on women as social subject and cultural construct, the epistemological conditions of what constitutes knowing need to be revised. New studies in feminist epistemology suggest that the fundamental schema of modern, rational epistemology, "*S* knows that *p*", be radically reconstructed so that epistemological truth will also encompass experiential and practical knowledges (Dalmiya & Alkoff, 1993, p. 233). Propositional knowledge, the singularly dominant

epistemology, is entirely concerned with observation in order to predict, manipulate and control. The knower, "S", is detached from the world and knows object "p" as an isolated abstract of society (Code, 1993, p. 17). This schema privileges the codification of all things knowable into atomized facts that can only be proved by objective perception (Dalmiya & Alcoff, 1993, p. 225). Experiential knowledge, by contrast, is subjective, acknowledging the knower's identity. In that it mediates propositional knowledge by providing a discursive framework, "S" becomes not a static individual but a dynamic community (Nelson, 1993, p. 123). The social and cultural factors which generate a point of view and make possible the category of gender presupposes that propositional truths or objective facts are real; however, they are experienced differently by their varying alternative relationships to the larger hegemonic epistemological community (Dalmiya & Alcoff, 1993, p. 240). Finally, practical knowledge is immanently involved in the everyday world (ibid., p. 235). As the normative dimension to knowledge, it is responsive to pre-established processes and arrangements but nonetheless cognitively relevant because "S" knows her actions and can be morally responsible for their consequences (ibid., p. 237). Following the schema "S knows how to do x," practical knowledge is the source of propositional knowledge, the space where knowledge negotiates with practice and admits its corrigibility (Code, 1993, p. 41). Feminist epistemology, therefore, denies the immutability of knowledge. Instead, "knowing" is a process of being in a world that is grounded in ontological categories and evidential facts but is also subject to historical, social and cultural

negotiations to "articulate viable, empowering epistemic imperatives and strategies" (Code, 1991, p. 70).

New Cultural History: Partial Perspective in the Comic Mode

Whereas the other paradigms tend to generalize the object of study, new cultural history paints a picture of the world that is resolutely partial and specific. This study of the culture of the convent begins with the sociological assumption that marginalized groups, like women, have historically appropriated the strategies of hegemony and retooled them for ironic, subversive possibilities (Bynum, 1991, p. 17). Without this primary assumption, there can be only a justification of medieval women's achievements in terms of the dominant discourses of their age, articulated in the dominant language of today, thus maintaining hegemonic order. Even a disclaimer that women's learning and erudition in the convent came at a price does not sufficiently undercut the present-day acceptance of a world that marked them as inferior. Feminist cultural theory about the medieval convent (both epistemological and historical) can depict women's thoughts and actions as resistant to but operating upon the dominant -- i.e., male -- interpretation of them. It works within the double-tension of the nuns' own sense of identity -- against their male authorities, but also against our understanding of what constitutes masculine and feminine in ontological discourses about revolutions in knowledge, faith and power. In this way, women become not objects but subjects of material reality and cultural imaginings -- the dual active agents for any

historical transformation (Haraway, 1991, p. 150). These subjects are continually positioned and repositioned in order to construct interpretive analyses of both their cognitive and structural locations (Code, 1991, p. 235). Subjects are contradictory, paradoxical, and at times incompatible with their own positions. They are, therefore, delicately balanced and finely tuned, in harmony with the beautiful, the cogent, the intellectually courageous and the passionately moral (Bynum, 1991, p. 23).

This new tradition recognizes the absurdity as much as the tragedy of women's history. The loss of original texts, the sometimes ignoble or even horrific lives and deaths of women religious are causes for anger and compassion but not so much that it perpetuates myths of victimization, a total lack of power, or dopism, a stultifying submission to oppression. To avoid these pitfalls, Caroline Walker Bynum suggests a "comic mode" for analyzing women's history. Comedy juxtaposes stories and characters, achieves resolution only by coincidence and improbability, places its subjects at risk and always assumes perpetual action just outside the frame of reference. The story is not the only one worth telling but only one is being told. Offstage voices can be heard and contradictory dialogues can find threads of mutual aims and methods (ibid., p. 24). Doing history in the comic mode is persuasive as well as soothing. Its overarching conclusions belie fears of domination and suggest ways for everyone to get along (ibid.).

NEW CULTURAL HISTORY AND MEDIEVAL EPISTEMOLOGY

This thesis is not about the validity of medieval Christianity in reference to original teachings. However, there do exist many provocative arguments that challenge medieval scriptural analysis and, in so doing, modern papal doctrine against women taking their place in the Catholic male hierarchy. Because they shed new light on the glaring contradictions in Christian thought that continue to resonate in our present civilization, they deserve a cursory review. Joan Morris dedicated a chapter in her landmark book, *The Lady was a Bishop* (1973) to a defense of Saint Paul. She insisted that Paul could not have possibly written the offending passages that silenced women in the first churches (I Corinthians 14:34-35)⁶ or subjugated them to the authority of their husbands (I Corinthians 11:3). Her logic was simple. In the first place, Paul often praised his women companions, calling them 'sisters' and assigning them high ranks in the churches (Romans 16:1-2). Furthermore, most of the early women converts were either widowed or had abandoned their pagan spouses to join the new movement and Paul did not hold them responsible for the salvation of their unrepentant husbands (I Corinthians 7:15-16). Morris contended that during the second century when the Scriptures were being codified, the offending passages were either interpolated or removed from an elaborating context that celebrated spiritual equality and mutual obedience (Morris, 1973, p. 123).

⁶For Biblical citations, see Appendix B.

Others were not so forgiving of Paul. Finding no reason to assume he did not write the epistles in question, they have rationalized the difficulty he faced establishing a new, equitable religion (certainly no easy task) within the Roman and Hebraic societies that denied women access to the study of faith and philosophy. Constance Parvey suggested that Paul's silencing of women was necessary to control the largely female Gnostic sect that engaged in personal ecstasies, making for disruptive congregations (Parvey, 1974, p. 124). His orders that the women acquiesce to male authority and keep their heads covered in church as a symbol of that subordination were attempts to conform to Jewish traditions of worship and Roman household codes. These two societies made women the property of fathers or husbands and insisted they be veiled if they went out in public (ibid., p. 125).

Regardless, pedagogical arguments from both the patriarchal and feminist perspective all agree that, spiritually, women were equal to men and played an active role, not only in Paul's mission but also in Jesus Christ's. The early Catholic cult adapted to pre-existing codes of behaviour and representations of women as articulated by the patriarchal societies in which it thrived. The conclusions drawn by these historians are crucial to understanding the full extent of the substance of Christianity. However, they are also invaluable to understanding how the dogma was used by women and men in the continual debates on the right way to know God. It is to this question that we now turn.

How were theories of learning, holiness and power constructed in the early Church to conjoin a theology of equivalence in Christ with the systemic practice of women's subordination? All three epistemological forms -- propositional, practical and experiential knowledge -- were established within medieval monastic scholarship to determine the true nature of God and the rightful relationships of women and men in and with the cosmos. Tracing the early history of the convent, then, necessitates an understanding of the rational, spiritual and emotive underpinnings which directed the course of early Christian education for women and men. Four themes and systems of representation offer a preliminary introduction to intricate theories on which a religion and a culture were built: organicism, the four ways of reading, the numinous and salvific experience, and the dialectic of hierarchy and equality. Their influence on medieval women's access to education and conception of the self as 'woman' circumscribed the advances, struggles, silences and victories of the great convents and nuns of the era.

Organicism

Durkheim asserted that attaining knowledge was the rational process of translating social states of time, space, materiality and sensation into categories of understanding which were ultimately metaphors to express the inexpressible (Durkheim, 1976, p. 9). Organicism was the root metaphor of medieval

knowledge. According to the prevailing dogma of the age, true knowledge was the perception of images of this world in relation to their models which were the divine ideas illuminated by God (Gilson, 1955, p. 72). Therefore, everything that existed in the world existed also in its heavenly conception so that there was a two-fold reality (ibid., p. 73). Since everything seen and unseen was nonetheless real, both the tangible and the ethereal could be known (ibid., p. 116). In fact, the very presence of ideas was tantamount to an apparition of God -- the primary theophany and proof that God existed in both universes (ibid., p. 119). These two realities were known to each other but only the spiritual could bridge them; thus, God was both immanent and transcendent to the world.

Medieval cosmology was ordered from the scientific (or rational) and occult (or wondrous) observation of the planetary systems and their perceived analogy to the human body and its faculties (Warner, 1976, p. 255). In this way, and many others, it was indebted to the classical philosopher, Plato. His assertion of the reality of ideas became the single most important foundation of intellectual activity in this age (Cantor, 1963, p. 402). His ontological frame supported the marriage of faith with reason. Foregrounding that the universal was as knowable as the particular, medieval scholars surmised that the human intellect would have inevitably arrived at the same divine concepts of truth, order, beauty, justice, equality and love that were revealed in the Bible; again, proving the presence of God in rational terms (ibid.). Since Christianity required that the believer know

God and to know God was to know everything in its particular and universal form, faith fuelled the desire for completeness not as the arrival at a final goal but as the deriving of a whole wheel of knowledge through extensive, systematic education (Flanagan, 1989, p. 82). The medieval scholar, dedicated to this new religion, sought to generate pools of wisdom in encyclopedic volumes which became increasingly more elaborate as the language and theories of knowledge advanced (Durkheim, 1977, p. 45). The encyclopedic mind was divided into two categories that were represented as masculine and feminine. The transcendent masculine symbolized eloquence, skill and divine guidance. The immanent feminine was love, learning, language and literature (Cantor, 1963, p. 76). She was often personified as the *anima mundi* or world-soul. The three-fold form she took comprised *Sapientia*, the Queen Consort and revelation of the divine cosmic wisdom of the Church, *Sophia*, the practical wisdom of the world, and *Scientia Dei*, the embodied experience of both kindness and terror (Lerner, 1993, p. 61). Her depiction in these encyclopedias was as "creating the cosmos by existing within it, her ubiquity expressed through the image of ceaseless or circular motion" (Newman, 1987, p. 64). An evocation of divine interaction with the cosmos in infinite time, the feminine element represented the synergistic relationship between the Church and the world which was the essence of beauty and order (ibid., p. 74).

The medieval equilibrium was not a scale but an embodiment of the essentialized woman as the affectual, nurturing, quixotic category in union with the deliberate, remote and rational category of man or the spirit-soul (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 250). As the humanity, wisdom and love of Christ, the incarnation of God and the representative of the Church, woman was the first order of knowledge. She was a necessary but inferior companion to the masculinized Logos, the rationality of Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the third force of the Trinity in which God reigned (Gilson, 1955, p. 125). Furthermore, since the Church -- a manifestation of Sapientia -- was currently of the world, women had to bow to the natural order and submit their bodies to the spiritual rule of men while their souls would be cherished and protected by Christ (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 157). Thus, Christian perfection in both meditation and expression was the fusing of contemplation and action, learning and piety, individual gifts in the service of the community, and the experience of common sinfulness and the joy of forgiveness (McLaughlin, 1979, p. 126).

The Four Ways of Reading

Much of early medieval scholarship was concerned with the interpretation, analysis and codification of the Scriptures and doctrines of late classical philosophers (Cantor, 1963, p. 114). The principle of metaphoric understanding implied that knowledge was more than literal, it was also moral, allegorical and

anagogical (Flanagan, 1989, p. 53)⁷. It was the third century philosopher, Origen, who suggested richer realms of understanding past the written text and used the tradition of layered readings themselves to categorize levels of holiness (Gilson, 1955, p. 36). Later, in the fourth century, Saint Augustine entrenched this system of reading with a sophisticated logic culled from neo-platonism. Briefly, he determined if ideas were real, or *res*, as was widely held to be true, then the words, or things of the world, also existed as metaphors in the mind of the Divine. Therefore, to know God, one had to acquire the transcendent knowledge embedded in the texts (ibid., p. 72).

Literacy

The classical system of education, in which the Latin Fathers, including Augustine, were trained and which was adapted for medieval Christianity, began with an introduction to literature followed by language theory and poetry (Hickey,

⁷William Tyndale (1494-1536) the English reformer and translator of the Bible, detailed and attacked the other-literary meanings because they hid meanings from the common laity. He wrote:

The greatest cause of which captivity and the decay of the faith, and this blindness wherein we now are, sprang first of allegories. For Origen and the doctors of his time drew all the scripture unto allegories; whose example that came after followed so long, till they at last forgot the order and process of the text, supposing that the Scripture served but to feign allegories upon; insomuch that twenty doctors expound one text twenty ways, as children make descant upon plain song. Then came our sophisters with their anagogical and [t]ropological sense, and with an antitheme of half an inch, out of which some of them drew a thread nine days long.

It is also interesting to note that for these criticisms, he was charged with heresy and executed. See William Tyndale. 1989. *Tyndale's New Testament*, trans. from the Greek in 1534, ed. with modern spelling and intro. by David Daniell.

1987, p. 62). Women, in particular, were steeped in the literary arts, generally more so than men who continued schooling with the final stage of rhetoric, which prepared them for public careers in ecclesia, politics and law (Heinrich, 1924, p. 85). Iconography encouraged women to pursue their verses. The ultimate personification of womanhood, the Virgin Mary Mother of God (an archetypal paradox herself), was often depicted reading or presiding in a library or scriptorium (Groag Bell, 1988, p. 168).

Moral

Moral virtue was the primary source of strength in Christian thought and could be attained through a rejection of the profane world and its sensual, bodily pleasures (Warner, 1976, p. 72). It was always remembered that not only did women represent the profane, but the first woman, Eve, was the source of original sin. The real existence of righteousness and purity in thought presupposed that, although humanity was in a fallen state since the expulsion from Eden, the struggle against sin or profanity was possible. Scriptural texts contained the moral laws which would guide the faithful into a fully realized relationship with God (Cantor, 1963, p. 89). Therefore, through systems of extrapolation and tropology, understanding the turn of a phrase could turn the soul to God and a method of restraint, discipline and abnegation could be formulated which would structure the mind to greet God (ibid., p. 182). This process of rationalization and socialization was necessary in order to bring individuals into a Church in the

world so that, together, the communal force would lift them upwards into the divine realm (Erickson, 1993, p. 13).

Allegory

In conformity with the double-faith doctrine that posited two levels of knowledge, the material and ideal, allegorical interpretation was the higher state of learning (Cantor, 1963, p. 72). Like everything else in the medieval age, allegory was subject to an order or system. The primary rule was that all representations reflect their gender in Latin grammar and the most abstract nouns, the divine ideas, were feminine. Sacred ideals such as grace, virtue, wisdom and healing were all represented as woman but the profane corollaries of sin, vice, temptation and desire were also grammatically feminine (Newman, 1987, p. 43). This ambiguity was resolved through scriptural interpretation. The decision was that, spiritually, women were equal or perhaps even better loved than men, but in the material state of sin, women were naturally the source of moral decay and the symbol of the body's subjection to the mind (Ruether, 1974, p. 158).

Anagogy

The subliminal or eroticized stage of knowledge was the initial impetus to spur a continued quest for God. Anagogical readings, fuelled by the Old Testament

chapter, the *Song of Songs*⁸, precipitated the devout's mystical communion with Christ, sometimes characterized as a virgin woman prostrate on her bed while the Lord, her bridegroom, encircled her head with his left hand while fondling her with his right (Ruether, 1974, p. 168). With this image in mind, it is little surprise that many women religious were praised by their male companions for never leaving their books and even sleeping at their desks (McLaughlin, 1979, p. 105). The ecstatic response to spiritual revelation was explained as the soul exerting a "vital attention" upon the body (Gilson, 1955, p. 75). It would conjure up spiritual visions to both quench the body of its thirst for knowledge, and order it so that it could move to deeper levels of understanding.

The early Church Fathers who devised this tiered method of reading justified their practices by appeals to the difference between worldly-feminine and spiritual-masculine knowledge. The scriptural rationale for this split was the creation of Eve from the body of Adam, a creature who was 'not-man' and 'like-man' before being named woman (Bloch, 1991, p.38). Until Eve, man was whole but God separated Adam's corporeality from spirituality when his rib was removed to create a companion (Ruether, 1974, p. 156). Thus, while Adam was to the image of God created (Genesis 1:27) and bestowed with the right to name

⁸From Old Testament Books of Solomon, the *Song of Songs* consists of eight chapters as Christ and his spouse sing out their love for one another. It begins with the spouse naming her desire. Then Christ caresses and draws her near. She glories in His humanity while He revels in her beauty. Basking in His love, she describes His great grace and is rewarded by being His only lover. He again expresses her wonderful character and they renew their vows of love.

all other creatures (Genesis 2:19), Eve was flesh and bone taken out of man (Genesis 2:23) to be his helper (Genesis 2:20)⁹. At four levels, then, woman was inferior to man from the beginning. She was created second from the rib of Adam, whereas Adam was fashioned pure from the mind of God. As the first sinner, she was the embodiment of profanity which impugned moral order. The allegorical representation of the Church in the world or the Body of Christ, she was naturally subordinate as the body is below the mind. Finally, as the source of love and beauty, she fanned the flame of devotion which was only the elementary stage of knowledge. The double-bind idea of woman, which gave reading its ontology, became instrumental to man's quest for knowledge. Either she embodied carnality and profanity which needed to be purged or she represented the ultimate union with Christ, that liminal state marking the entrance to the sacred and mystical knowledge hidden from the world (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 240).

The Numinous and Salvific Experience

The metaphoric use of women as grace, virtue and wisdom conveyed the tremendous, majestic and immanent presence of the transcendent absence of God and pure spiritual understanding. The 'absent presence,' or worldly window to

⁹Curiously, the earliest reference to sex differentiation in Genesis has both man and woman created in the image of God simultaneously: "*And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them*" (Genesis 1:27). See Appendix B for other biblical quotations in full.

the spirit, at the moment of knowing was the numinous or holy experience (Newman, 1987, p. 46). Unlike the functional-structural approach which would perceive the sacred as a rational production from the collective body, a cultural history of the sacred uses the numinous to imply a spirituality in tandem with rationality (Erickson, 1993, p. 57). If experiential or collective sensorial knowledge exists before and concurrent to codification in the form of propositions, then the feminine ideas of love, holiness and desire can be given greater weight in an appraisal of medieval epistemology.

Religion, as both the substance of knowing and the form of thinking about reality, was the fluid process of sacralization: that is, the profane body's identification and preservation of a core of social knowledge as religious and moral truth (ibid., p. 5). The profane body was the unknowing individual who could only enter into the numinous realm of the sacred through a salvific renunciation of the carnal and ritualistic (Bloch, 1991, p. 67). Women were regarded both and at once as the Devil's Gateway, the transmitters of original sin, and the Brides of Christ, representing the devoted, impassioned and beloved state of sacristy. Therefore, it was the salvific rejection of the bodily feminine and numinous embracing of the metaphoric or abstract feminine that began the journey of knowledge (ibid., p. 90). In Christian theology, women were socially inferior but possessed an identical immortal soul to men (Warner, 1976, p. 72). Yet the circular, synergistic sensibility of medieval thought transformed this inferiority into the epitome of

spiritual grace. One of the great mysteries of God was that He used the weak to confound the strong and fools to correct the wise; thus, a woman's humble acceptance of her subordinate position was in actuality a great source of holy authority (Flanagan, 1989, p. 56). Unlike men, who needed to reject another, foreign element from their minds, women had to spurn their own selves and become like men; their greater struggle made them more holy (Bloch, 1991, p. 67). The weak traits of the mind and body, those that prevented salvation, were natural to women, as the submissive sex. Even if they overcame their essential profane state as "revolting body," they could never be materially independent or spiritually superior to a man because that was, in itself, unnatural, disorderly and, therefore, sinful (Ruether, 1974, p. 157). If both sexes behaved according to their proper roles, then together they could await the Resurrection where the feminine would be stripped away, leaving only pure and sinless man (Noble, 1992, p. 105). The abstraction of holiness as pure love and majestic beauty in women set against the abhorrence of female beauty and sensuality in the world suggest that it was not 'woman' as gender differentiation that was feared and repulsed but libido and heterosexual desire (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 252).

Hierarchy and Equality

This dialectic between sacred and profane, numinous and salvific suggests that at the material level Christian women faced the intransigency of a patriarchal regime that would always mark them as abstract and inferior. They would eternally be in the process of 'becoming' holy, of sacrificing their bodies in the pursuit of salvation, without ever actually 'being.' The household codes of early Judaic and Roman societies emphasized the family as the most important social bond, and women were used by their fathers and husbands to strengthen family fortunes while denying them their own access to the public worlds of business and government (Parvey, 1974, p. 119). Accordingly, in the early centuries of the common era the Catholic cult revised its scriptural belief in the equality of all people before God to comply with the social dicta of its surrounding environment (Fiorenza, 1979, p. 31). Thus, while women were invited to learn and study at the side of men, they were barred from leadership or teaching. The lack of sacerdotal power prevented women converts from baptising, preaching in public, or claiming an authorial voice in scriptural analysis (*ibid.*, p. 43). At the same time, they were expected to provide primary education, particularly in literature and morality, for their family's children (Bell, 1988, p. 162). Women's route to equality began with a mortification of their bodily femininity, acceptance of their secondary position as learners and teachers of children, and an embracing of the abstract femininity of the Sapiential trinity. That many women pushed the

envelope while still preserving their holiness and conventual power is testament to their subversive intellect and steadfast devotion to the egalitarian spirit of Christ's teachings.

CONCLUSION

Thus, feminist cultural history is not so much about women's positioning as a subordinated part of the hegemony but can suggest that they actually forged an alternative which has continually evolved, expanded and intensified over the course of civilizations. This sets it apart from the three paradigms -- exemplar, evolutionary and quasi-sociological -- while still incorporating useful tools and strategies for understanding the relationship between biographies, institutions, systems and structures in medieval history with epistemological theories of cultural narratives, gender construction and contested knowledges.

The rationalist observation that has characterized medieval historical research until very recently can now be joined with feminist cultural history's re-introduction of sensual and practical knowledge. Together, history investigates the era's metaphoric language for subversive insight into the structures and systems that determined women's positions and representations in the monasteries -- medievalism's pre-eminent centres of learning (McLaughlin, 1979, p. 103).

Women's understandings of medieval religion and education were distinct from

men's; there were not just disparities in structure or function. Thus, it is possible to consider alternative tactics and forms women undertook to realize learning, holiness and power in violent, chaotic societies that were perpetually in turmoil for the eight centuries following the demise of the Roman empire.

Like the turning point of any great revolution, the transition to medievalism was marked by a period of conflict and synthesis amongst the decay of classical civilization. The centuries immediately preceding and following the Sack of Rome (410) saw the introduction of the concept of monasticism as a retreat from the material temptations of the world. The names of Saint Anthony, the first desert monk, and Saints Augustine and Jerome, who, with their contemporaries, wrote the first rules of monastic life are well known. But their woman companions have been hidden from the pages of general history. The early development of Catholicism and monasticism owes much to these women's labour and intellect. The picture of this turbulent era seen through their eyes is one of great sacrifice and courage in the face of oppression not only from their pagan families but also their new families in Christ.

ASCETICISM AND COMMUNITY

The early period of Christianization witnessed a revolutionary way of life whose adherents believed that they would inherit a new world. The image of a third race, neither male nor female but equal in Christ, was conceived by Saint Paul in the first century of the common era and fired the imagination of the young Church (Noble, 1993, p. 18). Persecution of Christians finally came to an end with the conversion of Constantine (d. 337), the last great Roman emperor, in 312. The following year he passed the Edict of Milan, proclaiming freedom of religion. By that time Christianity had spread throughout the Empire, reaching even far-away Gaul (now France) and Britain (Cantor, 1963, p. 43). Ireland, too, though not a Roman territory, also had learned of the new religion by the turn of the third century, probably through its trading relations with Gaul and Greece (Russell, 1956, p. 397). These two cultures -- Latin and Celtic -- vastly different in history, politics and society, nonetheless became the most important centres of Christian intellectuality in the fourth and fifth centuries, which bridged late antiquity and early medievality (Durkheim, 1977, p. 34). They are linked in two strategic ways: the dominance of monasteries and monastic schools for disseminating the religion; and the powerful opportunities opened and exploited by women converts.

THE LATIN TRADITION

Latin, or patristic, Christianity was characterized by a practicality and austerity in daily life coupled with a philosophical concern for the nature of man and the work of Christ (Von Campenhausen, 1964, p. 180). By the fourth century, the religion had made sufficient inroads with the senatorial class to exist syncretistically with paganism and the emperor-gods. Aristocratic families adopted both pagan and Christian religions to ensure their full access to the corridors of power in Church and state. Parents would give their sons a pagan education so that they could rise through the senatorial ranks. The daughters were usually trained as Christians and, if the family was large, one girl would be consecrated a virgin to save the father the cost of a dowry. The responsibility of lineage would be placed squarely on the shoulders of the other daughter(s). Families were small, due to high infant mortality rates, miscarriages and stillbirths. However, women struggled through pregnancies until they produced a healthy son (Yarborough, 1993, p. 327).

This "aristocratic factor" in early Christianity explains the emphasis on literary and philosophical scholarship as well as the evident stronghold noble women enjoyed in financing monastic houses (Lienhard, 1977, p. 110). While rules were written solely by men and administrative leadership was also exclusively male, educated and wealthy women wielded considerable influence from behind the walls of their

faith and family. To imagine a picture of Rome in these waning years through the eyes of its noble women suggests three perspectives: the meaning and practice of asceticism by women and men; the heretical cults' influences on orthodox definitions of women's roles in the clerical orders; and finally, the status of women and paths for rebellion from the lives and legacies of three of the most notable monastic women.

Asceticism

The aristocracy was a finite, insular class who, by the fourth century, had no significant source of income outside of government office (paid by the taxes exercised on lower class workers), inheritance and dowries. What was left, then, was to perpetually exchange and intensify the circle of wealth through patronage, family and marriage (Yarborough, 1993, p. 326). Their institutions were also drying up. Education, grounded firmly in rhetoric and literature, was still wholly dependent on the classicists Cicero, Terrence and Vergil; intellectual revitalization was desperately needed (Cantor, 1963, p. 70). Greek philosophy, largely Platonic but also some of Aristotle's then-extant works, like the *Categories of Understanding*, inspired the aristocracy to embrace a still pagan "philosophical monotheism", easily vulnerable to Christian interpretation (Brown, 1984, p. 34). A trend had already begun for aristocrats to retire to a country estate and devote themselves to a philosophic life of reading, contemplation and quiet study

(Yarborough, 1993, p. 328). This ideal life was adopted by Saint Augustine (354-430), the single most influential Church Father for the coming medieval age. His synthesis of the philosophy of Plato, the cultured leisure of Cicero and the meditative hermitage of Saint Anthony precipitated his conversion and baptism in 386. Another exemplar of the aristocratic pattern towards philosophic retirement who opened the doors for Christian contemplation in Rome is the noble lady Marcella (d. 410). She was praised by her friend, the Church Father, Saint Jerome (331-420), for adopting Plato's maxim "philosophy is a preparation for death" when she retreated to her estate on the Aventine, announced herself 'dead' to the urban excesses of her class and founded the first ascetic salon in Rome, devoted to literary studies and biblical commentary (Jerome, 1933, p. 451).

A growing movement of women's liberation gained some support from Plato's philosophical ideals (Raming, 1975, preface). In Plato's *Republic* women were proven to be equal in nature to men and different only in degrees of physical strength and intellectual capacity (Agonito, 1977, p. 32)¹⁰. Interestingly, Plato acknowledged and paid respect to women's practical knowledge in domestic arts and household management (ibid., p. 30). He argued, albeit with only a small measure of success, that women should be given equal access to education and gymnasium so that they could best serve the state side-by-side with their male

¹⁰Agonito excerpted from Plato, "The Republic" in *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett, Third edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, vol. 3, B-5.

companions (ibid., p. 39). Another eastern influence changed the course of Latin Christianity at the turn of the fourth century. From Egypt, Rome heard fantastic stories of desert communities of monks. Not only men but women, too, were abandoning the urban life for solitude, fasting and prayer in a Christian context. Saint Anthony (251-356), the first anchorite, placed his sister in a house of virgins before settling in the desert (Rader, 1982, p. 91). Palladius, who wrote the *Lausiaca History* of monks in 420, chronicled stories about a community of nuns in Tabennesiot, across the Nile from a male house (Palladius, 1918, p. 33).

The relaxing of marriage laws in the Empire allowed women to never marry and, by remaining chaste, become independent business women and rulers of their own household (Fiorenza, 1988, p. 326). Celibacy was a central tenet of Christianity, legalized by Constantine and exercised by women to refuse *manus*, or arranged aristocratic marriages with undesirable, pagan men; a traditional practice within the *pater familias* (Rader, 1982, p. 90). The *pater familias* enforced the father's control of the family. According to the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, he not only arranged his daughter's marriage but also retained control of her dowry and status until she was 25, although fourteen was the legal age to wed (in Amt, 1993, p. 35). He also enjoyed sexual control over his wife and slave women (Fiorenza, 1988, p. 326). Women possessed the two most critical resources for the continued strength of the Roman aristocracy: dowries and wombs. The granting of limited sovereignty could only hasten the demise of the empire and send even more families to the

Christian faith (Yarborough, 1993, p. 324). However, the Church promoted a legalistic notion of salvation through law-abiding which restricted admirable acts of rebellion to only those that served the burgeoning ecclesiastical system (Brown, 1984, p. 452). Rebellion against the Deutero-Pauline household codes of the *pater familias* was only salvific if matched with regulation under the new laws of obedience in Christ (Clark, 1990, p. 20). Christian leaders approved of women who rejected the *manus* but offered in its place the *synkeisaktism*, a celibate marriage which conformed to the rule of the *pater familias* but without conjugal rights (Rader, 1982, p. 80). This meant that women who sought companionship did so at the loss of their own personal authority, a ruse exploited by patristic propaganda to offer women only one form of liberation, the ascetic life (Clark, 1990, p. 22).

Joseph T. Lienhard lists six aspects of fourth century asceticism: the dualist despising of the world while ardently loving the world to come; withdrawal from the world so that one could better embrace Christ; material poverty to die to the world in the post-martyrdom era; continence to embolden the mind and body in service of God; good works and prayer to forge the path of salvation; and an eschatological fervour that the world was about to end, a psycho-cultural phenomenon probably triggered by the waning of the empire (Lienhard, 1977, pp. 135-138). Monasticism was an organizing principle to the ascetic life, referring to a particular structural form in which individuals collectively practised asceticism,

either as solitary anchorites¹¹ or communal coenobites (ibid., p. 81). Asceticism was a regulated practice, subject to rules developed by Church Fathers such as Jerome, Augustine and Basil, Bishop of Caesarea (330-379). But it was also a dynamic form of spirituality, open for philosophical speculation. Its discursive element allowed women to claim powerful positions and enter debates on the true nature of the ascetic (Miles, 1991, p. 98). Both Augustine's and Basil's sisters were monks, and Jerome's league of women followers was legendary even in its own time.

The true ascetic way of life could only begin after a conversion experience: a profound movement of the soul that transformed the personal totality of belief systems, moral considerations and social relations in which the self would then be wholly concentrated towards faith and knowledge in God (Durkheim, 1977, p. 29). This ordering of the mind, will and body was revolutionary to Rome, which had proved adept in assimilating practices and rites with little concern for their total meaning. The path to conversion was opened up by education. Only by attaining a totality of understanding could an individual's fractious intellect and social sensibility be unified as part of the spiritual community of Christ (ibid., p. 28). The Christian religion provided both the form and substance of spiritual strength, power and knowledge. It emphasized the purposive action of education in service

¹¹ The anchorites, popularly thought to have lived their lives completely alone, actually formed loosely organized collectives. Saint Jerome, during his anchorite period, not only had a library in his cave but also entertained friends from the cities and bickered incessantly with his monastic brothers (Von Campenhausen, 1964, p. 140)

to the religious principles of unity, intelligibility and sacristsy (Heinrich, 1924, p. 121). It presupposed, therefore, that the world could be completely known and articulated within a matrix of systems and categories of understanding, although there co-existed certain mysteries and sacred ideas that only the spiritually pure could ever encounter (Erickson, 1993, p. 22). "Thus must a soul be educated which is to be a temple of God," Jerome wrote to his Roman patronesses (Jerome, 1933, p. 345).

For many women, ascetic conversion took place after the death of their husbands. In the spirit of Moses' sister, Miriam, widows banded together in communities of prayer and scriptural learning. There is evidence that some of these communities claimed the sacerdotal authority of *diakoni* or deaconess. The Council of Orange (441) insisted that deaconesses relinquish authority and no new women be ordained. Again, in 553, it reiterated its stand but feebly explained that it was a benevolent act to protect the frail nature of women. The Ancient Statutes of the Church (475) conceded that widows and nuns could minister to rustic women but could neither teach in assembly nor baptize (in Amt, 1993, pp. 219-220). These efforts to silence women were ceaseless but to no avail. Desperate and confused, the law makers contradicted themselves in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (late-fourth century), the largest collection of canonical writings from late antiquity. In them, women were denied the right to teach and baptize but a prayer of ordination was included for deaconesses:

O Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of man and of woman, who replenished with the Spirit Miriam, and Deborah and Anna and Huldah; who did not disdain that Thy only-begotten Son should be born of a woman; who also in the tabernacle of the testimony, and in the temple, did ordain women to be keepers of Thy holy gates, do Thou now also look down upon this Thy servant who is to be ordained to the office of a deaconess, and grant her Thy Holy Spirit, that she may worthily discharge the word which is committed to her to Thy glory, and the praise of Thy Christ, with whom glory and adoration be to Thee and the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen (in Gryson, 1980, p. 62).

Many other women did not aspire to church leadership, but adopted the monastic life with ascetic zeal. Unlike men, whose social identity was tied into individual merit in the public world of government, citizenry and landownership, women were known by their relationship to parents, husband and children (Wire, 1988, p. 309). Asceticism provided an alternative to some aspects of Roman society, most obviously the *puter familias*, but remained secure within the patriarchal structure of late classical civilization (Fiorenza, 1988, p. 327). Antoinette Wire suggests six social functions that women ascetics served in the patriarchal order: quasi-asceticism safeguarded women from infidelity, after they produced heirs to family fortunes; spiritual marriage complemented domestic order; full asceticism compensated for a woman's inability to serve as wife or mother; once gaining a foothold, asceticism could begin to erode the stable status of previous roles; further, women could then publicly reject the domestic order in favour of monasticism (communal asceticism); finally, the goal of the monastic movement

was to supplant the family of men with the family of God (Wire, 1988, p. 309)¹². This systemized functionality is reflected in Jerome's only positive comment on marriage, "I praise wedlock; but it is because they produce me virgins" (Jerome, 1933, p. 95).

Heresies

While nearly all Christians embraced asceticism as the way of life best befitting the 'nature of man,' innumerable controversies were waged over the nature of God and the Trinity (Brown, 1984, p. 30). Heretical conflicts touched the lives of all the patristic Fathers and sparked the codification of orthodox leadership and creeds (Christie-Murray, 1976, p. 85). A remarkable feature of heresies was the active participation of women; a fact often used to condemn heretical cults. The breadth and scope of heresies is a monumental task, worthy of its own separate study. Here, for our purposes, four representative factions provide an outline of the impact heresies had on the Church and its women: Gnosticism, Origenism, Pelagianism and Montanism.

¹²Wire's functions have been slightly revised by Elisabeth Shussler Fiorenza (1988), and her suggestions are included here.

Gnosticism

Thanks in part to the 1945 discovery of long-forgotten writings in Nag Hammadi, Egypt and their translation and publication thirty-three years later, Gnosticism is the best known heresy. Ascetic in practice, it also included speculative Greek philosophy but rather than sanctifying the order of the household, it promoted personal revelation for women and men as proof of salvation and right of preaching authority (Clifton, 1992, p. 49). Adherents' principal inspiration came from Mary Magdalene and her gospel, *The Book of Mary*. According to this text, The Magdalene was acknowledged by the apostles to be the best loved and confidant of Christ. After His Ascension, she revealed visionary teachings that were resented by the Twelve because they had not heard the words themselves. Peter's angry outburst and Mary's tears sparked a chiding by Levi, "Peter, you have always been hot-tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like the adversaries" (Robinson, 1978, p. 473). This conflict was crucial to the political structure of the Church since it struck at the core of its authority: the right of Apostolic Succession which traced papal lineage to Peter and his followers. Only those who heard the teachings of Christ through succeeding generations of apostles could ascend to the Roman See (Pagels, 1981, p. 7). Furthermore, since the apostles were all men (although the twelve are linked with a band of women in the Gospels), only those who reflected the male spirit of the apostles were true pupils. The principle of divine revelation placed Mary

Magdalene above Peter and, therefore, visionary experiences elevated a person beyond the rule of bishops just as Mary moved outside the Twelve (*ibid.*, p. 30).

Gnosticism was truer to the spirit of Plato than Catholicism in its concept of the base, material world as an imperfect copy of the Perfect Idea; that is, God. The Archons or Aeons who ruled over the Seven Heavens were also similar to Plato's intellectual beings or ideas who together built the material world according to the Perfect Idea of God (Christie-Murray, 1976, p. 23). Gnosticism had a dualist sense of reality as an interplay between two dichotomous principles, either spirit and matter, soul and body or good and evil. God, therefore, neither created the world nor gave it his son in material form (Brown, 1984, p. 40). The cosmic entity, Christ, used the man, Jesus, as an instrument so he could guide people toward gnosis, or knowledge of the Aeons (Clifton, 1992, p. 50). The loss of the historic Christ equalled the loss of any real, doctrinal claim to salvation. It could no longer be proven that in one shattering historic moment, death was reversed and heaven opened. Nor did the Second Coming hold any real meaning since Christ was always present. The loss of the body of Christ felled the bridge between the Divine and humanity, thus eliminating any proof that heaven could be accessed through a person's faith and good works on earth (Christie-Murray, 1976, p. 32). Knowledge was now privileged over faith and subliminal knowledge over reason. The knowledge revealed was of the true nature of the Aeons and the ability to speak their real names. With each name the Demiurge, the Old

Testament God of the material world, lost another aspect of his power and the individual rose higher toward the absolute Depth that is the true God of the Perfect Idea (ibid., p. 22). Gnostic cosmology reflected three levels of knowledge in the believer. The first level, the material world of the devil, was also the material body entrapping the soul. The demiurgical world of the heavenly Aeons was the soul that contained the power of reason. The world beyond, ruled by Pistis Sophia (literally, Faith-Wisdom) was likened to the spirit in which resided the divine spark that reveals itself to the soul once it has been freed (Christie-Murray, 1976, p. 28). The consort of the Perfect Idea, Pistis Sophia was the subliminal wisdom that ruled over the rationality of the soul. While God was Depth, She was Silence, Thought and Mystery (Pagels, 1981, p. 64). Zoë, her daughter, whose name means light, gave Adam and Eve fruit from the tree of knowledge so that they could know they lacked knowledge, leaving them naked and ashamed. Before they could eat from the second tree, the tree of good and evil, they were chased out of the garden by the jealous Demiurge (Robinson, 1978, p. 174). Zoë was the Holy Spirit, Grace and Intelligence. Sophia, the seventh Aeon and youngest daughter of the Demiurge, mediated between earth and the heavens the way her grandmother mediated between the heavens and the Depth. To gain Pistis Sophia's favour, she ordered the skies and brought time to the world. She was Wisdom, Order and Foresight (Pagels, 1981, p. 64).

Reverence of the feminine and disregard for the body prompted an androgynous sexual instrumentality: i.e., it transcended gender (ibid., p. 32). Excessive remonstrations, either erotic or ascetic, were of no serious concern to Gnostic theology since the thoroughly bodily sexual act had no bearing on the spirit (ibid., p. 27). In its cosmology, however, sexual language was the predominant metaphor describing the relations of the heavens with the Dyad of Depth-God and Silence-Pistis Sophia (ibid., p. 58). Religious theory of feminine wisdom, spiritual revelation, sexualized cosmology and an overall disinterest in the body facilitated the generally positive regard for women in the social practices of the Gnostic church (ibid., p. 72).

Origenism

The first Christian philosopher and conceiver of the orthodox Holy Trinity, Origen (184-254) was an unlikely suspect for heretical accusations. Nonetheless, in the late-fourth century his book, *De Principiis* (First Principles), was to tear the church apart and irreparably damage the communal spirit of the first Latin monks. The son of a Christian martyr, Origen found refuge in a circle of women converts. His protectress, Juliana of Caesarea, gave him a Hebraic Bible written in verse, which inspired him to learn the original language (Palladius, 1919, p. 171). In faith to the Gnostic ideal of androgyny as transcendental gender, Origen had himself castrated so that he could become a eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 19:12) (Noble, 1993, p. 18). It is ironic that he

should take the Bible so literally since he was the first to detail the four ways of reading -- literal-historical, moral, allegorical and anagogical -- stating that the "cheapness of the letter refers us to the preciousness of the spiritual interpretation" (in Gilson, 1955, p. 36). His platonism likely spurred the decision to be castrated, since he believed his reason was residing in a "jail of flesh (ibid., p. 37). Reason, to Origen, was the Logos, the container of the material world, similar but simpler in conception than the Gnostic Aeons (ibid., p. 39).

Origen depicted each member of the Trinity as substantial and eternal, therefore ontologically equal. However, in a perpetual relationship that transcends time, God the Father begat Christ the Logos who then brought forth the Holy Spirit. Thus the latter two were economically subordinate, in the sense that they submitted to the will of the Father despite their equality in cosmic history. The relationship was explained as the same as a man and wife in Christian marriage, sealing women's fate inside a theological discourse (Brown, 1984, p. 91). Ignoring the feminine aspect of the divine but incorporating the remainder of the Gnostic trinity in its orthodox order, Origen described Existence as the Mystery of the Father, Reason the Intelligibility of the Word, and Holiness the Wisdom of the Spirit (ibid., p. 92).

Eternal existence meant the pre-existence of souls before bodies, a dualist theory that ultimately condemned Origen. His Christology suggested that Jesus, the

man, was pre-elected to contain a soul so well ordered that it could join with Christ, the Logos -- not Word become Flesh but Flesh become Word. The body alone, abandoned by the soul-Logos, was destroyed and Christ's resurrection was a divine, not a human act (ibid., p. 94)¹³. The Gnostic conflict reappeared. If Jesus Christ was not a man but only a body with the mind of Christ, then history is not finite and the individual could not aspire to heaven by virtue of good works. Four major counts of heresy were brought against Origenism: the pre-existence of the soul; the denial of the resurrection of the body; the limited period of punishment, since the devil was material not eternal; and the possibility of salvation for all material beings, including the devil (Wright, 1993, p. 498)¹⁴. A fifth and decisive factor in his denunciation was the orthodox rejection of androgyny, which entrenched women's subordination as eternal and intranscendent, as well as natural (Noble, 1993, p. 66). It can be suggested that Origen's quasi-androgyny principle was the most alarming since Augustine was able to continue the theory of election of the souls while condemning lust for women as the vilest of sins (Miles, 1993, p. 73). Spiritual equality ceased to mean androgyny and instead exalted one 'true gender,' male.

¹³This interpretation would have explained the perplexing and disturbing last words of Jesus Christ on the Cross: *"My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken me?"* (Matthew 16:35).

¹⁴See Jerome in Bibliography

Pelagianism

Despite the denunciation of Origen, the spirit of his teachings remained: the platonic injection, interpretive reading, consubstantiality of the Trinity and the eternal pre-existence of truth. Augustine, in particular, utilized Origenism for his writings on the nature of man. More precisely, he adapted the concept of 'good' to be not essential but accidental; that is, goodness was a gift from God (Gilson, 1955, p. 41). Because of original sin, passed on to succeeding generations in semen, the mind was not naturally turned to the intellect nor the will to morality. Only through grace could man turn from the sensible to the intelligible and begin the righteous work of God (Marrou, 1957, p. 52). While the Augustinian view was echoed by all the Latin Fathers and permeated later medieval thought, it was roundly criticized by an Irish monk named Pelagius (360-420). The Pelagian conception of God's grace was the sin-resisting nature of humanity and the free will to commit good works. Christ was not a saviour so much as a teacher or exemplar of goodness (Christie-Murray, 1976, p. 90). Pelagius rejected the Origenist election of the souls, which Augustine retained, because with his theology of grace everyone would have the potential to know and do good (Brown, 1984, p. 201). The striking dissonance between the two can be best understood experientially. Pelagius was from a primitive-agricultural civilization that did not know urbanity, did not fathom bureaucracy and conceptualized the family and women in a far more egalitarian way. Both Augustine and Jerome described their struggle to know God in vivid language with erotic female figures

to tempt them away from salvation. Jerome wrote to a young virgin of 14 or 15,

Eustochium:

But though in my fear of hell I had condemned myself to this prison-house, where my only companions were scorpions and wild beasts, I often found myself surrounded by bands of dancing girls. My face was pale with fasting; but though my limbs were cold as ice my mind was burning with desire, and the fires of lust kept bubbling up before me when my flesh was as good as dead (Jerome, 1933, p. 69).

Augustine, during his cathartic moment of conversion, also defined it as a turning away from lust:

Those trifles of all trifles, and vanities of vanities, my one-time mistresses, held me back, plucking at my garment of flesh and murmuring softly: "Are you sending us away?" And "From this moment shall we not be with you, now or forever?" And "From this moment shall this or that not be allowed you, now or forever?" What were they suggesting to me in the phrase I have written "This or that," what were they suggesting to me, O my God? Do you in your mercy keep from the soul of Your servant the vileness and uncleanness they were suggesting (Augustine, 1993, p. 144).

Both these men were well known for their voracious sexual appetites during their youth before embracing asceticism and they continued to rail against their desires for the rest of their lives. Their experience shaped their understanding of God and the nature of man. Pelagius completely undercut their theology and did so philosophically, morally and intellectually; he was the "true heir" of classical

disputation (Marrou, 1957, p. 52). By 418, Pelagius had sufficiently threatened Augustine and Latin Christianity to have a synod called in Carthage where the doctrine of free will was condemned and Augustine's theology of grace and man's ritual purity from the desire for women was adopted as the official church position (Brown, 1984, p. 207).

Montanism

A curious heresy, since its theology was generally aligned to orthodoxy, Montanism is a case study in Latin patriarchy. Charismatic and excessively eschatological, the cult was founded circa 165-170 by Montanus and his women lieutenants, Priscilla and Maximilla (ibid., p. 66). It opposed Gnosticism's anti-resurrection stance but also claimed divine revelation in the form of the New Prophecy. The three basic principles of the New Prophecy were the immanent end of the world, the descent of the New Jerusalem in Phrygia and public confession of Christ in hopes of martyrdom (Klawiter, 1993, p. 107).

Maximilla claimed the title "Word, Spirit and Power" and the divine gift to teach the knowledge of God (ibid., p. 106). Priscilla spoke directly to women, urging them to choose virginity so that they would not die in childbirth but in the glory of Christ, who appeared to her as a woman bestowing wisdom (ibid., p. 107). Criticism evidently rested on the authority of women in the cult. One of the first Church writers, Tertullian (160-240), a Montanist because he believed God

worked through all people, not just the apostolic descendants, at first resisted joining them because women preached:

And the women of these heretics, how wanton they are! For they are bold enough to teach, to dispute, to enact exorcisms, to undertake cures -- maybe even baptise! (in Gryson, 1980, p. 17).

Attacks on the cult's sexual equality continued through till the fourth century by influential writers like Eusebius (260-340) and Epiphanius (315-402), though little was said of its theology. There was no need for any official condemnation from the Church, however, since the failure of the world to end and the decreased opportunities for martyrdom caused Montanism to collapse on its own.

In combatting these heresies and, in the process, codifying the canon of Catholic orthodoxy, the Church Fathers created a web of contradictory theories bound together by a single unifying thread: abhorrence of women's bodies and contempt for women's knowledge. While the heretical cults provided a far more congenial space for women to practice their faith, Catholicism drew powerful members of the nobility to its side. How these women succeeded in faith and learning -- and at what cost -- can be seen in the lives of three friends, Marcella, Paula (347-404) and Melania (341-410).

A Monastic Dynasty

Not only were Marcella, Paula and Melania from the same class and connected by marriages but they also sustained each other in their early years of ascetic conversion (Yarborough, 1993, p. 320). Based in Marcella's country estate on the Aventine, their numbers included many other women friends and relatives who had all renounced their wealth and family in various degrees. To gain an idea of the extent to which women converts crippled the already near-bankrupt empire and bestowed vast fortunes on the Church we can look at one woman, Melania's granddaughter and namesake, Melania the Younger. Palladius detailed the riches which Melania the Younger gave to the Church upon her renunciation in 408: Over 150 000 pieces of money (probably gold), over 8 000 slaves, estates in Spain, the Aquitaine, Tarragonia, Gaul, and three estates which she kept for monastic endowments in Sicily, Campania and Africa (Palladius, 1919, p. 168). Further, Jerome wrote that Paula, equally wealthy but not as wise in divesting her estate, died bankrupt. In this light, it is little wonder that the aristocracy actively sought to prevent their women from undertaking monastic vows.

Marcella: The Roman Monk

The first Roman woman to renounce the world, Marcella was the second daughter of Albina, from the Caeonia family. Of her father nothing is written. Her sister, Asella, was a consecrated virgin but not ascetic, being expected to

continue enjoying the luxuries of her class (Yarborough, 1933, p. 324). Widowed after seven months of marriage, Marcella was bound by duty to re-wed so that the family could continue and expand its wealth. To her mother's consternation, she rejected even a chaste marriage with the elderly Cerealis, stating that the pleasure in marriage was sexual, not financial, and she would prefer to seek her companionship in Christ (Jerome, 1933, p. 442). Assuming leadership of her family, she moved them all to their country estate on the Aventine. There, she proceeded to develop an advanced and sophisticated study circle of virgins and widows. A feminine salon culture was well established and highly competitive among the great ladies of Rome. The different houses received imperial recognition from the Little Senate of Ladies, established in the early-third century by the Empress Mother to protect the rights of high-born women (Yarborough, 1993, p. 324). Members of the clergy sought hospitality and, Jerome hints in his letter to Eustochium, compensation and suspect camaraderie in the homes of these bored women (Jerome, 1933, p.85). Marcella's was unique because it was ascetic in practice and monastic in structure (Yarborough, 1993, p. 324).

It was at the home of Marcella that Jerome accessed the echelons of the Roman aristocracy in 382. Carving out for her house a reputation for high learning, Marcella invited this monk to speak to her women after his return from a three-year retreat in the desert. It must have been quite a cachet for her to have recognized him first. Most of what we know about Marcella we learn from

Jerome's letters to her circle. Her mother, Albina, sheltered Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria after his exile in 341 by the East's Arian-Christian emperor¹⁵. His translation of the life of Saint Anthony and stories of the Tabennesiot Nuns inspired the young Marcella to imitate the Eastern religious life but in a more pragmatic, Western way (Jerome, 1933, p. 449). Her moderate form of asceticism included holding onto the larger portion of her wealth, at least until her mother died, maintaining contact with her family and even drinking a little wine (Kelly, 1975, p. 96). Marcella is best remembered for her part in the Origenist controversies during the last decade of the fourth century. Not content to remain in the shadow of her male friends, Jerome and Pacchamus, Marcella took a bold and rather vindictive step to organize public trials against any who continued allegiance with the master's teachings (Jerome, 1933, p. 461). It is a conspicuous act by the woman who was praised for her humility and who always denied her erudition, giving the authority of her own ideas to Jerome or another of her friends "so that she might not seem to do a wrong to the male sex" (ibid., p. 455). Marcella's death was precipitated by the Sack of Rome in 410. Alaric's Gothic armies raided her home, but in respect of the faith to which they had only recently been converted, they allowed her companion, Principia, to accompany her to Saint Paul's Cathedral (Jerome feels it important to note for posterity that

¹⁵Arianism stated that the Logos was created to mediate between God and humanity, but that it was not itself divine and eternal (Brown, 1984, p. 116).

Principia was not raped!). After a few months, stripped completely of her remaining fortune, Marcella died (ibid., p. 465).

Paula: Jerome's Lion

Paula's childhood and early training are typical of her gender and class. Like Marcella, powerful churchmen visited her home and paid tribute to her Christian mother and respect to her Hellenistic pagan father (Herbert, 1885, p. 11). Her education reflected the sophisticated synthesis of these two religions. Already, a sobriety was seeping into the aristocracy and a philosophical retreat from the world was common. Like other girls, Paula studied first classical literature and then moved on to language theory and poetry, in keeping with the tiered curriculum that limited the third grade, rhetoric, to boys who sought appointments in business and government (Hickey, 1987, p. 62). This curriculum was tempered with a strenuous moral and Christian component, culled from scriptural texts. It was, in later years, to be the backbone of Paula's ascetic regime and she was praised for her moral and allegorical interpretations of biblical passages (Kelly, 1975, p. 97). The gravity of her education contrasts sharply with the strictly pagan studies other girls undertook. For the daughter of an 'unmixed' marriage, learning would be more a matter of deportment and training in feminine guile, having no pragmatic use save for enticing a husband (Hickey, 1987, p. 100). While she would be taught to read and write she would also be trained to speak with a lisp and stumble precociously over long words.

Ovid, the great pagan love poet whose works were a major part of the classical curriculum which girls studied, wrote about this speech impediment in *Artis Amatoriae*: "The defect has charm -- this uttering some words amiss: they learn the power to mar their power of speech" (in *ibid.*, p. 99). As soon as she began menstruating, this literate, lisping child would in all likelihood be married to a man many years her senior in accordance with the political and business needs of her noble family, where her affectations would no longer be necessary (Bloch, 1991, p. 85). Christianity provided Paula with a sense of purpose. While knowledge for spiritual, not material wealth, was the domain of all women, now, with the edifying essence of the new religion, she could realize her intellectual potential as something more than a diversion or erotic adornment.

After Paula's marriage, she had four daughters until finally producing an heir one year before her husband's death. In 382, the widow Paula retired to Marcella's Aventine monastery where she met Jerome and became his life-long companion. Their friendship invited speculation, especially in light of Jerome's past sexual exploits (Kelly, 1975, p. 91). Jerome's obsessively erotic language probably helped fuel the rumours. He admitted lust for Paula to another Aventine inhabitant, Asella, but insisted that her piety transformed desire so that he instead began to "revere, respect and venerate her" (Jerome, 1933, p. 183). His letter to Paula's daughter, Eustochium, on the Virgin's Profession, is rife with sensuality. He refers to her as the Bride of Christ (and Paula as the mother-in-law!) and harkens

to an image from the *Song of Songs* with Christ fondling her while she studies alone, leaving her "sick with love" (ibid., p. 109). He also laid the sin of lust firmly at her feet. She was ordered to tie down her breasts and never attend the baths for fear she should arouse any men (ibid., p. 65).

Rumours of impropriety forced Jerome out of Rome in 385, but Paula soon followed with a retinue of women to begin a pilgrimage through the Holy Lands. Such a trek was becoming common to the aristocracy. Guide books were written and the emperor had passed the *Codex Theodosianus* (364) whereby any man who so much as spoke to a holy woman pilgrim would be executed (Hickey, 1987, p. 30). The orthodox faith in the historical Jesus fostered a growing movement of visiting sights and collecting relics (Kelly, 1975, p. 124). This aspect of the popular faith never could have evolved under a Gnostic, Origenist or Pelagian theology. As it was, Paula prostrated herself before Christ's tomb and covered it with rapturous kisses. Her excessive, ecstatic approach to the ascetic life is curious when it is remembered that Jerome always preached moderation (Jerome, 1933, p. 249). Paula had wished to join the Egyptian anchorites but Jerome had other designs. His control over her did not go unnoticed by their contemporaries. Palladius wrote that Paula "was hindered by a certain Jerome from Dalmatia. For though she was able to surpass all, having great abilities, he hindered her by his own jealousy, having induced her to serve his own plans" (Palladius, 1919, p. 141). They settled in Bethlehem where, with Paula's money, a four-house monastery

was built, including a scriptorium and a school (Herbert, 1885, p. 236). Three of the houses were for women and were divided by class. It is telling that the men mingled in one house (Zahm, 1917, p. 51). That women's liberation from the social bonds of family to seek equality in Christ could not transcend their inferior nature is here given a deeper significance because the women, themselves, clung to their only recourse to authority, their aristocracy, at the expense of their lower-born sisters appeals to holiness. The nuns were occupied with language study, biblical exegesis and manuscript copying, setting a pattern of feminine monastic scholarship for the medieval age (ibid., p. 77). Paula and Eustochium, who was her mother's constant comfort throughout the pilgrimage, established a special project for themselves and Jerome: A full translation of the Bible into Latin, hitherto available only in Greek and Hebrew. Their accomplishment, the *Vulgate*, was and still is the authoritative Bible for the Roman Catholic Church. What is not widely recognized is the extent to which Paula and Eustochium contributed to its production: editing texts, correcting translations since their language skills far surpassed Jerome's, and critiquing Jerome's interpretations. The denial that the *Vulgate* was not the lone labour of a single man cannot be blamed on Jerome. His letters abound with gracious references to their work and their names are prominent in his own prefaces to Scriptural books (ibid., p. 74). Within a few centuries after their deaths (Paula in 404, Eustochium in 419 and Jerome in 420),

hagiographers even stripped Paula of her personhood, representing her instead as a lion, the protector of *Jerome's* monastery (*ibid.*, p. 106)¹⁶.

Melania: A Taint of Heresy

During the Origenist controversies, church leadership was split. On the one side was Jerome, with Marcella as his Roman lieutenant and other friends. On the other was Rufinus of Aquileia, his companion Melania and her kinsmen Palladius and Paulinus of Nola (Wright, 1933, p. 501). Most of the information on Melania's life comes from the latter two men. We know from Paulinus that she was extremely wealthy, highborn and wed to a man of equal rank though considerably older than she. His philosophic retreat to the country in 363 preceded his death by one year, followed rapidly by the death of two sons. Melania had experienced numerous miscarriages and stillbirths and was now alone but for an infant boy; at twenty-two years old, she was a widow with a broken body (Paulinus, 1967, p. 108). After eight years in Marcella's circle, Melania left her son in the care of his tutor and, after much family dissension, trekked to Egypt to become a patron and servant to the Nicene monks during the Arian controversy (Palladius, 1919, p. 147). She was shrewd with her money and

¹⁶Some have tried to link the Lion of Paula to the story of Androcles, who healed a wounded lion and received the animal's protection from Roman persecutors. However the life of Paula and the story of Androcles do not co-relate. What is more likely is that Paula's symbol was taken from the popular cult of Asherah, consort of Yahweh, who was written out of the Old Testament (Walker, 1984, p. 66). The monastery's school included a number of students from the surrounding area, who were almost certainly familiar with Asherah. The shadowy figure of Paula working with their gregarious teacher would have prompted the syncretic legend.

her rank, never hesitating to use them to her advantage. Upon her arrest for sheltering the monks from the Arian Emperor, Valens, Melania warned her jailer:

For my part, I am So-and-So's daughter and So-and-So's wife, but I am Christ's slave. And do not despise the cheapness of my clothing. For I am able to exalt myself if I like, and you cannot terrify me in this way or take any of my goods. So then I have told you this, lest through ignorance you should incur judicial accusations. For one must in dealing with insensate folk be as audacious as a hawk (in *ibid.*, p. 148).

She was immediately freed.

At the end of the Arian conflicts, Melania and her companion Rufinus established in Jerusalem the first double monastery. It was to become the model for Jerome and Paula ten years later. Following Saint Basil's Rule, the monastery became renowned for hospitality, almsgiving and scriptural study (Murphy, 1974, p. 70). Melania, herself, was admired not just for her biblical knowledge but for her erudition on Church writers, including Origen, Saint Basil and his brother, Gregory of Nyssa (Palladius, 1919, p. 161). She did not, however, abandon her pilgrim spirit, nor shelter behind Rufinus' guidance. She frequently engaged in political squabbles between members of the Church and the Church and state. She is credited not only with the sheltering of the Nicene community but also with resolving a schism at the church in Antioch and the first Origenist dispute between Jerome and Rufinus (*ibid.*, p. 148). Paulinus reveals that their group had

Pelagian sympathies as well, deciding that Melania's son would ascend to heaven after his death on the basis of his good works, despite his lack of conversion (Paulinus, 1967, p. 246). This he wrote in 408 to Saint Augustine, who was well acquainted with Melania and honoured when Paulinus equalled his faith to the woman's (ibid.).

Melania met her match in her old friend Marcella and had to return to Rome in 398 to rescue her pious granddaughter and her husband, "lest they should be injured by bad teaching or heresy or evil living" (Palladius, 1919, p. 158). Over the next ten years she converted the remainder of her family, with the exception of her grandson whom she established in Sicily. The eschatological tenor that marked her urgent preaching can only be appreciated in light of the fact that she was in Rome during the final decade of its life and escaped Alaric's army by only two years (ibid., p. 154). She died at her monastery the same year as Marcella. Although a saint, her memory has not been well preserved by the Church because of her heretical connections (Clark, 1984, p. 85).

Melania's stridently political and public expressions of faith might suggest that she was less concerned with her lowly female status than her friends, Marcella and Paula. However, her histories do not support such a contention. Instead, she seems to have openly despised her femininity and, despite allegiance to Origen, both Palladius and Paulinus praised her for being male in spirit. Paulinus even

suggested that calling her a woman would be "scornful of her Christian virtue" (Paulinus, 1967, p. 105). Melania was rigorous in the disparagement of her body, matched only by Paula. She never slept on a bed, preferring to spend nights alone reading scriptural exegesis. Her body was encrusted with filth, much to the alarm of her doctors and she either walked or rode the most miserable animal she could find whenever she travelled (Palladius, 1919, p. 161). It is interesting to note that her male companions still enjoyed baths and even a little wine. The ascetic scorn for her body was a symbolically rebellious act against her family who would have traded it for consolidation of power, property and wealth (Clark, 1990, p. 27). However, it also revealed a unique aspect of women's piety in this period which was inextricably linked with guilt for apparent sexual power over men. Melania held up for example Alexandra, who had shut herself up in a tomb, praying loudly for death. When Melania asked the young woman why, she responded:

A man was distressed in mind because of me and, lest I should seem to afflict or disparage him, I chose to betake myself alive into the tomb rather than *cause a soul made in the image of God to stumble* (Palladius, 1919, p. 53, italics mine).

Thus, it appears that despite their spiritual equality ascetic women remained socially inferior. Christianity, perhaps the most adaptive religion ever, created a deeply complex ideology whereby it could benefit from the wealth and knowledge of women but not upset the patriarchal status quo. The strategy was to at once

appeal to and control women so that, while they emancipated themselves from the confinement of the home, they were immediately repossessed by the monastic community (Bloch, 1991, p. 91). What appeared to be a heroic and rebellious act of faith in the new religion, changed a woman's social position very little (Ruether, 1979, p. 72). It is not coincidental that no writings by these women exist today and we must reconstruct their lives and learning from the works of male supporters.

THE CELTIC TRADITION

The history of Ireland's conversion is muddled and heavily mythologized. What is generally known is that, after the Fall of Rome, Ireland was the sole repository of classical learning for two centuries and kept Christian scholarship alive, though casting it in its own distinct light (Durkheim, 1977, p. 36). Diametrically opposed to the Latin tradition, Irish-based Celtic Christianity privileged free will and individualism (Scherman, 1981, p. 76). The ancient maxim, "A man is better than his birth" was etched into their laws and their philosophy, venerating skill and good work above all other social codes (MacNeill, 1934, p. 94). Its spirit transcended not just class but also gender and many women enjoyed positions of wealth, high learning and public careers (Scherman, 1981, p. 244).

Druidic Christianity

Christianity came easily to this tiny, rural island. No periods of martyrdom, no heretical schisms or power struggles between church and state colour its conversion (ibid., p. 97). Irish paganism was Druidic and the Druids were renowned scholars and statesmen. Julius Caesar, whose conquests repressed Druidism in all but Ireland by 50 BCE, wrote admiringly about their science, their morality and their political administration, which he then proceeded to crush (MacNeill, 1934, p. 72). Celtic resentment was so fierce and long lasting that for over two hundred years they competed with Rome in all things spiritual and scholastic until the acrimony subsided but the rivalry remained (ibid., p. 81). Druidism was a mystery religion, steeped in secret knowledge and 'magic' arts (Scherman, 1981, p. 98). While the Druids admired the Latin alphabet, they chose to invent their own complex and esoteric cipher, the Ogham. They had an extensive legal code, the Brehon Laws, which required years of specialized study, but they also placed a high value on practical knowledge of the domestic arts. Computation, medicine, warfare and poetry were complemented by midwifery, agriculture, weaving and administration. The distinction between masculine and feminine knowledge was blurred and rather irrelevant to their culture (ibid., p. 247). To be sure, domestic skill was the domain of women, but in a rural country with no towns, farming and weaving were the chief sources of income. Since Brehon Laws awarded a woman full rights over her dowry and any gains

made by her household after she married, feminine education could only be the more profitable lot (MacNeill, 1934, p. 66).

It was this civilization that Patrick converted to Christianity, but how and when is unclear. A forceful argument is made by Josiah Cox Russell that there were two Patricks, one in the early-third century and another in the mid-fourth. The *Catelogus Sanctorum Hiberniae* (eighth century) described three orders of saints. The first Order of Bishops was under one church and one set of rules and included women in their ranks. The second Order of Monasteries had both Latin and Gallic services and refused the ministry of women -- obviously a Roman influence. The final Order of Hermits was of solitary recluses and does not concern us here (Scherman, 1981, p. 101). The first Patrick was an emissary from Rome, brought to Ireland at the request of King Lughaid Maccon. It is known that Lughaid's son, King Cormac, was a Christian and is credited with introducing written history and literature to the schools, probably meaning Latin (Russell, 1956, p. 396). Following this period of conversion, native teachers gave rise to the second order whereby authority was hierarchized and systematized. These priests included the saints Ciaran, Ailbe, Ibar and Declan, all from the late-third and early-fourth century (Scherman, 1981, p. 84). The second Patrick was a member of this group, although initially shunned as an outsider (ibid). He was a Briton reared in Ireland after being stolen from his father's farm by Celtic raiders. He escaped and lived on the continent until the pope sent him back to Ireland in

432 (Stokes, 1877, p. 16). Rome, having denounced Pelagius some years previous, needed to squelch the Celtic spirit and bring Ireland under administrative control. Probably the greatest contribution made by this Patrick was the Christianization of the Brehon Laws into the *Senchus Mor*. This was a milder book which censured cruel and unusual punishments and wrapped the entire code in the cloak of God's grace according to canonical teachings (Scherman, 1981, p. 95).

Ireland never successfully adapted to the Roman system of episcopal sees -- it was simply too small and fragmented. Organized around the *tuath* or family unit, Ireland's economy was far better suited to monastic leadership, communities within the *tuath* communities (ibid., p. 97). The country's unruliness frustrated Rome and the old rivalries were revived. On the one side was the Pillar of Patrick, admired for his legalism, oratorical gifts and episcopal authority. On the other was a native farm girl, Brigid, the Mary of the Gael and Second Pillar of Ireland (Wescott, 1984).

In the Name of the Mother: Saint Brigid of Kildare

The figure of Brigid is a syncretism between a pagan goddess and a late fifth-century convert (McCone, 1982, p. 110). The goddess Brigid watched over healing, the household and poetry. She was also a teacher of martial arts and a patroness of warfare (Walker, 1983, p. 118). The saint Brigid (454-524) was

famous in Ireland for her Druidic science, domestic skill and Christian generosity (Wescott, 1984). The daughter of a pagan Lord and his Christian slave woman, Brigid was born in a doorway, on the threshold of two worlds (Stokes, 1877, p. 57). Wizards and bishops alike prophesied her coming and a Druid was her first teacher (ibid.). Stories of her piety, charity and skill spread quickly across the country and brought her to the attention of Patrick, then the Bishop of Armagh, as well as his associates MacCaille and Mél. To Patrick, Brigid told a dream she had while listening to him preach. He interpreted it to mean that they together were Ireland's true teachers of Christianity (ibid., p. 69). Brigid went to receive the veil from Mél, but instead he ordained her as a bishop like him. MacCaille was aghast but Mél was convinced "by God hath been given unto her this honour beyond every woman" (ibid., p. 67). Henceforward, the abbess of Kildare was also the bishop. Her parochia was the largest in Ireland, larger even than Patrick's. Built on the Curragh, the country's most fertile land, it was a gift from the Uí Dúnlainge who ruled the west (ibid., p. 77).

The legend of Brigid's ordination reflects a power struggle in Ireland more than the personal power of Brigid. At the level of the *tuaths* the monastery was recognized before the episcopal sees and the abbess or abbot ruled over the bishop (Scherman, 1981, p. 97). When Brigid's vita was being written, two centuries after her death, the Roman system was gaining strength and an appeal to the ecclesia was necessary to retain control over church lands (Sharpe, 1982,

p. 106). Despite her title, Brigid still needed a man to fulfill clerical duties so she appointed Bishop Conlief and assigned him a male house (Wescott, 1984). The Celtic double monastery, therefore, recognized the abbess as patroness and overseer before the abbot's sacerdotal function. This was a far more schismatic difference from the Latin tradition than the unique, God-given gift of bishopry to one exceptional woman. As abbess, Brigid also had the authority of confessor, outlawed to women on the continent (Morris, 1973, p. 141). She was called Ananchara, or soul-friend to the people (Sellner, 1989, p. 415).

The monasteries were the centres of learning and included schools modelled on the classical system (Scherman, 1981, p. 248). Manuscript and illumination were new arts fostered by the second Patrick that led to a new class of Christian scholars who usurped the status of the Druids (ibid., p. 99). While stories abound about the monastic schools of Saint Enda or Saint Finian, there is no mention of a school run by their contemporary, Brigid. Instead there are tales -- some fanciful, some common sense -- of expert agrarian management, artful medicine and cosmology and days spent on the domestic crafts of weaving and spinning. She is even said to have made Patrick's winding sheet herself (ibid., p. 96). While this practical knowledge is often dismissed in present days as folkloric, in early medieval Ireland it was of the highest epistemic authority and can give historic validation to feminist strategies of redefining knowledge to include a person's immanent involvement with the world (Dalmiya & Alcoff, 1993, p. 235).

Brigid was not merely a monk or even a saint. She was the heir to the goddess' crown. Celtic Christianity retained huge portions of its pagan past, including gender duality in their divinities (Scherman, 1981, p. 78). Kildare had been the site of Brigidine worship for centuries before and it is possible that Brigid was a priestess before her conversion (Walker, 1983, p. 117). In Ireland, conversion was not the purgative experience of Augustine or Jerome but a choice made by the free will which did not preclude the life lived up to that moment. The most telling symbol of Brigid's liminal faith¹⁷ -- that is, it was both/neither Christian and pagan, residing equally and consubstantially in both worlds -- is the eternal fire of Kildare. This sacred shrine, enclosed by a hedge and taboo to the men of the monastery, was watched each day and night by one of twenty elect nuns (Thurston & Attwater, 1981, p. 227). A relic from the pagan cult of Brigid, it was her Christian namesake who held the twentieth place even after death. The remaining nineteen would cry out at the end of the nineteenth night, "Brigid guard your own fire, the next night belongs to you." Nineteen was the number of years between the coincidence of the Hellenistic solar calendar and the Celtic lunar calendar. The twentieth year, therefore, belonged to both civilizations and it was right that Brigid mark it with her presence (Walker, 1983, p. 117). The fire

¹⁷Ancient and early Christian Celtic civilization was organized around the concept of liminality. The border line between contrasting moments in time, like night and day, or the change of seasons, exploded with mystical and awesome power that could be directed for both good and evil. The Celtic calendar included four liminal holidays: *Imbolc*, February 1st and Saint Brigid's feast day; *Bealtine*, on May 1st; *Lughnasad*, August 1st; and *Samhain*, November 1st. The liminal period occurred from sundown the evening before to sunrise, opening the doors to supernatural and magical phenomena. See Alwyn & Brinley Rees, 1961. *Celtic Heritage*. Great Britain: Thames and Hudson. pp. 89-94.

shrine was well documented and remained a part of the monastery until Henry de Londres, Archbishop of Dublin, order it doused in 1220 (Scherman, 1981. p. 113). Unlike the foreigner, Patrick, Brigid imbued the full spirit of Celtic piety and her authority burned in the conscience of the Church centuries after her death. Only with later Roman intervention would the cult of Patrick overpower the native faith. To the Irish, she was not a simple peasant girl but the daughter of God, Mother of Christ and bond of the Holy Spirit:

She it is that helpeth every one who is in straits and in danger. She it is that abateth the pestilences. She it is that quelleth the wave-voice and the wrath of the great sea. This is the prophesied woman of Christ (Stokes, 1877, p. 85).

CONCLUSION

In the Latin tradition, women's exclusion from canonical councils was justified by the limits of their education. Without the final schooling in rhetoric, the art of disputation was denied them. Yet, when the social context of the Fathers' lives is brought to bear on their propositions, the real but unacknowledged influence of practical and experiential knowledge rises swiftly to the summit of their arguments. These two apparently lesser factors, in point of history, often induced faulty reasoning and discordant logic, usually directed towards woman's natural inferiority and essential profanity. The Fathers were strongly sexed men who could abandon great fortunes and illustrious careers but lust for women was their

single most onerous barrier to God. The dichotomous duality of Gnosticism was easily adapted by Origen to place women as opposite to men, and then fully exploit its original egalitarian spirit to discredit androgyny and entrench the concept of the third race not as a combined gender but an untainted single gender, male. A spiritual woman was not considered female but male; or she could lose her humanity altogether and become a lion, a man's protector. The Celtic tradition, which did not deny the importance of social practice or collective experience to knowledge, had no such conflicts in its theology. Furthermore, the Celts were much more inclined to retain an immanent gender duality in their religion because of the residual potency of their goddesses. Celtic Christianity did not dichotomize gender but nurtured a dialectical relationship remarkably devoid of any strict social valuing. The ontological feminine was equal to but different from the masculine, just as women were equal but assumed different roles in society. Nevertheless, the Irish way ultimately capitulated to the ruthlessly patriarchal and misogynistic Rome. As the study of Brigid's ordination shows, the subsequent denigration of women's knowledge and positions resulted in the same confused claims to authority by God's grace that troubled the Latin Fathers. The conflict between these two cultures, girded by their opposing views of feminine power and women's equality, continued to plague the Church as it crossed over to a new era in human history, the medieval age.

2

PM-1 3 1/2" x 4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

THE CONVENT AS KINGDOM

After Rome fell in 410, Germanic armies raided the far posts of the western empire. The colonizers fled and civilization receded to tribal warfare. The collapse of the central state left only one institution standing, the Catholic Church. Members of the Church received protection from marauding armies whose warriors had recently been converted to Christianity, albeit in the heretical form of Arianism. Evidence of the respect given to the pious rests in the death of Marcella. While still a strong community, having followed the principles of Roman bureaucracy to organize dioceses and parochias in strict, hierarchical order, the Church Fathers were not prepared for the devastation that swept through their homeland. Much time was spent attempting to explain theologically why God allowed such carnage. Classical theories of grace and free will were necessary to explain what they saw as the world's inherent sinful state and the power of faith to rise above suffering. Augustine, in particular, provided the final solution in his multi-volume tome, *City of God*. For Augustine, civilizations were essentially impermanent "ideas of the world" but with the unfolding of each successive history, the soul would turn further to the work of God (Marrou, 1957, p. 8). The mystery of the world was God's infinite grace to restore creation from the disorder of original sin (Gilson, 1955, p. 80). *City of God* became the single most important work in the medieval age, launching a distinctive medieval

theology in an historiographical framework from the dawn of Creation to the millennial Second Coming of Christ (von Campenhausen, 1964, p. 250).

Ireland, untouched by the ransacking that left an empire in ashes, became a haven for the continent's church scholars, who brought with them remnants of the now-dead classical culture. This continental infusion deepened the Celtic tradition's philosophic reasoning, tempered their ascetic zeal and intensified the fervour for knowledge in the monastic schools (G. G. German, 1981, p. 242). The earliest scholarship of the medieval age was molded by the particular Irish sense of individualism and moral responsibility (Durkheim, 1977, p. 36). It was for over one hundred years the sole light of western Europe's once brilliant intellectuality.

The perpetual clash over the relationship between grace and free will was the overriding concern of the Church, especially in a time of such instability and human horror. Moments of peace and wealth were snatched hungrily by exhausted and frightened people desperate for a sense of meaning and purpose. Medievalism, a new civilization wrought from the wreckage of antiquity, re-configured reality, using the Bible as the centrepiece of knowledge, through a system of Catholic theology and neo-platonic philosophy formed within a network of demi-empires and monastic rules. In an era where every person was vital to survival, women were deployed at the frontiers, enjoying a level of power and social opportunity since unknown in Western history. Their elevation was not

merely a social or economic effect but a fully rational and spiritual aspect of the new world order.

THE EMBRYONIC SELF IN A DISPLACED WORLD

While the concept of ontology is a problematic category in modern philosophy, for the medieval world it was the bedrock of all understanding. Neo-platonic ideas made possible the alliance of faith and reason (Cantor, 1963, p. 402).

Layered readings privileged the metaphorical and, thus, grounded sexual difference not in biological-naturalistic terms but in the philosophical dialectic of masculine-reason and feminine-emotion. Since all was real and knowable, no person -- not even the vehemently autonomous Irish -- was in a detached or objective relationship with the world. The self was understood through the dynamic flow of energy between the two orders of microcosm and macrocosm. It turned on a double axis, either in the direction of the senses or toward God, the source of being (Miles, 1991, p. 94). Duality, not opposition, of affectivity and rationality connected the soul to its origins, both sinful and in a state of grace. The soul in the world was only partially formed, biding its time until it would be born(e) to the celestial kingdom. It is this psycho-cultural self that has been

called embryonic (Bordo, 1986, p. 443)¹⁸. Neither fully autonomous nor wholly dependent on the cosmos -- that larger structure that encompassed the world and the heavens -- the embryonic self was nurtured on love and reason. Empathetic, even erotic connotations were the cherished feminine aspect of the self aligned, however imperfectly, to a systematic logic and factual science based on observation and practice (ibid., p. 446). A fully realized self was gained from the total bridging of these two elements in a perfect order that was not symmetrical but harmonic; thought resonated in the space between the self and the world.

The patristic legacy ensured a continual misogynist current in any intellectual discourse (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 216). The monumental concern of medieval thought was the extrapolation and implications of patristic texts and how they could best serve the Church in the world (Cantor, 1963, p. 114). The feminine was not really a partner but an alternative -- necessary and real but requiring order and submission to the masculine. This philosophical understanding was reflected in the social position of women in the dynasties of warrior-kings and emperors. The dilution of hegemonic control generated a rift between temporal and spiritual power that was to continue throughout the medieval age. Kings sought benediction from the pope as a sign of divine authority over the world.

¹⁸Susan Bordo borrowed the term from Owen Barfield: *[Man] was integrated or mortised into [the world], each different part of him being united to a different part of it by some invisible thread. In his relation to his environment, the man of the middle ages was rather less like an island, rather more like an embryo.* See Owen Barfield, 1965. *Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, p. 78.

Popes were happy to oblige because they believed if they conferred imperial office, then they would be recognized as supreme rulers. Issues of faith, devotion and humility were often relegated to the shadows. Pope Gregory the Great (†590-604), having turned the destiny of the Roman See from its eastern empire to western Europe, began the long history of political negotiations between the papacy, the monarchy with its appointed episcopal counsellors, and Gregory's own unique contribution to the Church, the monastic army (Cantor, 1963, p. 192). Their endless rivalries prevented any one force from dominating for very long and power was always unstable and precarious. Inhabiting these hegemonic gaps, women could build their own networks of loyalty and patronage. Their achievements expose the arbitrariness and historical specificity of patriarchal dominance (Hennessy, 1993, p. 87). Turning dower lands into monasteries, women used all their energies to preserve their sanctity, their intellect and their status. However, their positive sense of self was mitigated by their social inferiority. While opportunities for great wealth and leadership were possible, women's identities were contingent upon their relationship to male authority figures, either popes, bishops or kings. Allegiance was tricky, subject to sudden change. It required keen political skill and an active engagement in world affairs (McNamara, 1985, p. 45). Dual supports of royal and monastic households strengthened a woman's autonomy: she would continue to enjoy the luxuries of her birthright and inheritance without passage into another family and accessed

greater levels of government and independence through her affiliation with the Church (Schulenburg, 1988, p. 107).

Irish missions introduced double monasteries in the tradition of Saint Brigid to Britain and the continent. They were eagerly welcomed by women members of ruling families who owned vast dower lands conferred upon them by their royal husbands. In actuality, these deeds of property were in exchange for their own families' lands to seal and protect the delicate balance of power between households. Royal women not only received a *legitima dos*, the legal transition of land and treasure that occurred between representatives from both courts, but were also rewarded for their post-nuptial services to their husbands with a morning gift (Ennen, 1989, p. 63). Despite their titleship, women could not rule alone in the temporal sphere. By transferring their allegiance to the Church, they retained authority over their lands, not as regents or consorts but solely as queen-abbesses; although they were responsible to Catholic hierarchy and the pope. The Irish missions caused a further disruption to Europe's tenuous balance of political power. Disinterested in papacy or episcopal bureaucracy, the monks also embraced women as full equals in holiness (Noble, 1992, p. 29). They sparked a bloodless war between the two cultures, Celtic and Roman, fought on a divided territory, Britain (Nicholson, 1978, p. 17).

THE BATTLE FOR BRITAIN

Soon after the Roman decampment, Anglo-Saxon tribes invaded and the British Isles reverted to paganism. The country was divided into three territories: the southern province of Kent, Mercia or the midlands, and the wild terrain of Northumbria (Cantor, 1963, p. 204). It was in the north that Saint Columba (521-597), the dove of Ireland, lived in voluntary exile from 563 until his death thirty-four years later (Scherman, 1981, p. 154). He settled in Iona, in what is now Scotland¹⁹, bringing with him the Irish tradition of double monasteries, ruled by the abbess who was superior to the bishop (Noble, 1992, p. 34). Perhaps the most important contribution Ireland made to women's piety was the sacrament of private confession. It was not the Roman way of public declaration of sin but an intimate, heartfelt expression to the spiritual counsellor and comforter who would guide the penitent back to God through prayers and deeds (Bieler, 1963 p. 49). This director was called the *ananchara*, or soul-friend, a title first used by Saint Brigid of Kildare. The feminine qualities of love, compassion and moral guidance were attached to the abbess, offering her increased leadership in the growing ritualization of church service (Wemple, 1981, p. 160). However, the ascetic rigour of the Irish system demanded confession three times a day and penance could include bodily mortifications as a kind of spiritual purging (Bieler, 1963,

¹⁹The Irish at this time were called *Scotti*. Hence, when they populated northern Pictish territories, the country was renamed Scotland, or land of the Irish.

p. 49). Nevertheless, Irish monastic settlements were characterized by mutual respect and warmth between the sexes. They both sought a degree of segregation to ameliorate spiritual and contemplative order but worked co-operatively on lands and in the household, offering hospitality, education and a simple piety to the laity (Scherman, 1981, p. 164).

After Columba's death, Rome could ignore the Irish no longer. The papal see sent the missionary Augustine to Kent in 597 to convert the English according to apostolic customs (Bieler, 1963, p. 74). Kent's royal family was connected to continental Frankish royalty by marriage and the daughter of this alliance, Aethelburg, was given to Eadwin (d. 633), the king of Northumbria. She brought with her the Roman rites and sent her own daughter, Eanflaed, back to Kent for her training (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 82). Eadwin, recently converted by the competitive efforts of his wife and the Irish monks, continued Northumbria's customary alliance with Iona and his son was trained by Columba's successor, Aiden (d. 651). The religious rivalry sparked an outburst of monastic activity. Double houses were founded across the land, the first known establishment ruled by Aethelburg's niece, Eanswith, at Folkstone. It was land settled to the church by her father, Eadbald, who after ascending to the Kentish throne in 613, bequeathed his daughter and her dowry lands to the Church as retribution for his brief flirtation with paganism (*ibid.*, p. 83). Northumbria also saw the value in

monastic courts and established Heortheu, ruled by Heru and consecrated by Aiden in the mid-seventh century (Bede, 1840, p. 242).

Women were valued members of royal families: they were necessary partners in holding lands, appropriating wealth and administrating the kingdom. Wives were assistant regents and daughters were esteemed because of their potential for royal alliances and monastic autonomy, depending on the needs of the province (Nicholson, 1978, p. 16). Eanflaed wed her cousin, King Oswiu, to secure the Northumbrian power base. She returned from Kent with her spiritual patron, Bishop Wilfrid, an arch-supporter of the Roman See (Bede, 1840, p. 175). Both Oswiu and his predecessor, Eanflaed's father Eadwin, had vowed their infant daughters to the Church if God granted them victory at two crucial moments in Northumbria's warrior history, but only Eanflaed's daughter, Aelfled (650-713), was intended to remain virginal. She, therefore, required a royal monastery to preserve not just her stature but that of the entire family. Oswiu and his patron, Aiden, turned to Hilda (613-680), Oswiu's second cousin, to build a feminine court worthy of the princess (ibid., p. 173).

The Court of Hilda

On the shores of the North Sea, encompassing a myriad of agrarian lands and tiny parochias, Whitby (also called Streaneshach) was the pre-eminent seat of

royal-spiritual authority, recognized as the feminine arm of the state (Noble, 1992, p. 34). From the beginning, Whitby was the centre of learning and art in Britain (Heinrich, 1924, p. 94). Women ruled over the scriptorium and library, as well as being charged with the making of altar cloths and priestly garments. Glorified in the manuscripts as the personification of wisdom, women benefitted from a broader education in literature and mysticism than the men whose social importance rested in their warrior abilities (Ferrante, 1988, p. 10). They also, in keeping with the tradition of Saint Brigid, exerted administrative control over the accumulation and distribution of royal wealth from the monastery (Heinrich, 1924, p. 73). Whitby was a luxurious palace resplendent with treasures and its nuns wore lavish silks that they had spent hours embroidering instead of praying. For them, the making of things beautiful was itself a form of benediction (Eckenstein, 1963, p. 226). The feminine arts of design, illumination and weaving were brought to great heights in the royal convents. Not merely aesthetic, they reflected the intricacies of the medieval mind. Circular, patterned knots represented the binding of immanent grace and transcendent wisdom, the holy threads of spiritual life (Walker, 1983, p. 512)²⁰.

Trained in the Irish tradition, Hilda was a zealous educator and administrator. Her convent became a centre of aristocratic and episcopal training. Not only did

²⁰see Appendix C, p. 187. The example is from the *Book of Durrow*, one of the earliest extant sacred books from Northumbria, circa 671.

she care for the royal daughters and tonsured monks²¹ but secular men came to her for their schooling. Hilda appointed bishops from among her favourite family members, thus reinforcing her own authority (Noble, 1992, p. 34). No less than five bishops in the late-seventh century owe their training and position to Hilda: including Wilfrid, who repaid his benefactress by leading the Roman faction against the Irish at the Synod of Whitby in 664 (Bede, 1840, p. 243). On the one side was the Kentish Eanflaed and her bishop, Wilfrid, returning from a pilgrimage on the continent. Her husband and daughter stood with Hilda and appointed Bishop Colman, from Iona, to speak for the Irish. The debate at the synod was practical, not theological -- try as they might, the Romans could never suppress the Irish on matters of orthodoxy (Scherman, 1981, p. 149). There were two issues tabled: the calculation of Easter and the proper style of the tonsure, the monastic haircut. Wilfrid's victorious speech was preserved by Bede (d. 735)²². It rested on the supremacy of Peter, appointed by Christ as keeper of the keys of heaven. Wilfrid sneered at the appeals to Britain's adored Columba and finally won over Oswiu, the adjudicator (Bede, 1840, p. 182). He did not, however, appease his former teacher. Hilda despised Wilfrid for the rest of her life, opposing his appeals to Rome and refusing the Roman calendar -- a brazen schismatic act that was not dared censured by either bishops or kings. The

²¹The tonsure, a ritual shaving of the crown of the head to open the mind to God, symbolized the vows of humility and piety and marked the final stage of a man's admission to a monastery.

²²An Anglo-Saxon monk and supporter of the Roman tradition, the Venerable Bede wrote an ecclesiastical history of his country which spanned from 60 BCE to 731 CE.

acrimony as well as the position of abbess was inherited by Aelfled (Nicholson, 1978, p. 18). Aelfled is referred to as "ever the comforter and best counsellor of the whole province" (in Eckenstein, 1896, p. 104). This suggests that she was an *anachara*, therefore an Irish traditionalist. Not until the respectful urging of the pope did she finally make peace with Wilfrid; although Whitby did not follow the Roman calendar until 716, three years after her death (Bieler, 1963, p. 80). By that time, the island's importance to the papacy was waning. As the Northumbrian kings became increasingly decadent and ruthless, their women kin also sank into lasciviousness and mediocrity (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 106). The best of the Anglo-Saxon monks and scholars sought appointments with the Frankish royal courts. Having divested itself of its intellectual leaders and exhausted its royal reserves with endless tribal battles, the Anglo-Saxon Church was weakened in both monastic discipline and scholarship. Feminine eminence in learning, dependent on the support of Celtic Christianity, lost much ground after the Synod of Whitby (Heinrich, 1924, p. 70). Adamnán (624-704), abbot of Iona, deplored the conditions of the royal monasteries which had been "converted into places of feasting, drinking, talking and other delights (Bede, 1840, p. 252). Irish missionaries bypassed England and went directly to the continent, where a tradition of royal monasticism, under the direction of Merovingian queens, had already begun.

THE DAUGHTERS OF MEROVECH

At the turn of the sixth century, Clovis I of the Franks (†481-511) conquered Visigothic Gaul and established the Merovingian dynasty, so-called by claims to their mythic founder, the Germanic hero Merovech (Cantor, 1963, p. 146). Converted to Catholic Christianity by his consort Clothilde, Clovis founded Paris as the capital city. Clothilde quickly followed with her own power base, Chelles, the first royal convent (Noble, 1992, p. 30). Polygamous princes generated a surplus of royal women, many ignoble but a few were able to assert themselves at their moment of favour to transform dower lands into monasteries. The monastery was the only refuge for Christian women. The Church was on a campaign for clerical celibacy that gave little regard for the fate of abandoned wives. The concept of ritual purity, begun by the Latin Fathers, supplanted ascetic piety on the continent. The argument was that there was something unclean about women. Their inherent baseness not only prevented them from sacerdotal duties but also emitted an aura of sinfulness that contaminated the priests (Wemple, 1981, p. 139). A woman spurned by her priest-husband had no other social recourse. While the Church refused to acknowledge her marriage it also denied her the right to marry someone else, even after her first husband's death (ibid., p. 134). A social pariah, bereft of companionship and spiritual comfort, viewed as the vessel of wanton evil, a spiritual woman's only salvation was in the monastery. The Church's hold on these women's sense of self and

social identity can only be understood under the rubric of patriarchy. In the Church's system a priest's wife was sinful for her public acts of sanctity and despised for her marriage but never allowed to rescind her mistake and continue with her life. Her husband, free from any blame, merely had to beg forgiveness for his weakness for female bodies and continue in his parish. He could even be rewarded with a promotion for destroying his wife to preserve his sacerdotal position (*ibid.*).

Queens and Pawns: Radegund and Bathild

By the mid-sixth century, the Merovingians had built an empire. Clothar I (†511-561), son of Clovis and Clothilde, led battles to bring home lavish booty of land, treasures and women, all of which he held hostage against rival thrones.

Radegund (521-587), abducted from the Thuringian court while still a child, was chosen to be the king's fifth wife. She soon discovered that her husband had murdered her brother to seal his power over her homeland. Devastated, she fled to Saix and sought the protection of the highest church leaders (Gregory, 1965, p. 57). Taking the veil (the feminine equivalent of the tonsure) she was invested as a deaconess, which meant that she could live a consecrated life in the world without enclosure in a convent. She remained secluded at her dotal estates while her friends, Bishop Medardus of Nyon and Bishop Germain of Paris, negotiated with Clothar for her freedom (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 55). This was no easy task as

kings felt it was part of their royal rights to take any women they wanted. Church authorities, needless to say, paid only the slightest lip service to their obligations to serve the monastic women under their care. Only those with whom they enjoyed a rare, personal relationship could expect any real support. Rather than threatening royal men with excommunication if they raped a nun, it was the women -- barely in their teens -- who were again the sole holders of sin and could be cast out of the Church if they could not prove that they had fought valiantly for their chastity against these warriors (Wemple, 1981, p. 157). Radegund probably was saved because of her unique position with all her masters in both Church and state. As mentioned previously, she was a friend to bishops. But she was also merely the fifth of seven wives and, with the death of her brother, the only survivor of the Thuringian House so that Clothar's rule could not be contested. Furthermore, she had no sons and, therefore, was of no value to the court.

Radegund established Ste. Croix à Poitiers in 566. She gathered about her priest's wives, deaconesses and veiled widows who heretofore had no sense of community. She also attached a male house to assist the women in spiritual matters and agricultural labour. The convent was distinguished for possessing a relic of the cross, mounted in a gold reliquary panel, decorated with enamel and precious stones (Lasko, 1971, p. 73). This sacred object secured for Ste. Croix an elevated position as a dynastic cult centre, touched by pure holiness (Wemple,

1981, p. 183). Female hagiographers, like the nun Baudonivia who wrote a vita for her patroness Radegund, often promoted the sanctity of abbesses and founders through direct, concrete appeals to relics, invested with miraculous powers that were believed to protect the women from worldly abuses (McNamara, 1985, p. 49). According to unique feminine principles of holiness, Radegund's active involvement in episcopal and imperial affairs, her reputation for healing, hospitality and education not only earned her power in her life but also elevated her to sainthood in her death (ibid., p. 40). Her male biographer, Fortunatus, stressed her simplicity, humility and self denial. This disparity in style according to gender has been identified by feminist scholars of hagiography (Wemple, 1981, p. 183)²³.

Latin culture found an enthusiastic patroness in her and classical studies were preserved at Ste. Croix with the assistance of her friend, the monk and poet Fortunatus (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 58). The seven liberal arts, the fundamentals of the classical curriculum, were known to western Europe from *De Nuptiis* (The Marriage of Philology and Mercury), a surviving work by the fifth-century Latin scholar Martianus Capella who depicted the arts as Philology's bridesmaids (Cantor, 1963, p. 76). The first order of the arts was the *logica*, or trivium of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic, which established the primary rules of thought and expression. Mastery of those systems would lead to further studies in the

²³Of the two vitae for Radegund, only Fortunatus' work has been translated into English.

quadrivium of music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. These were the *physica* or external realities of the laws of sounds, numbers, space and the stars (Durkheim, 1977, p. 47). The seven were applied to the problematic of Scriptural and patristic exegesis and then brought to sensorial splendour in the arts of illumination, weaving and poetry (Lasko, 1971, p.73). Deeply platonic in its sensibility, the seven arts were aligned with the seven planets²⁴, and the Pleiades, a brilliant celestial cluster of seven stars known also as the Seven Sisters of Wisdom (Walker, 1983, p. 804). Women's study under the classical curriculum received Scriptural sanction from the Book of Proverbs:

Wisdom hath built herself a house: she hath hewn her out seven pillars. She hath slain her victims, mingled her wine, and set forth her table. She hath sent her maids to invite to the tower, and to the walls of the city: Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me. And to the unwise she said: Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you. Forsake childishness, and live, and walk by the ways of prudence (Proverbs:1-6)

Like all ideas, the seven liberal arts were subject to the rules of grammatical platonism that presupposed a primordial essence to names, including their Latin gender. Thus, they were cosmically and insurmountably feminine: personified in monastic art as enigmatic, contemplative women (Dronke, 1984, p. 5).

²⁴Uranus was not discovered until 1781.

Radegund cleared a space for vulnerable women of her class. Without the monastery, life was unspeakably lonely, isolated and monotonous.

Communication outside palace walls was a rare and dangerous pleasure (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 149). Living, studying and creating communally fostered a strengthening feminine voice against the oppressive regime of a patriarchal Church and state. No one understood this potential better than Bathild (d. 680), first brought to the Merovingian Empire as a slave girl but who later became one of its most illustrious queens (Nelson, 1978, p. 46). Abducted from northern Gaul by armies of Clovis II (†639-657), Bathild was originally intended for the mayor of Paris but so enticed Clovis that, in 648, he made her his only queen -- although he indulged in countless concubines. Her unique favour to the king probably rested less on her beauty and more on the three sons she produced for the crown. Before the first was born, in 649, she even expressed to her spiritual advisor her fear of exile or imprisonment if her child turned out to be a girl (ibid., p. 47). Knowing full well that her time at the court was limited even after the initial threat of barrenness was alleviated, Bathild set about building for herself a network of influential bishops (ibid., p. 51). Her husband's death in 657 left her only seven years as regent until her eldest would be of age. Bathild then made it her special project to rebuild Chelles, which had fallen into ruins after Clothilde. It was an astute move that would delight Church and state alike (Noble, 1992, p. 32). Her other great near-achievement was the imprisonment and order of execution for Wilfrid, the Anglo-Saxon prelate in exile from

Northumbria in 660. Despite his opposition to Bathild's proposed ecclesiastical reforms, he was freed because of his foreign status and promptly returned to Britain to poison another queen nun's power (Bede, 1840, p. 310).

Bathild was a supporter of the Irish tradition, introduced to Gaul by Columbanus, a charismatic monk who emigrated from Ireland in 591 (Bieler, 1963, p. 85). His was the first real rival to the order of Saint Benedict of Arles, founded in 529 and the preferred monastic rule of the Roman Church. Columbanus appealed to command of the self and mortification of sin over Benedictine submission and humility (Noble, 1992, p. 83)²⁵. Bathild chose her first group of contemplatives from the houses of Luxeuil and Jouarre, the centres of Columbanus' rule. However, it is unclear if Chelles was a full double monastery or if the male numbers were restricted for clerical duties only (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 76). She retired to Chelles in 664 after her son assumed the throne. There is evidence that she was pushed out, however she had been planning this event for some years and continued to act with authority from the convent. Like Radegund, Bathild merged political acumen and mystical spirituality. She appropriated relics, commissioned saintly interventions and negotiated alliances with bishops and kings to ensure not just her power but the power of Chelles and all its inhabitants (Nelson, 1978, p. 72). Concerns for her legacy both in the world and

²⁵Noble points out that Benedict, like Jerome and Augustine before him, also had a cathartic conversion experience that included a burning sexual drive to possess, then brutally spurn, a woman (Noble, 1992, p. 83).

the heavens extended even so far as to arrange with her abbess, Bertilla, an elaborate and inspiring deathbed. This would increase the fame and stature of both Bathild and Chelles. She would become a saint and her relics would invest Chelles with numinous authority beyond the reach of male overlords from the ecclesiastical and temporal spheres (McNamara, 1985, p. 48). Her efforts were in vain. Soon after her death in 680, Europe experienced another political revolution that had dire consequences for the status of women.

THE CAROLINGIAN DARK AGES

Civil strife between members of the Merovingian family debilitated their empire by the eighth century. Temporal power shifted to the house of Pepin, a mere mayor of the palace but ambitious and adroit. In order to overthrow the monarchy, Pepin needed the support of the papacy. He befriended the influential Anglo-Saxon monk, Boniface (680-754), sent to the continent by the pope to convert the last of the pagan tribes (Boniface, 1911, p. 17). Boniface crowned Pepin king in 751, and was rewarded in return with the title Archbishop and chief reformer of the Frankish Church, according to his interpretation of Benedictine rules (Noble, 1992, p. 87). All this was but a prologue to the Carolingian Empire, founded by Pepin's son, Charlemagne (742-814). The pope, himself, revived the title Holy Roman Emperor for Charlemagne in 800. In many respects, Charlemagne's empire building mirrored Bathild's efforts to gain dynastic prestige

through divine and saintly power, subdue aristocratic and episcopal authority and create a centralized royal church (Nelson, 1978, p. 72). He did not engage in doctrinal disputes but was interested in monastic discipline, episcopal administration and the intellectual and financial growth of the Church to best serve the monarchy (Cantor, 1963, p. 227). Bathild's limitations were strictly due to her sex but Charlemagne had no restraints on either his ambitions or his talents (Nelson, 1978, p. 72). He gathered a community of monastic scholars, all male and almost all Anglo-Saxon Benedictines, to centralize education around his ideal institution, the Palace School. Boniface and his successor, Alcuin (735-804), who administered the church reforms, highlight the decay of British power after the Synod of Whitby as scholar after scholar abandoned his homeland for opportunities on the continent.

Not only were women excluded from the court's training but what positions they had held were stripped away when nuns were ordered to close their schools and reside in strict cloister (Wemple, 1981, p. 187). Even the Anglo-Saxon monks had been won over to the misogynistic ritual purity of the Roman church. In 747, Boniface wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury asking him to outlaw women's pilgrimage. As the convents became dull and ineffectual institutions, nuns sought spiritual fortunes on the continent, especially in Rome. Unfortunately, many would not return to their empty lives but chose to remain in secular society. Boniface complained:

For the most part they perish, few remaining pure. There are few cities in Lombardy or in France or in Gaul in which there is not an adulteress or a harlot of English race: which is a scandal and disgrace to your whole Church (Boniface, 1911, p. 180).

Other charges against nuns' piety called attention to their artwork, lavish clothing and dubious morality. Sexual liaisons between members of the double houses and rumours of infanticides plagued the once exalted English monasteries (Bede, 1840, p. 252). Truly pious women cried to Boniface for help but he and his colleagues only suggested more rigorous discipline and isolation (Boniface, 1911, p. 62).

The Carolingian reforms are sometimes dubbed a renaissance (see Durkheim, 1977) but the overall contribution to education was a continuation of the work of royal abbeys, minus the women. Alcuin can be credited with the invention of the Carolingian script, a standardized, easily legible form of writing (Noble, 1992, p. 93). But only one scholar is remembered for his contribution to the important disciplines of theology and philosophy -- and he was denounced as a heretic even before the close of the medieval age (Bieler, 1963, p. 132). Johannes Scotus Erigena (literally, "Scion of Ireland") was the resident scholar at the Carolingian court in 850, under the royal patronage of Charles the Bald, Charlemagne's grandson. Reverting to the Gnostic theory of the seven heavens and a platonic theologizing about divine ideas, Erigena illustrated the steps to salvation and grace. Before any movement to God could begin, however, the body must first

reject the stain of the feminine. Not Gnostic androgyny but patristic misogyny permeated his belief that at the resurrection "Sex will be abolished and nature made one... There will then be only man, as if he had never sinned" (in Noble, 1992, p. 105). Once again, "man," in true Latin tradition, was not considered a sex but the third race promised by Saint Paul. The pure male body would turn to vitality, then perception, next reason and, finally, mind. The end of rational creation would mark the higher plane of grace, commencing with knowledge, then wisdom and ultimately God-hood (Bieler, 1963, p. 128).

Since Erigena's ascent could not happen for women, they did not merit education. The convent, no longer attached to a male house, was used as a shelter, a prison or an old-age home -- a place to throw the feminine refuse of society (Wemple, 1981, p. 172). Concomitantly, polygamy and divorce laws were repealed, as were dowry traditions and consanguinity, all of which served to tighten the emperor's hold on his aristocracy and prevent its members from building a network of power through their women (Noble, 1992, p. 88). The Carolingian age promoted the Marian cult, celebrating the suffering, obedient, silent Virgin Mother as the epitomized divine woman. Veneration in the Palace School of sexless motherhood and domestic drudgery played counterpoint to the image of the sorceress and jezebel who tempted men with her pride, wit and beauty (Wemple, 1981, p. 103). The Carolingian empire can boast the first legal accusation and execution of a woman for witchcraft, the nun Gerberga (*ibid.*, p. 95). Gerberga

was not even killed for any actions on her part but because she was the sister of the Empress's lover. Judith, the second wife of Louis the Pious and Charlemagne's daughter-in-law, was perceived by the aristocracy as having too much power over her husband and needed to be brought under submission. Not even her divinely authorized status as a member of the imperial family could protect her. The execution of her friend, Gerberga, was followed with charges against herself and a brief imprisonment at Ste. Croix. She was later allowed to retire to her Italian estates (Ennen, 1989, p. 55). The marginalization of women reached near catastrophic conditions at the Council of Macon (900). There, in direct contradiction to the Scriptures and writings of the early Church Fathers, the bishops debated whether women possessed souls. By a one-vote margin, the decision was affirmative but not conclusive (Wescott, 1983). There is only one nun from this period who achieved any level of authority but it was before Charlemagne reached the heights of temporal power. Singled out for honours because of her special friendship to Boniface, Lioba (700-780) was destined for holiness.

Lioba's Holiness in Love

Lioba, whose divinely intoned name meant "beloved," was a new example of feminine piety. Visions marked both her birth and her vocation. Her pregnant mother experienced pulling a clanging bell from her breast, signalling a glorious

gift from Heaven. Sent immediately to a convent, the adolescent Lioba had a dream in which she drew a long purple thread from her mouth and wrapped it into a ball, to symbolize the grace of her wisdom and counsel that was a gift from God and should be used in service to the Church in the world (Rudolf, 1954, p. 213). The subjective, sensorial experience of God as compassionate and quasi-erotic love was a peculiarly feminine characteristic of the medieval age. A closed community devoted to prayer and meditation with as little social affection as possible would be the optimum climate for psycho-erotic traumas (Petroff, 1986, p. 6). The seed sown by Radegund and Bathild which gave women a voice against their temporal rivals through the divine power of holy relics became a source of frustrated self-confidence where a woman could feel authorized to speak and act publicly only by the intervention of visionary and reliquary grace (ibid., p. 6).

Born in southern Britain, Lioba was the last generation of medieval British women to enjoy a sophisticated education. Her biographer, Rudolf the Monk of Fulda, praised her learning in the logics of grammar and other liberal arts:

So great was her zeal for reading that she discontinued it only for prayer or for the refreshment of her body with food or sleep: the Scriptures was never out of her hand. For, since she had been trained from infancy on the rudiments of grammar and the study of the other Liberal arts, she tried by constant reflection to attain a perfect knowledge of divine things so that through the combination of her reading with her quick intelligence, by natural gifts and hard work she became extremely learned (Rudolf, 1954, p. 215).

At Boniface's special request, she was the only nun trained at the Carolingian court in the Benedictine Rule that stressed three vows of obedience, chastity and poverty and rejected the double monastery (ibid., p. 214). Before the king's anti-women sanctions, she was a friend and advisor to Charlemagne and his consort Hiltegard (ibid., p. 223). The ruthlessly bureaucratic system of the court distressed Lioba, who preferred her convent, Tauberbischofsheim, where pragmatic administration could be tempered with empathetic teaching and a piety derived from pure love (McLaughlin, 1979, p. 104). Learning in her convent maintained a mystical element, a hallowing of cosmic secrets that was of little use to the militaristic, bureaucratic regime of the emerging Holy Roman Empire (Noble, 1992, p.103). She was also a poetess, though none of her works survive. She would send her verses to Boniface for his criticism and inspiration, with the disclaimer that they were composed "in no spirit of confidence" (Boniface, 1911, p. 111). Her self-abnegation was another new element to women's holiness. Humility before her male supporters and a deferential language at all times were necessary precautions when powerful, assertive women like the Empress Judith were being efficiently crushed by the state.

During the thirty years following the death of her companion, Boniface, Lioba's authority sank. Despite the saint's expressed wish to have his beloved buried beside him at his church, when she died the monks instead placed her on the opposite side of the altar (Rudolf, 1954, p. 224). After Lioba there were no

women invited to the court of Charlemagne. Even his daughters were sent away, later to be permanently exiled by their brother, Louis the Pious (Noble, 1992, p. 89). However, the Carolingian attempt to deny women a space in the church was a failure. The collapse of the empire one hundred years after the death of Charlemagne saw a true renaissance in the convent as royal women fought to reclaim what they had lost.

THE CONVENTUAL RENAISSANCE IN SAXONY

At the beginning of the tenth century, the last medieval empire rose from the ashes of the Carolingians. The Ottonian Empire, ruling from Saxon homelands, rekindled the monastic flame. The dissolution of Charlemagne's ecclesiastical ideal rallied papal forces who, again, saw their strength in monasteries and the contemplative life (Noble, 1992, p. 109). Kings also realized the potential force of royal convents. The institutions safeguarded bloodlines, were a repository of wealth and culture and provided royal women with their own courts and an aura of holiness that strengthened the dynastic hold on their subjects. The strict Benedictine rules relaxed and women could now enter convents as secular canonesses, enjoying servants, luxury items and freedom of travel (Heinrich, 1924, p. 44). These Institutes of Canonesses also re-established schools and were designated *collegia* or colleges (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 149).

The marriage reforms of the preceding empire necessitated that royal consorts be scrupulously selected. The first Otto (†936-973) married Adelheid, a Burgundian princess recently widowed by the King of Italy. Their union launched the empire. They had two children. Mathild, who founded the first royal convent, Quedlinburg, in 968; and Otto II, who ascended to the throne in 973. His marriage to Theophanu, a Byzantine princess, sealed an alliance with the eastern empire. Their two daughters, Sophie and Adelheid, presided over the twin royal convents of Gandersheim (†1001-1039) and Quedlinburg (†999-1040). The five royal women ruled the Ottonian empire from their convent houses while their husbands and sons led the wars. Mathild was called *Metropolitana*, and was conferred the status of an archbishop over her lands and wealth (Morris, 1973, p. 58). Quedlinburg and Gandersheim were not merely convents; they were cities with their own churches and relics, villages and farmlands, administrators and legal systems, armies, and even their own coins struck at royal mints stamped with the abbess' portrait (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 153). At the death of Otto II, his son, the last Otto (†983-1002), was only three years old. After some contestation between Adelheid and Theophanu, Mathild was appointed regent, with Theophanu as co-regent (Ennen, 1989, p. 64). However, Theophanu chose Gandersheim to be the royal archive, amassing a library of classical, scriptural and apocryphal literature beyond the medieval imagination (ibid., p. 82).

The abbeys were held "to the king and from the king." This protected them from episcopal usurpation but also preserved autonomy from temporal exploitation (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 152). Sophie of Gandersheim best proved this rule, leading an army against the Bishop of Mainz because she felt he was not worthy to veil her. The Ottonian family believed they ruled by the grace of God. Given the precarious and brutal society at this time, it was not such a far-fetched idea. They were, therefore, themselves invested with a spark of divinity. This was the source of these women's vitality and supreme self-confidence (Ennen, 1989, p. 83). However, their authority was not a direct line from God but was mediated through the emperors. Sophie could well sneer at a bishop but it was only because she preferred to submit to the archbishop (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 151). Royal women faced the hypocrisy of the court in the same manner as all the queen-abbesses before them -- subversively (Ferrante, 1988, p. 213). Bowing to papal and imperial authority, they begrudgingly acknowledged their inferior status but always sought avenues of potential power and action. It was during this special period that one nun would turn feminine learning and piety on its head. That person was Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (932-1002), literary scholar and chronicler to the imperial court.

Hrotsvit: The Loud Cry of Gandersheim

This "literary coquette" (Dronke, 1984, p. 72) resided at Gandersheim under the rule of Gerberga II (†959-1001). Hrotsvit's legends, poems, histories and plays reverberate with ambiguous reference to her 'self': her intellectual, spiritual and social sense of purpose and identity (ibid., p. 56). For a woman to write at all in this era bespeaks a strength of will and spiritual intensity that transcended the mores of her society (Ennen, 1989, p. 44). The keynote of all Hrotsvit's work was the deliverance of the pious nature of Christian women from the lumbering grasp of paganism's masculine vigour (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 170). Working from Gandersheim's extensive library, Hrotsvit walked a delicate line between her drive to create and her position as a poor relative of Ottonian rulers. She couched her language in ornamental diminutives and always spoke first of her patrons. To the emperor's advisors, she wrote:

Yet you deemed worthy of admiration the work of a weak woman like me, and congratulating me with brotherly love, praised the Giver of the grace that worked in me. You thought that there was in me some slight knowledge of the arts, the subtlety of which far outruns my woman's understanding (Hrotsvit, 1923, p. xvi)²⁶.

²⁶This kind of false humility is curiously contained inside Lina Eckenstein's analysis of Hrotsvit's work: "*Those passages in which Hrotsvit speaks of her modest hesitation are especially worthy of notice and will not fail to appeal to those women now-a-days, who, hoping to gain a clearer insight into the difficulties with which their sex has to contend, feel it needful to face facts from which their sensibilities naturally shrink.*" (p. 169) While it is important to remember that Eckenstein was writing in 1896, the persistence of this literary tradition for over nine centuries elucidates the lasting endurance of patriarchy.

Yet, as Peter Dronke so brilliantly points out, Hrotsvit always included an assertive, self-aware statement:

If my devotion be pleasing unto any, I shall rejoice; but if through disdain of myself or through the rudeness of faulty style, it pleases no man, yet I myself am glad at that which I have done (ibid.).

She claimed the title "The Loud Cry of Gandersheim," derived from the ancient Saxon word *Hrôthsuith*, belying her diminutive style (Dronke, 1984, p. 70).

Two plays stand out not for their dramatic flair but because they give insight into the heights of conventual intellectualism. *Paphnutus* employs many Erigenesque traits in the opening scenes. Taunted by his pupils, Paphnutus discourses on the heavenly orders and harmonic progressions of the seven-ringed cosmos. In *Sapientia*, the title character confounds the emperor Haden with a lengthy numerology disputation. This play also includes a direct quote from Jerome. Sapientia praises her three daughters for being consecrated virgins and calls herself "the mother-in-law of Christ" (Hrotsvit, 1923, p. 109). These impassioned claims on knowledge and grace reflect the collective zeal felt by nuns at what was to be the zenith of the convent's power. The end of demi-empires eroded the convent's relationship with the temporal sphere and the increased divisions between men and women made it easier for the rival episcopacy to deny to nuns what they allowed monks. Hrotsvit knew she was bold, even audacious, to

presume any support or recognition for her ambitions. But it is because of such women that the convent was able to survive as a house of learning and culture in the face of persistent male suspicion.

CONCLUSION

The women of the early medieval age did not forsake family or fortune in the name of Christianity. Instead they forged their own, negotiated space between the competitive realms of temporal and episcopal authority. As leaders of these revolutionary communities, royal abbesses ceased to allow their male patrons to speak on their behalf but let their own voices ring out. The convent was a spiritual and social haven for women, but from the sixth to the tenth century, it was also something much greater. It was an alternative epistemic community, building from its inhabitants' own special context and activities a unique feminine understanding of philosophical ontologies, intellectual methodologies and situated theories of what was a woman's right work for the Church in the world (Nelson, 1993, p. 126).

The Celtic influence encouraged women not to disparage their minds and bodies until their gender was erased from the minds of men, as was the case with patristic doctrine. Instead, there is evidence in original texts and archaeological excavations that these women were gorgeously feminine, dressed in silk, purple

and jewels and presiding over their monastic households with full confidence in their legal and spiritual rights (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 223). Their epistemic achievements were reflected in the art and literature of the convents. As late as the eighth century, women in Chelles illuminated the *Sacramentary of Gellone* with a woman priest, holding the cross high in one hand and carrying an altar ornament in the other (Lasko, 1971, p. 107)²⁷. Their own verses and vitae present an alternative image of feminine sanctity as pragmatic, sacramental and immanently incarnational (McLaughlin, 1979, p. 105). The portrayal is starkly contrasted with the one bleak century of Carolingian reform, when a new type of womanhood, created by men, promoted an abject, meek and labouring helpmate (Schulenburg, 1988, p. 117).

Women claimed divine power both in the world and cosmic eternity through relics of Christ's suffering and visionary experiences of great love from the heavens. A clever ruse, it nonetheless became the main contributor to their own marginalization. Unable to speak as queens or as church leaders, women turned themselves into instruments of God's grace. Intellectual or spiritual erudition was seen less as a sign of hard work and talent and more as a rare and wondrous mystery. With the ascent of ritual purity their bodies again became battlegrounds and their language contorted so as not to offend their male patrons. At the close of the imperial age, royalty gave way to aristocracy and feudalism swept away any

²⁷See Appendix C, p. 188.

remnants of divine filial ties. Women increasingly relied upon heavenly assaults on their senses for their public rights -- a source of infinite power that could only reaffirm their social inferiority.

INSTRUMENTALITY AND IDENTITY

After the tumultuous centuries of nation building and papal missions, western Europe was finally Christianized by the eleventh century. The dawn of *Sacerdotium*, launched with the election of Pope Leo IX in 1049, marked a period of intense reform, codification and centralization of church power that lasted through the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Noble, 1992, p. 124). Church officials were subject to intense scrutiny and heightened moral conduct to preserve their distinctive position of authority (Cantor, 1963, p. 303). With the breakdown in any central political structure after the Ottonian Empire, the pope stepped into a vacuum in medieval social life, rekindling the rivalry between papal and imperial power. Both sought the support of the aristocracy which was just beginning to realize its own strength (Durkheim, 1977, p. 67). Hereditary laws gave vassals, the lesser-noble working tenants of a noble's fiefs, titleship of the property to pass down to their first-born sons (Bloch, 1962, p. 198). Feudalism and, with it, primogeniture became the organizing principles of the temporal sphere. It was a decentralized, warrior society built upon a network of courts consolidating their wealth through marriages. The soldier lords often left their wives and overseers to rule while they would heed the call by pope and king to fight in the Crusades (ibid., p. 200). The crusading ideal united *Sacerdotium* and *Imperium* against a common enemy, using the military to force non-Christian civilizations to convert and submit to foreign control (Noble, 1992, p. 125). It also gave birth to the third

and final pillar of the high medieval age, *Studium*. A vast treasure of lost classical writings and Arabian innovations in scientific and mathematical theory set in motion an intellectual revolution, weakening the platonic bridge between faith and reason, putting faith itself at stake (Durkheim, 1977, p. 73). Tossed amongst these competitive spheres, women were almost completely displaced. A noble woman, regent of her husband's fiefs but subject to strict marital laws, enjoyed a lesser freedom than the Merovingian and Ottonian queens. While she still enjoyed the security that comes from a palace, there was no longer any possibility of turning "her" court into a convent and ruling absolutely.

The *Frauenfrage*, or "women question," was seriously debated by men who, in their singular zeal for ritual purity, were suddenly faced with a society in which well over half the population had no public role (McDonnell, 1954, p. 84). Within the *Sacerdotium*, the continuing assault of the *diakoni* order and married clergy offered only the convent to religious women, and it was only open to the wealthy with ample dowries (Harksen, 1975, p.30). Because of the radical impulses in the texts discovered during crusading raids which placed faith under a microscope and offered science and math in the place of Church-sanctioned cosmology and numerology, the Church moved the schools out of the monasteries. A competitive network of rival teaching houses, clustered around the cathedrals and protected by the bishop, became the centre of *Studium* (Durkheim, 1977, p. 44). There were strict regulations against women even entering these "cathedral

schools" and students pledged celibacy (Noble, 1992, p. 136). In the *Imperium*, aristocratic men, reared on a warrior mentality that marginalized noble women in their own homes, had a much shorter life expectancy than their wives so that the women could be used over and over by their families to seal political alliances. Furthermore, the laws of primogeniture made women's bodies an investment in which the lord could not risk loss, therefore he isolated her -- sometimes even imprisoned -- from temptations (Alfonsi, 1986, p. 67). Even the new middle class which undertook the work of urbanization in newly formed guilds, pushed their women to the outer edges of society. Women guild members, especially in textile production, earned less than half the wages of their male counterparts. Men were also discouraged from marrying until after they were Masters, around the age of forty, and no apprentice was accepted if he had a wife (McNamara, 1986, p. 35). Thus, as the only sanctioned roles of nun or wife collided with a chain of alienating laws and customs against convents, schooling, marriage and labour, the social state of women was near paralysis. Hostile attempts to define women out of the new public spheres were rigid but not impenetrable. Breaking through chinks in the armour, some medieval women drew one last breath of intellectual energy from the faltering haven of the convent.

LOVE, NATURE AND THE WOMEN QUESTION

With the divorce of faith and reason came increased ambiguity between the dominating masculine realm of reason and the hesitant voice of faith. However, it cannot be implied that religious commitment to Christianity was failing but only the heretofore omnipotent force of pure faith. The laity was less inclined to put the care of their souls into the hands of a corrupt, lazy and politicized ecclesia (Noble, 1992, p. 127). They sought direct communion with celestial authorities, sidestepping the church in the world to cause a monumental shift in the medieval equilibrium (Cantor, 1963, p. 252). Some moved in the direction of reason, others rarefied faith. Both factions had, as part of their central axiom, an ambivalent understanding of woman. Little or no debate ensued on the corollary question of women's ambivalence towards man (Shahar, 1983, p. 33). On the patristic platform of misogyny, new intellectualism placed all ideas under intense scrutiny but one -- the fragile Bride of Christ and seductive Devil's Gateway, Woman.

The Death of the Idea

Up until the late eleventh century, Plato was the supreme philosophic authority, contested by no one. However, his distinction between spirit and matter, Christianized into soul and body, was the stumbling block of Catholic unity.

Dualism, ostensibly denounced as heretical but an insurmountable aspect of medieval theology, was the ultimate problematic in defining orthodox piety (Russell, 1992, p. 48). Renewed interests in the works of Origen and the re-introduction to Aristotle -- the "philosopher of divisions" (Lewis, 1936, p. 88) -- in the mid-twelfth century asserted the issue of Christ's humanity, the relationship of 'man' to the cosmos, and the logic of woman's subordination. There were three new models of understanding: nominalism, speculative mysticism and dialectics. Originally conceived by Roscellin, a lay teacher with the cathedral schools of Paris, nominalism was a full-scale rejection of the universality of ideas (Cantor, 1963, p. 402). Universals were merely words, or naming devices (*nomina*) to assist the individual in communication with others. Other-worldly existence was not real but was assigned properties by the rational thinking man. At the other end of the spectrum, the orthodox scholarship of monks favoured an emotive, dis-intelligent faith that disrupted the souls' union with the body for a harmony of the will with the divine (Gilson, 1955, p. 165). Theologically connected to the Augustinian "turning of the soul," speculative mysticism grasped the tragic tension between carnal desire and the leap of the soul towards God. It was the principle upon which monastic discipline depended (Warner, 1976, p. 129). Between these two opposing theories, Pierre Abélard (1079-1142) -- a former student of Roscellin with high ambitions in the clergy -- proposed a compromise using dialectics. Universals, while no longer *res* were more than *nomina*, they were concepts with a life outside the individual (Cantor, 1963, p. 400). Faith could be

arrived at logically through a system of dialectical abstractions to determine the "meaning of meaning" rather than the meaningfulness of ideas (Gilson, 1955, p. 160). All three broke with the organic, unified medieval equilibrium of the Church in the world, and the world itself was carved up into nature, man and the divine. Women were a part of nature, understood as something external and relational to men. Their lack of rationality, the mystery of their use first by the devil to cause men to sin and then by God to redeem them, and the dialectic of their fragility against their unique salvific force were not new concepts but were now separate and distinct theories. This initial period in the late-eleventh century of intellectual conflict and upheaval was re-synthesized in the early years of the twelfth century under the authority of the *Sacerdotium*. It monitored and directed debates to ensure that the fundamental principles of orthodoxy -- the Trinity, Apostolic Succession, Original Sin and the Resurrection -- remained intact (Frank, 1988, p. 71). It was the form of understanding alone that was open to scrutiny.

The Breakdown of Interpretive Knowledge

The intellectual renaissance of the late-eleventh- and twelfth-century Europe was characterized by its renewed spirit of dualism and the division of thought into reason and faith (Cantor, 1963, p. 369). The particular and the mundane began to fascinate scholars. While the metaphysical and supernatural were still the

strongholds in the theological world view, the physical and natural elements of the world received new attention (Frank, 1988, p. 27). Unlike cosmology, which linked the world to the divine, naturalism was more interested in biological and sociological explanations. It was a science that substituted itself for religion, classifying and systemizing earthly and human phenomena and determining how they inter-relate. The universalizing principle, or "moral remarking" on how the world works to bring the soul closer to God, was weakened to mean only that objects and relations in the world were copies, in imitation of heaven but not essentially connected (Durkheim, 1976, p. 65). Nature was simply God's instrument, there to be used and known for the good of man (Frank, 1988, p. 65). Aspects of the personality were now explicable as 'natural' and could be explored through the individual's relationship with other abstracted elements of the world, including other people. To the edifying experiences of desire and action, which helped turn the soul to God, was added a counterpart: pleasure in encounters with nature or the mundane, especially women (Lewis, 1936, p. 15). Questions of identity were centred on the use and potential of the naturalized body to liberate the soul. Since in medieval language, the body was feminine to the masculine soul, lust and gratification of women was deemed natural and their effective use could elevate men's psyche and spirituality (Bynum, 1991, p. 254). The Church insisted that women were absolutely inferior. Naturalism did not challenge that assumption. The abstraction of the feminine world into her natural and bodily

components merely provided new logics of subordination and added a new dimension of use-value or instrumentality to the concept of woman.

After literary understanding was appropriated by the rational nominalist and dialectic school, the three-fold model of interpretive reading also fell to the same vigorous abstractions that affected woman and the world. Divided into its component parts, the anagogical and moral were adopted by speculative mysticism while the allegorical became the domain of the increasingly well-educated laity (Lewis, 1936, p. 44). Before, to understand was to know a thought's real essence. The melding of the four levels of interpretation was synonymous with the marriage of faith and reason and made 'true' knowledge sacramental, a conjuring and reassertion of the divine in the world (ibid., p. 45). Now, there was no sense of completion but an acknowledgement that all interpretation is somewhat less real, a fiction or imitation of the real thought which only the thinker could grasp (ibid.). This radical idea raised individual experience and self-awareness to dizzy heights, transforming the sacramental character of religiosity. The practice of piety, previously a communal gathering of food, reading and prayer to nourish body and soul became intensely solitary and marked with an overwhelming subjugation of the body to the thought (Warner, 1974, p. 131). Objects became stand-ins for the real experience, like the blessed wafer which imitated the Eucharist, the Body of Christ. Communion changed from a meal shared with friends in the faith to the ritual bestowing of the Eucharist by the priest to the

pious. It is impossible to fully grasp the high-pitched fever for the Body of Christ. When meaning was a complete process through the four-tiered mode of thought, the sacramental experience was internalized but understood to be universal. Now, with thought divided and meaning a mode of expression through isolated names, concepts or feelings, the individual had to externalize experience to display and explain the self to the world (Lewis, 1936, p. 48). Since the Church had adopted pure faith, the Christological themes of love, humanity and sacrifice overpowered rational piety. To love passionately, admit weakness of the flesh and submit to the torture of desire was to imitate Christ and to imitate was now to know. All of these themes were feminine and women, barred from the realm of reason, embraced the new forms of faith with great abandon (Petroff, 1986, p. 5). As worship became an increasingly feminine practice, men began to confuse the iconic representations of 'woman' with real women and a bizarre current of adoration seeped into the fabric of society. The *Frauenfrage* was now joined by the *Frauendienst*, or the service of women (Lewis, 1936, p. 9).

The Cult of Our Lady/ies

It is important to reiterate that the culture of the convent was almost exclusively for the upper and noble classes. Thus, it shared many of the same characteristics as a court. Innovations in the temporal sphere were often mirrored in monastic life. Nowhere is this more true than in the synchronous elevation of the cult of

Mary with the invention of courtly love. Specific to the twelfth century, courtly love was practised predominantly in southern France and Italy by the troubadours, the secular equivalent to the wandering friar (Alfonsi, 1986, p. 15). Mariology, however, had been part of the Catholic mentality since the days of Jerome (Warner, 1974, p. 128).

Troubadours

The troubadours, or love poets, were members of the lesser nobility engaged to entertain ladies of the court who had been married off by their families for economic and social reasons. Marriage did not in any way mean "love" for the feudal class, but the laws of primogeniture made it disastrous for a woman to have sex with anyone other than her warrior-husband. Into the household came the troubadour, dedicated to naturalism and prepared to serve his mistress as her allegorical lover (Warner, 1976, p. 141). His passion was technical more than emotional, a flurry of rules and devices that moved him from *joi* or delight to *valor* or the merit of his Lady's attention. To succeed, he must possess *cortezia* or the desire to please with *mezura* or moderation and discipline (Frank, 1988, p. 140). His yearning and lack of fulfilment satisfied his own sense of heroics but treating his subject as a distant, ethereal creature pushed her own intellectual and moral confusion into the shadows (Cantor, 1963, p. 421). Women of the nobility turned into figural instruments of man's striving upwards. The greatest, most

noble and beautiful woman to whom any man could aspire was Mary, mother, virgin and bride of Heaven.

Mary and the Song of Songs

Quite possibly the strangest chapter in the Bible, the erotic and passionate *Song of Songs*, became the anthem of the high medieval age and an ode to Mary, due in the most part to the exegetical contribution of Bernard de Clairvaux (1090-1153) (LeClerq, 1979, p.129). An ecstatic and mystic, Bernard believed that Mary was the key to salvation and that Christ's partner in the Song was His mother, His spouse, His virgin, His church and the souls in His care: a position still embraced by the Church (Warner, 1976, p. 125). Mary was pious emotion, quixotic devotion and innocent passivity. She was the ultimate achievement of pure, unquestioning faith (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 250). But she was absolutely not divine, only an instrument of divine love of God for his Son and the world. In the order of Heaven, only the cult of *latria*, the Godhead or Trinity, was divine. Mary was *hyperdulia*, a direct intercessor to Christ, the humane aspect of the Trinity, as opposed to the *dulia* cult of the venerated saints (Alfonsi, 1986, p. 61). As such, Mary became the presence of absence, the immanent representative of transcendent holiness (LeClerq, 1979, p. 129). The sexually charged image of Mary -- the immanent and salvific force -- languishing in the delight of Christ -- the transcendent and numinous force -- had grave consequences for women and intellectuality. Unlike early patristic doctrine that used the Song to praise

learning and meditation²⁸, Bernard used Mary to deny literacy and education as a path to salvation (Cantor, 1963, p. 405). Her impossible perfection did not empower women but merely gave them a direct and palpable reason for their inferiority, they simply were not as good as Mary. As erotic as the twelfth century Mary was, she was eternally virginal. The woman who did have sex and bore the children of the world was the antithesis of purity. She was Eve.

Eve's Secret Knowledge

A revolutionary aspect of the new theology of love was that hetero-erotic relationships were now the ultimate love experience. Early medieval love was communal and affectionate: the love of teacher for student, abbess for monk, warrior for warrior, lord for vassal (Lewis, 1936, p. 9)²⁹. A late-twelfth-century morality play is the first instance in religious literary arts where a man and a woman are partners in romantic love. *Adam and Eve*³⁰ records the first dialogue in which love and trust are professed. That they are immediately betrayed is also not without significance (Auerbach, 1953, p. 151). In Eric Auerbach's interpretation, Eve's action of eating the apple was meant to signify a lack of moral consciousness compared to Adam's unquestioning faith in God's

²⁸See Chapter I, *Asceticism and Community*, pp. 73-74.

²⁹Lewis himself does not list any feminine examples. He states, "The deepest of worldly emotions in [the early medieval period] was the love of a man for a man" (Lewis, 1936, p. 9).

³⁰Excerpted in French by Auerbach, 1953. Translated in English by Alexandre Franklin. 1963. *Seven Miracles Plays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

interdiction (ibid., p. 147). However, it was more complicated than that. The Gnostic thread which dogged Catholic theology is here revealed in its high medieval form. Eve wanted to *know* before she would believe. Her moral transgression -- an act of self-awareness, not amorality and ignorance -- was that she, and therefore all women, sought wisdom (Sophia) before faith (Pistis): faith with wisdom (Pistis Sophia). So, when Eve turned her back on her lover's rational, logical admonitions to obey, and tested the limits of her own authority not just against God but also against man, she disrupted the natural order and opened the gate to sin. In the story of Eve lies the problematic of system, authority and dissent that frustrated the Church throughout the reforms. As the theological and philosophical debates raged on, some tried to put new theories into action. Monastic experimentation and lay rebellions sprang up throughout Europe as leaders sought the perfect organizing principle for all of Christendom.

ORDERS AND DISORDER

The division of the Eastern Orthodox and Latin Catholic churches in 1054, the dissolution of a central royal authority and the increase of lay education were all major factors in what has been called the first world revolution, the Gregorian reforms (Cantor, 1963, p. 300). Against rising urbanization, wealth and corruption, Pope Gregory VII (†1073-1086), originally Hildebrand, Monk of Cologne and a member of Leo IX's inner circle, led a fierce campaign for papal

imperialism (Noble, 1992, p. 124). The papacy drew its strongest support from the monastic community and together they vied for power against aristocratic and episcopal leaders and the lay teachers and administrators of the cathedral schools. Invoking a warrior spirit, which included whole monastic armies for the Crusades, the reform movement sought to remove religious office from secular society, creating an unbridgeable chasm between sacred and profane in its attempts to elevate the *Sacerdotium* above all other spheres (Bloch, 1962, p. 107). Since religious women had always received their dominion through monasticism, even as it was exploited by royalty, nuns were avid supporters of the reforms. No longer queens, but still important leaders, abbesses spoke out in favour the Church who needed them all the more now that the monks were fighting Crusades in the East (Gies, 1978, p. 68)³¹.

With the Church's disapproval of the new learning and its fostering of asceticism, a genuine "grassroots" movement evolved from the reforms. The *vita apostolica* was a call to imitate the life of the apostles based on three basic principles: a simple, humble and impoverished lifestyle; a passionate love for all of God's creatures; and an evangelical spirit (McDonnell, 1954, p. 141). The Benedictine and Canonical rules of royal monasteries did not adequately reflect the new piety and so members of the reform movement began new monastic orders. Inspired

³¹Monastic armies are just one example of Pope Gregory's imitation of his predecessor and namesake Gregory the Great's own reform principles (Noble, 1992, p. 125).

by the success of Cluny, a monastery that dominated papal attention in the first half of the eleventh century, other monks began experimenting with different forms of living communally and expressing their faith (Cantor, 1963, p. 266).

The Monastic Experiments

With increased diversification and communication between monastic settlements and the lay community around them, the dedicated religious sought ways to reinstate their remote and superior character not by vast displays of wealth and learning but by abject poverty and manual labour. Abandoning the towns, they plunged deeper into the forested wilds of the sometimes still-primitive Europe to lead fully self-sufficient and autonomous lives. While a large number of new orders were founded, and despite women's avid support, there was no feminine revolution of the same magnitude. The reforms' patriarchal dictates included the finally successful rule of clerical celibacy, conventual cloister and the callings of warriorism and husbandry as the best work of God. The *Frauenfrage* left the Church in a state of nervous apprehension over independent women (Labarge, 1986, p. 101). Two orders in particular demonstrate the contradictory impulses of the Catholic Church toward women, Fontevault and the Cistercians. Both were dedicated to Mary and had quasi-illicit relationships with penitent lay women, but in their internal intellectualizing about women, they were radically different.

Fontrevault

At the turn of the twelfth century, Robert d'Abrissel (circa 1060-1117), a wandering monk near forty years old, retired to Brittany's forest of Craon to found a rustic hermitage called Fontrevault (Smith, 1978, p. 179). His success and popularity were so great that Fontrevault houses were founded across France and England, patronized by the powerful Eleanor of Aquitaine³². Robert designed his rule around a passing moment in Christ's passion when He summoned Saint John to care for His mother, Mary. As Christ attended to Mary, then, so will all men imitate their Saviour by service to women (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 239). The community consisted of four houses: the nunnery was dedicated to the Mother of God; a hostel for repentant prostitutes was called, predictably enough, La Madeleine; Saint Lazare was a hospital for lepers; and Saint Jean housed the monks (Labarge, 1986, p. 104). Robert reverted to the old system of double monasteries with an abbess as leader. It was a move he had to defend over and over, not just to papal representatives but to his own men who generally loathed their proximity to women and felt their subordination to be "unnatural" (Morris, 1973, p. 56). However, as d'Abrissel argued, their submission was in imitation only. The deference shown to the nuns was not in respect of their holiness but to ensure the salvation of men. Robert, himself, would use the

³²Eleanor of Aquitaine (1124-1204) was the daughter of one of the first noble troubadours, Guilham IX, who also led the Crusade of 1101. After his death, she inherited his ducal territory of Aquitaine. She first married King Louis VII of France in 1137 but left him for Henry II of England in 1152. When she moved to her second husband's country, she brought with her the Fontrevault system (Warner, 1976, p. 138).

women under his care to test his piety and resistance to carnal desire, often sleeping with a prostitute in her bed (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 240). Practices such as these were deplored by his fellow reformers. Some felt that the only route to salvation was through the woman Mary, but without any contact with their actual women contemporaries.

The Cistercians

Around the same time as Fontevault, Robert de Molème led a band of monks to Cîteaux, in the French countryside, to begin a life of humble devotion and agricultural labour (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 190). His success led to a daughter house in nearby Clairvaux, ruled by the mystic and mariologist, Bernard. From the beginning, Cîteaux was dedicated to Mary the Virgin and Bride of Christ, not the Mother icon favoured by Robert d'Abrissel (Alfonsi, 1986, p. 64). However, its inhabitants believed that salvation came from Mary alone, and women were refused admission into the order. Citing the expense of keeping nuns, providing for their social and spiritual needs as well as their inability to participate in hard labour, the Cistercians were able to deny official responsibility for their women followers while preaching a theology of salvific womanhood (Bynum, 1987, p. 15). Despite their efforts to preserve a ritual purity at their establishment, itinerant holy women, called *mulieres sanctae*, clustered around them (McDonnell, 1954, p. 149). The Cistercians were particularly vexed because these women would organize small schools for children to support themselves in a socially sanctioned

way, even though teaching was one of the Order's forbidden activities (Thompson, 1978, p. 236). Devout persistence ultimately won out and the Cistercians began to retract their virulent anti-women interdicts which resided alongside their founding principle to adore the iconic woman, Mary. They reluctantly founded cloisters for nuns by the late-twelfth century (Noble, 1992, p. 140). Yet the roles offered to women willing to take the veil were narrow and, at times spiritually bankrupt. Entrance dowries were expensive, daily life monotonous and piety mediocre, especially compared with the zeal and creative opportunities exploited by their monastic brothers (Labarge, 1986, p. 100). Women began to seek alternative outlets for their own experiments in the faith/reason relationship, replaying their historic role in heretical cults.

Sisters of Eve

During this period of reform, education was the enemy of a Church anxious to preserve its grip on the minds of the laity (Bloch, 1962, p. 107). Those that succeeded in establishing new orders were supporters of the pope and adhered to his authority. But there were those who either struck new paths in the *vita apostolica* in the spirit of individualism or actually were driven to contest doctrine itself as impediments to the ascetic ideal (Russell, 1992, p. 23). The new heresies shared many of the same characteristics as feminine piety: affective relationship with the divine, penitential asceticism, a bodily concern for Christ's humanity and

a general disinterest in clerical and episcopal interference (Bynum, 1987, p. 17). This was not coincidental. The Church was on a campaign to rid itself of real women and substituted a new equilibrium based on practical men in service to allegorical women³³. Therefore, although it rejected reason, it remained a political and economic organization with crucial ties to the other pillars of society. Contradictory to their spirit, reforms were bureaucratic and highly rationalized, subject to public debates and dialectical inquiry. With such a restrictive space offered them, the population of pious and dis-empowered women would retain their old spiritual values and seek alternative avenues of exploration and communication.

The Beguines

Spontaneous collectives of the *mulieres sanctae* sprang up in the waning years of the twelfth century (Petroff, 1986, p. 172). Mostly members of the guild class and caught in the net of the *Frauenfrage*, these women loosely organized themselves in their homes under the rubric of voluntary poverty -- a misnomer since single women without dowries were doomed to a life of misery and want (McDonnell, 1954, p. 82). Although the full realization of the beguine movement rightly belongs to the hyper-ecstaticism of the late medieval age (thirteenth to fifteenth century), its founders deserve credit for sowing the seeds of lay piety and

³³This theme is derived from Michael Evans. 1984. "Allegorical Women and Practical Men." See Bibliography.

vernacular sacred literature. Their own spiritual aspirations did not hesitate in the face of their poor education. Instead, they taught themselves and each other and amassed libraries of sacred texts and sermons in translation (Brunn & Epiney-Burgard, 1989. p. xxii). Originally fostered by members of the Cistercian Order, the Beguines nourished themselves on a simple faith and ecstatic abandonment to the mysteries of Christ's body (McDonnell, 1954, p. 324). The assumed founder, Marie d'Oignies (1177-1213), was said to have carved pieces of flesh off her body, spent months in total silence and wept uncontrollably at the sight of the Eucharist, in repentance for Christ's suffering (Bolton, 1978, p. 263). What is often not explored in discussions of her contribution to feminine piety was her fervent desire to preach. Jacques de Vitry and Thomas de Cantimpré, influential members of the clergy who together wrote her vita, both stressed her assistance in preparing their sermons and suggesting topics and themes. Marie, herself, never presumed to speak publicly but saw her male supporters as gifts from God (ibid., p. 288). Thus, sacerdotal authority was not contested by this feminine religious body at this time and heretical accusations were held in abeyance. Such was not the fate of the Cathari.

The Cathari

In southern France, the centre of *Frauendienst*, dualist theology seriously threatened the Church in the form of Catharism, also called Albigensianism. Preaching strict division between the good God of the spirit and the evil God of

matter, the Cathari rejected the Resurrection, mariology and orthodox sacraments (Rowbotham, 1895, p. 301). Like their Gnostic predecessors, the Cathari viewed the body as a prison entrapping the divine spark, therefore procreation or natural life was anathema to God (Clifton, 1992, p. 7). Sex was allowed as long as it was strictly primal, a biological urge without emotional or intellectual commitment. Women were viewed as the instruments through which men could assuage their natural instincts until both were ready to purge themselves of sin and receive the *consolamentum*, the sacrament of spirit-perfection (Alfonsi, 1986, p. 21). Because elevation to the role of *perfecti* from that of the sinful, material *croyant* could occur only once and any transgression would wipe out all vestiges of holiness, most Cathari waited until the moment of their death to receive the sacrament (Russell, 1992, p. 52).

Sharing the spirit of naturalism and heterosexist lust, many troubadours and their benefactresses joined the Catharist heresy (Rowbotham, 1895, p. 52). Their participation intensified two aspects particularly despised by the Catholic church. Women were invited to accept the *consolamentum* and become cult leaders. Furthermore, casual sex was encouraged for the *croyants* until they reached a stage where they could abandon their bodily needs (Warner, 1976, p. 144). Thus, the Cathari disrupted both the patriarchal social code and the misogynistic culture of the Catholic Church and had to be destroyed. The first Crusade on French soil against their own people was waged at the turn of the twelfth century. It is

said the once-rich countryside was razed and burnt to ashes (Clifton, 1992, p. 11).

Inside the intricate and multi-textured web of intellectual and spiritual activity, women were removed to the margins of society while becoming a central focus in the cultural consciousness of the age³⁴. There were, therefore, precarious gaps in the social logic that some women -- particularly religious women -- readily pushed through to have their learning and passions acknowledged by the Church (Noble, 1992, p. 140). The possibilities and problematics of alternative feminine action inside the womb of high medievalism can be considered from three exemplary lives, the abbesses Herrad (1125-1195), Hildegard (1098-1178) and Héloïse (1100-1163).

TWILIGHT IN THE CONVENT:

THE LIVES AND WORKS OF HERRAD, HILDEGARD AND HÉLOÏSE

As the revolution in spirituality marched on, waving the double-sided banner of noble warrior and humble peasant, some women clung to the old ways that had offered them so much more. The new forms of religious understanding from the *vita apostolica* begat a new language for its adherents that made over the soul in a hyper-expression of physical submission and religious guilt to imitate Christ's

³⁴Joan McNamara asserts that women were removed from the social consciousness; however, I suggest that the 'question of women' was on the minds of leaders from the three pillars of society. Because she does not acknowledge their discursive importance in the twelfth century, she relegates women to the role "victims of progress." See McNamara, 1986, p. 37.

suffering and humanity (Erickson, 1993, p. 7). For Herrad and Hildegard, abbesses of royal convents, these outpourings of fanatical emotionalism without any interpretive rationale were not welcome in their houses. Even Héloïse, remembered all too often for her reckless affair with Pierre Abélard, did not bring her wild passions to Paraclete, the convent built for her by her ex-lover. She ruled with great skill and intelligence, demanding reasons for any mortification, admonishment or sacrifice. All three women were great scholars and administrators -- 'conservative' goals for women in those days -- yet ones which had proven, and proved once more for the last time, to be the mainstay of power in the convent.

Herrad's Garden of Delights

A daughter of the royal house of Landsberg, Herrad was reared at Hohenbourg, a royal convent-collegium in the Saxon tradition (Heinrich, 1926, p. 105). Beginning in 1140, it had undergone a period of extensive reforms to rebuild scholastic and artistic activity by the time Herrad succeeded her teacher, Reglindas, as abbess in 1167 (Straub & Keller, 1977, p. vi³⁵). Herrad continued the project, bringing Hohenbourg to its highest peak of prosperity, monastic discipline and scholarship. Her interests were solely in the education and spiritual striving of the nuns under her care. For them she created the *Hortus*

³⁵See Herrad of Landsberg in Bibliography.

Deliciarum, the Garden of Delights. Within that encyclopedia resided the essence of high medieval thought: immanent logic, abstract formalism, systemized language and religious fervour (Durkheim, 1977, p. 58). It was modelled on Marianus Capella's *De Nuptiis* (Cantor, 1963, p. 76). His was a popular encyclopedia in the convents of Herrad's day and is credited with introducing the medieval tradition of emblematic women, allegorical figures carrying a mark of their skill, to represent the liberal arts (McNamer, 1991, p. 30). Herrad's text was to be used for the nuns' lessons in science, philosophy, language and literature contained in an all-encompassing history of the world from creation to the second coming (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 242). The encyclopedia was the perfect form for Herrad's intellectual excursions, concerned as she was with the relationship of parts to the whole, of the bodies of people with the Body of Christ (Bynum, 1991, p. 12). These other-worldly concerns reflect the mind of a woman who knew only the society of the convent and the palace, whose life experience was tied completely into a spiritual network of devout, highly educated and self-sufficient women (Nelson, 1993, p. 156). *Hortus Deliciarum* exuded what Victoria Lee Erickson has described as 'erotic sociability;' concern for the religious and social ways of living communally and propagating a healing, nurturing environment (Erickson, 1993, p. 108). The immanent holiness in her language was the power of life, fertility and love (ibid., p. 114). In the introduction she beckoned to her nuns:

I urge you to study this book often and seek the sweet fruit it contains, to refresh your tired spirit by the drops of its honey so that, nourished by its spiritual sweetness you would be able to confront without danger the transient things of this world (Herrad, 1977, p. viii).

And yet, her desire to keep the sinning, sinful world at bay while encouraging her daughters to goodness and love was also expressed dualistically at the opening of the book in this short verse:

Despise the world.
 Despise nothing.
 Despise thyself.
 Despise despising thyself.
 These are four good things (in Eckenstein. 1896. p. 255).

Two illuminations give great insight to her concept of knowledge. *The Muses* consists of nine interlocking cameos of pious, contemplative women in the noble dress of Byzantine society³⁶. Each woman is a grave representative of the diverse faculties of the intelligence and the gradual development of human knowledge (Herrad, 1977, p. 34). Their discerning demeanour is a representation of *discretio* or the "joyful knowledge" that came with the light of the world (Brunn & Epiney-Burgard, 1989, p. 15). Thus Clio is not the muse of history but of the desire to acquire knowledge. Eurterpe no longer breathes life into the flutes but

³⁶see Appendix C, p. 189.

into the expression of that desire. Melpomene does not inspire tragedy but serious dedication to study. Thalia, the comedic muse, now represents the primary phase of understanding. Polymnia is not the muse of mime but of memory. Erato does not reveal the systems of lyricism but of relations and analyses. Terpsichore does not dance but delights the scholar with her sage judgement. Urania, who bears the weight of the world, is not the muse of astronomy but of heavenly morality. And Calliope, the muse of epic poetry and beautiful voices, is here reminding the student of the need to explain in a pleasurable, logical manner, the truths discovered (ibid.). The brilliance of this work lies in Herrad's ability to recast each muse so that she did not lose her original character but gained manifold power within a holistic, hierarchical system.

Although fascinating, *The Muses* was merely a precursory foray into Herrad's epistemological theories. The full flowering of her mind was the illumination of *Philosophy and the Liberal Arts*³⁷. Presiding over the profane studies of the trivium and quadrivium, Sophia sits enthroned not above but at the centre of knowledge. Her words flow like the seven streams of living water; a platonic conception of the Queen of Heaven mediating the grace of God by reflecting His light so that it gives life, quickens, nourishes and purifies the soul like water (Warner, 1976, p. 259). Plato, himself, sits at her feet beside Sophocles as they inscribe her words. Surrounding them are seven women in noble dress with the

³⁷see Appendix C, p. 190

emblems of their instruction. Grammar holds up a whip and a jewel-encrusted book as a reminder of the strict discipline needed to grasp her art. Rhetoric is equipped with a stylus and two tablets that she will peruse diligently to ensure the argument is sound. Dialectic holds the head of a barking dog but she is the one gesturing in heated debate. Regarded as the amorous form of mathematics. Music plays a harp, the instrument of angels. Arithmetic holds a counting rod and Geometry a compass. Astronomy looks up at the sky to determine meteorological and agricultural conditions. Beneath the realm of Sophia sit the poets and magicians, writing the false words of the devil in the disguise of a black bird (Herrad, 1977, p. 36). Herrad is disinterested and scornful of the new naturalism and courtly love -- poetry and magic hold no reward for her. This materialistic reworking of the *anima mundi* expressing the rich rewards of education and knowledge synthesized all the properties of medieval epistemology -- holism, multi-layered textuality, dichotomy of the sacred and profane, and a reflexive hierarchical depiction of spiritual equality -- into a work of holy love and beauty.

Herrad's singular purpose to enrich and edify the daily life of her nuns did not extend past the convent walls. The tone of *Hortus Deliciarum* was sombre and the lessons earnest. Yet, secure in her well-endowed home, she could also spill forth a vivacity and joy when she shifted from the serious matters of the world to the glorious knowledge of Christ, their bridegroom (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 255). Other

nuns, however, were deeply concerned with the changing temper of lay society. Herrad's contemporary, Hildegard wrote not just for the convent library but for all people in all spheres who shared her love of knowledge. While the wealth of themes and topics she explored deserve and have received extensive analysis, it is her writings on feminine bodies and intellectual abilities that are most striking because they were geared not towards women's usefulness to men but asserted their own sense of self-authority.

Hildegard's Cosmology of Sex

Perhaps the best known medieval woman scholar, Hildegard has captured the imagination of scientists, literary critics and feminist theorists alike. Tithed to the church by her lesser-noble family, Hildegard lived as a recluse until her adolescence when Jutta, her spiritual guardian, turned her hermitage into a resplendent Benedictine monastery (Flanagan, 1989, p. xi). In Hildegard's own words we are told how, at the age of forty-three, after succeeding Jutta as abbess, she was commanded by God to write down the visions sent to her since she was a child (Hildegard, 1990, p. 59). Encouraged by Bernard de Clairvaux and sanctioned by the pope, Hildegard became one of the most famous mystics of her day (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 260). Her vision quest, however, was markedly different from those of the ecstatic *mulieres sanctae*. She did not fall into a trance but was wide awake and in full command of her faculties when the light from heaven

appeared. Furthermore, her Benedictine vows demanded moderation in daily life. Finally, while many women ecstasies, including Marie d'Oignies, took vows of absolute silence to display their holiness, Hildegard called herself a "small sound of the trumpet" who must speak publicly in the name of God (Hildegard, 1990, p. 59). The concern for bodies and voices infused her vast compendium of visionary and scientific works, which include: *Scivias*, *Liber Vitae Meritorium* and *Liber Divinorum Operum*, the visionary trilogy; *Physica*, the Book of Simple Medicine; and *Causae et Curae*, a catalogue of medical and physiological theory accounting for the relationship of the individual with nature and the cosmos (Flanagan, 1989, p. 225). In all her works, Hildegard remained true to the Church sanctioned divisions of gender ontologies and sexual moralities; however, she refashioned the ideology of feminine inferiority to venerate the synergistic, nurturing and warmly erotic holiness of woman (Newman, 1987, p. 46). Two inter-related themes run through her works, her worldly interest in sex and other-worldly concern for the cosmic Church. She even went so far as to express the Trinity in sexual terminology:

For a man has three causes for his act: desire, potency and zeal.
His desire enkindles his potency, and thus in both the man and his
work there is zeal to complete the work and burning will
(Hildegard, 1990, p. 170).

Desire was akin to the humanity of Christ, potency to God and zeal to the act of grace or the Holy Spirit (Brunn & Epiney-Burgard, 1989, p. 14). The Church is

the Trinity's partner in love. She gave birth to all her souls, the altar is her womb and she weeps for her children as Mary wept for her son (Hildegard, 1990, p. 170). Hildegard's cosmology was rendered in an illumination for the third book of visions, *Liber Divinorum Operum*, depicting the Godhead, the womb of the church and the body of Christ emanating *discretio* love and light³⁸. What is most striking about the picture is that Hildegard drew herself in the corner at her writing desk gazing upwards upon her vision. This visceral self-awareness, repeated by no other scribes or mystics of the period, was an act of great courage and confidence for a woman who repeatedly professed her ignorance and, in the beginning of her literary career, credited God as the true author of her work (Lerner, 1993, p. 64). In the preface to her first book of visions, she claimed to be but an instrument of God, chosen because there were no men strong enough in faith to learn His lessons without intervention through a fragile woman (Hildegard, 1990, p. 60).

As her command of language and sense of identity strengthened, Hildegard struck out on her own, preparing treatises not as an instrument of God but as an intelligent, creative woman with knowledge to share. *Causae et Curae* presented a more sophisticated explanation of sexuality and the cosmos than the *Scivias*. Unfortunately, it has yet to be translated in full but Peter Dronke excerpted passages for his book *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (1984). Hildegard, a

³⁸See Appendix C, p. 191.

virgin with very little male contact, prepared a beautiful chapter on sex and love before the Fall. Eve was created not from Adam's rib but Adam's love and it was through the man's love that he was able to impregnate woman:

And so, because a man still feels this great sweetness in himself, and is like a stag thirsting for the fountain, he races swiftly to the woman and she to him -- she like a threshing-floor pounded by his many strokes and brought to heat when the grains are threshed inside her (Dronke, 1984, p. 176).

But woman was no passive vessel, as in Catharism and the speculative mysticism of Bernard de Clairvaux. It was the woman's orgasm, emanating from her intellect, that willed the body first to open, then seal the man's love inside her:

When a woman is making love with a man, a sense of heat in her brain, which brings with it sensual delight, communicates the taste of that delight during the act and summons forth the emission of the man's seed. And when the seed has fallen into place, that vehement heat descending from her brain draws the seed to itself and holds it, and soon the woman's sexual organs contract, and all the parts that are ready to open up during the time of menstruation now close, in the same way as a strong man can hold something enclosed in his fist. (ibid., p. 175).

Furthermore, while woman was responsible for the Fall, Hildegard reminded the world that it was better this way, since a man's transgression would have been too hot and strong for there to have been any chance of redemption (Labarge, 1986, p. 132). Unlike the Aristotelian theory favoured by the schools, which stipulated

that man was the right temperature and woman too cold. Hildegard retorted that woman was correct and the "spume of semen" was the overcooking of pure blood by man's carnal lust (Dronke, 1984, p. 176).

Her micro/macrocosmic relationships extended even to a typology of women, related to the cosmic elements and natural humours: *De Sanguinea*, the woman of blood and fire; *De Fleumatica*, the woman of phlegm and earth; *De Colerica*, the woman of choler and water; and *De Melancholia*, the woman of black bile and air. Hildegard explained the differences between each according to body size, colouring, stamina, fertility, menstruation, disposition and libido (ibid., p. 180). All were praised for their good characteristics and even their weaknesses were not criticized but offered in such a way as to suggest their best service to the natural order and cosmic grace (ibid., p. 181).

Despite her recognition as "Sybil of the Rhine," Hildegard could not penetrate the fortress of *Studium*. Wishing to be a part of the fledgling University of Paris, Hildegard submitted her books to the bishop. He kept them for three months, remarked upon their divine inspiration and declined to use them in the curriculum (Wescott, 1983). Only one woman is known in history to have reaped the benefits of the cathedral schools. Héloïse, a woman of the world forced into a convent, enjoyed praise throughout her life for her religion and her learning.

The Ethica of Héloïse

In his autobiography, *Historia Calamitatum*, Pierre Abélard described how, in 1118, he heard of a young woman named Héloïse renowned for her language and literary talents (Muckle, 1954, p. 25). His praise was echoed by Pierre le Vénérable, abbot of Cluny, twenty five years later. The story of Héloïse's two-year affair with Abélard is well known. Often, there is an attempt to depict her as Abélard's partner and equal but their relationship was far more complex and disturbing. Abélard admitted that he ingratiated himself into the home of her guardian uncle, the Canon Fulbert, who was a member of the cathedral school of Chartres (ibid.). He convinced Fulbert to give him full guardianship, including corporal punishment over the eighteen-year-old girl, twenty years his junior. Such was his concern for appearances that he would strike her in public "not through anger or vexation but from love and affection which were beyond the sweetness of every ointment" (ibid., p. 26). After she became pregnant, he sent her to his family in Brittany to avoid scandal. Even when they were discovered by Fulbert and ordered to be married, Abélard, concerned for his career, convinced her to enter the convent at Argenteuil, whereafter he promptly ceased communication until 1129 when he needed an abbess for his establishment, Paraclete (Radice, 1974, p. 112).

Nothing was heard from Héloïse until she read *Historia Calamitatum*. What followed were a series of letters which, despite their sexual earthiness and literary ornamentation are together a unique argument for the ethics of faith and love, a theory propounded by Abélard but lived by Héloïse. Briefly, the essential principle of the ethics, worked out in Abélard's dialectical treatise *Ethica* or *Scito te Ipsum* (Know Thyself), was that the moral value of any act was inscribed not by the effect but by the intention and state of mind of the actor (Dronke, 1984, p. 118). Héloïse accused her ex-lover of using her for sex alone and abandoning their love once he could no longer have her³⁹. Weary and annoyed by his praise of her piety and honour, she reminded him that she was not a nun by choice but by devotion to her husband. Furthermore, her initial refusal to marry was not, as he wrote, solely for the sake of his career but because it offended her beliefs that love should never be bound by the mundanities of social custom (Radice, 1974, p. 114). Her love was pure and innocent because its spirit was chaste. It was only after Abélard's intentions were clearly to deceive the world by hiding first her pregnancy then their marriage, rather than remaining resolute against their adversaries in the ethics of their commitment to each other, that God punished them (ibid., p. 130). Was her railing against God a cause for shame? She felt not because she fulfilled her duties to the nuns under her care, first as prioress in Argenteuil then as abbess of Paraclete, but she would not deny her pain and loss

³⁹Canon Fulbert, upon discovering that Abélard had installed Héloïse at Argenteuil and was publicly denying their marriage, was so enraged that he hired some brigands to castrate him (Muckle, 1954, p. 35).

(*ibid.*, p. 115). Even her remonstrations against womankind were not the florid misogyny of Abélard, who fostered an ambivalent attitude toward the feminine weak nature even as he sought refuge from his many enemies behind the care and compassion of the nuns at Paraclete (McLaughlin, 1975, p. 308). After Abélard's admonitions in response to her first letter, Héloïse poured out her anguish, deploring her gender; but it must be remembered that she had by then become what she despised, cloistered, humbled and sexless. Abélard's coldness had deeply wounded her confidence when she denied her partnership in love and wrote that she was nothing more than an instrument of the devil's malice, damned to destroy her lover (Radice, 1974, p. 131).

For all of Abélard's public displays of remorse juxtaposed against Héloïse's private rebellions, he was not to be the successful innovator of ethical monasticism. Héloïse, determined to do right, asked his advice on adapting the Benedictine rule to offer a more reasonable and purposive life for Paraclete (*ibid.*, p.162). Her request was filled with references to classical and patristic authors, as well as the standard scriptural exegesis. Abélard complied and wrote back a lengthy letter of suggestions but it was clear that Héloïse had ideas of her own and felt she would ultimately know best. She modelled herself on Marcella to Abélard's Jerome (Dronke, 1984, p. 135). Like Marcella, she preferred an independent relationship to her patron and chose her own course of action, writing a rule that emphasized education, ascetic moderation and communal

affection (McNamer, 1991, p. 93). In less than twenty years, Héloïse turned Paraclete from a miserable hovel of mud and thatch into an expansive and wealthy territory, chartered by both pope and king, (ibid., p. 84). Abélard looked to Paraclete for his own dignity, since his personal attempts as abbot or theologian were met with loathing and charges of heresy (McLaughlin, 1975, p. 317). Eventually, he became dependent on Héloïse's accomplishments. She sheltered him, buried him at her church and successfully appealed to the Church for absolution post-mortem of his sins (Radice, 1974, p. 288). After her death in 1163, twenty-one years after Abélard, the nuns honoured her request to be laid in Abélard's tomb with him. Her ethics of love remained true beyond death and assured her of her reward:

In whatever corner of heaven God shall place me, I shall be satisfied. No one wil' envy another there, and what each one has will suffice (Radice, 1974, p. 135).

CONCLUSION

Despite their close proximity in location and age, these three women were ignorant of each other and their feminine predecessors from the Saxon, Frankish and British houses (Newman, 1990, p. 9⁴⁰). Communication, the sharing of knowledge and the passing of information between convents, was almost non-

⁴⁰See Hildegard in Bibliography.

existent. Apart from their own spiritual daughters, 'woman' was as much an allegorical concept to women as was love. In the sexual scientific discourses and social practices of this first intellectual revolution the ambivalent, paradoxical category of woman was placed into the theories of knowledge as a natural and essential construct that male authorities could appeal to in their efforts to bind all women to a logic of subordination (Haraway, 1991, p. 155). The twelfth century renaissance was a prelude to modernity, a civilization bound to the denial of the eternal and immutable but with a learning ethic dedicated to the mundane elements of human (male) emancipation from the grip of nature (female) and the enrichment of daily life (Harvey, 1989, p. 12). For women, this period of transition tossed a veil over their minds, bodies and voices: at once shrouding them in mystery and turning them into objects of fascination to be seized and controlled. Neo-Aristotelian theories brought to the static idea of woman an androcentric biology and anthropology that naturalized women's subordinated position while dismissing their cosmic power as 'unscientific' (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 216). The popularity of Aristotle's rigid sense of linear logic and perfection began the transformation of the founding metaphor from the World-Soul into the Chain of Being with God at its head and all creatures holding their rightful place beneath one another: hierarchy without equality. Men were placed directly beneath God and women not at all; they were a deformity of Christ's masculine perfection and possessed only the potentiality of a soul. Women were proven

'scientifically' to lack the qualities or capacities for reason and leadership: their strength resided in their obedience to men's rule (Agonito, 1977, p. 54)⁴¹.

At the transition to the thirteenth century, two events sealed women from the centres of power and learning. In 1200, the University of Paris was officially opened to men of all class and nations (Gilson, 1955, p. 244). Fifteen years later, the Fourth Lateran Council prohibited the founding of any independent feminine monastic orders and demanded that all existing houses be placed under strict cloister (Bolton, 1978, p. 272). Not just education but the arts, too, moved out of the convent and into the artisan guilds who enjoyed greater flexibility in clients and projects (Eckenstein, 1896, p. 355). Nuns were ordered by the bishops to attend to devotional rites and leave scholarly activities in the public domain of men; as a result, their mysticism became perverse, severed from logic or practical sciences (Noble, 1992, p. 141). Bereft of spiritual authority and noble purpose, the convent's principles of wisdom and faith slowly died out. However, the removal of this feminine ethos from the centre of the intellectual stage, though disastrous for women's sense of social identity and spiritual worthiness, was in no way absolute. This chapter in the history of an alternative epistemology closed, to move underground in the heretical sects and New World migrations of the early

⁴¹Agonito excerpted from Aristotle. 1912. "De Generatione Animalium" trans. by Arthur Platt, in *The Oxford Translations of Aristotle*, ed. by W.D. Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press. and Aristotle. 1885. *Politics*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

modern age. And yet, vestiges can now be traced in the recent scholarship of materialist postmodernism and feminist epistemologies.

CONCLUSION: THE SECOND COMING

The culture of the convent is but one position in a multiple field of meanings, bodies and knowledges. Unlocking the door to this other world of history and delving into the lives and works of a tiny fraction of the women who generated such promise for themselves and anxiety for their men offers few answers but can deepen the narrow order of rational questioning. Where to go from here is consequent upon immanent needs and dynamic relationships in the political, social and economic spheres -- not to mention the cultural and spiritual. There is an emancipation which comes from knowing that there is no one right way or historic truth. It allows for communities to be built while autonomy is respected and for co-operative understandings without ruthless subordination to a one-dimensional epistemological regime.

Returning to the model of feminist culture, outlined in Chapter I, the importance of the medieval convent to feminist theories of structures, ideologies and epistemologies now can be considered. While women were acutely aware of their subjugation, their methods of rebellion were subtle and generally uncritical of patriarchal Church doctrine. They were prepared to acknowledge their social inferiority as natural if it resided concomitantly with a spiritual equality and feminine ontology that elevated women's piety. Furthermore, their appeals to the essence of womanhood -- either as the humanity of Christ, the Virgin Mary or

Sapientia/Sophia -- were the only transcendent relationships with 'women' that they enjoyed during a period when communication between houses was near non-existent; and conventual history was left largely unrecorded, save for the relics of deceased abbesses. Otherwise, feminine communities were immanent, materially limited and specific to the intellectual needs of their women inhabitants. Their political contributions were to support and strengthen their families' fortunes, not destabilize the already fragile temporal balance by revolts and protests. Only when their personal prestige was under attack did women rise up against an enemy, but it would be under the banner of Church or state. Finally, while many outstanding women offered intriguing insights into other possible visions of the world, their reasons for doing so more often were to ameliorate the world to come than the world that was. It is crucial to remember, also, that these exemplary women were regarded as rare, wondrous mysteries of God's grace, not as practical, knowledgeable people.

It is only in the gathering, synthesizing and re-conceptualizing of the scattered fragments of history that a feminist project has begun to be realized by medievalists, epistemologists and cultural critics alike. Materialist postmodernism looks to history to produce disruptions in the hegemonic narrative of social order and naturalized meanings, while epistemological critiques also claim an historical spine for the formation of knowledge across structural and ideological networks of power. Used conjunctively, they can compress time and space so that medieval

women religious can stand together as a politicized body gesturing towards a *second naïveté*: a return to the feminine aspects they helped create, including nurturing wisdom, affective language and holistic science (McLaughlin, 1978, p. 103). Re-articulating the feminine alongside the masculine in an historical -- not mythological -- context suggests the layering once again of perspectives and interpretations in a pragmatic, material world bound by social structures and negotiated meanings between disparate groups.

The medieval system was certainly not perfect. It suffered grave, internal contradictions from three sides: its dualism, while rejecting dualism as heretical; its spirit of equality, wrapped in a patriarchal and misogynist tradition; and its historiographical view of the world, with an ahistorical philosophy of universality. However, when western Europe experienced its first revolution in knowledge, there opened up the possibility of transforming the static, hierarchical ideas of gender determined by neo-platonism; and allowing for greater discursive and structural differences, which could have solved many philosophical conflicts. Instead, the new scholasticism chose the naturalist theories of Aristotle in concert with the patristic doctrine of ritual purity to prove the immutability of women's inferiority based on their lack of rationality, while at the same time denying the universality of all other ideas (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 256). Western science replaced religion as the source of enlightenment, evolving from a dichotomized split in which man was the subject and all things feminine -- including real women

-- were the propositional objects of observation and abstraction (Noble, 1992, p. xiii). The autonomy of the individual from a sense of cosmic truth that included moral remarking and spiritual sensuality marked the beginning of what has been called "the loss of the world" (Benhabib, 1991, p. 109).

Not all intellectual movements were in the direction of rational objectivity. Some alternatives maintained the sapiential element, often times dismissed as folkloric or "old wives" wisdom (Dalmiya & Alcoff, 1993, p. 220). They preserved the neo-platonic dualism of gender equality and immanence to the world while also retaining an ambivalence towards sex roles and gendered differences (Newman, 1987, p. 251). The first such counter-revolution occurred in the wake of the Gregorian reforms when women turned to private ecstasies and mystical visions for authority. There have been attempts to celebrate their bodily manipulations as a "re-writing" of their positions within the Catholic system (Antonopoulos, 1991, p. 201); but it must be remembered that these women lived and died horribly, their holiness came from self-abuse and degradations. This final period of the medieval age contains valuable lessons for both feminist history and epistemology that severing the masculine from the feminine holds as much conflict and anxiety for women -- left behind in the rational project -- as for men.

Re-visiting medieval ontologies not as a fixed heaven of ideas but as discursive properties that help to set limits and forge epistemological relationships can be an

empowering feminist strategy for change (Benhabib, 1991, p. 114). Meanings and structures need not be denied but made contingent upon a feminine world that, it turns out, was not lost but merely misplaced by the dominant systems of rationality. It is presumptuous to "break" with modernism and push forward without being responsive to past cultural and epistemological moments. For feminists working in materialist postmodernism, neglected women and faded realities can be returned to the collective consciousness in revitalized and creative ways that remember and remark upon their authority and abilities on their own terms. New theories, then, can talk about the social relations of science, the cultural meanings of history and the epistemology of communities (Nelson, 1993, p. 126). They will be interpretive, critical and bound to an objective responsibility that there are facts and realities to be known. In this way, by harkening back to a past understood through the lens of present-day concerns, genuinely new directions can be illuminated for the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rosemary Agonito, ed. 1992. History of Ideas on Woman: A Source Book. New York: Perigree Books.

Sandra Resnick Alfonsi. 1986. Masculine Submission and the Troubadour Lyric. New York: Peter Lang.

Emilie Amt, ed. 1993. Women's Lives in Medieval Europe. New York: Routledge.

Anna Antonopoulos. 1991. "Writing the Mystic Body" in Hypatia, vol. 6, no. 3 (Fall), pp. 185-207).

Erich Auerbach. 1953. Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Augustine. 1993. Confessions, trans. by F.J. Sheed, intro. by Peter Brown. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

J.H. Baxter. 1919. "St. Augustine's Rule (rejoinder to McNabb)" in Journal of Theological Studies, vol. 20, pp. 352-355.

Susan Groag Bell. 1988. "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture" in Women and Power in the Middle Ages, edited by Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski. Athens: University of Georgia Press. pp. 149-187.

Seyla Benhabib. 1990. "Epistemologies of Postmodernism: A Rejoinder to Jean-François Leotard" in Feminism/Postmodernism. Edited by Linda J. Nicholson. New York: Routledge. pp. 107-130.

Ludwig Bieler. 1963. Ireland: Harbinger of the Middle Ages. London: Oxford University Press.

Marc Bloch. 1962. Feudal Society, trans. by L.A. Manyon. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

R. Howard Bloch. 1991. Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brenda M. Bolton. 1978. "Vitae Matrum: A Further Aspect of the *Frauenfrage*" in Medieval Women, ed. by Derek Baker. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. pp. 253-273.

Boniface. 1911. The English Correspondence of St. Boniface, ed. and trans. by Edward Kyrie. London: Chatto & Windus. Publishers.

Susan Bordo. 1986. "The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought" in Signs, vol. 11, no. 3 (Spring). pp. 439-456.

Harold O.J. Brown. 1984. Heresies. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

Emile Zum Brunn and Georgette Epiney-Burgard. 1989. Women Mystics in Medieval Europe, trans. by Sheila Hughes. New York: Paragon House.

Vern L. Bullough. 1973. "Transvestites in the Middle Ages" in American Journal of Sociology, vol. 79, no. 6, pp. 1381-1394.

Caroline Walker Bynum. 1991. Fragmentation and Redemption. New York: Zone Books.

_____. 1987. Holy Feast and Holy Fast. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hans von Campenhausen. 1964. The Fathers of the Latin Church. London: Adam and Charles Black.

Norman F. Cantor. 1963. Medieval History: Life and Death of a Civilization. New York: The MacMillan Company.

David Christie-Murray. 1976. A History of Heresy. London: New English Library.

Elizabeth A. Clark. 1990. "Early Christian Women: Sources and Interpretation" in That Gentle Strength, ed. by Lynda L. Coon et al., Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, pp. 19-35.

_____. 1984. The Life of Melania the Younger. New York: Edwin Mellen Press.

Chas. S. Clifton. 1992. Encyclopedia of Heresies and Heretics. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC & Clio.

Lorraine Code. 1993. "Taking Subjectivity into Account" in Feminist Epistemologies. Edited by Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter. New York: Routledge. pp. 15-49.

_____. 1991. What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Giles Constable. 1978. "Aelred of Rievaulx and the Nun of Watton: An Episode in the Early History of the Gilbertine Order" in Medieval Women, ed. by Derek Baker. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 205-226.

Vrinda Dalmiya and Linda Alcoff. 1993. "Are 'Old Wives Tales' Justified?" in Feminist Epistemologies. Edited by Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter. New York: Routledge. pp. 217-244.

Peter Dronke. 1992. Intellectuals and Poets in Medieval Europe. Roma: Edizioni Di Storia E Letteratura.

_____. 1984. Women Writers of the Middle Ages. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Eleanor Shipley Duckett. 1964. Women and Their Letters in the Early Middle Ages. Massachusetts: Smith College, Northampton.

Emile Durkheim. 1977. The Evolution of Educational Thought, translated by Peter Collins. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

_____. 1976. The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, translated by Joseph Ward Swain. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Lina Eckenstein. 1896. Women Under Monasticism. Cambridge, UK: The University Press.

Edith Ennen. 1989. The Medieval Woman, trans. by Edmund Jephcott. London: Basil Blackwell.

Victoria Lee Erickson. 1993. Where Silence Speaks: Feminism, Social Theory and Religion. Minnesota: Fortress Press.

Michael Evans. 1978. "Allegorical Women and Practical Men: The Iconography of the *Artes* Reconsidered" in Medieval Women, ed. by Derek Baker. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 305-329.

Joan Ferrante. 1988. "Public Postures and Private Manoeuvres: Roles Medieval Women Play" in Women and Power in the Middle Ages, edited by Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski. Athens: University of Georgia Press. pp. 213-229.

_____. 1980. "The Education of Women in the Middle Ages in Theory, Fact and Fantasy" in Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past, edited by Patricia H. Labalme. New York: New York University Press. pp. 9-42.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. 1988. "Response to Antoinette Clark Wire" in Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism, ed. by Karen L. King. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. pp. 324-328.

_____. 1979. "Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities" in Women of Spirit, edited by Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin. New York: Simon and Schuster. pp. 29-70.

Sabina Flanagan. 1989. Hildegard of Bingen, 1098-1179: A Visionary Life. New York: Routledge.

Donald K. Frank. 1988. Naturalism and the Troubadour Ethic. New York: Peter Lang.

Frances and Joseph Gies. 1978. Women in the Middle Ages. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

Etienne Gilson. 1955. History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages. New York: Random House.

Gregory, Bishop of Tours. 1965. History of the Franks, ed. and trans. by Ernest Brehaut. New York: Octagon Books, Inc.

R.P.C. Hanson. 1993. "The Date of St. Patrick" in Studies in Early Christianity, ed. by Everett Ferguson. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., pp. 376-393.

Donna J. Haraway. 1991. Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. New York: Routledge.

Sibylle Harksen. 1975. Women in the Middle Ages. New York: Abner Schram.

David Harvey. 1989. The Condition of Postmodernity. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Mary Pia Heinrich. 1924. The Canonesses and Education in the Early Middle Ages. Washington, DC: Catholic University Press.

Rosemary Hennessy. 1993. Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse. New York: Routledge.

Herrad of Landsberg. 1777. Hortus Deliciarum, commentary and notes by A. Straub and G. Keller, ed. and trans. by Aristide D. Caratzas. New Rochelle, NY: Caratzas Brothers, Publishers.

Anne Ewing Hickey. 1987. Women of the Roman Aristocracy as Christian Monastics. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Hildegard of Bingen. 1990. Scivias, trans. by Mother Columba Hart and Jane Hart, intro. by Barbara J. Newman, preface by Caroline Walker Bynum. New York: Paulist Press.

Hrotsvit of Gandersheim. 1923. The Plays of Roswitha, ed. and trans. by H.J.W. Tillyard. Charing Cross: The Faith Press, Ltd.

Jerome. 1933. Select Letters of St. Jerome, trans. and intro. by F.A. Wright. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

J.N.D. Kelly. 1975. Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies. London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., Ltd.

Frederick C. Klawiter. 1993. "The Role of Martyrdom and Persecution in Developing the Priestly Authority of Women in Early Christianity" in Women in Early Christianity, ed. by David M. Scholer. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., pp. 105-115.

Margaret Wade Labarge. 1986. Women in Medieval Life: A Small Sound of the Trumpet. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Peter Lasko. 1971. The Kingdom of the Franks. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company.

Jean LeClerq. 1979. Monks and Love in Twelfth Century France. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gerda Lerner. 1993. The Creation of Feminist Consciousness. New York: Oxford University Press.

C.S. Lewis. 1936. The Allegory of Love. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Joseph I. Lienhard. 1977. Paulinus of Nola and Early Western Monasticism. Köln: Peter Hanstein Verlag GMBH.

Eoin MacNeill. 1934. Early Irish Laws and Institutions. Dublin: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd.

Henri Marrou. 1957. St. Augustine and His Influence Through the Ages, trans. by Patrick Hepburne-Scott. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

_____. 1956. A History of Education in Antiquity. New York: Mentor Books.

Kim McCone. 1982. "Brigit in the Seventh Century: A Saint with Three Lives" in Pernia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland, ed. by Donnchadh ó Corráin, vol. I, pp. 107-145.

Ernest W. McDonnell. 1954. The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Eleanor McLaughlin. 1979. "Women, Power and the Pursuit of Holiness in Medieval Christianity" in Women of Spirit, edited by Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin. New York: Simon and Schuster pp. 99-130.

_____. 1974. "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Woman in Medieval Theology," in Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions, edited by Rosemary Radford Ruether. New York: Simon & Schuster. pp. 213-266.

Vincent McNabb. 1919. "Was the Rule of St. Augustine Written for Melania the Younger?" in Journal of Theological Studies, volume 20, pp. 242-249.

Jo Ann McNamara. 1986. "Victims of Progress: Women and the Twelfth Century," in Female Power in the Middle Ages, edited by Karen Glente and Lise Winther-Jensen. Copenhagen: Second St. Gertrud Symposium.

_____. 1985. "A Legacy of Miracles: Hagiography and Nunneries in Merovingian Gaul" in Women of the Medieval World, ed. by Julius Kirshner and Suzanne F. Wemple. pp. 36-52.

_____. 1984. "Muffled Voice: The Lives of Consecrated Women in the Fourth Century" in Distant Echoes: Medieval Religious Women, edited by John A. Nichols and William Thomas Shank. Michigan: Cistercian Publications, Inc. pp. 11-29.

Elizabeth Mary McNamer. 1991. The Education of Héloïse. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press.

Margaret R. Miles. 1991. Desire and Delight. New York: CrossRoads.

Joan Morris. 1973. The Lady was a Bishop. New York: The MacMillan Company.

J.T. Muckle. 1954. The Story of Abélard's Adversities: a Translation with Notes of the *Historia Calamitatum*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies.

Francis X. Murphy. 1947. "Melania the Elder: A Biographical Note" in Traditio, vol. 5, pp. 59-78.

Lynn Hankinson Nelson. 1993. "Epistemological Communities" in Feminist Epistemologies. Edited by Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter. New York: Routledge. pp. 121-154.

Janet L. Nelson. 1978. "Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History" in Medieval Women, ed. by Derek Baker. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. pp. 31-77.

Barbara Newman, ed. 1988. Symphonia (Book Three of the *Scivias* by Hildegard of Bingen). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

_____. 1987. Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Joan Nicholson. 1978. "*Feminae Gloriosae*: Women in the Age of Bede" in Medieval Women, ed. by Derek Baker. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. pp. 15-30.

David F. Noble. 1992. A World without Women: The Clerical Culture of Western Science. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Elaine Pagels. 1981. The Gnostic Gospels. New York: Random House.

Palladius. 1918. The Lausiac History, trans. and intro. by W.K. Lowther Clarke. London: The MacMillan Company.

Constance F. Parvey. 1974. "The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament," in Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions, edited by Rosemary Radford Ruether. New York: Simon & Schuster. pp. 117-149.

Paulinus of Nola. 1967. "The Letters of Paulinus of Nola," trans. and annotated by P.G. Walsh, in Ancient Christian Writers. London: Longmans, Green & Co. Vol. II, letters 23-51.

- Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff. 1986. Medieval Women's Visionary Literature. New York: Oxford University Press.
- W.S.F. Pickering. 1984. Durkheim's Sociology of Religion. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Griselda Pollock. 1988. Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art. New York: Routledge.
- Rosemary Rader. 1982. "Early Christian Forms of Communal Spirituality: Women's Communities" in The Continuing Quest for God, ed. by William Skudlarek O.S.B. Collegeville, Minn: The Liturgical Press, pp. 88-99.
- Ida Raming. 1975. The Exclusion of Women from the Priesthood, trans. by Norman R. Adams. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- James M. Robinson, gen. ed. 1978. The Nag Hammadi Library. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers.
- Joel T. Rosenthal. 1990. "Introduction." in Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History, edited by Joel T. Rosenthal. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- John Frederick Rowbotham. 1895. The Troubadours and Courts of Love. New York: MacMillan and Co.
- Rudolf, Monk of Fulda. 1954. "The Life of St. Leoba" in The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany, ed. and trans. by C. H. Talbot. London: Sheen and Ward, pp. 205-228.
- Rosemary Ruether. 1979. "Mothers of the Church: Ascetic Women in the Late Patristic Age" in Women of Spirit, edited by Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin. New York: Simon and Schuster. pp. 71-98.
- _____. 1974. "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church," in Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions, edited by Rosemary Radford Ruether. New York: Simon & Schuster. pp. 150-183.
- Betty Radice, trans. 1974. The Letters of Abélard and Héloïse. London: Penguin Books.
- Jeffrey Burton Russell. 1992. Dissent and Order in the Middle Ages. New York: Twayne Publishers.

Josiah Cox Russell. 1956. "The Problem of St. Patrick the Missionary" in Traditio, vol. XII. pp. 393-398.

John Ryan. 1931. Irish Monasticism: Origins and Early Development. Dublin: Cahill & Co., Ltd.

Katherine Scherman. 1981. The Flowering of Ireland. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.

Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg. 1988. Female Sanctity: "Public and Private Roles from 500 to 1100" in Women and Power in the Middle Ages, edited by Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski. Athens: University of Georgia Press. pp. 102-125.

Edward C. Sellner. 1989. "Brigit of Kildare - A Study in the Liminality of Women's Spiritual Power" in Cross Currents, Winter (v. 39). pp. 402-419.

Shulamith Sharar. 1983. The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages. London: Methuen Press.

Richard Sharpe. 1982. "Vitae S Brigitae: The Oldest Texts" in Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland, ed. by Donnchadh ó Corráin, vol. I, pp. 83-106.

Mary Skinner. 1984. "Benedictine Life for Women in Central France, 850-1100: A Feminist Revival" in Distant Echoes: Medieval Religious Women, edited by John A. Nichols and William Thomas Shank. Michigan: Cistercian Publications, Inc. pp. 87-114.

Jacqueline Smith. 1978. "Robert of Arbrissel's Relations With Women" in Medieval Women, ed. by Derek Baker. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 175-184.

Traian Stoianovich. 1976. French Historical Method: The Annales Paradigm. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Whitley Stokes, ed. 1877. Three Middle-Irish Homilies on the Lives of Saints Patrick, Brigid and Columba. Calcutta: (s.n.).

Susan Mosher Stuard. 1976. "Introduction," in Women in Medieval Society, edited by Susan Mosher Stuard. The University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sally Thompson. 1978. "The Problem of the Cistercian Nuns in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries" in Medieval Women, ed. by Derek Baker. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 227-252.

Herbert J. Thurston and Donald Attwater, eds. 1981. Butler's Lives of the Saints. Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics.

Venerable Bede. 1840. The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation (60 BC to 731 AD), trans. by Rev. J. A. Giles. London: E. Lumley.

Barbara G. Walker. 1983. The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets. Boston: Harper & Row.

Marina Warner. 1976. Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary. London: Picador.

Suzanne Fonay Wemple. 1992. "Women from the Fifth to the Tenth Century" in A History of Women in the West, edited by Christiane Klapisch-Zuber. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. pp. 169-201.

_____. 1981. Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister 500 to 900. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Margaret Wescott, director. 1988. Behind the Veil (film documentary). Montreal: Studio D, National Film Board of Canada.

Antoinette Clark Wire. 1988. "The Social Functions of Women's Asceticism in the Roman East" in Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism, ed. by Karen L. King. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. pp. 308-323.

Ann Yarborough. 1993. "Christianization in the Fourth Century: The Example of Roman Women" in Women in Early Christianity, ed. by David M. Schabert. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., pp. 319-335.

J.A. Zahm. 1917. Great Inspirers. New York: D. Appleton & Company.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TABLE OF NUNS AND THEIR PLACE IN HISTORY

Time Period	Women Religious	Their Male Peers	Their Positions & Accomplishments	General History of the Era
Late Classical Antiquity: 4 th -5 th c.	Marcella (d. 410)	Jerome called her the first Roman monk and struck a lifetime friendship and correspondence	Founded the first ascetic salon in the Roman countryside	
		Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, introduced her to the lives of the Desert Fathers and the Tabennessiot nuns	Led the Roman faction against Origenist teachings	312: Constantine the Great converts, Christianity becomes official state religion
	Paula (347-404)	Jerome invited her to join him in his exile from Rome. They founded a double monastery in Jerusalem	Co-wrote and edited the <i>Vulgate</i> , the first Latin translation of the Bible	395: Roman Empire split into East and West
	Macrina (341-410)	Rufinus of Aquileia, Paulinus of Nola and Palladius are counted amongst her kin and supporters. They documented her retreat from the world in letters and chronicles	Founded the first double monastery, in Palestine with Rufinus of Aquileia	410: Sack of Rome by Gothic armies
		Augustine was a friend of her family and assisted her grand-daughter in founding a double monastery in North Africa	Spoke publicly in defense of Church teachers, including the Nicene Fathers and Origen	476: Western emperor deposed
Early Celtic Christianity 4 th -5 th c.	Brigid (454-524)	Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, called her the only other true teacher of Christianity	Founded the double monastery Kildare, the largest Christian territory in Ireland	3 rd c: Ireland converted to Christianity. The first Patrick visited
		Bishop Mel was said in legends to have consecrated her a bishop instead of a nun	Overseer and Ananchara of Kildare, positions of higher authority than the male abbot-bishop	4 th c: Second Order of Saints includes native bishops and the appointment of Patrick to organize the Church

TABLE OF NUNS AND THEIR PLACE IN HISTORY

Time Period	Women Religious	Their Male Peers	Their Positions & Accomplishments	General History of the Era
Early British Christianity 6 th -8 th c.	Hilda (613-680)	Great-niece of King Eadwin of Northumbria and friend of the Irish monk Aidan Teacher of five Anglo-saxon bishops: Aethel of Dorchester, Bosa of York, John of York, Othor of Worcester and Wilfrid of Kent	Abbess of Whitby, Northumbria's first royal monastery Presided over the Synod of Whitby	563 Columba left Ireland to convert Britain to Celtic Christianity 597 Roman emissary, Augustine, sent to discredit Irish teaching
	Aelfled (650-713)	Daughter of King Oswiu, who succeeded Eadwin. Continued royal monastic alliance with the Celtic tradition and the Irish monks of Iona	Succeeded Hilda as Abbess of Whitby Attended all important councils and synods, earning a reputation for spiritual comfort and political insight	664 Synod of Whitby established supremacy of Roman laws over Celtic tradition
Merovingian Empire c. 500-750	Clothilde	Chief consort of Clovis I, first Merovingian king	Founded Chelles, first royal monastery in Europe	
	Radegund (521-587)	Fifth wife of Clothar I, daughter of the royal Thuringian household Bishops German of Paris and Medardus of Nyon released her from her marriage Bishop Gregory of Tours supported her convent	Founded Ste. Croix monastery. Established a school grounded in the classical curriculum and religious arts	496 Clovis I converted to Christianity at his wife's urging 590 Gregory the Great, first monastic pope, ascended to the Roman See
	Bathild (d. 680)	Only wife of Clovis II Supporter of Irish Monk Columbanus and his reforms on the continent	Rebuilt Chelles and turned it into the premier royal monastery Ruled Merovingian kingdom as regent from 657-664 Began a program of Church reforms reflecting Celtic traditions	591 Columbanus began his mission on the continent

TABLE OF NUNS AND THEIR PLACE IN HISTORY

Time Period	Women Religious	Their Male Peers	Their Positions & Accomplishments	General History of the Era
Carolingian Empire 751-987	Lieba (700-780)	Boniface called her from England to assist him in Church reforms Charlemagne counted her among his palace counsellors	Only woman to be trained in Benedictine rules at court of Charlemagne. Founded the convent, Lauberbachsheim A poetess and scholar of the seven liberal arts	741: Boniface appointed as chief reformer of the Frankish Church 751: Pepin crowned King of the Franks by Boniface 800: Charlemagne crowned Holy Roman Emperor by the pope 829: Nuns ordered to close schools and enter strict cloister
Ottoman Empire 936-1024	Mathild Sophie & Adelheid Hrotsvit (932-1002)	Otto I's daughter and Otto II's sister Otto II's daughters and Otto III's sisters Royal historian to the Ottoman court	Founder and <i>metropolitana</i> of the royal convent, Quedlinberg Coregent of empire for 10 years, beginning in 983 Rulers of the twin royal convents Gandersheim and Quedlinberg. Sophie exceeded her sister by gaining exempt status from the bishops for her convent, Gandersheim First known medieval dramatist. The earliest nun whose literary works are still extant	951: Otto I of the Franks wed Adelheid, Queen of Italy, launching the empire 962: Otto and Adelheid crowned by the pope 972: Ottonian empire aligned with Byzantine through marriage of Otto II and Princess Theophanu 1024: last emperor, Henry II died, leaving no imperial heir Europe was divided into the territories of France, Germany and Italy

TABLE OF NUNS AND THEIR PLACE IN HISTORY

Time Period	Women Religious	Their Male Peers	Their Positions & Accomplishments	General History of the Era
High Medieval Age 11 th -12 th c.	Herrad (1125-1195)	Daughter of the royal house of Landsberg, from Hohenstaufen dynasty	Abbess of Hohenbourg, a collegiate convent renowned for its scholarship Wrote <i>Hortus Deliciarum</i> , an encyclopedia used for her nuns' lessons	1049 Pope Leo IX began period of reforms 1073 Pope Gregory VII stepped up reform campaign, chief supporter of new monastic orders 1096 The Crusades began (1st Crusade in 1270)
	Hildegard (1098-1178)	Recognized as a mystic and visionary by Bernard de Clairvaux and Pope Eugenius	Founder and abbess of Bingen, on the Rhine Toured Europe four times to preach about her visions Wrote three books of visions, one text on natural history and a book of medicine and physiology	12 th Cathedral schools established
	Heloise (1100-1163)	Niece of Canon Fulbert of the Chartres Cathedral School Abelard's lover and student Correspondent with popes and influential abbots, including Pierre le Venerable of Cluny	Reputed to be the most learned woman in all of France Prioress of Argenteuil and Abbess of Paraclete Best known for her letters to Abelard; also credited by some for writing the monastic rules for Paraclete	New monastic orders like Cluny, Cîteaux and Fontevault officially recognized by pope
	Marie d'Oignies (1177-1213)	The Cistercian monks Jacques de Vitry, later a Cardinal, and Thomas de Cantimpré wrote her vita and commended her to the pope	Founder of the Beguine movement and a promoter of vernacular sacred literature	

APPENDIX B

SELECTED SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES ON WOMEN

The Book of Genesis

- 1:27 And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them.
- 2:19 ...for whatsoever Adam called any living creature the same is its name.
- 2:20 ...but for Adam there was not found a helper like himself.
- 2:23 And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.
- 3:16 To the woman also [God] said: I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee.

Romans

- 16:1-2 But I commend to you Phœbe, our sister, who is in the ministry of the church at Cenchæ, that you may receive her in the Lord as becomes saints, and that you may assist her in whatever business she may have need of you. For she too has assisted many, including myself.

I Corinthians

- 7:3-4 Let the husband render to the wife her due, and likewise the wife to the husband. The wife has not authority over her body, but the husband; the husband likewise has not authority over his body, but the wife.

- 7:15-16 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart. For a brother or sister is not under any bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. For how dost thou know, O wife, whether thou wilt save thy husband? Or how dost thou know, O husband, whether thou wilt save thy wife?
- 11:3-5 But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying with his head covered, disgraces his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered disgraces her head, for it is the same as if she were shaven.
- 11:8-10 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. For man was not created for woman, but woman for man. This is why the woman ought to have a sign of authority over her head, because of the angels.
- 11:11-12 Yet neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man in the Lord. For as the woman is from the man, so also is the man through the woman, but all things are from God.
- 14:34-35 Thus I likewise teach in all the churches of the saints. Let women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted them to speak, but let them be submissive, as the Law also says. But if they wish to learn anything let them ask their husbands at home, for it is unseemly for a woman to speak in the church.

Galatians

- 3:27-28 For all you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians

- 5:22-24 Let wives be subject to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the Church, being himself saviour of the body. But just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be to their husbands in all things.

A resolution test chart featuring various patterns of vertical and horizontal lines. Each pattern is accompanied by a numerical value representing its resolution. The values include 1.0, 1.1, 1.25, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.2, 2.5, 2.8, 3.2, 3.6, and 4.0. The patterns become progressively smaller and more densely packed as the numerical value increases.

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS
STANDARD REFERENCE MATERIAL 1010a
(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)

- 5:28-31 Even thus ought husbands also to love their wives as their own bodies. he who loves his own wife, loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh; on the contrary he nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ also does the Church (because we are members of his body, made from his flesh and from his bones).

I Timothy

- 2:12-15 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. For I do not allow a woman to teach, or to exercise authority over men; but she is to keep quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and was in sin. Yet women will be saved by childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with modesty.

Titus

- 2:3-5 ...that elderly women, in like manner, be marked by holiness of behaviour, not slanderers, nor enslaved to much wine; teaching what is right, that they may train the younger women to be wise, to love their husbands and their children, to be discreet, chaste, domestic, gentle, obedient to their husbands, so that the word of God be not reviled.

Matthew

- 19:12 For there are eunuchs who were born so from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made so by men; and there are eunuchs who have made themselves so for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let him accept it who can.

APPENDIX C

ILLUMINATIONS

- I. **Book of Durrow.** Written and decorated at the monastery of Durrow, Northumbria, late-seventh century.

Margaret Rickert. 1954. *Painting in Britain: The Middle Ages*. London: Penguin Books. p. 239

- II. **Sacramentary of Gellone.** Written and decorated at the abbey of Chelles, late-eighth century.

Peter Lasko. 1971. *Kingdom of the Franks*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. p. 107.

- III. **The Muses.** Written and decorated at the convent of Hohenbourg, supervised by Herrad of Landsberg.

Herrad of Landsberg. 1977. *Hortus Deliciarum*, commentary and notes by A. Straub and G. Keller, ed. and trans. by Aristide D. Caratzas. New Rochelle, NY: Caratzas Brothers, Publishers. p. 36

- IV. **Philosophy and the Liberal Arts.** Written and decorated at the convent of Hohenbourg, supervised by Herrad of Landsberg,

Herrad of Landsberg. 1977. *Hortus Deliciarum*, commentary and notes by A. Straub and G. Keller, ed. and trans. by Aristide D. Caratzas. New Rochelle, NY: Caratzas Brothers, Publishers. p. 37

- V. **Hildegard's Cosmology.** Written and decorated by Hildegard of Bingen, for *Liber Divinorum Operum*, 1169.

Matthew Fox. 1985. *Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen*, text by Hildegard of Bingen, trans. with commentary by Matthew Fox. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Company. p. 39.

I. BOOK OF DURROW

II. SACRAMENTARY OF GELLONE

III. THE MUSES

Hortus deliciarum Pl XI.

Fol 31^a

IV. PHILOSOPHY AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

V. HILDEGARD'S COSMOLOGY

END

0 8 - 1 1 - 9 4

FIN