

## **Patriarchal Negotiations: Women, Writing and Religion 1640-1660**

Ward Lowery, Nicholas J. L.

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author

For additional information about this publication click this link.

<http://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/jspui/handle/123456789/1682>

Information about this research object was correct at the time of download; we occasionally make corrections to records, please therefore check the published record when citing. For more information contact [scholarlycommunications@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:scholarlycommunications@qmul.ac.uk)

**Patriarchal Negotiations: Women, Writing and Religion  
1640-1660**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D in the University of London by Nicholas J.L.  
Ward Lowery of Queen Mary and Westfield College, October 1994.**



**Patriarchal Negotiations: Women, Writing and Religion  
1640-1660**

1	'Speaking nothing for favour relation or flattery': reading early modern women writers	5
2	Gifts beheld in a mirror: prefacing women writers	49
3	'Wearying him with her words': Katherine Chidley's metonymic separatism	78
4	'The thriving trade of considerate collection': distribution and consumption in the theology of Elizabeth Warren	114
5	'That it may be put out of question': Mary Pope's patriarchal constitution	140
6	' <i>The Woman</i> (that is the Church or Saints of God)': prophecy and justification in the work of Mary Cary	175
7	Generating sufficiency: the spiritual autobiography of Jane Turner	205
8	'Christ is thine and thou are his': reciprocal relations in the work of Anna Trapnel	228
9	Saintly spouses and heavenly husbands: masculine and feminine models in Dorothy White and Abiezer Coppe	252
10	'Husband to the desolate widdow': the politics of gender in Quaker polemic	281
11	Conclusion: Hermaphrodite Councils	303
	Bibliography	308

## Abstract

Women were prominent in the Lollard movement in the fifteenth century, but it is only in the mid-seventeenth century that women begin to produce theological texts which contribute to the controversy over popular religious expression and women's part in religious culture. After 1640 women began to publish on a number of theological issues and in a wide range of genres: prose polemic, prophecy, autobiography and spiritual meditation. Subject to widespread criticism, they quickly had to fashion a rhetoric of justification with which to defend their intervention in print and pacify male critics. This thesis shows that they achieved this in two ways: by producing a literature which complied with the expectations of masculine theological culture and by manipulating these assumptions so as to create space for a female symbolic language of piety.

They developed a literary self-consciousness which depends on the idea of subjectivity as a gendered experience and they often resisted their detractors by valorising denigrated forms of female subjectivity and pursuing theological conclusions irrespective of normative ideas of gender. Women did not engage in theological debate in isolation, however. They often intervened as committed members of religious sects and thus deserve to be read as representatives of corporate and communal theologies.

In contrast to earlier studies which have sought to recover neglected women writers as early feminists, without reading their work historically, this thesis seeks to uncover the social and the theological rather than the authorial origin of much early modern women's writing and to measure its engagement with early modern debates on women and religious culture. It seeks to challenge the increasingly dominant view of early modern women writers which invests them with too modern an authorial presence, by reconstituting the seventeenth-century debates which gave rise to their work and by bringing modern French feminist perspectives to bear on a period largely untouched by theoretical approaches to literature. To this end it proceeds by way of several close readings of women who wrote as women and as Baptists, Independents, Levellers, Presbyterians and Quakers.

## Abbreviations

BIHR	Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research
CH	Church History
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
ELR	English Literary Renaissance
GAH	Gender and History
HLQ	Huntington Library Quarterly
HWJ	History Workshop Journal
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JLT	Journal of Literature and Theology
JMH	Journal of Modern History
JOFHS	Journal of Friends Historical Society
JOHI	Journal of the History of Ideas
JSH	Journal of Social History
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
NLH	New Literary History
PMLA	Proceedings of the Modern Language Association
P&P	Past and Present
RQ	Renaissance Quarterly
RS	Renaissance Studies
SCJ	Sixteenth Century Journal
SH	Social History
SIE	Studies in English 1500-1800
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
SQ	Shakespeare Quarterly
TSC	The Seventeenth Century
TSWL	Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature

For all references the place of publication is London unless otherwise stated. All quotations from the Bible are from the King James unless otherwise indicated.

## 1

### 'Speaking nothing for favour relation or flattery': reading early modern women writers

You taught me language; and my profit on't  
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you  
for learning me your language.

*The Tempest* Act 1, Scene 2, ll. 365-367.<sup>1</sup>

Caliban's tormented and paradoxical position, that the language he speaks to curse Prospero both liberates and imprisons him, is shared by many of the groups contesting the right to distinct literary development in the modern world. Post-colonial writers are painfully aware that to write in the language of former colonisers is partly to repeat, if not wholly to accept, the political realities of colonial oppression. Postmodernists struggle to find value in the alienating formal innovations of Modernism, unwilling to accept its often reactionary political ideologies. Feminists worry that to write out of an almost exclusively male literary tradition does a disservice both to history and to the utopian aims of the Women's Movement (in all its forms). Readers of twentieth century English Literature are familiar with the ambivalent feelings of working class writers towards the cultures which produce and educate them. For these writers, the path through school and university produces the desire to testify to the veracity of their cultural roots but compromises their ability to describe them authentically. All these binary oppositions characterize Caliban's paradox. The argument of this thesis is that women's religious prose of the mid-seventeenth century illustrates the same paradox. Despite the widespread belief that women's place in culture differed from men's, they nevertheless wrote within a largely male literary tradition whose readers were conditioned to expect masculine texts. Their writings articulate a response to the problem of representing the views of women which takes three different, though inter-related, forms.

Either they could pretend a textual masculinity, mimicking the techniques and conventions of ordinary theological dispute so as to appear male in everything except the accident of biological gender, or they could adopt the opposite approach by mobilising the most powerful - if patriarchal, and in male writers often misogynist - stereotypes of femininity. The former strategy seeks acceptance in masculine terms, while the latter demands notice in stereotypically feminine terms: one pursues the abolition of difference to prevent marginalisation, while the other exaggerates difference to create feminine space. The third tactic falls somewhere between these two extremes, combining weak claims for the social value of contemporary representations of femininity with pleas for authority on the basis of masculine writerly traits such as sobriety, clarity and rationality. In the chapters that follow the religious prose works of several mid-seventeenth-century women writers are analyzed using this theory of textual production. The aim is descriptive rather than evaluative; not to judge the success or failure of each strategy and so declare one of the three the most effective, but to examine them as they are particularly expressed by different texts and to analyze the way in which each negotiates with prevailing patriarchal lore. I have restricted the content of this thesis by cultural provenance, and to some degree by social class. All the women whose works I examine in the following chapters were literate - unlike most women in this period - but they were not members of the aristocracy. Some were referred to by contemporaries as 'gentlewomen', but most are likely to have been privileged members of a merchant or artisan class. A few of them could read Latin, notably Elizabeth Warren and Mary Pope, but they were mostly women whose entry into print was enabled by a vernacular Bible and the evangelizing culture of puritan devotion. Many of them, like Katherine Chidley, Anna Trapnel, Mary Cary and the Quakers, were social revolutionaries; all belonged to a sectarian religious group.

Hoping to change the society in which they lived they challenged the theological orthodoxies of the day, disrupted the lectures of the ungodly and went 'gadding to sermons', often travelling large distances on foot to hear particular preachers. The literature they produced is concerned almost exclusively with the personal and social politics of prevailing theological trends. There is another literature produced by women and men in this period which grew out of a classical genre of misogynist slander and female complaint. It is often satirical and licentious and is uncertainly documented even today. This literature was more closely connected to the universities and sites of official learning than that produced by the writers below and may be distinguished from it by content, style and intention. For this reason I make no reference to it in what follows.

The remainder of this introduction has several aims. The first is to give an indication of the depth of existing work on early women writers in the fields of English and History, and to assess its limitations. Another, is to measure the extent to which contemporary French feminist thought can help us to read the work of seventeenth-century English women. This represents a slight modification of the more usual relationship - as I see it - between recent French feminist theory and literary criticism. Finally, I set out guidelines to the work undertaken in later chapters.

The title of this introduction comes from the funeral sermon of Susanna, Countess of Suffolk, who died on May 19 1649. Her funeral oration was preached by Edward Rainbowe at her burial at Walden in Essex on May 29 in the same year. It was dedicated to James, Earl of Suffolk, and subsequently printed in London by William Wilson. Rainbowe took as his text Ecclesiastes 7;1: 'A good name is better than precious oyntment; and the day of death than the day of ones birth'. In the preamble to his sermon he vowed:



I shall in all sincerity endeavour to speak nothing for favour, relation, flattery or to gain a vain glorious name to her that is gone, or to him that speaks, but to set forth such real virtues as shined in her life, that we may all have occasion to glorifie God, who was graciously pleased to instamp such lively characters of his image upon a poor corruptible creature, and to aspire after all that is praiseworthy in so precious an example.<sup>2</sup>

Rainbowe's task was to give a picture of the Countess' unstained modesty, chastity, and commitment to domestic virtue. He universalizes these qualities as ones befitting the conscientious and obedient Christian. He describes the sharpness of her wit in questions of religion: 'chiefly cases of conscience', and how she was 'most sudden at making Nice Doubts, and extraordinary at resolving them'.<sup>3</sup> He praises first her 'naturall endowements, judgement, phancy, memory' and follows this with an assessment of those of her virtues, 'which gain reputation for morality'. These included holy fortitude, boldness for truth, charity, compassion and humility. All her faculties and desires, claimed Rainbowe, were employed 'to build up her self a tabernacle, a temple for the service of the living God'.<sup>4</sup>

Rainbowe's rhetoric illustrates the extent to which the official sanction of a masculine patriarchal institution - the Church - could acknowledge the iconic power of women to represent Christian virtue while at the same time exploiting this merely symbolic importance to maintain the inferior position of women. According to Rainbowe's logic the Countess was not so much one who praised God, as someone through whom it was possible to worship God. Rainbowe thought Susanna a temple, a place for worship, but not quite a centre of worship. Yet this observation raises several questions. According to conventional theology Christ was miraculously both human and divine; had he not taken human form to redeem mankind? Why was it that seventeenth-century male theologians were untroubled by the paradox inherent in the analogical idea that man was to woman as God was to man; since this gave women an analogical equality

with men which could have reduced censure of their ecclesiastical activity? And it has been argued that women were specifically attracted to the humanity of Christ. If the ideal Christian was symbolically a woman, shouldn't this have deepened the theological importance of femininity; how could men be both woman before God and God before woman without appearing theologically arrogant? Furthermore, why did the theological value of femininity not extend to women, as women, in society at large? More pertinently, how does this irony of private and public symbolic value affect women writing religious prose from a position of great iconic power but little or no political influence?

For twenty years feminist critics in English universities have debated the usefulness of French feminist theory (produced largely by psychoanalysts) for literary criticism. The debate has produced divergent views. Some see French theory as a wishful and impossible attempt to reclaim unavoidably misogynist binary logic for a progressive political programme. Their opponents see the speculative theorizing of writers such as Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous as an indispensable catalyst in the production of utopian writings by women. Since the publication, in 1981, of Ann Rosalind Jones' article *Writing the Body: Towards an understanding of l'Écriture Feminine*, the debate has produced meditations of steadily increasing sophistication.<sup>5</sup> Despite this, little work has been undertaken of a kind which would directly illustrate the utility of such approaches for the recovery of little known texts by women - a traditional endeavour for Anglo-American literary historians.<sup>6</sup> This thesis addresses itself to this double task: both to further our understanding of radical religious prose by women, and to illustrate the ways in which French feminist theory might be of use critically *and* historically.

As long ago as 1975, Natalie Zemon Davis summed up the burgeoning work on early modern women by observing that although much had been learned about the theoretical amelioration of the position of women inside Protestant marriage, 'less attention has been paid to the changed roles of women within the life, liturgy, symbolism, and organisation of the Reformed Church'.<sup>7</sup> In the nineteen years since this was written, feminist scholars have produced a plethora of groundbreaking works which investigate and assess women's involvement in the Reformation Church. One area which has not received the attention it deserves, perhaps because it falls between disciplines and between feminisms historical and literary, is the body of religious prose produced by committed sectarian women in the Civil War and Interregnum period in England. Historians of aristocratic women have obtained records for the gentry much more easily and thus concentrated their efforts in large measure upon single figures of puritan persuasion or Protestant martyrs, while in departments of literature the emphasis has been on the study of gender in writing. This has produced an increasingly sophisticated debate about the significance of women in early modern drama and extensive research into early women writers who received a humanist education but wrestled with the ambivalences of masculine culture towards educated women. Less is known about the period between 1640 and 1660 which saw a significant rise in the number of women's publications and which allowed many less educated women a printed public voice for the first time. It is from this large body of published work, much of it latterly unread, that the studies which make up this thesis are drawn.

Historians, reading widely across the many sources, though not always deeply into individual works, have often sought to uncover in early modern women's writing precursors for modern feminist thought.<sup>8</sup> This attention to older forms of contemporary

social phenomena is not altogether unwarranted - there *are* parallels to be drawn - but it is not without risk. An uncritical adoption of past models or traditions which, it is naively believed, will make contemporary political struggles easier to win, does the specificity of other historical epochs a great disservice. All history, on this kind of reading, is a curious repetition of earlier episodes. Conversely, a commitment to historical difference should not lead necessarily to the marginalisation of issues which focus on the significance of gender and the relations between men and women in earlier societies.<sup>9</sup> Another unwarranted tendency in much historical work on the early modern period is the failure to perceive the central importance of gender for early modern culture, and the reduction of women's history and the history of gender to footnotes in a larger historical narrative. This view sees women's history as an adjunct or complement to the central plot of history, a chapter in the history of puritanism or part of the Reformation's anti-clerical thrust - a short lived consequence of the Protestant reform of marital relations or a primitive prototype for later feminist developments.<sup>10</sup> What it fails to acknowledge is that without an understanding of the role played by gender, in all its symbolic and rhetorical forms, in the early modern period, we will not begin to grasp the nature of early modern women's attempts to modify patriarchal restraint.<sup>11</sup>

In the case of early women writers, the spilling of so much ink would perhaps have been more fruitful if a whole series of critical orthodoxies and methods had first been adapted so as to take account of the recent developments in literary theory and the importing into history of categories of thought borrowed from social anthropology.<sup>12</sup> Because this methodological adaptation was not achieved, and because the study of women writers has to no small extent been dependent upon the kind of critical exegesis

associated with New Criticism and older forms of historical enquiry, its findings have been less exciting than they might have been. It may not be too much of an exaggeration to claim that the deep context of much early modern women's writing has gone largely unexamined.<sup>13</sup>

In part this is due to the nature of the task: recovering forgotten or ignored writings tends to result in the defence of hitherto unnoticed texts for their particular worth as feminist artefacts, rather than a detailed analysis of their content. This study will attempt to redress the balance by offering an interpretation of several early modern women writers which avoids the anachronistic excesses of some earlier studies.

Just as historians have argued long, hard, and often acrimoniously, about the significance of the English Civil War, so their attitudes towards the part played by women in the events of the 1640s equally display a lack of scholarly consensus. The earliest practitioners in this field conscientiously drew attention to attitudes which appeared to parallel or presage modern feminist demands. To this end Ellen McArthur began her 1909 article on women petitioners and the Long Parliament by noting that:

the student of seventeenth-century history must often be struck by anticipations in many directions of later demands. Not least interesting of these are the claims urged by women for wider educational opportunities, and for equal rights with men in various matters.<sup>14</sup>

It is important to remember that McArthur was writing eleven years before the establishment of women's suffrage in the very country whose history she was recounting. Her aim was to argue convincingly that 'the statement of an equal interest with men in matters of national importance and of a right to petition parliament is an old claim'.<sup>15</sup> When Ethyn Morgan Williams published her article on women preachers in the Civil War in 1929, her reading of the 1640s similarly found the activities of women preachers 'of great importance, both as an expression of the greater religious freedom of the period,

and as an early manifestation of feminism'.<sup>16</sup> It is easy to see the contemporary value of establishing such a political pedigree for women. It is also true, however, that such single minded vigour in the establishment of a 'tradition' obscures or ignores much that is historically specific. One of the political criticisms most frequently made of women's activism in the Civil War period is that women steadfastly failed to demand female suffrage. While this is so, it is not clear what political conclusions can be drawn from this observation. It is true, at the very least, that the lack of a demand for women's suffrage *does not* indicate the absence of political themes in women's contributions to the culture of early modern England.

Both these readings are unashamedly whiggish.<sup>17</sup> That is to say they are written in the belief that political history is best understood as an evolutionary development from absolutist monarchy to representative democracy, in which each step along the historical path builds modestly upon its predecessor, and the movement from one to another is progressive and enlightened. By this fortuitous and steady path political history reaches parliamentary democracy and stops. The feminist struggle continues, since it lags behind other developments. But in Williams' view, it continues to press for the kind of social relations envisaged in the ideal unknowingly expressed by 'the feminists of the Independent sect' who defied 'scripture and tradition' and 'asserted their rights as individuals'.<sup>18</sup> The politically active individual is, on the whig reading, the perfect conclusion to parliamentary evolution. But a reading more sensitive to the context of early modern culture suggests that women felt supported both by scripture and tradition and asserted their rights not as individuals, but as members of a body politic. One of the shortcomings of much good work on early modern women writers has been the tendency to mimic progressive narratives of history and construct a parallel but independent

tradition of women writers. This approach highlights the extent to which women have written about the private and the personal in response to their lack of educational and political opportunities, but is less successful in documenting - especially for the Civil War period - the active contribution to political debate which some women *were* able to make.

While whig historiography formed, for good reasons, the motivating rationale for most of the early work on women in the Civil War, by the late fifties it was becoming clear that it no longer produced adequate answers to the kinds of question coming into historical vogue. A greater realisation of the extent to which Stuart culture was constitutively religious and greater knowledge of the connection between religious and family practice made it increasingly difficult to argue that the women activists of the 1640s and 1650s were akin to nineteenth-century suffragettes. Yet the desire to ascertain whether they contributed positively or negatively to later feminist movements, and to judge their historical merit on the basis of criteria adopted from the rhetoric of later struggles, still exercised the minds of historians.

Keith Thomas' oft-quoted *Past and Present* article 'Women and the Civil War Sects' did much to relocate the question of seventeenth-century feminism in its historical context. Thomas noted that it was possible to 'hold for the seventeenth century a theory of the greater natural religiosity of women'.<sup>19</sup> He found a historical tradition to support this view stretching back to the Lollards and lay pressure for a vernacular scripture.<sup>20</sup> He observed too, in the separatist belief in the spiritual equality of the sexes before God, an explanation for the disproportionate role played by women in many of the radical groups.<sup>21</sup>

It is difficult for us to recapture the apocalyptic atmosphere in which all this took place, but the challenge offered by these events to traditional

ideas on the passive and subordinate role of women in the church and in society is obvious.<sup>22</sup>

Yet despite this emphasis upon the theological context, and the insight that social attitudes towards women were inseparable from beliefs about family structure and political practice, Thomas appears to want to judge older feminisms according to modern criteria. He quotes Elizabeth Warren's apology for publishing despite the weakness of her sex as evidence that 'not all women visionaries of this period were ardent feminists',<sup>23</sup> as though this kind of generic commonplace, often assumed to be insignificant in men's writing, revealed the authentic beliefs of women writers. Although Thomas calls her an exception, it is not clear either that apologies for female weakness disable 'feminist' intention and effect, or that those who claimed absolute spiritual equality before God were 'ardent feminists', since theological equality may not presuppose social or political equality. Indeed, there is much evidence to suggest that the genderlessness of souls was a religious commonplace rather than a radical and heterodox theological tenet.

Thomas is keen to assess the long term effects of women's activities in the Civil War period, but his conclusions are somewhat disheartening:

as regards the place of women, the long-term effects of separatism were probably small. Appeal to divine inspiration was of very questionable value as a means of female emancipation...it does seem in this case that the language in which such writing was couched must have served to perpetuate the myth of women's inferiority.<sup>24</sup>

Here the rhetorical excuses of separatist women are mistaken for the substance of their intervention in social affairs, which is rather like believing the assertion that after dinner speakers are unaccustomed to speaking in public! It signals a failure to appreciate that such rhetoric might be strategic rather than integral. The literary scholar might equally



complain that Thomas rushes to assess the long-term consequences without hesitating to consider the short-term. He notes finally that no plea was made for women's suffrage until much later and thus he dates the beginning of modern feminism - enshrined in the two doctrines of natural right and the denial of intellectual differences between the sexes - from the end of the seventeenth century:

nor does the sectarian insistence upon women's spiritual equality seem to have been of very great importance in the later history of female emancipation in general.<sup>25</sup>

Here the argument is fatalistic: it would require a more secular age to loosen the patriarchal grip of Family and Church upon women's position, and because these institutions structured women's subordination in general they could not be attacked on particular points until patriarchy itself was undermined. Thomas confusingly argues that patriarchal theory emerged unscathed from the Civil War but that the family did not; that women's intervention in ecclesiastical affairs was one step forward and two back on the road to emancipation, both a beginning and an end. Modern feminists, claims Thomas, would not recognise the rhetorical collusion with patriarchy of their earlier sisters as a legitimate strategy.

Patricia Higgins, noting that women formed part of the London mob in the early 1640s, doubts that the period saw the emergence of a new kind of female identity: 'it seems more probable the Civil War was simply the occasion which permitted latent female potentiality to be expressed'.<sup>26</sup> Her analysis of Leveller women's petitions to Parliament in 1642, 1643 and 1653 suggests that the activities of women in civil demonstration 'challenged generally accepted ideas about the place of women in seventeenth-century English society'.<sup>27</sup> Women *ipso facto* claimed some right to political participation through their actions, since these were political in nature. But Higgins goes

on to argue that women accepted the idea that they were men's political inferiors. Petitions legitimised their complaint by stressing the liminal and extraordinary nature of female protest. In times of national crisis, it was argued, God licensed the weak and subservient to make appeal to those in authority. Whilst these defences were doubtless ineluctable - part of what had to be said to appease parliamentary procedure - they nonetheless amounted to a kind of social veto on irresponsible parliamentary policy. Higgins thinks that these 'biblical' arguments legitimated special behaviour in women as weaker vessels but that 'they did not offer a basis for a sustained feminist movement'.<sup>28</sup> Any feminist politics is thus thought fatally compromised if it fails to avoid challenging in its own terms the rhetorical premises of patriarchal political theory. In Higgins' view, the absence of a claim to absolute political equality between men and women in Leveller women's rhetoric leaves the movement complicit with the very political system which a genuine and sustainable feminist politics would radically redesign.

Higgins concludes that 'while not overtly challenging masculine superiority, women tentatively put forward justifications for the involvement of women in politics based on the equal rights of men and women'.<sup>29</sup> The modern historian finds this gratifying because it is a thoroughly uncontentious liberal position. To unearth such apparently prescient and modern doctrine in an earlier period is a way of reinforcing your own faith in such ideas. But it is surely erroneous and misguided to congratulate early women writers for appearing to espouse a doctrine of liberal individualism.

More recent work by historians has failed to alter the pattern of work by McArthur, Williams, Thomas and Higgins. Commenting on the Leveller women's petitions, Derek Hirst accepts that women figured predominantly in the events but thinks that 'they stopped short of demanding political rights or legal reforms for women'.<sup>30</sup>

Lawrence Stone, like Higgins, observes that Leveller women's demonstrations were more militant in 1649 than in 1642 and notes that their 1649 claim to an equal share and interest in the Commonwealth logically suggested a demand for equal voting rights but that this was never contemplated by the women themselves or by the male Leveller leadership. Without this demand, which serves as a kind of bench mark for modernity and therefore importance in the historical assessment of Civil War feminism, Stone can only offer a sobering conclusion:

this feminine agitation at a time of temporary breakdown of law and order should therefore best be seen as a symptom rather than as a cause. The episode is significant as the first emergence on a mass level of feminist ideas among an artisan urban population, but it was a movement without a future.<sup>31</sup>

In company with Keith Thomas, Stone initially acknowledges the importance of the movement, but then cuts it off without prospect to await the classical Tory feminism of the early eighteenth century. Stone argues that women's agitation was 'largely abortive and without much influence in changing public attitudes'.<sup>32</sup> Stone's point is that since the women's demonstrations produced no immediate political change and subsided in the later 1650s, we can read them as an isolated, extremist, and possibly counter-productive political phenomenon.<sup>33</sup>

There is of course no intrinsic need to judge historical phenomena strictly by modern standards. In one recent survey of the period Keith Wrightson offers a more subtle and less severe way of reading women's demonstration by way of a discussion of order. In an analysis of the practice of riot in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century culture, he notes its orderly and legalistic nature, which was often consciously royalist. Stressing that riot was far from the anarchic free-for-all in contempt of all authority often visualised today, Wrightson emphasises its social function as 'a way of demanding that certain

legitimate rights of the common people be respected and that the authorities live up to the standards of their own paternalistic rhetoric'.<sup>34</sup> Women were prominent in enclosure riots, notes Wrightson, because of the popular belief that women were outside the law, whereas men were contained within it. Stone et al are thus misguided in dismissing Leveller women for being 'too modern' since their activities were a legitimate part of the political culture of their time. I hope to show that they similarly miss the point when they dismiss the movement for not being sufficiently modern. The failure to demand women's suffrage should not be taken as evidence that seventeenth-century women were in no way feminist.

In Wrightson's view we can see Leveller women's demonstrations as traditional ways of attacking negligent authority. However, we should be careful lest our reading swing back from reductive modernism to an inert traditionalism which accounts for all social action by describing it as part of the social structure, leaving no room for genuine political and religious disagreement, which can never be wholly contained by social structures. Leveller petitions were not carnival riots, that is, temporary and licensed inversions of a permanent order, nor were they traditional forms of social protest designed to remind patrician authorities of their responsibilities to the common people. They were political events insofar as they provoked unpredictable responses, illustrating the extent to which Civil War politics inaugurated new forms of common awareness of, and involvement with, national politics. Two women died after a violent demonstration outside Parliament in August 1643 when the Lords were threatening to capitulate to Charles.<sup>35</sup> Patrick Collinson veers overmuch toward carnival and custom in his characterisation of women's contribution. He labels women's activities 'collusive' and argues that:

these women made no attempt to break the mould or to redefine the ground rules of their existence. If they had done so they would surely have been resisted and probably defeated. To petition, even tumultuously and almost violently, or to engage in certain types of enclosure riot, was an activity more safely and appropriately undertaken by women than by men and in any event a means of self expression conveniently tolerated in their sex.<sup>36</sup>

Sara Heller Mendelson, in her biographical study of three Stuart women sees no reason to depart from Collinson's analysis. She writes of her subjects:

what they did not challenge was the whole complex of cultural axioms about gender, with its implicit assumption that the two sexes were polar opposites with two sets of mutually contradictory traits.<sup>37</sup>

This conclusion is wrong on two counts. Firstly, women did challenge the idea that gender difference was an absolute and unchallengeable bar to their participation in cultural processes (such as writing); secondly, many women argued not against the idea of gender difference but against gender hierarchy. They wanted to challenge the model of sovereignty insofar as it depended upon a patriarchal model of the social body and in doing so they frequently had occasion to invert, reorder and otherwise manipulate the way in which gender was used to discuss social and spiritual matters. So while they did not challenge 'the whole complex' in modern egalitarian terms, this fact should not be allowed to de-politicise their work. Mendelson's negative judgement of women's writing is thus premature and anachronistic. It is clear too that 'the whole complex of cultural axioms' was riven by contradictions and inconsistencies. Some of these were wholeheartedly confronted by women who published theological polemic in the mid-seventeenth century.

Susan Amussen places gender relations similarly beyond question when she asserts that:

many people in the early seventeenth century thought that society was falling apart; this belief was confirmed by scolding women, the poor,

vagrants and day to day social tensions. In spite of this, the gender order was never challenged explicitly and the inferiority of women never denied. The existence of the gender hierarchy was secure. But the class hierarchy was challenged; the criteria for determining status, the conception of moral superiority of the wealthy and the inferiority of the poor were called into question. The radical groups of the civil war challenged the class order, not the gender order. <sup>38</sup>

Again we must be wary of accepting the idiosyncratic view that in a society whose political theories depended upon analogical thinking, gender can be so stringently separated from status, moral superiority, wealth and the position of the poor. Why, if this is the case, do women's interventions in writing so often invoke gender in their discussions of social policy, the welfare of the poor, and political power?

Support for the idea that women's political action was allowed by and complicit with seventeenth-century patriarchy is found, perhaps unexpectedly, in much of the recent work on women's literary history. Thus the editors of *Kissing the Rod: an Anthology of Seventeenth-century Women's Verse* note that

the use made of women in religious controversy has often more to do with the idea that God speaks through the mouths of 'babes and sucklings', and idiots and others who would otherwise be dumb and of no account, than any conviction of the sexlessness of souls.<sup>39</sup>

This apparent criticism of women for abjectly participating in male religious controversy is predicated on an impossibilist rhetoric of purity. It is not possible or legitimate to attempt by decree to place oneself outside cultural modes of expression which are tainted by patriarchal ideology. Furthermore, if such insistence on untainted authenticity is observed throughout, no account is taken of those who struggle from within. The accusation of collaboration which Greer et al aim at religious women in the early modern period needs to be challenged - not by refusing its terms - but by arguing that collaboration is neither fruitless nor complicit, but may well be the discursive condition of all successful struggle. Janet Todd has noted that many a female author considered

the state of their sex, and 'however conservative, in some way disturbed patriarchal assumptions - necessarily so since her very existence as a writing subject challenged the prevailing ideology of female marginality'.<sup>40</sup> Finding no grand gestures of resistance, many commentators have assumed that there were none. Such impatience with sources deeply embedded in their contexts is unwarranted, for patriarchy may be as profoundly undermined by subtle disturbance as by wild exogenous postures.

Dorothy Ludlow dismisses many of the female prophetic visionaries of the period as 'God intoxicated adolescents' and repeats Lawrence Stone's assertion that their impact was largely negative - that 'they antagonized more people than they converted'.<sup>41</sup>

According to Ludlow's reading

Several 'mystics' appear to have been silly, vain, and rather egocentric girls who enjoyed attention and were aided and used by male sectaries for their own purposes.<sup>42</sup>

Of the modern accounts which have tried to rescue early modern women from readings like this, Diane Willen's is one of the most subtle and convincing. Noting that gender has recently been offered as an explanation of female prophecy she recognises the double bind which many commentators now accept structured female oracular behaviour:

what were seen as the traditional female qualities - passivity, irrationality, passion - allowed contemporaries to accept women as visionaries whilst at the same time to deprive them of political power and responsibility.<sup>43</sup>

Willen recognises too that 'it is futile to debate whether the legacy of the Reformation was a negative or positive influence in the lives of these women',<sup>44</sup> since this would be to judge reductively an historical era with complex and contradictory long term consequences. More problematic for our understanding of gender and subjectivity in the Civil War period is her unquestioning adoption of twentieth-century patterns of self-fulfilment to describe the reasons for women's activity. In this vein she claims that

women were attracted to religion because it offered:

escape from passivity in a highly patriarchal society, the promise of a meaningful life, the satisfaction of emotional catharsis, opportunity for self expression, spiritual egalitarianism, and a means to cope emotionally with the perils of childbirth.<sup>45</sup>

One problem here is that these categories of fulfilment erase historical difference and make early modern concepts of religious subjectivity identical with their modern political counterparts.<sup>46</sup> Nor does it serve historical scholarship to describe them as functionally accurate, that is to say, as good translations of what are in effect universal human requirements, since this gives us no access to the specificity of early modern subjectivity. There is a school of writing on women's history which invokes all kinds of doubtful attributions to their subjects of modern ego-affirming states of mind.<sup>47</sup> This technique often involves the simple and erroneous collapsing of text into person. Mary Ann Schofield has written of the process by which mid-seventeenth-century women writers 'tentatively and tenaciously...began to explore, clarify, affirm and authenticate their self-image'.<sup>48</sup> Without careful definition the casual use of such terms allows us to recognise women's agency only insofar as it is analogous to modern subjectivity. Thus Selma Leydesdorff, in an article which does much to challenge the idea of a seamless tradition, writes of studying women's history: 'time and time again there is that moment of recognition, that feeling that all women are involved in the same things'.<sup>49</sup> There is nothing erroneous in this kind of claim, except that 'the same thing' is often described in very different terms. The danger here is that if one gives up the idea of historical difference then one runs the greater risk of giving up history altogether. In a similar vein Ellen Macek finds evidence in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* for an 'incipient women's subculture'. Arguing that it is likely that Foxe underestimated women's strength of character in order to exemplify God making himself known through the weak, Macek



criticises those scholars who have noticed the scriptural learning possessed by religious women:

they have not emphasised enough the benefits of self-assurance and the strengthening of Christian self-identity that accompanied such knowledge.<sup>50</sup>

This may well be because of the immense difficulty encountered by any attempt to define or measure self-assurance or self-identity.

Several scholars have suggested that women were motivated to write about experiences which they knew were textually unrepresented.<sup>51</sup> A body of work is beginning to emerge which reads between the lines of patriarchal precept and illuminates the ways in which women, though marginalised, found narrative voices.<sup>52</sup> The explosion of work on the family has fostered a greater attention to domestic history and an inevitable consideration of women's position as home-keepers. The detailed adumbration of early modern attitudes to women has provided a large body of knowledge against which to measure the protestations of early women writers.<sup>53</sup> The ideological prescriptions which severely curtailed the literary aspirations of many women, coupled with the prejudices which denied them educational opportunities and associated women's discursive activity with carnal promiscuity, are increasingly well understood: so too are the hesitant and often compromised efforts of women to overcome them.

If speaking from a position of no account was powerful, and many contemporaries thought it was, then criticism must account for this power and analyze its workings. It is a mistake to think that any patriarchal contamination of early women's writing renders its analysis worthless. In any case Greer et al's denunciation of such complicity is overhasty, precisely because it ignores the extent to which the power of the weak *was* a potentially revolutionary force in early modern religious culture. Millenarian hope pervades the thought of so many seventeenth-century divines that to give examples

pointlessly specifies what must be understood as a general feature of the period.<sup>54</sup>

There was good biblical precedent for acknowledging the power of the unenfranchised, as Stephen Marshall's Fast sermon before the Lords on October 26 1646 makes clear. Even if it was not always well received, the kind of threat posed by the conventionally powerless amounted to more than the futile and impotent propaganda sceptically rejected by Greer.<sup>55</sup> Marshall took as his texts Isaiah 41;14-15:

fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.

He also took Jeremy 31;22, 'The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man', and Revelations 11;5, 'If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies'. His dedications also contained significant texts from I Corinthians 1;27-28:

but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are,

and from the eighth psalm: 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger'.

Marshall's elaboration of his theme was nothing less than a clarion call to those cited to seek to engage in Christian revolution. God has chosen man to be his champion, he has conferred this honour upon babes and sucklings, he has, Marshall argues, dignified them with strength which is to be exercised 'by the mouth'. God's champions will defeat his enemies because

his heart is with them, his love is set upon them, they are his children, the apple of his eye, they are written upon the palmes of his hands, they are continually in his sight, he loves them as he loves himself.<sup>56</sup>

Out of the mouth, Marshall thought, came all the power that the saints possessed. According to Marshall's scheme there were five fruits of the mouth: preaching, prophesying the name of God, praising and singing hymns, praying and covenanting. Marshall ended his text with a warning not to disband the 'forces of babes and sucklings'. Every soul won to Christ, he added, 'be it old man, woman or child will be as good as a soldier in the battle against enemies'.<sup>57</sup> The republican John Goodwin also actively engaged the political support of women in his *Anti-Cavalierisme, or truth pleading as well as Necessity*, a pro-parliamentary tract published in 1643. Arguing that a legion of Jesuits, papists and atheists had gained possession of that 'chief treasure of the land' - the King - aiming thereby to 'dissolve and ruine that assembly, which is by interpretation or representation (which you will) the whole nation', Goodwin called for solidarity among the saints. Head work, he reminded them, was as important as hand work:

they that have neither hands, nor heads, nor estates, let them find hearts to keep the mountain of God, to pray the enemies down, and the armies up: let them find tongues to whet up the courage and resolution of others. This is a service wherein women also may quit themselves like men, whose prayers commonly are as masculine, and doe as great and severe execution as the prayers of men.<sup>58</sup>

Despite the fact that Goodwin is himself immersed in patriarchal rhetoric - elsewhere he tries to garner support by alleging that the royalist cause threatens the chastity of the implied male reader's wife and daughters - the involvement of women in the political process here deserves more attention than Greer's accusation of masculine exploitation would suggest. There is surely also some obstacle in Marshall and Goodwin's work to Susan Amussen's contention that no challenge was made to the early modern gender order by the Civil War sects. If order was hierarchical and analogical, as husband to wife, master to servant, king to realm, and father to child, then to some extent gender and class hierarchies stood or fell together. Neither actually fell in the Civil War Period,

but this does not mean that there was no discursive threat to both. Marshall clearly thought that the Second Coming was heralded by the overcoming of the strong by the weak, men by women, the high by the low and a complete inversion of ordinary social relations. Gender and class, as two of the most powerful social distinctions, were neither exempt from this apocalyptic overturning.

Henrietta L. Moore has argued in another context that feminist anthropology is not about 'adding women' but about uncovering the conceptual biases in the discipline.<sup>59</sup> The best modern work on gender is beginning to argue that far from being a kind of supplement to earlier histories, feminist understanding reveals the extent to which one simply cannot understand early modern culture without reading for gender as a central cultural structure.<sup>60</sup>

The initial interest of literary researchers in early modern women's writing was not without shortcomings. An attachment to certain kinds of aesthetic criteria in the judgement of texts led to some impressionistic conclusions. Early work also posited a female tradition which began with the educated Tudor aristocrat, passed through the turbulence of the 1640's and emerged more or less intact, in the high Tory feminism of Mary Astell and Aphra Behn. Moira Ferguson applies this thinking to the early modern and Restoration periods arguing that all women writers therein are connected 'in tone, spirit and ideas'.<sup>61</sup> Ferguson identifies four fundamental strategies: first and foremost, counterattack; secondly, 'at a more advanced stage of development', the mounting of a variety of assaults, including the demanding of certain rights; and thirdly an attempt to shun oppression by ignoring it and seeking to create a better life. This took the form of 'love poems, love letters, informal female communities, and a conscious intellectual unity'. The fourth stage, voluntary empowerment, Ferguson sees coming into play on

the eve of the French revolution. There are several problems associated with the evolutionary postulations borne of such theorising. Firstly, there is no reason to separate stages into discrete periods. Writers often illustrate within the same text all the characteristics listed in historical progression by Ferguson. Secondly, there is no generic evolution from prose complaint to poetry, politics and 'conscious intellectual unity'. Some women's writing is associated directly with politics: they addressed themselves to the nation in poetry and prose, but when persecution ceased so did their literary activities. Ferguson is using a concept of authorship, continuous, professionalized, self-conscious, and above all modern, which is not applicable in the circumstances she describes.

Ferguson chooses Katherine Chidley, an Independent Church leader who was active in the 1640s, founded a separatist church at Stepney in 1646, and who may have drafted the women's petition delivered to Parliament amidst violent demonstration in 1653, to prove her point. Chidley's 1641 text *The Justification of the Independent Churches of Christ* is applauded for arguing that

women should be their own moral agents; that even though tradition dictated female obedience in marriage, men should not expect automatic control of women's consciences.<sup>62</sup>

This is only a partial reading of Chidley's text which is actually a defence of separation from the Church of England. Thomas Edwards, the notorious sectarian antagonist, had attacked the separatists in print earlier in the same year. His third reason against toleration had argued that to allow voluntary religion would breed division within families, separating husband from wife and brother from brother. Furthermore, argued Edwards, to allow family members freedom to attend other services as they wished would take away that power which God had ordained of husband over wife, father over child

and master over servant. Chidley urged Edwards to consider 1 Corinthians 7, which declares that if the wife be a believer and the husband an unbeliever yet he shall have no command of her conscience. She notes:

it is true he hath authority over her in bodily and civill respects, but not to be lord over her conscience; and the like may be said of fathers and masters, and it is the very same authority which the sovereigne hath over all his subjects, and therefore it must needs reach to families: for it is granted that the king hath power (according to the law) over the bodies goods and lives of all his subjects; yet it is christ the king of kings that reigneth over their consciences: and thus you may see it taketh away no authority which God hath given them.<sup>63</sup>

There was nothing particularly unique about Chidley's claim that the individual was governor of their own conscience. John Dod and Robert Cleaver's *A Plaine and Familiar exposition of the Ten Commandments* of 1618 argued that the servant must obey the governor in indifferent things, but not in those which went against God: 'in such a case it is better to obey God than man'.<sup>64</sup> The puritan Richard Sibbes claimed in *The Soules conflict with itself and victory over itself by faith* that God had made everyone governor over himself, 'the poor man that hath none to govern, yet he may be a king in himself'.<sup>65</sup> William Perkins also saw fit to limit the influence of earthly law over personal belief in his *Discourse on Conscience* published in 1596. God gave liberty to the conscience in the New Testament (Galatians 5;1, 'Standfast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage'), Perkins argued, and no human laws made after this could rebind conscience:

magistracie indeed is an ordinance of God to which we owe subjection, but how far subjection is due there is the question. For bodie and goods and outward conversation, I grant all: but a subjection of conscience to man's law I denie.<sup>66</sup>

Thus to make Chidley's defence of conscience an extraordinary feminist statement is to read it through twentieth-century eyes without an understanding of its context. If it is

feminist because it defends conscience, then so are Dod and Cleaver, Sibbes and Perkins. And yet all four devote much space in their writings to the details of women's subordination to their husbands' will.

Critics certainly want to read Chidley as a feminist defender of women's conscience. But the wilful reading-in of modern significance is not always illuminating. When Antonia Fraser wrote about Chidley in *The Weaker Vessel: Woman's lot in seventeenth-century England* she misconstrued Chidley in a way which reveals the danger of overestimating the presence of patriarchal assumptions. Towards the end of her tract, in which she has challenged Edwards' reasons one by one, Chidley invites him to public debate:

and now, (Mr Edwards) for conclusion of the whole, I doe here affirme, that if upon the sight of this book, you shall conceive that I have either misconstrued your words, or accused you without ground (necessarily drawne from your own speeches) or that I have mistaken any sense of scripture, that I have quoted in this book, or that I have not answered you directly to the point (by any oversight) Then chuse you sixe men (or more if you please) and I will chuse as many, and if you will we will agree upon a moderator: and trie it out in a faire discourse and peradventure save you a labour from publishing your large tractates which you say you intend to put out in print against the whole way of separation; and if it can be made appeare that (in any of these particulars) I have missed it, I will willingly submit. But if you overcome me, your conquest will not be great, for I am a poore worme, and unmeete to deale with you.<sup>67</sup>

Fraser quotes the passage as reading 'for I am a poor woman and unable to deal with you', evidence, according to Fraser of a 'sting in the tail'.<sup>68</sup> If Edwards were to win, a victory over a woman would itself represent no real victory. Despite the error, Fraser is right about the sting in the tail. If Chidley is quoting psalm 22;6, 'But I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men and despised of the people'; it is possible to read her parting shot as both ironic, 'I am no man', and political, since the unmeet, according to puritan authority were those whose coming to power would signal the oncoming

apocalypse. Nevertheless Chidley's defence of conscience seems to have a particular resonance for modern commentators; they rarely quote from anywhere else in a tract eighty-one pages long. Thus R. Valerie Lucas argues that her claim that a man should not lord it over his wife's conscience was a position which:

goes beyond championing the dictates of individual conscience; she undermines one of puritan preaching's rationales for patriarchal authority, the contention that one was obliged to obey father, husband, or king because his authority represented God's will on earth.<sup>69</sup>

If Chidley is feminist because she defends conscience and thereby attacks patriarchal assumptions about obedience, then seventeenth-century puritan theology is broadly feminist. If Chidley is undermining patriarchy by expressing such views on conscience, then the puritan theologians were themselves undermining patriarchal consensus. My view is that Chidley was indeed feminist, but her feminism springs largely from her challenge to the metaphoric nature of sovereignty put forward by Thomas Edwards, not from her championing of conscience.<sup>70</sup> Those who find feminism in claims for the autonomy of conscience may be missing the point; such claims may not have been subversive of dominant assumptions, they may indeed *be* dominant assumptions.

Historical study has failed, with a few exceptions, to deliver straightforwardly feminist prototypes: women who thought in modern terms and were not subject to the paralysing misogynistic pressure of their own time. Other disciplines frequently duplicate such simplistic readings. One unfortunate consequence of modern selections, often published in anthologised form, is a tendency to bring aesthetic standards to bear where historical understanding fails. The rhetorical stance adopted in many of these texts puts forward an ill-considered theory of representational authenticity. One such study published in the late seventies, claimed to have elected to let English women's voices speak for themselves in their own vernacular. The absence of 'quality' was something



of an embarrassment; 'some, of course,' the editors admitted, 'deserve oblivion'.<sup>71</sup> The questions they sought to answer bespeak a concern for the fully present self and the confident ego. Thus they wanted to know when women began 'to regard themselves as individuals with the capacity to perceive and share the full range of human experience?'. These questions and hypotheses seem oddly directed: they may well have value for us in the twentieth century, but they are less immediately relevant to early modern women writers.

Not all commentators on early women's writing have ignored the historical context of the texts they edit or annotate. But some of the attempts to construct a female tradition, a kind of silenced continuum of women writers all constrained by masculine prejudice, have resulted in the promotion of a puzzling hermeneutic of authenticity. Betty Travitsky and Ann Rosalind Jones have both delineated a female tradition of women's counter-attacks against misogynist polemic. They argue that female polemicists developed techniques which differed from those of their male detractors. They asserted the limited goodness of women, their essential qualities and even argued for women's superiority to men. Ann Rosalind Jones thinks women dispense with masculine discourse when they begin to question the legitimacy of men as judges. This is an important point. Travitsky takes up a different argument and reads into female polemic the emergence of 'full human being[s]', whose authenticity is then vouchsafed:

the more moderate nature of the female protests, I believe, derives from the writer's sense of their own capacities and of their actual experience of life.<sup>72</sup>

For Travitsky, women writers become the bearers of scrupulous, indubitable honesty. When discussing Isabella Whitney, Travitsky praises her judiciousness in confining her criticism to 'known cases of male inconstancy'. Without evidence, she asserts that

women's writing gives access to something immediate, unrhetorical and without guile. She suggests that Whitney's poetic advice 'suggests painful experience, rather than rhetoric, by virtue of its restraint'. Travitsky interprets, without argument, more than is expressed here; she assumes that art which originates in the deeply personal is truer to female experience and therefore an accurate account of it. This separatism - of a different kind to Chidley's - is developed elsewhere. In her introduction to a collection of essays on Englishwomen in the Renaissance, Travitsky begins from the premise that women's experience of the Renaissance was not 'a carbon copy' of men's and sums up by stating that the volume illustrates, 'the partial, often painful emergence of some Renaissance Englishwomen from cultural marginality as they developed a voice of their own'.<sup>73</sup> The idea of women's voice as less stylised and less rhetorical than men's carries with it the promise of a direct and unmediated glimpse of authorship. The interpretative availability of women's writing is something that its contemporary readers constantly reiterated. More generally, patriarchal theorists thought of women as always dangerously knowable.<sup>74</sup> Modern critics often invoke a similar pattern of thought trading on some kind of organic resonance in early modern women's writings. To read such writing, so the argument goes, is to witness personalised therapy. Women's interpretative directness is sometimes thought of as having its foundation in marginality. Thus Margaret Hannay's introduction to the important collection *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* finds women relegated to the 'margins of discourse', but decides that 'they did find their own voices through their proclamations of the word of God'.<sup>75</sup> The idea of voice seems to beg almost as many questions as it resolves. Arising out of the genuine need to see women's writing as different it often seems to guarantee, in some ill-defined way, rather impressionistic

readings. The interpretation of women's texts as more personal, direct, honest and ingenuous, in contrast to masculine deviousness, rhetorical connivance, and semantic ingenuity seems to concur remarkably with Thomas Rainbowe's obviously ideological view of the Countess of Suffolk. Critics who adopt this position are guilty of taking an ideology of women's style at face value and refusing to entertain the possibility that women's texts needed to be more, not less, rhetorically subtle than men's because of the more complex position they occupied with regard to hegemonic ideologies of gender in early modern England. From a rather different perspective, the results of theoretical work on Catholic mysticism are slowly beginning to filter across into work on English writers.<sup>76</sup> Work by Jacques Lacan, Luce Irigaray and others on the subjectlessness of mystical ecstasy, and the way in which hypostatic union with the divine might dissolve ordinary gender relations, has opened up new areas of enquiry.<sup>77</sup> Gary Waller's recent consideration of women writers among the sects illustrates the way in which a measure of high theory has been added to the study of prophetic discourse. The result is an interesting but not wholly successful reading of Anna Trapnel as the practitioner of a kind of early *écriture féminine*:

while there is no woman writer, even among the sects, who we could classify as a 'feminist' in the sense of articulating a conscious political program, nonetheless, by an examination of the activities, and interestingly enough, the poetry of the women of the civil war sects, we can see the spasmodic eruption of a genuine feminine discourse<sup>78</sup>.

Waller has clearly emerged from the 'authentic voice' school of criticism. His next move is to read Trapnel as an architect of this nascent feminine discursive style. Her work, argues Waller,

represents an especially interesting refusal to enter the dominant public discourse of poetry. She condemns herself to marginality by the distinctive voice of her work, which is that of ecstasy, seeming incoherence, and (a common charge against women writers at that time)

apparent madness.<sup>79</sup>

Trapnel's refusal to conform is seen by Waller as evidence of real feminine discourse struggling to be heard above patriarchy. Yet it would be wrong to assume that the qualities Waller lists were really marginal. The Christian subject was often an ecstatic subject. I think that Waller overplays the element of incoherence in her work. It is an effect easily achieved by persistent and unreferenced biblical quotation. Having made a claim for marginality, however, Waller pursues it into some puzzling ground. Trapnel's texts:

may also be seen as idiomatic, informal, and struggling to give voice to emotions which were able to be articulated because they were socially marginal, largely irrelevant to and scorned by the hegemonous social forces. On the fringes of society, Trapnel was able to give voice in however inchoate a way, to experience that writers like Mary Sidney and Mary Wroth, more closely tied to the dominant structures of their age, were not.<sup>80</sup>

Here Waller perceives a distinction between good wild women writers and bad tame ones, repeating the old and unproven wisdom which suggests that the uncontained margins are the repository of novel and challenging emotion because they lack the polish of masculine education or practice which in any case is a barrier to expression. His idea is that feeling is best raw, and social assimilation rather overcooks it. Carol Thomas Neely recently suggested that the new theoretical discourses have had a negative effect on the feminist practice of the last twenty years:

the denial of subjectivity and identity are pleasurable, as Nancy K. Miller points out, especially to those who have had the luxury of benefitting from them. But for feminist criticism this decentring is decapitation...If feminist criticism abandons the notion of the subject, replacing it with the much more slippery concept positions, and by doing so calls into question the notion of gendered subjects, gendered authors, gendered texts, the ground for its critique is eliminated. Denying the unitary subject, declaring the end of difference, does not do away with the difference between men and women or with the subordination of women; it merely conceals it.<sup>81</sup>

Some of these points are well made, and the risk that subjects are replaced by 'positions' is a real one. It would be a pity however, if a desire to remain concerned with particular women writers meant remaining attached to a fictional unitary subject. Critical loyalty to this idea has produced all those problems with 'authentic voice' which bedevil Gary Waller's work. Waller finishes his piece with a quotation from Julia Kristeva about marginal rupturing otherness and claims that this idea is born out:

perhaps for the first time in English literary history, and not again perhaps until the nineteenth century, by the incoherent, disruptive, and disintegrative verse of Anna Trapnell. Within the discourse of the Renaissance...such writing is undecipherable, unstable, and incoherent, verging on, but never quite engulfed by the silence to which its society tried to reduce it.<sup>82</sup>

It seems to me that such ideas are wishful thinking. Trapnell's verse appears incoherent and disintegrative, but I suggest this is more a reflection of her expression of religious subjectivity than a commitment to radical otherness.

When the theological context of her work is recovered, a good deal of the apparent madness, incoherence and rupturing otherness of Trapnell's narratives begins to make sense. In her other writings Trapnell remained wedded to common sense rationalism. In the introduction to her *Report and Plea*, a narrative of her journey from London to Cornwall published in 1654, she expresses a surprisingly - given Waller's comments - coherent attachment to truth. Responding to the opposition she had received and wanting to communicate to her readers the malice to which she had been exposed, she wrote:

for I shall declare the truth without addition, though I cannot (it may be) remember all the passages in order, yet as many as the Lord brings to my minde, I shall relate, for the satisfaction of the lords friends known and unknown in all parts where the rumour hath run.<sup>83</sup>

It is difficult to see a marginal rupturing of male discursive practice in the figure of a

woman writer defending her name against scurrilous rumour. A good many of Trapnel's prose works are concerned with elaborating the process of conversion and her gradually strengthening belief that God's love was both genuine and sustainable:

though some would say to me, dost thou not love christ? I would say, but how shall I know whether my love be true love? I may think I love christ, and deceive myself, I not being able to judge of my love whether it were right or no, and therefore I was puzzled, because I looked for that in the first place which should come in as second evidence, which caused my spirit continually to be in a hurry.<sup>84</sup>

All this is fairly clear, and not culturally marginal, but central to the expression of Christian selfhood in the Civil War period. Clear too, is the fact that Trapnel is *taking up* discursive positions, rather than giving free rein to some essential femininity. This allows us to read her as articulating Luce Irigaray's conviction that one way of challenging 'the discursive mechanism', is to expose it by inhabiting it. In *This Sex Which is not One* she argues:

there is, in an initial phase, perhaps only one 'path,' the one historically assigned to the feminine: that of mimicry. One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it...To play with mimesis is thus for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it...It also means 'to unveil' the fact that, if women are such good mimics, it is because they are not simply resorbed in this function. They also remain elsewhere: another case of the persistence of 'matter,' but also of 'sexual pleasure'.<sup>85</sup>

Irigaray's style is dense and allusive and her dialogue with psychoanalysis (principally Freud and Lacan) constantly modifies and complicates her texts, making straightforward reading difficult,<sup>86</sup> but her aim is to show that psychoanalysis is blind to its own sexist logic, despite being historically correct about the status of female sexuality.<sup>87</sup> For Irigaray, however, there is no easy and straightforward way out of patriarchal logic into a wholly autonomous realm of feminine subjectivity. Her theoretical strategy thus

involves a refusal of 'equality' in favour of disrupting the semantic economies of masculine discourse. The point here is to find anew a 'possible imaginary for women'.<sup>88</sup> The concept of the imaginary has a complex relation to the work of Jacques Lacan, but for Irigaray it represents the possibility of using the situatedness of women in a patriarchal economy to reinvent not just feminine subjectivity but also the foundations of meaning itself. Irigaray writes about a 'feminine syntax' which is constituted by masculine hegemony but also exceeds it.<sup>89</sup> It is easy to see the way in which Irigaray's ideas might be used to describe the work of mid-seventeenth-century women writers. For the idea that women should write in a way which incorporates present circumstances in order to establish a new politics of subjectivity offers an interesting hypothesis about such things as women's use of female figures from the Bible, the nature of women's prophecy, the politics of women's conversion narratives and the models of interpersonal relationship which women employ rhetorically to describe their relationship with God. Irigaray's ideas could also be used to explain the use of domestic lore, often incorporating patriarchal logic, to characterize the relationship between Christ and believer and the adoption of metaphors of membership of the body of Christ which stress democratic rather than hierarchical connection between head and body.

One of Irigaray's speculative challenges to Lacan concerns his emphasis on the primacy of metaphor over and above metonymy as the dominant cultural trope, determining the organisation of family ties and ultimately social institutions and meanings.<sup>90</sup> If metaphor is seen as a hierarchical and absolute form of substitution, one in which the act of separation is paramount, then metonymy can be interpreted as a connective trope in which the original is connected in part to the new term. Metaphoric (substitutional) and metonymic (connective) meanings lie at the heart of women's

arguments for theological influence and inclusion in print culture. Chapter three, which examines Katherine Chidley, deals with this subject at length, but since it represents a continuous strand throughout the thesis I shall offer some explanation here. The most commonly advanced arguments for women's participation in theological debate seem to depend on justification by example (female figures from scripture), by universal membership of the body of Christ, and by cultural affinity (domestic traits appropriate in the pious Christian). In all such arguments the point is made for women's writing by virtue of their existing connective likeness; they are already found in scripture, are already members of Christ, and are already behaving in a manner appropriate to Christian office. These arguments rest on metonymic relation and similitude. Women are part of the whole because they can show that they are already, in the most important documents and ideology of piety, part of the whole. Men, conversely, often treat religion in the period as a liminal activity and are drawn to it because of its metaphoric possibilities. Religious experience allows the reality of male power in society to be exchanged for the idea of feminine powerlessness before God. Men are metaphorically able to pursue difference by such a mechanism, while women seek to connect more publicly and more powerfully to the experience of social existence they already enjoy. Men are concerned to swap gendered roles whereas women deepen the ones they already possess.

It is possible to read Katherine Chidley and Luce Irigaray as urging the construction of a social politics based on a this model because it is a model which values interconnectedness above the operation of strictly separate spheres of jurisdiction. I do not suggest that we celebrate Chidley or any of the other writers examined here as Irigaray's intellectual precursors because of this parallel - though we might in part want to do so for other reasons - but that we use this remarkable coincidence to interrogate



both authors' arguments. It is not a question therefore of using a contemporary theory to unpick the texts of an earlier epoch but rather a case of encouraging the arguments to spread in both directions.

The texts examined below have been arranged so as to illustrate the way in which women's textual strategies and solutions to the problem of gendered exclusion from the public world of printed texts range from moderate conformists like Jane Turner and Elizabeth Warren, the latter an anti-sectarian Anglican, the former an anti-Quaker Baptist, to a middle ground occupied by politically radical if stylistically less heterodox writers like Katherine Chidley, a separatist Leveller, and Mary Cary, a Fifth Monarchist, and eventually to a stylistically galvanised fringe of prophetic writers composed largely of Quakers like Dorothy White and Hester Biddle. This classification works according to style but is not intended to reflect a political spectrum. Cary and Trapnel are both Fifth Monarchists: they shared similar politics, but wrote very differently from one another. Chidley and Warren were on opposite sides politically but both wrote in a similar quotation-encrusted and threateningly apocalyptic style reminiscent of The Old Testament. Similarly the use of feminine symbols or figures from biblical texts seems to follow no pattern of political allegiance. Indeed, in writers like Chidley and Turner the use of pointedly symbolic references is relatively rare, whereas in both the politically conservative (Warren) and the extreme radicals (White and the Quakers) whole arguments are made via citations of femininity from scripture. The arrangement followed is broadly chronological but it should not be taken, for the moment, as indicative of a belief in the increasing radicalism of women's writing from the 1640s onwards, nor should it be assumed that this grouping implies favour towards stylistically heterodox writers. The existence of a pattern uniting style and chronology, and the question of the relation

between stylistic experimentation and political belief will be discussed further in conclusion.

#### Notes

1. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Frank Kermode (Methuen, 1954).
2. Edward Rainbowe, *A Sermon preached at Walden in Essex on May 29th At the interring of the corps of the right honourable Susanna countesse of Suffolk* (1649), p. 10.
3. Rainbowe, *A Sermon*, p. 11.
4. Rainbowe, *A Sermon*, p. 29.
5. Too many, indeed, to give full reference to here. But see Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (Methuen, 1985); Elaine Showalter's introduction to *Speaking of Gender* (Routledge, 1989) surveys the last ten years, and her earlier volume, *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory* (Virago, 1986), contains Ann Rosalind Jones' article on l'Ecriture Feminine; Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (Verso, 1986); *Feminist Perspectives in Philosophy* edited by Margaret Whitford and Morwenna Griffiths (Macmillan, 1988); Morag Shiach, *Helene Cixous: A Politics of Writing* (Routledge, 1991); Janet Todd, *Feminist Literary History: A Defence* (Polity, 1988).
6. But see *Writing Differences: Readings from the seminar of Helene Cixous*, edited by Susan Sellers (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1988), and *Feminist Criticism: Theory and Practice*, edited by Susan Sellers (Harvester, Sussex, 1991), for attempts to link theory and criticism.
7. Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Duckworth, 1975), p. 68.

8. For a sample of the most frequently expressed views see N. Z. Davis *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, particularly chapters three and five; the collections of essays on Tudor women writers edited by Margaret Patterson Hannay, *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Kent State University Press, Ohio, 1985), and Betty Travitsky and Anne Haselkorn, *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon* (University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1990). See also Betty Travitsky, 'The Lady Doth Protest: Protest in the Popular Writings of Renaissance Englishwomen', *ELR*, 14, No. 3 (Autumn 1984), pp. 155-283; Angeline Goreau's introduction in her *The Whole Duty of a woman: Female Writers in Seventeenth Century England* (Dial Press, New York, 1985) and Margaret George, *Women in the First Capitalist Society: Experiences in Seventeenth Century England* (Harvester, Sussex, 1988). *Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation*, edited by Katharina M. Wilson (University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1987), includes studies of European women broadly within the same critical paradigm, as do Electa Arenal and Stacey Schlauf in 'Stratagems of the Strong, Stratagems of the Weak: Autobiographical Prose of the Seventeenth-Century Hispanic Convent', *TSWL*, 9, No. 1 (Spring 1990), pp. 25-42.

9. The argument here might be that gender relations which in our own time are discussed, argued over and in crisis were simply taken for granted by pre-feminist epochs. It has a corollary in the argument that political authority, something also in crisis in our own age, was thoroughly and unconsciously accepted as the prerogative of the monarch and/or an aristocratic minority in pre-modern times. Both, on my account are mistaken pastoral conceptions of social primitivism.

10. For a reading of early modern women's writing as the initial chapter in an unbroken tradition of feminist complaint see the introduction to *The Female Spectator: English Women Writers before 1800*, edited by Mary Mahl and Helene Koon (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1977), p. 3. See also Moira Ferguson's introduction to *First Feminists: British Women Writers 1578-1799* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1985), where she argues that the Civil War sectarians are connected by form and content to the works of the Elizabethans Margaret Tyler and Jane Anger, and to the respondents in the Swetnam controversy in the early seventeenth century. For a reading of this formal controversy which doesn't make this connection see Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620* (Harvester, Sussex, 1984).

11. For an example of the kind of history which takes account of the importance of gender in a manner neither too grand nor too local, see Lyndal Roper, 'Stealing Manhood: Capitalism and Magic in Early Modern Europe', *Gender and History*, 3, No. 1 (1991), pp. 4-22.

12. An antidote - in part - to some of the earlier work is Elaine Hobby's *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1642-1688* (Virago, 1988). For the sixteenth century see Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the age of Shakespeare*, second edition (Harvester, Sussex, 1989).

13. For a useful bibliography of recent work see Elizabeth Hageman, 'Recent Studies in Women Writers of the English Seventeenth Century (1604-1674)' in *English Literary Renaissance*, 18, No. 1 (1988), pp. 138-167. See also Olwen Hufton's article 'Women in History: Early Modern Europe', P&P, 101 (1983), pp. 125-141.
14. Ellen McArthur, 'Women Petitioners and the Long Parliament', *English Historical Review*, 24 (1909), 698-709, p. 698.
15. McArthur, 'Petitioners', p. 709.
16. Ethyn Morgan Williams, 'Women Preachers in the Civil War', *JMH*, 1, No. 4 (1929), 561-569, p. 561.
17. See J. C. D. Clark, *Revolution and Rebellion* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986), for a hearty and dismissive reading of what he terms 'whig teleology'.
18. Ethyn Morgan Williams, 'Women Preachers', p. 569.
19. Keith Thomas, 'Women and the Civil War Sects', P&P, 13 (1957-58), 42-62, p. 45.
20. See Claire Cross, 'Great Reasoners in Scripture: Women Lollards 1386-1530', in *Medieval Women*, edited by Derek Baker (Blackwell, Oxford, 1978), pp. 359-381.
21. Claire Cross, '"He-Goats before the Flocks": A Note on the part played by Women in the founding of some Civil War Churches' in *Popular Belief and Practice* edited by D. J. Cuming and Derek Baker (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972), argues for the importance of women not so much because of the radicalism of the times but because: 'the whole trend of puritan practice for at least the previous century had been preparing them for such action' (p. 202). See Claire Cross, *Church and People 1450-1660* (Fontana, 1976), for an extended treatment of this idea.
22. Thomas, 'Women and the Civil War Sects', p. 48.
23. Thomas, 'Women and the Civil War Sects', p. 49.
24. Thomas, 'Women and the Civil War Sects', p. 56.
25. Thomas, 'Women and the Civil War Sects', p. 56.
26. Patricia Higgins, 'The Reactions of Women' in *Politics Religion and the English Civil War*, edited by Brian Manning (1973), 179-222, p. 180.
27. Higgins, 'Reactions', p. 209.
28. Higgins, 'Reactions', p. 215.
29. Higgins, 'Reactions', p. 222.

30. Derek Hirst, *Authority and Conflict: England 1603-1642* (Edward Arnold, 1986), p. 18.
31. Lawrence Stone, *The Family Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, abridged edition (Penguin, 1979), p. 227.
32. Stone, *The Family Sex and Marriage*, p. 225.
33. Calling radicals counterproductive and arguing that they retard the evolutionary political process is a favourite technique of Stone's. See *The Causes of the English Revolution*, second edition (Ark, 1986), where Stone claims in fine whiggish style that the appearance of the sects described in Christopher Hill's *The World Turned Upside Down* (Penguin, 1975, first published in 1972), 'put a damper on most attempts at moderate reform for almost two centuries' (p. 176).
34. Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (Hutchinson, 1982), p. 179.
35. G. E. Aylmer, *Rebellion or Revolution: England from Civil War to Restoration* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986), p. 55.
36. Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (Macmillan, 1988), p. 77.
37. Sara Heller Mendelson, *The Mental World of Stuart Women: Three Studies* (Harvester, Sussex, 1987), p. 185. See also her article 'Stuart Women's Diaries and Occasional Memoirs' in *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, edited by Mary Prior (Methuen, 1985), pp. 181-210.
38. Susan Amussen, 'Gender, Family and the Social Order' in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, edited by Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985), 196-217, p. 216.
39. *Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth Century Women's Verse* edited by Germaine Greer, Jeslyn Medoff, Melinda Sansone and Susan Hastings (Virago, 1988), p. 15. There was of course no necessary connection between believing in the sexlessness of souls and spiritual equality before God, and 'enlightened' attitudes towards women's emancipation. See C. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, p. 311.
40. *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers 1660-1800* (Methuen, 1987), edited by Janet Todd, p. 23.
41. Dorothy Ludlow, 'Shaking Patriarchy's Foundations: Sectarian Women in England, 1641-1700', in *Triumph over Silence: Women in Protestant History*, edited by Richard L. Greaves (Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1985), 93-123, p. 103.
42. Ludlow, 'Shaking Patriarchy's Foundations', p. 102.

43. Diane Willen, 'Women and Religion in Early Modern England' in *Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation England: Public and Private Worlds*, edited by Sherrin Marshall (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1989), 140-165, p. 147. Writing about Renaissance women Elaine Beilin has argued that 'we must recognise the close links in a Renaissance mind between the qualities of humility, patience, obedience, and chastity - and salvation. These are, after all, the spiritual values of Christ and the Virgin Mary, and therefore the ideals of a Christian life'. See Elaine V. Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1987), xiv.
44. Willen, 'Women and Religion', p. 158.
45. Willen, 'Women and Religion', p. 140.
46. For an argument that the puritan self was ideally feminine before God see Amanda Porterfield, 'Women's Attraction to Puritanism', *CH*, 60, No. 2 (1991), 196-209, p. 202.
47. See Antonia Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel: Women's Lot in Seventeenth Century England* (Methuen, 1984), for an illustration of the effect of popularising gusto.
48. See Mary Ann Schofield, 'Women's Speaking Justified: The Feminine Quaker Voice 1662-1797', *TSWL*, 6 (1987), 61-77, p. 62.
49. Selma Leydesdorff, 'Politics, identification and the writing of women's history' in *Current Issues in Women's History* edited by Geerte Binnema, Annemieke Kennen, Vefie Poels, and Jacqueline Zirkzee (Routledge, 1989), 9-20, p. 9.
50. Ellen Macek, 'The Emergence of a Feminine Spirituality in *The Book of Martyrs*', *SCJ*, vol XIX, No. 1 (1988), 63-80, p. 71. Elaine Beilin has argued of Anne Askew - one of the martyrs eulogised by Foxe - that we must read her sense of self as 'motivated not by the individualism of modern autobiography, but by the desire to participate in a larger community, the Reformed church'. See her 'Anne Askew's Self Portrait in the *Examinations*', in *Silent But for the Word*, edited by Margaret Hannay, pp. 77-91.
51. See Mahl and Koon, p. 3, and Patricia Crawford, 'Women's published writings 1600-1700', in *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, edited by Mary Prior, 211-282, who argues that 'because some knew that their experiences as women were dissimilar from those of men, they wrote to bear witness to their own different reality' (p. 227).
52. The best example to date can be found in the work of Caroline Walker Bynum. See *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (Zone Books, New York, 1992). In a similar vein are *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740* edited by Isobel Grundy and Sue Wiseman, (Batsford, 1992), and *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760*, edited by Claire Brant and Diane Purkiss (Routledge, 1992).

53. See Ian MacLean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980). For a reading of patriarchal attitudes and their pressure on women's writing see Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Nets and Bridles: early modern conduct books and sixteenth century women's lyrics', in *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in Literature and the History of Sexuality*, edited by Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (Methuen, 1987), pp. 39-72.
54. Bernard Capp suggests that of 112 ministers publishing at least 3 works between 1640 and 1653 70% are explicitly millenarian. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (Faber, 1972), p. 38.
55. See the case of Elizabeth Poole who wrote a tract denying the power of Parliament to sit in mortal judgement over Charles. On 29 December and 5 January 1648/9 she was examined by officials who were sceptical of the truth of her claim to be God's messenger. See *Puritanism and Liberty, Being the Army Debates (1647-49) from the Clarke Manuscripts*, edited by A. S. P. Woodhouse, 3rd edition (Everyman, 1986), pp. 469-471.
56. Stephen Marshall, *A Two edged sword out of the mouth of Babes to execute vengeance upon the enemy and avenger* (1646), p. 13.
57. Marshall, *A Two Edged Sword*, p. 31.
58. John Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme* (1643), sig A3r.
59. See Henrietta L. Moore, *Feminism and Anthropology* (Polity Press, 1988).
60. See Lyndal Roper's rereading of the Reformation in Germany for a good example of the kind of work which makes gender central to historical understanding. Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991).
61. Ferguson, *First Feminists*, p. 2.
62. Ferguson, *First Feminists*, p. 10.
63. Katherine Chidley, *The Justification of the Independent Churches of Christ* (1641), p. 26.
64. John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Plain and Familiar exposition of the Ten Commandments* (1618), p. 210.
65. Richard Sibbes, *The Soules conflict with itself and victory over itself by faith* (1638), p. 67.
66. William Perkins, *A Discourse on Conscience* (Cambridge, 1596), p. 40.
67. Chidley, *The Justification*, p. 80.

68. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, p. 279.
69. R. Valerie Lucas, 'Puritan Preaching and the politics of the family', in *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print*, edited by Travitsky and Haselkorn, 224-240, p. 233.
70. See chapter three below.
71. Mahl and Koon, *The Female Spectator*, p. 1.
72. Travitsky, 'The Lady doth Protest', p. 260.
73. Travitsky, *Counterbalancing the Canon*, p. 5.
74. This is so even where they encouraged women to believe that they could be sealed containers. Ludovicus Vives Valentius' *Instruction of Christian Women* translated by Richard Hyrde (1557, originally published 1529) sets the pattern for much of this paradoxical rhetoric. Vives thought of women's thought as swift and unstable, prone to wander from the house, where it ought to be contained, 'by reason of its own slipperyness' (p. 3). He urged women to reflect inwardly: 'I praie thee understand thyne owne goodness, mayd, thy pryce can not be esteemed, if thou joyne a chaste mind unto thy chaste body, if thou shutte uppe both body and mind, and seale them with those seales that none can open, but he that hath the key of David, that is thy spouse' (p. 14).
75. Margaret Patterson Hannay, *Silent but for the Word*., p. 14.
76. See *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, edited by Elizabeth Avilda Petroff (Oxford University Press, New York, 1986).
77. See chapter two below for a discussion of Irigaray.
78. Gary Waller, 'Struggling into discourse: the emergence of Renaissance women's writing', in *Silent but for the Word*, edited by Margaret Patterson Hannay, 238-256, p. 254.
79. Waller, 'Struggling into Discourse', p. 253.
80. Waller, 'Struggling into Discourse', p. 255.
81. Carol Thomas Neely, 'Constructing the Subject: Feminist Practice and the New Renaissance Discourses', *ELR*, 18, No. 1 (1988), p. 13. See also Margaret Patterson Hannay's introduction to *Silent but for the Word*, where she remarks that Lady Jane Grey's voice 'was amplified, not silenced, by beheading' (p. 12).
82. Waller, 'Struggling into Discourse', p. 255.
83. Anna Trapnel, *Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea* (1654), To the Reader. Jane Turner makes a similar point about the need for scrupulous honesty in the recollection of conversion events. See chapter seven below.



84. Trapnel, *A Legacy for Saints; being several experiences of the dealings of God with Anna Trapnel* (1654), p. 5.

85. Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, translated by Catherine Porter (Cornell University Press, New York, 1985), p. 76.

86. This is not the place to consider her work in relation to psychoanalysis. Those who wish to might consult Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (Routledge, 1991), and Elizabeth Grosz, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist introduction* (Routledge, 1990), and *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1989).

87. Irigaray, *This Sex*, p. 102.

88. Irigaray, 'The Poverty of Pyschoanalysis', in *The Irigaray Reader*, edited by Margaret Whitford (Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 97.

89. Irigaray writes in *This Sex*:

in that 'syntax' there would no longer be either subject or object, 'oneness' would no longer be privileged, there would be no proper meanings, proper names, 'proper' attributes...Instead, that 'syntax' would involve nearness, proximity, but in such an extreme form that it would preclude any distinction of identities, any establishment of ownership, thus any form of appropriation (p. 134).

90. For a precise reading of Lacan in this respect see Juliet Flower MacCannell, *Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious* (Croom Helm, 1986), pp.90-115.

## Gifts beheld in a mirror: prefacing women writers

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Proverbs 31:19-31.

I propose in this chapter to look at the way some seventeenth-century women's texts were prefaced by men and to examine in particular the subjectivity attributed or imputed to female authorship. I will argue that there exists a consensus of sorts about female subjectivity which is accepted both by those who are ostensibly writing to praise particular women writers and those who are overtly hostile. The other point I shall make is that it is possible to see a relation between early modern theories of women's writing expressed by men and Luce Irigaray's reading of Freudian psychoanalysis.

I want also to propose that Irigaray's observations about the historical fate of female subjectivity and her utopian rereading of this tradition suggest an experimental model for reading early modern women writers. At issue is whether Irigaray's post-Freudian speculative theory can be used to unearth interesting features in pre-Freudian historical texts. To adopt this strategy is, of course, to risk distorting the historical record, since Irigaray's more recent theorising of the ethical encounter requires utopian engagement between contemporary individuals, and its application to texts runs the risk of turning polemic into method. It may be that one should not expect to be able to do historical analysis with speculative thought. Yet there is and has always been a confessedly historical dimension to Irigaray's work, one which her expositors have readily recognised.<sup>1</sup> I shall return to this in conclusion. The history which she has elaborated is none other than the history of patriarchy and its negative and exclusive effect upon



female subjectivity. Toril Moi explains this analysis aptly:

caught in the specular logic of patriarchy, woman can choose either to remain silent, producing incomprehensible babble (any utterance that falls outside the logic of the same will by definition be incomprehensible to the male master discourse), or to enact the specular representation of herself as a lesser male.<sup>2</sup>

Irigaray's work is therefore a challenge to a certain view of history which contaminates ethical relations between the sexes, as Elizabeth Berg writes:

her work states that there can be no relationship between the sexes until men have recognised women as Other, that if there is no relationship between the sexes (as Lacan asserts), it is because men have reduced women to a mirror image of themselves.<sup>3</sup>

All this is to say that the ethical encounter between men and women has functioned to allow the construction of male subjectivity. Elizabeth Grosz encapsulates both the tragedy of the status quo and the idealism of the envisaged change which would ensure its irrevocable alteration:

ethics has only represented the subject's encounter with his own reflection and not with an autonomous, indeed, primary other. An ethics of sexual difference would have to rethink the encounter between the self-same subject and an irreducibly sexually different other, an exchange between two beings who must be presumed to be different.<sup>4</sup>

Irigaray's concern with difference has led her to criticize the tendency to advocate sameness; a form of equality she thinks characteristic of many of the demands of Anglo-American feminism. As Sarah Miller argues, Irigaray's work begins from the insight that all constructions of subjectivity are appropriated by, or for, the male subject:

briefly, her contention is that 'woman' represents an empty space into which 'man' directs his gaze; her absence of being functions like a mirror, casting man's reflection back on himself. His recognition of himself and his identity depend on the empty depths of the looking glass. Phallogentrism is constructed on this 'homosexual' glance - the woman's place is to have no place, but to be a reflecting surface that permits man's speculation.<sup>5</sup>

Irigaray has thus been critical of those who urge feminism to demand political change

on the basis of equal rights and who advocate the adoption of the mirror position from which to return the phallogentric glance. In 'Equal to Whom' she calls the practitioners of this project to task:

they often imagine that equality in the workplace and in (neuter?) science will grant them sufficient status as subjects. This strikes me as quite an ingenuous error since they still lack what's needed to define their own socio-cultural identity.<sup>6</sup>

Irigaray wishes to see women pursue more profound and fundamentally different subjectivity in relation to gender. She accuses those who argue for equality, philosophically at least, of wanting to become men. The alternative favoured by Irigaray involves re-reading patriarchal history so as to reinvigorate women's contribution and to extend and explore their 'genealogies' in order to generate a model for female subjectivity:<sup>7</sup>

what women need is a symbolic mother of daughters - woman -mother and lover - and not a mother of sons whose predications are defined by the incest taboo among others...In order for women to truly come together, there must be a reinterpretation of the meaning of all religious traditions and an examination of those which leave room for the genealogies of holy women.<sup>8</sup>

Whilst few doubt that the re-examination of women's writing is a necessary and useful exercise, some have taken exception to Irigaray's theorizing. Toril Moi criticizes Irigaray for valorizing female mysticism to a degree which implies an essentialist politics: by positing an idealist construction of subjectivity which claims that women escape patriarchal logic even as they are oppressed by its subtlest premises. Moi argues that deep mimicry, the process by which female mystics undermine patriarchy by *over-miming* it, is ironically an enactment of the logic of sameness. Indeed, after disagreeing with Irigaray's position, at the end of the section on Irigaray in *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Moi suggests that feminists might abandon, at least for a while, questions of the female and

the feminine in order to approach questions of oppression and emancipation from other angles. Mimicry is useful, argues Moi, but it is not the panacea that Irigaray takes it to be.

It has certainly been the fate of Irigaray to be read, in some circles at least, in broadly physiological, and therefore essentialist, terms. K. K. Ruthven, in his *Introduction to Feminist Literary Studies* devotes no more than a couple of pages to her work, in which he oversimplifies her figurative mapping of female subjectivity onto female genitalia. I think Ruthven's arguments are badly presented, and though Moi's criticisms are acute, my own reading of English Protestant women writers leads me to the conclusion that there is much sense in the idea that women's writing is embedded in patriarchal logic, because the logic of early modern culture is largely patriarchal. But whilst this has to be acknowledged it does not preclude the possibility of partial escape or extensive negotiation. It was possible for women writers to pose an effective challenge to these assumptions by adopting quasi-mystical or symbolic discourse which specifically reflected women's point of view.<sup>9</sup>

Irigaray offers her most sustained and intriguing engagement with femininity and divinity in a speculative essay entitled 'Divine Women' originally delivered as a lecture in 1984.<sup>10</sup> She begins with an account of her attempts to get back to a language of elementals in the course of publishing three books. She then elaborates a meditation upon the story of Melusine and the practice of falling back on the Middle Ages as a source of 'images and secrets'. Without quite connecting the two, she then suggests that masculine identity is enabled only by its relation to God, to the infinite, and by the absence of any masculine relation to the feminine. God is necessary, she asserts, 'to posit a gender'. The suggestion here is that for women, 'divinity is what we need to become free,

autonomous, sovereign'. She notes too that Christianity offers a God of three manifestations and that the third, which has not yet happened in western culture, 'occurs as a wedding between the spirit and the bride'. Irigaray does acknowledge the importance of women in mystical Christianity, and notes that women were able to achieve some measure of social power within it in early modern culture. Despite the obvious difficulties of the theological tradition - 'there is no *woman* God, no female trinity' - it is towards the divine that Irigaray looks for a response to this lack:

the (male) ideal other has been imposed upon women by men. Man is supposedly women's more perfect other, her model, her essence. The most human and the most divine goal woman can conceive is to become man. If she is to become woman, if she is to accomplish her female subjectivity, woman needs a god who is a figure for the perfection of her subjectivity.<sup>11</sup>

If there is no infinite God, women remain paralyzed as mothers. On this reading, having a God and fully adopting one's gender are inextricably linked. Only if women achieve a relation to the divine will they achieve autonomy. Irigaray gives a definition of such a God which makes explicit the connection with identity:

every woman who is not fated to remain a slave to the essence of man must imagine a god, an objective-subjective place or path whereby the self could be coalesced in space and time: unity of instinct, heart, and knowledge, unity of nature and spirit, condition for the abode and for saintliness.<sup>12</sup>

Women, she argues, have failed 'to place our goal *inside as well as outside ourselves*, failed to love, failed to *will* ourselves and one another'. Irigaray's claim amounts to nothing less than the idea that only the divine can liberate; a love of God 'is the incentive for a more perfect becoming'. Irigaray makes it clear that women have been defined historically in relation to social function within sexual-familial parameters (she gives virginity, marital status, children and identity of spouse as examples of these parameters) which deny autonomy and identity:

fenced in by these functions, how can a woman maintain a margin of singleness for herself, a non-determinism that would allow her to become and remain herself? This margin of freedom and potency (puissance) that gives us the authority yet to grow, to affirm and fulfil ourselves as individuals and members of a community, can be ours only if a God in the feminine gender can define it and keep it for us. As an other that we have yet to make actual.<sup>13</sup>

It is clear that Irigaray is using the idea of the divine as a kind of supplementary enabling myth, a modern preoccupation with the infinite, rather than implying that institutional religion must immediately be embraced. Irigaray is arguing, on the contrary, for the importance of the divine as a speculative opportunity for women. It is clear too, that there is a fruitful tension between past traditions and present politics throughout her discussion. No attempt is made to deny the patriarchal past of religious culture, but neither is this fact allowed to obscure the social significance religion has had for women. This view is consistent with Irigaray's oft-repeated reluctance to accept that symbolic meanings can be altered by political decree and her opposition to the idea that one can achieve a position of purity, utterly untrammelled by patriarchal influence, from which a truly authentic feminist politics is then possible. Irigaray's scepticism about purity is not a bleak message about the impossibility of feminist politics however. It is a recognition of contingency and the inevitably contaminated nature of intellectual resources. It is partly for this reason that it does not seem inappropriate to view the early modern women whose texts are discussed below through Irigaray's theory of a new feminine subjectivity. Women writers in the period were deeply concerned with the possibility of personal relation to the divine and braved considerable obloquy to explore it. In what follows I shall examine the points raised by Irigaray in 'Divine Women' and attempt to discern whether gendered subjectivity is indeed achieved for women, as she suggests it might be, through a relation to divinity.

Jane Turner published a book called *Choice Experiences* in 1653. It was prefaced by the work of three men. Jane Turner's husband, Colonel John Turner, contributed two sections of prefatory material, and John Spilsbery and John Gardiner both wrote short introductions to the work. John Turner begins with this rather bizarre admission:

I know that it would seem very strange to you if this following treatise should come into your hands without my publick owning of it, as indeed well it might, considering my neer relation to the author.<sup>14</sup>

There is a need propounded here which escapes explicit articulation. For a woman to speak in print without the official sanction of her husband is an act discursively dangerous enough for John Turner to wish to oversee. Moreover, his authorization takes the form of a 'public owning' which implies that their proper relation requires that everything written by his wife must be overwritten by his own larger authority, an authority which encompasses his wife and everything she sends out into the public domain. Having established that her words are within his, he continues, coming to the question of subjectivity directly:

beloved Brethren, you have here the labours of one of the weakest sex, which I trust will occasion you the more to give glory to God, in that his strength appears in weakness, were it not for the relation, I should have much room to speak of the author, and this her work, but I shall only say, let her works praise her; only I have this that I cannot but say, it was not her desire to publish it, her reasons she hath expressed, secondly, so far as one can speak for another, I can say for my wife, in this work she hath had little help from men or things, but I believe much from the lord; and as the lord hath owned and much assisted her in these great labours, I trust the same power will accompany each precious heart, into whose hand it may come to make it very profitable to them.<sup>15</sup>

There are several things to note here. Although the exceptional nature of Jane Turner's work is openly acknowledged, her 'performance' springs not from her own piety, but from the omniscient and all-encompassing power of God. Although her husband's willingness to speak of her work is curtailed, rather than allowed for, by their relation



in marriage, he nevertheless protects her modesty by admitting that the desire to publish was not originally hers. He is forward in claiming her independence from human sources which might implicate her in plagiaristic practice. Although to this degree she is responsible for her work, there is no stigma attached to the claim that, as far as he can speak for another, she has had much help from the Lord. John Turner also tells us that his wife wrote in secret, and that he was the first, or so he believes, to see the work after herself. He viewed it and pressed her to publish it. For John Turner what is important about women's writing is not so much their ability with a pen, as the moral state of their heart, since it is this moral identity which will draw down divine assistance and which is dangerously revealed by writing. John Turner reads his wife's subjectivity as a quality that inheres in her purity rather than in her arguments. What he finds in her work is a message concerning the worth of her person. John Turner believes, like Rainbowe, that regardless of its literal content, women's writing always betrays the condition of the female religious body.

John Spilsbery takes it as a mercy from the Lord that he can give testimony to such a work as Jane Turner's:

which indeed is a work that is not common among men, being the work of a daughter in zion, nay I may say, a mother in Israel.<sup>16</sup>

The phrases he draws upon are biblical allusions which refer to the liminal prophetic power of women in cultures which normally disregard their words. For Spilsbery, women belong to a category of beings whose public speaking is a sign, invariably from God, that affairs of state are woefully degenerate. As if to confirm this reading, he goes on to claim that her work discovers:

the most devilish and strong delusions of our times, and the depth and danger of them, and also the nature and tendency of them.<sup>17</sup>

Jane Turner is here credited with a facility for seeing straight to the heart of the matter. He finds it laudable and remarkable that a woman should see so clearly the dangers inherent in the most widespread and beguiling illusions of the epoch. For Spilsbery, as it was for her husband, this perceptual lucidity becomes not so much a characteristic of Jane Turner's writing in itself, as a transparent message about the moral content of her soul. Like Thomas Rainbowe, Spilsbery uses the idea of woman as iconic vessel to represent moral extremes.<sup>18</sup> He is therefore able to inform us that the treatise presents us with the opportunity 'to see the very inside of a gracious soul'. All this assumes an unmediated, literal and transferable relationship between women and writing. What the practice of reading women's writing allows, Spilsbery seems implicitly to be arguing, is immediate access to the soul. It is as if all the problems associated with the rhetorical nature of language and the ambiguity of written texts were not important factors in women's writing. When Spilsbery reads Jane Turner the linguistic opacity which ordinarily obscures the relationship between real self and fictional self vanishes, leaving us to contemplate the stark truth of another soul. In such a reading the morally pure body acts as guarantor for the truths which inhabit it. For John Spilsbery the conjunction of woman and language is fruitful because each serves to guarantee the veracity of the other. Whereas both are habitually capable of duplicity, here language is assured by physical purity and this in turn convinces of inherent spiritual truth.

John Gardiner, who wrote the third preface to Jane Turner's book, tells a similar story. He warned:

many persons are so drowned in confused and unmethodical thoughts that all their intentions are like an untimely birth, or the grass on the house top.<sup>19</sup>

Jane Turner's intentions, he argues, are not of this kind: 'this precious soul hath

conceived and brought forth spiritual fruit'. Her intentions, in other words, constitute a timely birth conducted with propriety. He also finds the comfort of feminine modesty in her introspective vision, calling it 'meditations relating to the inward man'. He too finds Jane Turner assuredly a daughter of Zion and a mother of Israel and writes:

it was the great sorrow of the jewish woman to be barren, being thereby deprived of bringing forth Christ in his human nature; and it is greater sorrow to the ingenuous Christian to be barren in spirituals.<sup>20</sup>

This soul, he triumphantly asserts, has brought forth fruit, and we may witness God's daily footsteps in her soul. All this is self-evident in an age:

in which saints time hath been occasionally taken up more in building the walls of the true sion than in discovering the treasures of grace and inward glory of christ in the soul.<sup>21</sup>

What women's writing illustrates better than anything else, claims Gardiner, is the 'treasure', 'grace' and 'inward glory' of Christ in the soul. Women's souls are not clouded by the kind of subjectivity that hampers men's relation to Christ because they are not only the weaker vessel, but also the emptier one. Women become visible artefacts only when they have been colonised by something from the outside. In the mid-seventeenth century, the two main candidates for this task of occupation were God and the Devil. Women's subjectivity becomes an hypothetical territory in which external forces battle for dominance. And while women could accept 'occupation' they could not achieve self-possession for themselves. It is the corporeal and territorial nature of women as weaker vessels that gives greater value to their piety, because occupation demonstrates authenticity by proclaiming dependence. The fear that appearances could deceive returned to haunt many male commentators even as they praised iconic and visible feminine virtue. As John Turner confesses,

it is no small mercy, nor low attainment, to be indeed an experienced Christian; it is easier to have fine words than a treasure in the heart.<sup>22</sup>

Ann Venn's<sup>23</sup> spiritual autobiography<sup>24</sup> was published in 1658 together with prefaces by Thomas Weld<sup>25</sup> and Isaac Knight. The idea of female subjectivity which emerges in these prefaces is in many respects similar to that espoused by Jane Turner's preface writers. Weld and Knight both map subjectivity onto the body of the writer and claim that her writing gives them an unmediated access to the moral purity of this physical symbolic. Thomas Weld begins:

here mayest thou see the free, frequent and familiar intercourse betwixt the lord and a godly soul, her continual addresses to him, and his gracious returns to her. (sig. A3r)

So far so good, one might conclude, there is to be give and take, a conversation of sorts; a dialogue. Yet despite this egalitarian promise the reader is quickly enmeshed in a discussion of female subjectivity which reasserts the principle that symbolically the woman writer is an empty vessel or container which must be occupied, a radically free and thus potentially threatening space which demands colonisation. Thus Jane Turner is praised for containing herself without undue publicity:

but her pious soul (in an eminent manner) kept truth and zeal warm in her heart even til she enjoyed full communion with her beloved in heaven.

(sig. A3r)

Piety is a function of proper privacy, an appropriate modesty before God and society.

Her reward is renewed physical proximity to Christ in an age darkened by apostasy:

[she] lay as much in the bosome of christ as any that I have heard of; a rare pattern in these cold declining times. (sig. A3v)

The question of women's subjectivity becomes the question 'where is the body?'. To keep this body to oneself, to preserve privacy and hence the modesty without which women are anathema is the mark of a virtuous soul. Thomas Weld finds much to praise in

the closeness of her spirit (not opening her condition to such as might have relieved her) but seeking to heal herself by duties and holy walking. (sig. A3v)

She spent so much time in closet meetings with God that it was, he thought, a wonder:

her poor weak heart was able to subsist; and doubtless, had God not renewed her strength, anointing her with fresh oyle it could not have been. I marvelled, (I confess) to see so many of her writings found in her closet as I did. (sig. A4r)

Female subjectivity exists to bear testimony to the colonial act. Women are their bodies, and if the body could not have sustained this writing by itself then help must have come by way of a favourable invigoration. God has entered into and reinforced female subjectivity, explaining the enigma of the body strong enough to write so copiously. The modesty trope functions as it did with Jane Turner to release Ann Venn from the responsibilities of authorship and the desire to publish. The image of subjectivity which Weld holds out to us as readers is one in which tribute is paid to Christ, who approaches her:

giving her such a clear sight of himself, that now having with the spouse found her beloved, she took him, and caught him, and held him, and would not let him go, oft saying with the spouse, let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is better than wine. (Weld's preface)

This physical and interactive subjectivity is the kind Thomas Weld recommends for the female body, transformed into the subject of a colonial encounter with Christ. What he has to say about the inside is perhaps more revealing. God, he thinks,

laid her very low in her own eyes, with much self emptiness; a thus bespoke a large room in her heart that he might bestow a great deal of christ therein, and so made her a vessel capable of a greater measure of grace then (I am persuaded) many others (though truly godly) attain on this side [of] heaven. (sig. A4r)

Ann Venn expresses personal desire externally, wishing to be adopted by Christ, but inside she is hollowed out by inspiration to form an emptiness which Christ fills. This

raises the prospect of that 'homosexuality' to which Irigaray refers, and the idea that masculine subjectivity makes use of women as a tabula rasa, a space in which to construct a picture of the male subject which can then be reflected back to and for itself by women. All those aspects of personal expression which Ann Venn might own for herself she is congratulated for having personally suppressed:

so exceeding tender was her heart in point of sin, that she would often and deeply judge herself (as this treatise abundantly shews) for pride, passion, inordinate love to the creature, neglect of her duty to her relations etc. Whereas those that daylie conversed with her (being discerning spirits) could see no such appearances, but the contrary frame of spirit eminently shining out in her, she was so afraid of pride, that she dared not wear such jewels or apparel as she had by her, for fear her heart should be drawn from God thereby; and so fearful of vain glory that though she had this treatise of the incomes of God lying by her, yet not any, (no not her dear parents) ever knew thereof, till they found it in her closet after her death, herself leaving this as the reason, lest her wretched heart should be lifted up and others should think better of her than was meet. (sig. A4r-v)

Weld argues that even in women's writing which communicates, indeed is predicated upon, a concept of subjectivity, one finds an appropriately self-imposed silence.

Isaac Knight also argues that whatever inspiration made the act of writing possible for Ann Venn has its origin outside her person and is independent of her own sense of self. He finds it in the name of the Father:

the lord first brake in upon her heart by the frequent impressions of the word as they were instilled into her by her honoured father, whose practice was to re-inforce the truths publically preached in his family upon his children and servants. (Knight's preface)

Here human reluctance is violently broken down from outside and the subjectivity within is carefully conditioned to accept God's impression. Isaac Knight finds praiseworthy this process of subjectification, which is actually subjection, and notes, 'she frequently was fild in her soule as with marrow and fatness'. The word of God softens up the subject internally and provokes pious self-effacement:

and such was her jealousy of any pride or hypocrisy that might arise by discovering of her labour, that untill she fell asleep in the lord her writings came not to the view of any. (Knight's preface)

The reproduction of a private text initially produced by God within Ann Venn's subjective space, is a breach of modesty from which Isaac Knight is relieved to exonerate Ann Venn. In her case there has been no imprudent public text which might have exposed the overwritten or fatally occupied self.

The title page of Mary Cary's Fifth Monarchist exposition of Daniel proclaimed itself a text concerned to elaborate an answer to 'that great question, whether it be lawful for saints to make use of the material sword in the ruining of the enemies of Christ, and whether it be the mind of Christ to have it so'. Despite this avowal of interest in martial sainthood, the male commentators who prefaced the work felt compelled to return to the question of its female author's propriety. The army chaplain Hugh Peters, who deemed himself a 'worthless worm not worthy to comment on books',<sup>26</sup> nevertheless concluded in his preface that Mary Cary had taught her sex two things: firstly that there were 'more ways than one to avoid idleness' and secondly that 'those who would not use the distaffe may improve a pen'. Peters' praise is predicated on two slanders; that some women are atrabilious and refuse women's work, and that the common way of avoiding idleness is sinful. He further finds an 'holy modest, painful spirit' in her writings:

in this dress you shall see neither naked breasts, black patches, nor long trains; but an heart breathing after the coming of Christ, and the comfort of souls.<sup>27</sup>

The scriptures were so properly used, he wrote, that 'you would think she ploughed with another's heifer, were not the contrary well known'. Mary Cary's example prompted Peters to recall two other 'ladies of learning', 'one of that unhappy tree which is cut off and pulled up by the roots. The other of deserved note in Utrecht, the glory of her sexe

in Holland'.<sup>28</sup> It is clear that Peters is measuring not the analytic excellence of prophetic exegesis but the spiritual chasteness of learned women. If Mary Cary's moral scrupulousness is untarnished it does not matter that Peters does not even agree with her interpretation. He quotes the end of the book of Proverbs in approbation of her work<sup>29</sup> and observes that he has always held belief in the personal reign of Christ and his Saints 'an harmless error, if an error'.

It is a mark of Peters' assumption of the larger irrelevance of women's theological views that he feels no compunction about endorsing the text despite his divergence from one of its major theses. To some extent then, gender barred women from the wider polemic arena because their texts could only, in the eyes of the their male interlocutors, illustrate their reputations. Thus male readings of women's texts invariably attend to the physical, as it embodies feminine virtue, rather than the intellectual arguments their authors sought to advance.

Henry Jessey, in a second preface, takes Mary Cary's account as illustrative of a humble conscience rather than an analytic mind and reminds readers of his *Storehouse of cases of conscience*, whose publication he 'forbore' in 1650 but admits now he is unable to withhold. Both Peters and Jessey thus read Cary as offering a kind of special pleading. This attitude is repeated by Christopher Feake, writer of the third preface to Cary's text, who sees it as evidence that those who condemn 'illiterate men and silly women' for intervening in theological affairs are mistaken. They will notice, cautions Feake, that hundreds of illiterates and silly women, have been wiser than their contemporaries. Thus he ascribes to women the status of the insignificant and powerless imbued with wisdom in a time of social crisis. Cary's text tends 'to the wiping off of those unjust aspersions which Hieron and others would cast upon the millenaries, as they



are called'. Here the great value of Cary's text lies precisely in its ability (that of a virtuous woman) to overturn 'unjust aspersion' against the millenary body, rather than secure by rational means its theological supremacy.

When James Cranford licensed for publication Elizabeth Warren's *The Old and Good Way vindicated* in 1646 he interpreted it as evidence of God's working out a divine plan through the agency of the weak:

having perused (not without admiration) this short, but seasonable treatise, I could not but see fulfilled that of the psalmist *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hath thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mayest still the enemy and avenger: And that of the Prophet upon my hand-maids will I powre out of my spirit. This work needs not (Reader) my commendation, but both our practice.*<sup>30</sup>

Again, the important point Cranford makes is to advertise the exceptional nature of Warren's text. It is one he has looked over 'not without admiration', suggesting that the quality is less important than the fact that a woman writing for publication, infused with the spirit, signals a particular biblical narrative. Cranford's point is that if women (babes and sucklings) are beginning to speak out then it can be taken as a sure sign that the apocalypse is imminent. Women's writing thus often figures for male readers not as a sign of its own arguments but a portentous herald of greater events.

Elizabeth Warren's second preface writer, one T. C., comes even closer to postulating Irigaray's theorem of woman as selfless reflector of male subjectivity:

reader; in this necessarie and profitable essay, thou mayest behold, (as in a mirrour) eminencie of gifts, humilitie of spirit, elegancie of style, soliditie of matter, height of fancie, depth of judgement, clearenesse of apprehension, strength of reason, all sweetly met together, and all piously improved for the maintenance of the old truth of Jesus Christ, against the new errors of these times, by this rare and precious Gentlewoman, the envie and glorie of her sex. (T. C., preface)

There is a curiously material force in T. C.'s description, as if the text were a physical object rather than a collection of arguments. The purpose of such adumbration becomes

clear when he concludes by declaring the extent to which her text is reflection of her self. We are encouraged, as readers, to consider not a body of belief but the body of a virtuous woman displayed in perfect proportion. The woman writer is thus absurdly reduced to the perfect representative of her sex.

Luce Irigaray suggests that a certain symbolism has been employed in the representation of sexual difference and that this pervasive tropological formation has come to define human intellect in exclusively male terms. Reason has become identified with the masculine and with transcendence, in particular with that mental flight which, with its cumbersome baggage of logical, non-material, non-bodily aspirations, transcends precisely those opposing values epitomised in woman and in femininity: non-identity, ambiguity, multiplicity, and so on. In Irigaray's analysis rationality itself is mythically marked and defined as a specifically masculine trait. This takes the form of the principle (though it is perhaps better termed a style) of identity and non-contradiction; a kind of phallic one-ness and unity which exiles without appeal the creative and liberating possibilities of the other of female sexuality. In this system female sexuality comes to signify not an entity in itself, but a hole or lack which metaphorically echoes Freud's original definition of female development as beginning with the recognition of women's castration. In the male representation of rationality, ambivalence and 'differance' are strictly reduced to a minimum. The binary opposite, a basic building block in much structuralist thought, is thus a good example of masculine rational transcendence, for it dispels all fluidity and mixing in the name of an analytical imperative which slices up the social realm into precisely proportioned totalities whose interpretative usefulness is directly attributable to their lack of excess signification or semantic overspill. Irigaray suggests that we should not be surprised that these precise and absolute categories have

proved so popular in masculine theories of identity.

The world is not as neat as this binary rigour suggests, however, and though we may slice up the world conceptually, there is an added but unavoidable consequence:

any organisation of the real, whether it be linguistic, social or individual, is an organisation which carves out of an undifferentiated continuum a set of categories which enable the real to be grasped. But it is impossible to organise the world in this way without residue.<sup>31</sup>

It is this residue, this signifying substance outside our categories which expresses the value of the female imaginary, and, as Margaret Whitford puts it in her admirably clear explication of Irigaray:

this outside, which is non-graspable in itself. Since it is by definition outside the categories which allow one to posit its existence, it is traditionally conceptualised as female. (The unlimited or the formless of the pre-Socratics.) Within this sexual symbolism, the determinate, that which has form or identity, and so ipso-facto rationality, belongs to the other half of the pair, and is therefore male.<sup>32</sup>

The important point to keep in mind reminds us that the relationship between body and gender is not determinate or necessarily causal and that this representation is concerned to elaborate a set of cultural associations which are written not out of biology, but around a kind of 'ideal symbolic morphology'.

It is clear that Irigaray's theory has at its core a historical basis.<sup>33</sup> The claim is that this binary division has always been part of western thought, and that the history of intellectual endeavour is in major part a history of this conceptual division and of the systematic exclusion of women and those differences which have come to represent female sexuality. Irigaray suggests that masculine reason is already troubled by just those residues which it consciously attempts to exclude. Irigaray's implicit point is that the recognition that there is no 'outside' of the masculine or feminine and therefore no sense in which the derogation of one by another can ever be anything more than a convenient

fiction encourages the kind of reading that guards against the insidiousness of binary logic and exclusive categorisation. Without the understanding provided by this recognition, Irigaray's criticisms and solution (the privileging of the symbolic of female sexuality) are too easily perceived as complicit in the system whose deconstruction they attempt.

The obvious connection between Irigaray and the seventeenth-century men who addressed Jane Turner is that they delineate similar concepts of femininity: both perceive women as a lack which can only be made whole by masculine culture. For Spilisbury, Gardiner and Turner, this 'hole' allows perception and is seen as available space which may be occupied either by the word and effect of God or by their own analysis. The possibility of women becoming available as subjects demands from male preface writers a reading which will supply this identity from God, or from an imaginary ideal of feminine existence. Where male preface writers try to exclude any feminine autonomy, any part of female expression which escapes male authority, Irigaray attempts to locate any residue which escapes to foment in it a rebellion against male constructions of masculinity which exclude women.

The Quaker Edward Burrough also wants a unified reading. He reads the female form as a possessed and permeated body, but not as otherwise beyond or in excess of reason. Nowhere does he suggest that there exists any category beyond rationality which might be retrieved for a positive female imaginary. His vitriolic response to Jane Turner was published as *Something in answer to a book called Choice Experiences given forth by J. Turner* in 1654.<sup>34</sup> Burrough's exasperation with Baptist theology informs his text throughout and it is less an argued repudiation than a violent and unreasoned outburst against those practices he thought anathema to the quaker theology of the light within. Drawing attention to her 'dead formalism', Burrough argues that Christ in the Saints is

identical with Christ crucified, and tries to establish a stable and morally perspicuous distinction between those who wait for the stirrings of religious presence within, and those who practice 'imitations of duties and ordinance', which God abhors.

Burrough's quaker soteriology has at its heart a theoretical injunction to passivity. Yet once this token allegiance to the female imaginary has been articulated it is abandoned in favour of a patriarchal stridency. The doctrine of waiting upon the Lord for inspiration is expressed in stark contrast to the monolithic prejudice which the presence of God, once ascertained, corroborates. Given the proximity of God and the licence to speak this promotes, Burrough's epistemological certainty is fixed without caveat. He complains of Jane Turner's claim that she has been brought out of Babylon into Zion, and quickly runs on to the base and corporeal truths he wishes to publicize:

but all along through her book language is one and the same, before her coming out of Babylon and in Syon...for I know her voyce, its the language of the city where she now dwells, which is in confusion in Babylon...death yet reigns in her...I speak as in the presence of the Lord.<sup>35</sup>

A language 'one and the same' reveals in Jane Turner the absence of an inner revelation of Christ which would have effected a dramatic change in her linguistic behaviour and therefore her religious *style*. Burrough is also here returning us to the idea of a female language as a homogenous substance sprung directly from a transparent and absolutely knowable being. In his subsequent expositions the distinction between language and person is dispensed with, just as the preface writers conflated women's language and women's bodies, and as his anger grows Burrough gives expression to it by expounding patriarchal lore.

The textual nature of expression is also lost in Burrough's allegations of bodily possession. It is clear that, for Burrough, Jane Turner's language is a carnal entity and her mode of expression base and oral. Women who publish theological heresy infringe

the code of modesty by 'speaking', by displaying the 'body' of their text and by exposing the nakedness of their learning. Under the guise of these two manipulations; one which transforms narrative into the outspoken body and another which turns graphic text into feminine excess, Burrough reasserts the idea of presence in forms which seem to offer greater security for interpretative conclusions. This process is effected by reinscribing the ephemeral effects of writing in ways which appear to offer a greater degree of material presence. Burrough's hermeneutic project is to fashion out of the text a body, and thereby an animated and verbal opponent who he can beat and about whom he can have, or believe himself to have, accurate and genuine knowledge. Burrough's invocations of God's presence, and his epistemological claims about the materiality of text and body are not supported by reasoned argument. Indeed, having asserted that her truths are mere errors, he refers back to this assertion, as if it were a documentary proof which need not be repeated in minute detail. Needless to say, Burrough's accusation of perpetual error rests, like an unsupported fiction, on the authority of its own premises.

The abyss across which he builds a critical structure divides a variety of entities from necessary contact with each other. The division Burrough elides separates language and voice, belief and utterance, origin and expression, person and idea and the utterer from the utterance. He does this in order to exclude all those things which protect written meaning from the naturally arising contingencies of interpretation. Only if the truth of Jane Turner's text is without doubt can the truth of her character be fully known. The former ensures the latter. Burrough's disgust at women and the voice in the flesh of women is a patriarchal Quaker phenomenon which desires God's animating word to overpower the excesses of the body. For male Quakers like Burrough the form and style of this body is often that of the female body accompanied by patriarchal readings of its

symbolic value. This theological dualism certainly provokes Burrough to a fierce diatribe of condemnation and insult. He calls Turner a witch, a blasphemer and a liar:

she is returned with the dog to the vomit and with the sow to her wallowing in the mud...and she now joys in the earthly dust, in formes and traditions, and likenesses of things, and knows not what it is to joy in God the substance (p. 11).<sup>36</sup>

The blasphemous nature of these physical and material passions is self-evident. Yet they are indicative of a deeper malaise, one which inhabits the body in the form of Satan, who 'is not yet discovered in her, but lies under his vaile of flesh deceiving her' (p. 5). Is the body in question gendered, or is it merely the general body of mankind? There is no evidence readily to hand which would indicate a deliberate and articulated choice. But Burrough's theory of the relationship between God and 'man' must make us anxious for the fate of the female body, since God and Christ, though infused mysteriously in 'man' are yet, it seems, symbolically male within male:

and this mystery is within in life and power, consisting of the new man Christ Jesus, who is made in the image of God made manifest within the saints, in whose image man is like God, godly. (p. 5)

It follows that religious possession of this kind, born of a profound unity between the corporeal image and the sense of 'man' will always be antithetical to the feminine. Thus it is that the female body, in Burrough's theology, forms a theological aporia, a fractured unity which reveals the confusion of the feminine and the satanic. The patriarchal response to such confusion is hysterical violence; a violence of the letter at once performed abstractly and brutally upon the body of a woman's text, a violence we have witnessed already in Burrough's readings, but which is acted out in an equally disturbing manner upon the body represented in writing:

and I charge her, as in the presence of the lord that she knows not what a command from God in spirit is, but is ignorant and not a daughter of Zion, and let her mouth be stopped and let shame strike her in the face,

who professes herself to know the lord. (p. 7)

The inculcations of punishment rhetorically enact retribution upon a body insistently speaking out of place. Burrough finds pollution in the body of the text rather than in theological implication and seeks to neutralize its contaminating effects by stopping up the issuing orifice of the flesh with the embodied presence of God. It is this speaking in the presence of God that guarantees the exhaustive totality of his knowledge of the body of the other. Jane Turner's text reveals to Burrough a body possessed in its depths by death and darkness, a fate she has partaken of voluntarily by refusing to wait on the Lord. Her repeated course has been to 'runne in her own will, which is an abomination to him' (p. 7). For Burrough, all this involves a doubly culpable sin. The first error is to believe lies; Burrough knows this to be the case because he can see through the text to the social and mental reality beyond. The second error is to reproduce this somatic mendacity in textual form, and Burrough believes this fault to be patently self-evident.

Despite the preponderance of almost apoplectic diatribe in Burrough's reading, one genuine point of contention does emerge. This concerns the relative importance of the body and its social procedures over the significance of truths within. For Burrough, duties without the original impulse of the moving spirit are an abomination to God. The body must be ordered of the mind, and the mind must be ordered of God. Duty is a function of the 'will' of man and if not moved from God, it is theological anathema. Burrough describes Turner's attachment to ritual in trenchant terms:

she calls the substance a shew, and the shew or likeness, a substance, and woe unto her which calls good evill and evill good. (p. 8)

Form and content are neatly held to have roughly opposite meanings for the two writers. For Burrough the impulse of the faithful stems not from the outward letter, but from 'the spirit which gave forth the letter' (p. 9). Yet this emphasis on the inner presence which



alone can motivate outer expression creates a tyranny of presence, in which only strong and doubt-quenching certainty will produce theological behaviour. It is an ideology which internalizes and legitimizes bigotry and is premised at the outset on the non-meaning of doubt. All Turner's doubts are, for Burrough, indicative of her ensnarement by Satan. Scepticism is the repressed unconscious experience of Quakerism. When the discussion is finally returned to the body as the appropriate site for theological conflict, it is merely to allow Burrough to address the incarcerated and betrayed conscience in a peroration which seeks to override the recalcitrance of a bodily vessel that continues to refuse his moral message. He concludes:

for it is nothing but aery imagination and confusion and death yet raignes in her, and she knows not the baptism of saints, nor communion, nor the true church of Christ; to that witness in her conscience doe I declare, and why it shall arise, it will eternally witness me, whose name in the flesh is Edward Burrough. (p. 12)

Here the vilified female body signifies the outer shell of the embodied conscience. It takes on the appearance of an almost insignificant external carapace: as Burroughs himself declares, 'the stronger man came to unseat the strong man in war'. The virile male body is reasserted, and if only Turner had endured for longer the difficult journey to Quakerism, she would have won a great victory. The difficulty for women was that achieving the victory urged by Burrough required them to acknowledge faith as a masculine occupation.

In *Purity and Danger* Mary Douglas describes the body as 'a model which can stand for any bounded system...its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious'. In adopting this idea of the body as culturally significant, I have sought to show that in the radical religious literature of mid-seventeenth-century England this concept can be made to perform illuminating analytical work, providing the

body is viewed not as a neutral casket for the soul, but as an expression of gender and the difference this makes to a male reading.

Luce Irigaray's creative, though problematic re-conceptualisation of the relation that exists between the symbolic effects of gender seems to concur with the symbolic system at work in Burrough's text insofar as the female body functions as a hole which can be infused with the word of God or occupied by Satan.<sup>37</sup>

Writing of the early Christian Church Mary Douglas provides us with a key insight into the structure and *modus operandi* of Burrough's symbolic body/spirit antithesis:

the idea that virginity had a special positive value was bound to fall on good soil in a small persecuted minority group. For we have seen that these social conditions lend themselves to beliefs which symbolise the body as an imperfect container which will only be perfect if it can be made impermeable.<sup>38</sup>

Here Burrough's strategy is laid bare: where he exists in a whole unity with God, Jane Turner is occupied by Satan; as he is illuminated by God's light, she is inhabited parasitically by base materiality; and as he is driven to speak by union with God, she is literally divided against herself. The light within is a source of godly presence which finds its way 'inside' only via the will. This entity provides the quaker body with its last and most significant orifice, through which God makes an entrance. In Quaker ideology, a woman's real and lasting lack is an absence from the site of the body of this final and spiritual orifice. And it is this system, we must remember, whose founding distinctions are shared by the preface writers (they lack only Burrough's animosity), which defines a woman as an open container and a palpable spirit.

On Irigaray's reading, Freud sees women's sexuality as constructed around the experience of penis envy. She argues that for Freud it is as a little man that the girl loves

her mother. To bring arguments like this directly to bear on Spilisbury et al seems anachronistic, but these technical terms translate readily into more general cultural terms which do have application in the early modern period. The preface writers examined here did read writings by women as, insofar as they were worthy, illustrative of masculine truths: hence the artificial doubts about authorship. Prefaces are complex documents because writing was a masculine activity and women's proficiency at it required considerable and convoluted explanation. If women wrote with flair and piety, traits indicative of masculine skill, this diminished their value as iconic passive figures of moral purity. The danger was that they then resembled male authors. Preface writers attempt to preserve these incompatible traits. The interpretative dilemmas they experienced stem from the fact that they were trying to explain *without scandal* the unavoidably scandalous fact of women writers' cultural transvestism.

#### Notes

1. For a recent overview of Irigaray's work, and one which offers an admirably clear exposition of the debate over essentialism, see Maggie Berg, 'Luce Irigaray's "Contradictions": Poststructuralism and Feminism', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 17, No. 1 (1991), pp. 50-70.
2. Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, p. 135.
3. Elizabeth L. Berg, 'The Third Woman', *Diacritics*, 12, No. 2 (1982), 11-19, p. 16.
4. Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 146.

5. Sarah E. Miller, 'Bringing up Demons', *Diacritics*, 18 (Spring 1988), 2-17, p. 7. See Laura Mulvey's classic essay on 'the gaze': 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', in *Visual and other Pleasures*, (Macmillan, 1989), pp. 14-29, for a more anglocentric version of this idea.
6. Luce Irigaray, 'Equal to Whom?', *Differences*, 1, No. 2 (Summer 1989), 59-76, p. 70.
7. Some work has been done on religious genealogies, though the extent to which a female subjectivity untarnished by patriarchal ideology can remain undisturbed in historical texts is debatable. See Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (Penguin, 1982) and Ursula King, *Women and Spirituality: Voices of Protest and Promise* (Macmillan, 1989). Caroline Walker Bynum considers the Beguines in her groundbreaking *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: the religious significance of Food to Medieval Women* (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987).
8. Irigaray, 'Equal to Whom?', p. 71.
9. See the exchange over Foucault between Laurie Finke and Valerie M. Lagorno, 'Mystical bodies and the dialogics of Vision', in *Philological Quarterly*, 67 (1988), pp. 439-460.
10. The essay is published in Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, translated by Gillian C. Gill (Columbia University Press, New York, 1987), pp. 57-72.
11. Irigaray, 'Divine Women', p. 64.
12. Irigaray, 'Divine Women', p. 67.
13. Irigaray, 'Divine Women', p. 72.
14. Jane Turner, *Choice Experiences of the Kind dealings of God, before, in and after Conversion (1653)*, sig. A2r.
15. Turner, *Choice Experiences*, sig. A4r-v.
16. Turner, *Choice Experiences*, sig. B2r.
17. Turner, *Choice Experiences*, sig. B3r.
18. See chapter one above.
19. Turner, *Choice Experiences*, sig. B5r.
20. Turner, *Choice Experiences*, Gardiner's preface.
21. Turner, *Choice Experiences*, Gardiner's preface.
22. Turner, *Choice Experiences*, John Turner's preface.

23. Ann Venn was the daughter of Colonel John Venn the regicide and a member of the Church of Christ at Fulham. In her spiritual autobiography she records that she began to seek God at the age of nine. Between 1638 and 1639 when she was 12 or 13 she attended religious meetings with her mother and felt sorely oppressed by the devil. She read John Dod on the commandments and texts by Timothy Rogers and Clement Cotton. She seems to have been greatly influenced by the preacher Christopher Love, who lived with the family at Windsor during the years 1642-1644. In 1650 her father died suddenly, prompting another bout of religious questioning. Later in her life, though still suffering from religious despair, she seems to have found some comfort in the sermons of Stephen Marshall, and Jeremiah Burroughs.

24. Ann Venn, *A Wise Virgin's Lamp burning, or God's sweet incomes of love to a gracious soul waiting for him* (1658). References to this text are hereafter given in parenthesis in the main text.

25. The DNB (ed. Leslie Stephen, Smith Elder and Co, 1889) records that Weld was no stranger to religious controversy. Instituted vicar of Terling in Essex in 1624, he was deprived in 1631 for nonconformity whereupon he emigrated, arriving in Boston on 5 June 1632. He was an associate of John Eliot, the 'indian apostle' in Massachusetts. In 1637 he was a member of the first puritan synod of New England which condemned the antinomian views of John Wheelwright and his sister-in-law Anne Hutchinson. Between her two trials (October 1637 - March 1638) Hutchinson was held in Weld's personal care at Roxbury. In 1641 Weld was sent to England with Hugh Peters as a colony agent. He visited Laud in the tower but when called back to New England in 1646 he refused to comply. In 1649 he was put into the rectory of St. Mary's Gateshead. His connection with Tyneside lasted until 1657. He signed a declaration against the Fifth Monarchists in 1661 and was active in anti-Quaker polemic. He is believed to have died on 23 March 1662.

26. Using the same unacknowledged scripture as Katherine Chidley in her defence of Independency. See chapter three below.

27. Mary Cary, *The Little Horns Doom & Downfall: or a Scripture-prophecie of King James and King Charles, and of this present Parliament unfolded* followed by *A New and More Exact Mapped or Description of New Jerusalems Glory* (1651), sig. A2.

28. Probably a reference to Anna Maria van Schurman (1607-1678). See Janet Todd, *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers 1660-1800* (Methuen 1987), p. 214.

29. Proverbs 31:29-31:

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruits of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

30. Elizabeth Warren, *The Old and Good Way vindicated in a treatise wherein Divers Errors (both in judgement and practice, incident to these declining Times) are unmasked, for the caution of humble Christians* (1646), title page. The second edition claimed to be 'much enlarged', and carried a letter appended by Elizabeth Warren 'wherein she cleareth herself from black mouth'd calumny'. Further references to the prefacers of this text are cited in parenthesis.

31. Whitford, 'Luce Irigaray's critique of rationality', in *Feminist Perspectives in Philosophy*, 109-131, p. 119.

32. Whitford, 'Luce Irigaray's critique of rationality', p. 119.

33. See the selection from *Ce sexe qui n'en pas un* (Minuit, Paris, 1977), in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, edited with an introduction by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (Harvester, Sussex, 1985), where Irigaray writes 'Woman's desire most likely does not speak the same language as man's desire, and it probably has been covered over by the logic that has dominated the west since the Greeks' (p. 101).

34. Edward Burrough was a leading northern Quaker, born in 1633, he travelled widely and died a prisoner in Newgate in February 1663. See David Blamires, *Quakerism and its Manchester Connections* (John Rylands University Library, Manchester, 1991) p. 13.

35. Edward Burrough, *Something in Answer to a book called Choice Experiences given forth by Jane Turner* (1654), p. 3. Hereafter all references to this text will be given in the main text in parenthesis.

36. The biblical source here is 2 Peter 2:22.

37. John Knox in his notorious *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstruous Regiment of women* (1558), cites Tertullian as an authority in order to call women 'the port and gate of the devil'. He also neatly encapsulates Irigaray's paradigm by saying of Mary's reign, 'her empire is a wall without foundation'. It can be seen that both these strategies make of women an available interpretative space.

38. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Ark, 1984, originally published 1966), p. 158.

### 3

#### 'Wearying him with her words': Katherine Chidley's metonymic separatism

Thomas Edwards writes unflatteringly of Katherine Chidley in his huge three-volume anti-Independent tome *Gangraena* published in 1646. His reference to her activities is both short and condemning. His description of her actions at Stepney combines one secure point of theology with bitter character assassination:

Katherine Chidley about August last came to Stepney, (where she hath drawn away some persons to Brownisme) and was with Mr Greenhill,<sup>1</sup> where she with a great deal of violence and bitterness spake out against all ministers and people that met in our churches, and in places where any idolatrous services have been performed. Mr Greenhill answered her by Scripture, and laboured to reduce to a short head all she had spoke, asking her if this were not the sum, namely that it was unlawful to worship God in a place which had been used or set apart to Idolatry, under the names of Saints and Angels, she would not hold to the stating of her question, but running out, Mr Greenhill to convince her, told her that all England in this way and manner had been set apart to St. George, and Scotland to St. Andrew, and so other Kingdoms to other saints; so that by her grounds it was unlawful to worship God in these, and so by consequence anywhere in the world; but instead of being satisfied or giving any answer, she was so talkative and clamorous, wearying him with her words, that he was glad to goe away and so left her.<sup>2</sup>

This complaint introduces the strategies which persisted over the course of Chidley and Edwards' mutual animosity and which lie at the heart of their theological and political differences.<sup>3</sup>

Their antagonism towards each other was acrimonious and hostile, and Edwards retells events to produce a relieved victory for Mr Greenhill. Katherine Chidley objects to the idolatrous nature of the service and finds the people condemned by their adherence to scandalous practice. Mr Greenhill, for his part, seeks refuge in scripture and tries to reduce Katherine Chidley's contentions to a 'short head'. It seems obvious that this strategy, the parodic *reductio ad absurdum* of the arguments of opponents should raise

hackles. My point is that this translation of verbatim utterance into basic summary is not only a propagandist exercise, but is actually the characteristic polemic action of Edwards' attack on Chidley. It is important because it encapsulates his dialectical *style* and provides us with a key insight into the working patterns of his prose and Chidley's reactions to it. Katherine Chidley, we note, 'would not hold to the stating of the question' but was 'talkative and clamorous, wearying him with her words'. Here too, I suggest, we gain important insights into the style of argument preferred by Edward's co-combatant. It is significant that she is attacked for improper verbosity since contemporary patriarchal apologists were keen to encourage women to keep silent in church and associated an unruly tongue with sexual lasciviousness.<sup>4</sup> Against Mr Greenhill's academic, reductive and contractive positions we can usefully contrast Katherine Chidley's demand that proper consideration be given to *all* she has to say. Her theology, she implies, is a complete entity in which every term and definition has been meticulously considered and to attempt to call things to a 'short head' is wilfully to miss the point.

In 1641 Thomas Edwards published *Reasons against the Independant Government of particular Congregations*, a text in which he argues the Presbyterian case opposing gathered or separatist churches.<sup>5</sup> Katherine Chidley wrote a detailed critique of this work which was published in the same year entitled *The Justification of the Independant Churches of Christ*.<sup>6</sup> Chidley's text attempts to refute Edwards' arguments point by point and constitutes a massively detailed and rigorous undermining of Edwards' central propositions. Chidley's argument with Edwards has received some attention from historians and many of her basic defences of Independent practice have been succinctly described elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Although her writing has not been examined in detail, her tracts



have been plundered for evidence of early feminist thought. This they certainly contain, and on more than one occasion Christopher Hill has quoted Katherine Chidley's view that the 'husband had no more right to control his wife's conscience than the magistrate had to control his.'<sup>8</sup> As Hill himself makes us aware however, asserting freedom of conscience does not necessarily put an end to the physical power a husband may wield over a wife.<sup>9</sup> It is quite possible that the autonomy Chidley claims for conscience is theoretically legitimate *because* it didn't have any impact on public relations between superiors and inferiors and didn't upset the moral division between public and private. Freedom of conscience thus becomes an excuse for physical and economic subordination. It palliates repressive effects in private but does not alleviate patriarchal pressure in public. It would be a mistake to read the writings of women like Chidley as bare theology or political theory, devoid in all respects of rhetoric and strategy;<sup>10</sup> just as it would be a mistake to believe that political and religious rhetoric existed independently of contemporary social trends and preoccupations.

In the confrontation between Chidley and Edwards, what is at stake is not so much theological fact or precedent, although these are indeed important, but rather the way in which principles of reading are applied to given collections of data. Working within certain frames of reference each writer constructs strikingly different ways of extracting political theory from theological method. What is surprising is that both writers begin from a group of similar ideological positions in relation to authority and its manifestations, only to proceed in diametrically opposed directions thereafter. It is important to remember that significant differences of religious practice were being debated in these texts and that to address the question of style is not necessarily to privilege form over content. And Edwards does pursue genuine theological cruxes for

much of his text. His text comprises a list of 'reasons against Independency' and is heavily annotated with biblical references. Many of his criticisms are repeated in similar forms in several of his 'reasons' and I shall therefore confine myself to an overview of his general principles. Edwards argues that the Independents break the ordinances of God as they are recorded in the Bible. In his view the Independents' main error is to have abandoned apostolic succession by denying that ministers should be ordained by ritual laying-on of hands. He thus finds them incapable of carrying out the requisite testing of ministers' knowledge by other ministers and worries that individuals with no talent for the conceiving of prayer or sermon will be appointed to positions of authority. He also discovers a lack of organised and ordaining structure at the heart of Independent practice. On the question of the correct method of clerical selection he is outraged by the complete absence, as he sees it, of any mechanism for proving the appropriateness of individual candidates. At other times he bemoans the particular and specific location of selectional power in congregations as a whole. One of the most undesirable outcomes that Edwards envisages, and one which he accuses the Independents of countenancing, is that church power may fall into the hands of one man.<sup>11</sup> Put simply, what Edwards does is theoretically to undo the legitimacy of Independent authority by arguing that it is vulnerable to usurpation by unscrupulous individuals, while ignoring the paradox of his own reintegration of this monolithic power structure via another vehicle: the synod. He offers no guarantee that synods and councils will be free from the manipulation of unscrupulous individuals or political groupings. Edwards decries the presence of a singular source of authority in Independent congregations and yet desires it in the Presbyterian Church. On a more mundane level, Edwards tries to defend the extension of authority from the congregation itself to outside structures, notoriously, (as Chidley's

exasperation indicates) to an undefined concept of Church synods.<sup>12</sup> Edwards' model of judicial referral subjects the judgements of individual congregations to the effects of decisions reached by external bodies. In his theology elements of the local congregational structure are combined to create a more complex organisation which appears to preserve the autonomy of original congregational decision-making while in reality subordinating individual cases to a more complex totality. Edwards preserves authority by concentrating power in one place within a church and subordinating individual grievances to this authority. Thus to the congregation, he adds the synod, whose function *supplements* that already possessed by the congregation. Without this greater structure, gathered churches are simply the exposed and isolated limbs of a tragically dismembered body:

in all societies and bodies it is thus by the Dictates of Nature, and it is found necessary amongst bodies naturall, and bodies politicke, that the severall parts and particular members doe joyne in one for the good of the whole, and that the whole being greater than a part, the severall parts should be subject to, and ordered by the whole: as in a mans body, the foote, though it hath its proper use and operation, is dressed, lanches and ordered, not by itself, but by the hands and eyes: In cities and great townes, though there be severall companies who have orders and government among themselves in some particulars, yet they are in subordination, and in a consociation with greater assemblies, in more high and difficult cases for the preservation of the whole: in common wealths and kingdomes, though severall cities, townes, counties, have courts, and their particular governments, yet all these courts are subordinated to higher, and all these joyne and are consociated together in some chosen out of all, as in parliaments. (*Reasons*, pp. 10-11)

One important concept in Edwards' metaphorical description is that of subordination. For Edwards subordination is determined and organised according to structural relations between centres of influence.<sup>13</sup> One obvious difficulty with such a system of structural reference for contentious or ambiguous decisions is knowing the point at which appeal to other sources of judgement can go no further. For at this point, which expresses the

limit of the jurisdiction of the structure, there is no higher authority, beyond that already present, which can be called upon to arbitrate between conflicting positions. Ultimately therefore, seeking elsewhere in the structure for adjudication will only suffice as long as the structure is infinite: as long as higher authorities can be petitioned. The paradox lies in recognising that the political usefulness of such a structural system *depends* upon the production of final judgments which are not subject to appeal. But the logical organisation of the structure of subordinate authorities always suggests the hypothetical existence of another, higher, authority to which existing decision-making centres are subject. It can now be seen that the logic of the structure conflicts with the logic of the political and theological tasks it is called upon to perform. For while the former suggests a logically infinite system of referral, without any mechanism for halting the transfer of authority, the latter requires that the movement be impeded and a final and lasting decision, without the possibility of referral, be implemented.

Edwards invites such observations by describing a society in which 'all' bodies are subject to greater bodies. The justification of his arguments for final authoritative stasis requires that he propose and adumbrate, 'the greatest body'. A contradiction arises when it can be demonstrated that this final body, in whom transcendental interpretative power resides, must of its own logical necessity occupy a position *outside* the structure which it organises. For any final authority encompasses the whole structure of subordinated authorities under its wing and is itself free from the need to subordinate to a further authority. Naturally one must enquire after a possible justification for the position and power accorded to this ultimate locus of authority. Yet in Edwards' text one looks in vain for any proposition which defends this 'stop in the mind' of the argument.<sup>14</sup> This conceptual impasse culminates in the final body which is both inside and outside the

structure.<sup>15</sup> In Edwards' scheme of things, this finalising body corresponds on the one hand to the organising influence and judgment of God, and on the other to the mind, as it coordinates and originates the actions of the human body. These two 'stops' in the structure are nevertheless subject to the difficulties inherent in Edwards' theory. The grounding of final and proper judgment cannot be constituted logically by deductive decree. For by such a strategy the theorist steps outside the logical structures that have been erected and forces them into a false stasis, which must then be justified using another argument. Edwards backs up his argument for diffused authority with the idea that decisions reached through the consent of many churches carry a greater authoritative and democratic weight, and have more hegemonic force.<sup>16</sup> He asserts that there is a distinction between covenants and oaths in order to argue that God's general rules can be translated into codes of behaviour irrespective of whether these general rules are present in the Bible. He claims that such cases are so obvious as not to require the specific word of God in command. Edwards similarly attempts to entangle the separatist argument in a lexical snare. In his fifth reason against independence, he describes cases where 'there is no other remedy but separation, separation being indeed the remedy of separation' (*Reasons*, p. 14), thereby suggesting that the Independent project can be overcome simply by going beyond in retribution those very strategies it seeks to advance in its defence.

The playful nature of Edwards' punning also insinuates into the debate the accusation that separatism is based on a stubborn and pedantic attitude to language and its possibilities. The dictates of God divided into particular and general commands and left somewhat under-developed in Edwards' text, are subjected to a devastating critique in Katherine Chidley's response. His further criticisms stem from the theological belief

that without law there can be no transgression and therefore no sin, for sin consists entirely in the transgressing of a given law. The logical outcome of this definition is to make sin strictly a reflection of the law, technically non-existent outside written theology. This position is made ironic by Edwards' uncharacteristic concern for the legal nature of sin. In this instance the nature of sin is arbitrarily logocentric, because the breaking of proscribing words, rather than the deed itself, constitute the misdemeanour. Another hermeneutic difficulty which arises concerns Edwards' combination of an appeal to Scripture for the precise definition of holy law with several somewhat vague invocations of the concept of the 'Light of Nature'. This serves as a kind of stop-gap concept, tantamount to reason, yet requiring little in the way of organised argument. It is used to defend the lack of precision that bedevils scriptural prescription. The 'Light of Nature' is exceedingly useful in cases of self-contradiction, where the authority chosen to ground a particular proposition fails (for whatever reason) to meet the contractual obligations that have been devised for it. It tends to function like an argument drawn disingenuously from 'common sense'. This particular dialectic reaches its apotheosis in Edwards' fourth 'reason against Independency', where his argument over-extends common sense and threatens the very authorities whose presence the 'Light of Nature' was meant only to supplement:

as church discipline is to be learned from the plaine and perfect word of God: so in such particulars as are common to the church with other societies, it is to be directed by the light of Nature, the church observing alwayes the generall rules of the Word, and so this is brought as the maine ground for their church covenant (though there be neither precept nor practice of it, in the Word) namely the Lawes and rules of Nature which doe run along with, and are alike common to things spirituall and humane, so far as both are found to agree in one common nature together... So say I in this point, when God required government and discipline in his church, those rules and practices of governments, which according to the light of Nature and right reason are in common-wealthes and societies are warranted for the discipline of the church, especially the church observing

the generall rules of edification, order, peace, etc, which synods, and counsells apparently tend to do, so that I may affirm of dependancy (as it is said by them of their church covenant) it is so farre from being any thing above that which is written, that it rather comes within the compasse of the Apostle, it needed not at all to have been written I Thes.4;9. Ye are taught of God in a law spiritualised. (*Reasons*, p. 12)

Edwards suggests here that the Law consists of Holy Word and everything not in God's Word which is nevertheless self-evident. Again the argument has been propelled so far only to have its logic halted and a declaration alleged in the place of any justification. The 'Word' and the 'Light of Nature' appear to supplement each other where they supply the code for church organisation. Yet this introduces the problem of division into the discussion of 'grounding' authorities. God's 'Word' is the writing of authority, self-contained and sufficient for the ordering of all things. The 'Light of Nature' cannot complete the 'Word' of God because there is in Scripture no perceptible lack. But he *also* claims that church order must follow the requirements laid out in Scripture in the form of general and particular commands. Thus, in a most visible paradox, Edwards attempts to theorise in two directions: both departing from, and remaining faithful to the word of Scripture, so as to remain faithful to the Spirit, the 'Word of God'.<sup>17</sup> But we have already seen that Edwards requires another authority to support Scripture against the chronic lack of precision which paralyzes it. It is this willingness to divide the source of authority which causes many of the problems in Edwards' argument.

Throughout his text, Edwards pursues a number of allegations concerning the activities of Independent Church members. He doesn't want the ill-educated to wield power within churches, nor does he want power which should be given to kings to be given to the Saints (*Reasons*, p. 20). He is worried that the Independents believe that Saints do not go to heaven at death but proceed to some other place (an allegation wholly denied by Chidley). The wearing of hats at Communion causes him similar anxiety. At

one point he also suggests that Independency leads to melancholic apathy in its adherents.<sup>18</sup> These are arguments about the spiritual propriety of individuals within the Church. In contrast, Edwards' other allegations are concerned to demonstrate the dire consequences of Independency for Christianity in general and for the Church of England in particular. Separation in the Church, he asserts, will legitimate separation in other areas of life: loosening the relations between husbands and wives, fathers and children, brothers and sisters, and masters and servants. Edwards also argues that the Independents' division and disturbance of national religious life threatens to rend the very fabric of the social order (*Reasons*, p. 26). Under the mantle of a call for Church unity Edwards gloomily suggests that if Independent ideas were to be tolerated there would conceivably be no end to divisions and subdivisions *ad infinitum* (*Reasons*, p. 35).

In addition to these undesirable effects upon its most fervent practitioners, Independency also threatens to erase those vital differences of power which define the relationships between individuals within families, congregations, synods, and parliaments. In Edwards' theology 'Conjunction' and 'Consociation' both function to preserve difference at one level: in relations between individuals, whilst simultaneously erasing the significance of this difference at the level of theological distinction. Indeed the latter strategy is carried on the back of the former, since what is required of the individual citizen is a separation - into professional and hegemonic classes - which goes on to form the basis for the subsequent argument for Church unity. The argument here makes a complex twist: claiming that unless there is separation and subdivision at one level there can be no unity at another; and that conversely, Independency threatens society with a unity at one level - the congregation - that will lead disastrously to separation and subdivision at another: in culture at large. Edwards feels that believers should



compromise their beliefs as much as is theologically possible before leaving a Church.<sup>19</sup> He uses the metaphor of a child deserting its parents to describe the nature of Independency.<sup>20</sup> It is obvious that examples such as these serve to continue the debate when all those arguments based in reason have been exhausted. Edwards' text is composed of an uneasy mixture of justified theological disagreement and unjustified (because unargued) political opposition. His claim that divisions are theologically undesirable at the level of individual churches is difficult to distinguish from the political argument bemoaning disunity in society and the consequent claim that disarray within the churches will cause the loosening of all the ties that bind superiors and inferiors.

Edwards complains that he cannot understand why the Independents find otherwise lawful prayer unlawful when it is prescribed by the Church.<sup>21</sup> Refusing to acknowledge his opponents' different position in this way is one of Edwards more common polemical techniques.<sup>22</sup> Edwards makes explicit another concealed ideology in his conclusion to his 'Reasons' when he earnestly entreats the Independents to 'please not your selves in your own opinions, be not addicted to your own judgment' (*Reasons*, p. 54). But Edwards' text fails to make clear why he himself cannot legitimately be accused of having given himself to his own opinions and become addicted to his own judgement. Moreover, the sober Christian was obliged to express affection for deeply considered judgement.

In Edwards' text, the power possessed by instruments of ecclesiastical government is organised around the idea of metaphor (the substitution of ministers by synods). Edwards' vision of church authority is further organised by two concepts in particular, equivalence and substitution. These two ideas organise metaphor as a vehicle for meaning, and it is these aspects of the trope that Chidley contests in her response to

Edwards.<sup>23</sup> Edwards' analysis of his opponents' position accumulates evidence for two different conclusions. The first is that the theological difference between Presbyterians and Independents is so great as to be insurmountable. This may be termed the conclusion of radical difference. It is often in evidence when Edwards discovers that his foes are beyond the pale of sensible discussion. His accusations of endless division and subdivision wherein, he argues, the very basis of society collapses, are a good example of this. The second conclusion, which may be termed the conclusion of anti-difference, is reached when Edwards decides that his opponents are uselessly arguing over non-existent distinctions and that there is no genuine difference between their position and his. Often this involves a critique of unnecessary lexical contra-distinction, as when Edwards claims that the Independents yield to the substance (the genuine essence, as he sees it) of excommunication, but not to the letter of it. In his view, differences are either fixed and absolute or non-existent, and his opponents are therefore liable to two sorts of error. They may believe in differences which simply do not exist, or they may unwittingly have become the victims of a genuine distinction. In the former case, the sectarian position is a deluded one because it pedantically sifts the minutiae of theological dispute for the most trifling of separatist excuses. In latter case, this action removes them from the sphere of reason and projects them into theological bedlam.<sup>24</sup> Chidley's counter argument is that there is a space between the two extremes condemned by Edwards for an Independent theological position.

The unearthing of such a space is one of the tasks which Katherine Chidley sets out to perform in her refutation of Edwards' arguments. She questions the coherence of his logical deductions and accuses him of practising a kind of reverse equivocation, whereby an argument depends for its validity upon the failure to recognise crucial

differences in the application of terms to the theological context under discussion. Many of Chidley's criticisms of Edwards concern arguments over the use of words and the extent to which his definitions are justified. We have already seen this technique in use against the Independents in Edwards' narrative. In Katherine Chidley's defence of Independency however, the question of stylistic difference has grown so large that it is more appropriate, perhaps, to call it a different theory of theological meaning and interpretation.

One nineteenth-century commentator on the Chidley/Edwards debate remarked splendidly on the difference made by gender to the tone of the proceedings when he wrote:

of all the divines then living, none would, perhaps, have so contemned, as Edwards, the very idea of being encountered in print by a woman. And mortifying indeed it must have been to him to be divested of his imagined supremacy, and reduced to the base level of one of those on whom he had bestowed his gratuitous vituperation.<sup>25</sup>

Gender is undoubtedly an important theme in Katherine Chidley's writing. The fact of her biological gender would certainly have made a difference to the contemporary reception of her writings, since to write as a woman was without doubt a threatening challenge to the male domination of polemical literature. The radical sects of the revolutionary period were to some degree revolutionary in their attitudes towards the position of women in political and religious life. Women preached, demonstrated, lectured and published as part of their involvement in the radical movement. Women like Katherine Chidley had arguably a greater feminist effect by virtue of being published than by any defence they might subsequently have made for women's freedom of conscience.<sup>26</sup> We must not, therefore, allow the arguments which defend their texts to obscure the threat to patriarchal culture posed by the *fact* of their texts. Nor should we confuse the

effects of patriarchal pressure, which requires women to apologise for writing because it is a potentially unseemly act, with the expression of humble piety; a behavioural trait which women took up because they felt it connected them to the humanity of Christ.

In her riposte to Edwards, Katherine Chidley connects gender literally with the body and uses this connection to make an attack on Edwards' theory of representation and his subordination of women within the Church and within society as a whole. If Edwards' characteristic proposition is to deny the validity of differences, both in order to defend the hegemony and the united voice of the Church and to sustain the existing relations between masters and servants (and by extension parents and children, husbands and wives, men and women), then Katherine Chidley's answer is to stress the significance of difference and to undermine the authorities that Edwards arbitrarily supports. The justification of difference creates a space in which each protagonist must recognise the authentic existence of another position. It is easy to see that this emphasis on difference lends itself to a consideration of gender. Importantly, however, the illustration of difference in gender is implicit rather than explicit. It is contained by implication within the language of example and counter-example but it is not explicitly voiced.<sup>27</sup> When Edwards had argued that society was like a man's body, with every part subordinate to another part, Chidley's response is interesting because her refutation of Edwards' analogy is bound up with the presentation of gender. The body that concerns Katherine Chidley is not the body of society but that of the Church. Furthermore, the Church is grammatically female. Thus in answer to Edwards' point that illiterate and intellectually destitute ministers will lead the Church into disrepute, she replies:

here you would fain make the ruling Elders, the eyes of the church and then all the rest of the body must be blinde, and so unfit to have any hand in election, and also void of the spirit of Grace to discern the gifts by, though it hath beene proved unto you before that she is the greatest of all

having the spirit of God to leade her into all truth, being the spouse of Christ, and endowed with all his riches, gifts and donations. (*Justification*, p. 8)

The body must not be construed as consisting of an absolute hierarchical order within which the disabling of a higher function completely incapacitates the whole. This point is argued in contra-distinction to Edwards' plainly metaphorical claim that ministers and congregations are in some way equivalent. What Chidley concludes is that a single minister can never equal the significance of a whole congregation. Although seeming to grant Edwards' reading, Chidley posits the Church as a female entity in obvious and remarked contrast to Edwards' conception of it.

*you say it is found necessary, in bodies naturall, that the particular members doe joyne in one, for the good of the whole, and that the whole being greater than a part, the severall parts should be subject too, and ordered by the whole: All this I have granted you freely already; where I have plainly proved unto you, that the hands of the Church are ordered by the whole body, in the Ordination of the Ministry Church of God to the naturall body of a man; and therefore when the hand lanceth the foote it cannot be said properly to be the action of the hand alone, because the hand is set aworke by the body, neither can the body set the hand aworke, if it be destitute of the power, for the motion of the body commeth not from the hands but the motion of the hand from the body; and thus you see I have granted your comparisen. (*Justification*, p. 10-11)*

Chidley grants Edwards' metaphor of the relation between delegated officers and the membership they represent by reaffirming its metonymic basis. The relationship between subordinate parts and the whole as it is presented in Edwards' text is partially inverted in Chidley's account. Edwards' metaphoric transfer of the power inherent in the general body to particular officers allows them to assume power on behalf of a particular congregation. For Chidley the body is no more than the sum of its reciprocally-dependent parts and the original authority of these parts must be respected; for Edwards, the parts are less than the sum of the whole.<sup>28</sup> The metonymic connection in Chidley's

account encloses the power of the body and the actions of its particular parts in a hegemonic circle above and beyond which no exercise of power or action can extend.

One implication contained in such an account is that there can be no point of appeal 'outside' to combat the internal connectedness this relationship inaugurates. At this point the division between part and whole seems in danger of imminent collapse, for it can be seen that Edwards has once more set up an outside authority (the hands and eyes) whose prerogative it is to execute judgement for and over another party. Chidley sets them up as guides and counsellors to the whole congregation, rather than administrators with exclusive executive powers. Edwards' argument for the introduction of synods was based on the claim that 'parties' should not be 'judges'.<sup>29</sup> The 'outside' in this discussion corresponds closely to an idea of objectivity, and it is just such a self-authorizing foundation that Edwards seeks to unearth as the basis for his structure of subordinated authority. Chidley's claim is that there can be no outside-the-body in which to locate the presiding and efficient authority Edwards wishes to entrust with impartial judgement. Edwards' assumes a difference between inside and outside which proves impossible to traverse. Repeated metaphorical substitution is required to accommodate the split between all the terms which define Edwards dualist theology: inside and outside, structure and authority, body and mind, congregation and synod. In Edwards' text connections between these supposedly disparate entities always have to be made via the mechanism of metaphor: the suggestion that one thing can be made to represent another, that the difference can be erased. In Chidley's reading of Edwards' arguments however, these connections in metaphor are redivided into their original constituent parts, thereby exposing the authoritarianism inherent in their combination. This is no more than the argument for separation. Chidley's subsequent argument is that the structure of

connection in Church government is not metaphoric but metonymic. This claim rests upon perceiving the relationship between part and whole and depends on recognising the interconnectedness of parts rather than their autonomy. One of the most important principles in Chidley's theory demands that the specific identity of separate parts be considered sacrosanct, thereby avoiding the danger of undifferentiated incorporation. In Chidley's schema the female body of the Church as the spouse of Christ replaces Edwards' male body of society, whose organic operation disingenuously conceals the transfer of power from many parts to those who stand, metaphorically, for the whole. Although both sides propose a cumulative unity based on disparate entities, they differ in that Edwards' body dissolves into separate individuals who exercise the authority of the whole on its behalf, whilst Katherine Chidley steadfastly refuses to divide the whole of the congregation and to adumbrate the metaphorical substitution of power that such a theology would require.

It can readily be seen that Chidley's and Edwards' respective rhetorics of power have a great bearing on the points of doctrine at the heart of their dispute. Thomas Edwards' technique is to use metaphorical equivalence to propose the unity and lack of divergence he wishes the separatists would accept. His argument suggests precisely that differences are exaggerated and that separation is an unnecessarily extreme reaction to mere variations of opinion. Katherine Chidley's technique, in contrast to Edward's, is to preserve the plural nature of congregational life. She rejects consociations and conjunctions because they dissolve the specificity of individual members. Edwards attempts to dissolve the antagonisms of his Independent opponents, thereby removing the justification for their separation. Chidley's technique is to pursue the logic of her positions to the point where a clear distinction can be perceived and incorporated into

doctrine.

Katherine Chidley's metonymic text, which I now turn to in more detail, aims at the construction of alternative metonymic readings which are associative rather than substitutive, connective rather than supplementary and diverse rather than restrictive. Her argument attempts to protect the democratic participation of congregational members in Church affairs by pleading the metonymic nature of separatist theology.

In the preface to her tract, Chidley describes the areas of liturgical and theological practice that she believes Edwards has misrepresented and misinterpreted. These concern the outward profession and practice of true worship, the idea of devised and therefore anti-Christian prayer, and the 'glorious beauty' of Christ's true discipline grounded and founded in his 'Word'. These external contentions are complemented by the inspiration that is 'the bright coming of Christ's Kingdome (into the hearts of men)' (*Justification*, p. 2). It is interesting to note that this internalisation of religious faith has its literary location inside parenthesis. The punctuation of this expression is far from insignificant. The 'bright coming of Christ's Kingdom' without modification is not contained within the body, and may actually be a description of terrible innovation, whilst the 'bright coming of Christ's Kingdom *into the hearts of men*' contains change within the body of the individual and thereby lessens the threat to the existing order of things.<sup>30</sup> Thus the difference between inner kingdoms and outer kingdoms may well express the difference between revolutionary fervour and revolutionary quietism. Certainly this is the conclusion reached by Barry Reay in relation to the Quakers in the 1650s, and if we are to take heed of Christopher Hill's words on the subject then it is unwise to draw too strictly the boundaries between radical religious sects before about 1660.<sup>31</sup> Examples of this kind highlight the need to read tracts like Katherine Chidley's with the utmost



attention to the significance of apparently minor details.<sup>32</sup>

Chidley's preface concludes with an invocation to the reader to forgive her lack of 'schollerlik way' because her points are laid down by the 'plaine truth of holy scripture'. She suggests that if readers find things disordered, they should labour to rectify them in their own minds and if they find weight in the things written they should give glory to God. If they find nothing worthy, they are advised to 'attribute not the weaknesse thereof to the truth of the cause, but rather to the ignorance and unskillfulnesse of the weak instrument.' This can be read as the self-effacing apology for entering into print characteristic of women's writing, but it also records another value by giving political priority to the cause rather than the individual.<sup>33</sup> For the modern reader Chidley's self-effacing comment is a double-edged sword, supporting on the one hand an undesirable patriarchal hegemony whose domination requires that women writers apologise for the impertinence and inappropriateness of their scholarly activities, and on the other a commitment to causes and cooperatives rather than the naked and immodest individualism espoused by her opponents.

In her introduction, Chidley claims that not only is it lawful, but it is the duty of those who are informed of the evils of the Church of England to separate from it. The precedent for such separation is enshrined in the very foundation of the Church, and in defending this claim Chidley suggests a novel and radical theory of history. In defining separation, she simultaneously suggests the authority for separation:

I could not but declare by the testimony of the Scripture itself that the way of separation is the way of God, who is the author of it, which manifestly appears by his separating of his church from the world, and the world from his church in all ages. When the Church was greater than the world, then the world was to be separated from the Church, but when the world was greater than the Church, then the Church was to separate from the world. (*Justification*, introduction, p. 3)

Here the direction of separation is crucial. Edwards seems to want to defend the difference of the world as legitimate. For Chidley such an idea is historically antiquated and misconceived - because the precious must separate from the *vile* - and because it does not concede that the Church must separate from the world (rather than the world from the Church) as long as the world is numerically greater than the Church. It is vital in Chidley's account that the lesser separates from the greater, for the process culminates in the understanding that separation is not mere division, but represents the departure of truth from greater falsehood and the prevailing hegemony. When the Church is greater than the world, the process is reversed and the world separates from the Church. In this specific form of separation the precious and the vile can be historically distinguished and the genuine purpose of distinction better served. When Cain's crime was discovered, argues Chidley, the Church was greater than the world, and Cain was exempted from God's presence, conversely when Noah was instructed to construct the Ark, the world was greater than the Church and therefore the Church separated itself from the world, which was duly inundated. At this point Chidley is approaching the aporia in Edwards' text which demands that the organising centre of the structure (here the structure of relationship between Church and world) be both inside and outside the structure itself. But Chidley has neatly avoided the need to postulate an outside authority to adjudicate in disputed cases. For the world divided into Church and non-Church leaves nothing to exist in any outside sphere. The two entities together occupy all the available theoretical space. In this structure the question of authorising power is transformed into the question of autonomy. The right of separation is exercised by the lesser, rather than, as in the case of Edwards' synods, the right of judgement being exercised by the greater. One of Edwards' maxims on Church government stated that parties (interested groups) should

not be judges. It required two further things: that judges should only wield influence from outside, literally 'without' interests; and that they must be representative, requiring that they be connected by metaphorical transfer of power from the bodies to the parties in dispute. Chidley deals with this point by defining the unity of the Church in isolation; from within the body that neither transfers power nor represents itself through delegation to bodies within bodies. Here a case is argued for the uniqueness of the separated Church in relation to the exercise of power. It is this specific power of a church with respect to its own existence which cannot be transferred or delegated. To support this idea Chidley argues that the Church has no need for officers and administrators other than those suggested in the Bible. Edwards had argued that even with such officers the early churches needed greater guidance; here he had discovered a lack that could, in theory, be supplemented by synods. Chidley takes issue with him:

*and whereas you seeme to affirme, that these Offices were extraordinary and ceased, and yet the Churches have still need of them: You seem to contradict your selfe, and would faine cure it again, in that some other way which you say, you have to supply the want of them, but this other way you have not yet made known: You suppose it may be by some sinods and Counsels, to make a conjunction of the whole. (Justification, p. 2)*

The eccentricity evident in Edwards' logic proves to be one of Chidley's recurrent themes. But to the admonishing of his self-contradiction and apparent disingenuousness is added a more theologically astute and powerful criticism. Edwards constantly creates the want of some organising principle or administrative discipline in the Separated Church which he then attempts to supply with a presbyterian remedy. Such remedies are not necessary, argues Chidley, because the lack they are designed to supply is no more than an unfortunate fiction. If the whole is genuinely whole, urges Chidley, then it cannot gain increase from supplementary conjunction with other organising structures. No

outside principle needs to be exerted because the body is connected internally and power is devolved from within. These internal officers are named as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers given by God for the gathering together of the Saints in the work of the ministry:

and these are they, by whom all the body is coupled and knit together, by every joynt for the furniture thereof, according to the effectuall power, which is in the measure of every part, and receiveth increase of the body unto the edifying of it selfe in love. (*Justification*, p. 3)

Chidley adds that 'The time they must continue is till all the saints be in the unities of the faith', recalling separation as an idea of history which will reverse its emphasis when the Church is greater than the world. At this point the lesser world will separate from the greater Church.

The Church is thus intrinsically seen as a structure whose identity exists most powerfully at the level of the collective group, the level at which faith and the certainty of God are directly experienced. This is in direct contrast to Edwards' identification of the Church as an entity defined by the possibility of metaphoric transfer, whereby the power that exists in a church body can be transferred to another body. For Chidley, the very core of a church inheres in the specificity of a collection of convinced believers rather than in the transferability of their general representation to another place and another body via the mechanism of synods. Ironically then, Chidley explicitly discusses the freedom of the body of the Church whilst implicitly defending the freedom of the individual. Conversely, Edwards' attempt to defend the individual against the harsh judgements of his or her own church on the subject of excommunication substitutes internal government for external decree, thereby ensnaring the whole congregation in the judgements of an even more dictatorial structure. To be *of* and *subject to* the congregation is undoubtedly to be freer than to be pinioned by the irrevocable decisions

of an external body by whom autonomous power has been appropriated. In this debate the defence of the individual is carried on by both authors. But the one who defends the right of the church body to police individual behaviour within a congregation conducts a more profound defence of individual rights than the one who seeks to protect such rights by submitting them to external appeal. For as Katherine Chidley's arguments demonstrate, in the case of synods, the fact of disconnection does not guarantee impartiality, and even if it were to, she argues, impartial judgements are nothing more than the imposition of bogus decisions on the weak by those who have usurped their power by metaphor. The idea of separation is therefore a revolutionary one, for it suggests that the weak should determine themselves metonymically, without metaphorical representation, and that this political goal is nothing less than the law of God written down in the Bible.<sup>34</sup>

This underlying theory of the historical and political direction of separation helps to explain another of the mistakes Chidley finds characteristic of Presbyterian interpretation, namely Edwards' confusion of the issue of rejection and excommunication. In his 'eighth reason against Independancy', Edwards first argued that the Independents accepted that churches 'of such a communion' were entitled initially to censure, and ultimately withdraw from, relations with churches who persistently disagreed over significant points of doctrine:

now I would know of them (avoyding strife about names, words, and formes of excommunication) what is excommunication, but this? what is it to excommunicate, or to be excommunicated but to reject persons, and not to have communion with them neither in holy nor civill things familiarly?... So Titus 3;10, Excommunication is expressed under rejecting: so that our Independent Brethren should not upon words or names, make so great a stirre in the Church and maintaine a controversie, even to separated Assemblies when they doe yeeld to the substance. (*Reasons*, pp. 19-20)

The problem thrown up at once by such a position is that the strife between Edwards and Chidley is indeed about names, words and forms of excommunication. Chidley's response begins by accusing Edwards of making excommunication and rejection one-and-the-same. On this point, Chidley argues, Edwards perpetrates a lexical error rather than a political one, but his conjunction of the two is no less misconceived for its mere wordiness:

Titus had power to reject a person, but we do not read that he had power of himself to excommunicate that person. A wicked man may be said to reject God when he rejecteth his word. So Saul rejected God. (I Sam 15;23) therefore God rejected him from being King, verse 26. but did he excommunicate God? So the people of Israel rejected God I Sam 8;7 and 10;19. Did they therefore excommunicate God? (*Justification*, p. 18)

The spirit and authority of God alone are capable of excommunication. It is defined and distinguished from rejection by virtue of its unique operational practice, in other words, the single and specific direction of its power from greater to lesser. Rejection occurs when the lesser individual persists in objecting to the edicts or principles of the greater body. Furthermore, Chidley writes, 'he that addes to, or diminisheth from the laws of God may be said to reject God, in rejecting the counsell of God which injoynes him neither to adde, nor diminish'. Edwards' constant lack of attention to the precise form of Scripture, his chronic propensity for generalisation and his inability to produce fair close readings of his opponents form the basis of virtually all Chidley's criticisms.

Chidley accuses Edwards of succumbing to the desire for supplementary theology, which has its foundation in her original complaints about his metaphorical style. Metaphor is, after all, itself a form of supplementation, substituting one word in the place of another. But in its second manifestation, Chidley is able to make the criticism reflect upon the character of her opponent. When Edwards claims that the Church is in need of greater help than that provided in the Bible, Chidley wryly comments that this desire

for extra pastoral provision

was the very suggestion of satan into the hearts of our first parents; for they having a desire of something more then was warranted by God tooke unto them the forbidden fruit, as you would have the Lords Churches to doe when you say they must take some others besides these churches to interpose authoritatively. (*Justification*, p. 1)

The implication here is that Edwards has yielded to the same satanic suggestion that successfully tempted Adam and Eve. It is clear, according to Chidley, that one must be careful not to add to the Word of God. But this quite straightforward hermeneutic principle nevertheless creates the fiercest antagonism towards Edwards when it is applied to his text. Chidley repeatedly rebukes Edwards for finding in scriptural text 'more than is written there'. This particular instance of exegetical rule only delineates one half of the problem however. The other obvious requirement is for a limit to the subtraction that one may feel inclined to make from God's Word. One must not add, and one must not take away.<sup>35</sup> Yet the need to interpret meaning requires all readers to perform both these translations, because the commands of God possess a certain jurisdiction, the limits and extent of which must be calculated. Both the extent and the limit of scriptural command must be gauged in order to ensure that the tenor of God's desire is adhered to. The task of the interpreter is to attest to the presence in God's Word of a semantic higher truth, a grounded sense which is so fully present to itself that other interpretations are not merely excluded but deemed finally nonsensical. It is the detection of this presence which offers to secure for interpretation a conclusive access to the metaphysical truth of God beyond language. For Katherine Chidley, presence is strongly associated with God's desire. Her apparent concern with literalism is more precisely a concern for the literalism of presence in the Bible. Such a literalism holds up the possibility of a one-to-one understanding of theistic desire and seeks to ensure the complete revelation of

heavenly will.

It is presence - in the form of God's attention to organic wholeness rather than social hierarchy - which allows Chidley to prefer ordination by election, rather than by apostolic succession. When Edwards criticizes the lack of selectional procedure imposed in the ordination of Independent ministers, she asks 'who hath greater measure of the spirit than beleevers?'. This point is made explicit when Chidley writes:

but you may see, that the church of Jerusalem did nothing without the counsell of the spirit, neither determined of any thing, that was not written in the scripture. So the churches of God now ought to presume to do nothing but what the written Word allows them; being taught the true meaning thereof by the spirit that God hath given them. (*Justification*, p. 14)

The spirit must be present within the individual, it cannot be supplied by the learned teaching of church ministers or the bureaucracy of church government. Here, the longstanding objection to synods and supplementary structures is complemented by a renewed emphasis on the faith and power of each member of the Church. For Chidley the supplement is a vital component in interpreting eschatology, for without the spirit given by God the true meaning of Scripture would remain imprisoned in the bare letter.<sup>36</sup> The difference between her position and Edwards' remains clear at this point. Edwards supplements the bare word with contingent concepts and structures of government, while Chidley makes the supplement internal and enlists it to help guarantee the truth of interpretation, refusing to relinquish the primary importance of the individual soul at the heart of all religious conviction.

The idea of the supplement I'm employing here is found in the work of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who whilst discussing its articulation in Rousseau's *Confessions*, gives this description of its effects in his critique of phonocentrism and the



traditional debasement of the concept of writing in Western philosophy:

the supplement adds itself, it is a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude, the *fullest measure* of presence. It culminates and accumulates presence...But the supplement supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself in-the-place-of; if it fills, it is as if one fills a void. If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. Compensatory and vicarious, the supplement is an adjunct, a subaltern instance which takes -(the)- place. As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence, it produces no relief, its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness. Somewhere, something can be filled up *of itself*, can accomplish itself, only by allowing itself to be filled through sign and proxy. The sign is always the supplement of the thing itself.<sup>37</sup>

It is indeed Derrida's sense of the supplementary which we find at work in both these texts. The supplement is the mischievous supplier of authority to incomplete wholes. The illusion of full truth, the Word present to itself and the speaking subject, and communicated between speaking subjects, is accomplished for both Thomas Edwards and Katherine Chidley by supplementary gesture. The weakness of Edwards' supplementary theology is exposed, for Chidley, in the paradox by which an already self-contained whole has added to it further theological considerations which fully complete its wholeness. This is a paradox of definition, which Edwards falls victim to because he attempts to organize from outside that which can only be legitimately and democratically controlled from within. Yet Chidley's alternative theology depends on the idea of the supplementary in a strikingly similar way. Edwards adds an analytic strategy to his scriptural foundation which allows him considerable interpretative plasticity, whilst Chidley is more literal with Scripture, but insures against the possibility of inaccurate interpretation with the supplementary action of the Holy Spirit in the heart of every genuine believer. For Chidley, Edwards' arguments are either over-supplementary or they are too weakly supplementary. In the latter case, just as separation is *more* than

Edwards claimed, so excommunication is *more* than rejection and his readings of Scripture express *more* than is written there. His attempts to destroy the difference of Independent theology fail to appreciate that there is *more* in the arguments of Independent theologians than he finds, just as there was more in the controversy over names and words than he is prepared to accept. Where Edwards' arguments are over-supplementary, his analytical tools are all tainted by an overpowering supplement which manifests itself in the adoption of such concepts as the Light of Nature, or the assumption that certain biblical precepts could be assumed in one text if they have been alluded to in another. Chidley's recurring accusation of metaphorical translation - that Edwards has made one thing another, for instance prayer made ordination - is at heart a criticism of overly strong supplementation.

Although Chidley adopts a theory of literary supplementation to allow the believer access to the final form of God's desire, it is not correct to interpret this as quite the descent into spiritual mysticism it appears to be. The goal for Chidley is to forge a theory that will do away with the need for extra-biblical texts, such as the Book of Common Prayer, while at the same time reinforcing the position of the Bible as the primary text. But this is not done by refuting the historical and human nature of the Bible. Chidley is not a scriptural literalist, despite her claims that one should neither add nor subtract from biblical texts. What Chidley suggests is that over the difficulty of particular and general commands, a topic raised by Edwards, it should be taken that general commands reach into every particular occasion, but that particular commands do not reach into every general occasion. This means that not every recorded biblical command is still relevant. In objecting to any form of devised worship, this particular conclusion is of great significance. What it makes possible is the argument that

apparently specific commands in Scripture are not really of use in standardizing worship because they are historically specific. Furthermore, general indications of the form worship should take are no more than this, and do not incorporate specific terms. Using this idea, Chidley argues that there are no specific descriptions of the form prayer should take in the Bible. The Lord's prayer is a description only of the manner in which one should pray. It is a list of those things for which one should thank God, but it is not the very form those words of thanksgiving should take. Gospel duplication stresses the broad message but not its final form. However in interpreting the Bible one must be aware that anything which is not consistent with the command neither to add nor to take away is bad theology. If the idea that there are devised forms of worship requires particular commands to that effect in the Bible, then it is contradictory, argues Chidley, for no evidence to that effect can be found in a coherent form.

Now if there were any forme of prayer for men to binde themselves unto, it would have been shewed, either in this scripture, or in some other, which thing you have not yet proved. That they were not tied to this forme of words is plaine in another evangelist, which doth not use the same words, but addeth some and leaveth out some; and also the whole forme of thanksgiving is left out by Luke, (Luke 2;2,3,4. compared with Matthew 6;9.) and to seeke the helpe of any booke but the bible to teach men to pray, is to disable God which hath promised to give beleivers his spirit, whereby they shall cry Abba Father (Rom 8;15) and that spirit should lead them into all the truth, and bring all things to their remembrance (John 14;26) Therefore a forme of prayer for men to tie themselves unto cannot be sufficient and pleasing to God though it were never imposed by any. (*Justification*, p. 32)

Chidleys hermeneutic principle requires the utmost analytical precision in all application of Scripture, and to bind oneself to a form of words not endorsed by the Bible is evidence of a cavalier attitude to the Word of God.

Chidley was a separatist, but she conformed to the stylistic norms imposed by masculine theological debate and challenged Edwards, in part, in his own terms. Her

concern with gender was part of a broader theological project. Her argument empowers all members of the congregation by reducing the authority of those empowered in Edwards' metaphoric hierarchical model of ecclesiastical power. The inclusion of women in her 'congregation' is thus implicit rather than explicit, but it is no less radical for this fact. In the next chapter I examine a writer who chose to mimic masculine styles, like Chidley, but whose theological message was more conservative. Unlike Chidley, Elizabeth Warren uses a masculine style to champion a version of piety which has its foundation in feminine domestic occupation.

#### Notes

1. The DNB (1889) records that William Greenhill (1591-1671) was himself part of the campaign for a more thoroughgoing reformation in the Church of England. Early on in his career he got into trouble with the Bishop of Norwich, Matthew Wren, for refusing to read the book of Sports. He was a noted Independent, and afternoon preacher to the congregation at Stepney. Jeremiah Burroughs preached the morning lecture and together they were known as the morning and evening stars of Stepney. He was a friend of Henry Burton (mutilated with Prynne and Bastwick in 1637) and a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. He was appointed chaplain to Charles I's children in 1649 and in 165 was appointed to the commissioners for the approbation of public preachers. He was ejected at the Restoration.
2. Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena* (1646), pp. 79-80.
3. For an account of Chidley's activity in Bury St. Edmunds and Thomas Edwards reporting of it see A. L. Morton, *The World of the Ranters* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), pp. 20-41, 125. For the Church Covenant witnessed by Chidley at Bury in 1646 see A. J. Grieve and W. Marshall Jones, *These 300 Years* (1946), and for Chidley's association with Stepney see A. T. Jones, *The Early Days of The Stepney Meeting* (1887).
4. This was usually implicit in the claim that women's reputation required silence. See R. Brathwait *The English Gentlewoman* (1641) pp. 293, 355, and Joseph Swetnam's *Arraignment of Lewde, Idle, Froward and Inconstant Women* (1615).

5. Further references to this text, hereafter *Reasons*, are given in the main text.

6. It was printed for William Larnier 'to be sold at his shop, at the signe of the Golden Anchor, neere Pauls-Chaine'. All further references to this text, hereafter *Justification*, are given in parenthesis in the main text. She also published a broadside, *Good Counsell to the Petitioners for Presbyterian Government* (17 November 1645) and a further tract *A New-Years Gift, or a brief exhortation to Mr Thomas Edwards that he break off his old sins, in the old yeare and begin the New yeare, with the fruits of love first to God and then to his brethren* (1645).

7. See Ian Gentiles, 'London Levellers in the English Revolution: The Chidleys and Their Circle', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 29 (1978), pp. 281-309, and B. Hanbury, *Historical Memorials Relating to the Independents or Congregationalists*, vol 2 (1839), pp. 100-117.

8. See Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (Peregrine, 1986, originally published 1964), p. 443 and *The World Turned Upside Down*, p. 312.

9. Indeed Chidley herself claims freedom of conscience but appears to concede physical authority to Patriarchy:

I pray you tell me what authority this unbelieving husband hath over the conscience of his unbelieving wife; it is true, he hath authority over her in bodily and civil respects, but not to be a lord over her conscience; and the like may be said of fathers and masters, and it is the very same authority which the sovereign hath over all his subjects, and it must needs reach to families: for it is granted that the king hath power (according to the law) over the bodies goods and lives of all his subjects, yet it is Christ the King of Kings that reigneth over their consciences and thus you may see it taketh away no authority which God hath given to them. (*Justification*, p. 26)

10. In his more recent essays Hill admirably illustrates how it is possible to misconceive semantic interpretations by ignoring the importance of contingency and convention in historical documents. Hill argues that this is of particular moment in the discussion of political vocabulary. See 'Political Discourse in Early Seventeenth-Century England', in *Politics and People in Revolutionary England: Essays in honour of Ivan Roots*, edited by C. Jones, M. Newitt and S. Roberts (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986).

11. Edwards here turns the Independent argument against Episcopacy back on the Independents, 'consider if they do not fall into that which they complain against in the Episcopacy, namely for one man to have the sole power of Ordination' *Reasons against the Independent Government of particular congregations* (1641), p. 8. We can be reasonably certain of one significant *absence* at this point. Edwards' ministerial paradigm does not conceive of the possibility of women occupying this position of power. When he writes 'man' it is an exclusive, rather than an inclusive gesture in

relation to women.

12. See Chidley's comment, 'Me thinks you are strangley put to your shifts, that dare not tell the world what you mean by your synods' (*Justification*, p. 15).

13. It is important to note that the concept of structure is not identical to that of mere hierarchy. Edwards describes, earlier on in his exposition, how the purpose of higher structures is 'to supply the defects of each particular, by the conjunction of the whole, the whole helping every part, and supplying what is lacking to it' (*Reasons*, p. 2), thus indicating the *interdependent* nature of the parts that go to make up the whole structure. It is therefore 'conjunction' that is emphasised through the process of subordination.

14. The term 'stop in the mind' is Christopher Hill's, and was originally used to describe how the ideology of monarchical authority was psychologically prevalent in the minds of its opponents: and therefore to a great extent successful. See Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714*, second edition (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1980, first published 1961), p. 53.

15. See Jacques Derrida's essay 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' in *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), for the original articulation of these ideas.

16. It is important to remember that Edwards actually regarded democracy as a dangerous and politically anarchic force. He certainly didn't defend openly the idea of democratic government in the sense we might now understand. Indeed it was a political philosophy he attributed to Independency:

but the government of synods is most Aristocraticall, whereas the Independant way for the most part is onley Oligarchicall, having but a few officers in a church, or else Democraticall, if put to into the body of the congregation. (*Reasons*, p. 16)

Nevertheless it would be wrong to suggest that Edwards believed in aristocratic government without any form of accountability. The purpose of synods was to provide another source of authority for disputes that could not be settled locally.

17. A good example of this strategy and the response it evokes from Chidley occurs when Edwards argues (*Reasons*, p. 55) that over the thorny question of Church discipline the Independents cannot consider differences over its execution sufficient reason for separation since, as Calvin notes, the scriptures express the substance of ecclesiastical discipline but not the form of exercising it. This, argues Edwards, should be left to synods to determine. Chidley finds this conclusion startling in its assumption of knowledge of the mind of God. She argues:

hath Christ indeede written in his word the substance of his discipline and not the forme? you would make (indeed) the substance of discipline without forme, and voids, even as the earth it self was, when darkness was upon the face of the deepe: so you would have men conceive there is a substance, but they must have no rule to know where to find it; for you say, the forme of exercising it is not prescribed. (*Justification*, p. 76)

18. They goe looser in their apparell and haire, they take lesse care for the publicke in things that concerne the glory of God and salvation of men's souls, their principles and spirits grow very narrow like their churches, they grow more strange, reserved, subtile, in a word, they minde little else but the propagation of their independant way. (*Reasons*, p. 49)

19. Though in the light of his previous stringent comments about finding his truths written in the Word of God, it would seem that something of a contradiction emerges among Edwards' authorities. Political behaviour and theological truth are not, in his view, to be sullied with the inconvenient doctrine of mutual coherence. We might interpret Edwards more favourably and explain this point by accepting the distinction he draws between the toleration of doctrinal difference within the congregation and the toleration of theological difference outside the Church. Whilst the former is politic the latter is anathema. This point too seems to rest on the *order* of the aforementioned process which leads from separation (or difference) as an accepted pre-requisite for the initial grouping within the structure (corresponding here to the selection of an educated elite, and the separation of ministerial vetting) to the unity of the entire structure under the auspices of synod and the originally combined nature of its unified authority.

20. He writes:

it cannot be counted envy in ministers to be unwilling to have their flocks and people fall from them, is it envie in a father to be unwilling to have his children stollen from him and tempted away by strangers? I aske such of you who be fathers if you would be willing to have your children forsake you and that with renouncing the womb that bare them and the paps that gave them sucke, throwing dirt in the face of Father and Mother? Now this is the case for ministers, to have their spiritual children whom they have begotten to God, who are their comfort and the fruit of all their labours to fall from them and despite them afterwards cannot be pleasing, neither ought it. (*Reasons*, p. 50)

It is worth noticing that in the course of this metaphor several ideas relating to the biological nature and specifically female aspects of 'mothering' are invoked by Edwards in an ideologically masculine environment.

21. They hold that things lawful in themselves (as for instance, set formes of prayer acknowledged by them to be lawful) yet being enjoyed by authority are now unlawful, so that though a forme of prayer be lawfull, yet being imposed for order, uniformity, that alters the case (a strange paradox that things lawfull in themselves tending to order and peace, should become unlawfull when commanded). (*Reasons*, pp. 30-31)

22. In his ninth reason against toleration Edwards suggests that the adherents of uncompromisingly opposite views have greater justification than do those whose

disagreements are less virulent in character:

a toleration may be demanded on the same grounds for all the rigid Brownists of the kingdom and for all the Anabaptists, Familists and other sectaries, who profess tis conscience in them, and in some respects upon better grounds it may be moved by them, as being perswaded we are no true church, then for the semi-separatists. (*Reasons*, p. 83 (32) pagination error)

23. Although Geoffrey Leech in *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (Longman, 1969), describes metaphor in terms of transference. 'In fact, metaphor is associated with a particular rule of transference, which we may simply call the 'Metaphoric Rule', and which we may formulate: F= 'like L' (p. 149). Leech proposes a 'strong' rule of metaphor which actually describes metaphor, the relation between tenor (subject) and vehicle (image or analogue of presentation) in terms of simile: the transformation is dependent upon the presence of 'likeness'. Metaphoric transformation can only take place if likeness is perceived. The ground of comparison forms another rule in Leech's theory which states that, 'X is like Y in respect of Z'. Both of these rules describe the coherence of metaphor rather than its operation and privilege singular and mechanistic transferences at the expense of other attributes. It can be argued that similarity may not always be at the heart of metaphor and Leech does not consider the role that differences between tenor and vehicle may play in the transference. Here another question is begged: what is it that is being transferred?

24. In his ninth reason against toleration Edwards suggests that the more extreme dissenters may have a better case for the justification of separation than the Independent semi-separatists. The two strategies are obviously contradictory. One cannot argue successfully that minor distinctions between churches are not acceptable on the basis that they are divisive and socially destructive (as well as theologically fallacious) whilst at the same time allowing that extreme distinctions between churches are justified, because the degree of distinction is itself an index of the socially undesirable nature of such churches. Edwards' point is ironic, but illustrates well his analytic tendency to mimic the structure of metaphor. Differences are absolutely either/or, and arguments for a space between the one and the other of binary opposites are anathema to his thinking. Hence he is able to suggest, albeit jokingly, that people who differ extremely have a better case than those who differ in a minor way because the former better describe the function of metaphoric difference, whilst the latter tend towards a metonymic relation with the established Church.

25. B. Hanbury, *Historical Memorials*, vol 2, p. 108.

26. Murray Tolmie notes an interesting exclusion to which Chidley herself makes no reference.

Probably the strongest personality in the church was the formidable Katherine Chidley, barred by her sex from church office; she was still a potent political force in London in 1653



in defending the leveller John Lilburne in the twilight of his political career.

See *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London 1616-1649* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977), p. 22.

27. Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity*, p. 42.

28. Curiously then, Edwards is 'democraticall', because in his scheme of things representation is not only possible but desirable and necessary. Chidley, who almost suggests that representation itself is a misnomer, is an individualist, denying the greater body of society a cohesive and ordaining role in the conduct of an individual life. The only structure which goes some way towards preventing this slide into absolute individualism is the Church which takes the place of society as a cooperative body.

29. Discussing the actions of Paul and Barnabus in Acts 15, Edwards recounts how they sought help from the Jerusalem Church over the nature of circumcision because, 'the church judged it unequall, that they who were the parties in the controversie should be the judges' (*Reasons*, p. 10). Chidley comments pointedly 'That they judged it unequall, is more than is expressed in that place' (*Justification*, p. 10). She goes on to conclude that the Church of Antioch in fact believed it an unequall thing to judge the members of the church of Jerusalem, thus preserving the autonomy of individual congregations.

30. Richard Bauman notes the internal nature of Protestant theology in *Let Your Words be Few* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983):

the emergence of protestantism was accompanied by a progressive interiorisation of the word, as intermediary symbols, rituals, and functionaries that stood between the individual and God were stripped away from religious practice. (p. 29)

31. See Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (Temple Smith, 1985):  
They [Quakers] did not actually deny that there would be a final judgement and resurrection, but the stress was on the resurrection and judgement within each Quaker. (p. 35)

For Christopher Hill's comments on revolutionary flux see the introduction to *The World Turned Upside Down*, p. 6. Hill's blurring of theological differences has been criticised by Murrie Tolmie, see the introduction to *The Triumph of the Saints*.

32. Some see attention to words as the prime protestant ideology and the central shift of Reformation culture. See Thomas L. Huxon 'Calvin and Bunyan on Word and Image: Is There a Text in Interpreter's House?', *English Literary Renaissance*, vol 18, No. 3 (1988), pp. 438-459. Huxon traces the privileging of words over things through Bunyan, Calvin and Luther back to St. Augustine to reveal the 'logocentric character of Protestant and Puritan thought' (p. 439). Patrick Collinson in *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* contrasts an intensely visual, ritualistic medieval religious world in which 'seeing was believing' with the reformation's emphasis on

cerebral, didactic, and above all written, theology which allowed Protestants to recover 'their sense of God's awe-inspiring otherness' (pp. 99-103). In contrast see Christopher Hill's conclusion to *The World Turned Upside Down* (pp. 361-386), where the radical protestant style is described as consisting of a privileging of experience over tradition and things over words: the very opposite of logocentrism!

33. The degree to which this strategy reflects the true state of scholarly capacities is difficult to assess with any certainty. Certainly Chidley did not have the benefit of a university education. Yet she makes mention of John Robinson and Hugh Latimer in her text and proves every bit as capable as Edwards of producing biblical authorities in her defence.

34. Chidley states unequivocally that the true Church of Christ is the Church of the poor and dispossessed:

And that the Church of Christ consisteth of meane persons is no wonder; for the we have learned, that the poore receive the gospell, and you know you have granted, that it stands with the light and Law of Nature, that the liberty, power, and rule should be in the whole, and not in one man or a few; So that the power must rest in the body, and not in the officers, though the church be never so poore (*Justification*, p. 25).

35. A point taken by Chidley from Revelations 22;18,19:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

36. Compare the famous Pauline conclusion in respect of God:

who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (2 Corinthians 3;6).

Many of Chidley's sympathies are broadly Pauline in nature.

37. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* translated by G. Chakravorty Spivak (Ithaca Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1976), pp. 144-145.

#### 4

#### 'The thriving trade of considerate collection': distribution and consumption in the theology of Elizabeth Warren<sup>1</sup>

In much Protestant theology of the mid-seventeenth century, the religious subject is often thought of as a receptive material or a surface, either worked by God's hand or imprinted with his law. The reborn or converted subject is consequently described as the original subject rewritten. Theories of man's natural religiosity crucially depended upon this idea. John Sedgewick believed that God's law was indelibly written into human nature 'as with a pen of iron', which made the mark of God's written statutes a permanent part of human identity, since they were: 'for ever to remain with the nature of mankind'.<sup>2</sup> The Puritan Richard Sibbes, Master of Catherine Hall and Grays Inn preacher, thought the regenerate Christian heart was like soft wax ready to receive a new form: 'after love hath once kindled love, then the heart being melted, is fit to receive any impression'.<sup>3</sup>

The idea that salvation involved the recognition of divine inscription was expressed by John Collings, whose sermon on the Song of Solomon complained rather cryptically that there were more honest magistrates than God would someday thank for their honesty. He advised: 'if they be of God's coine they will have his image and superscription upon them'.<sup>4</sup> John Dod and Robert Cleaver in their *Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments* found the words of God

written and engraven in every man's conscience: so that let wicked men strive and labour, and do what they can to make themselves atheists, yet it will not be, they cannot blot out God's writing.<sup>5</sup>

The permanence and truthfulness of God's indelible script was often used to explain the efficacy of conscience as a part of the soul which perspicuously judged the actions of the

flesh. The Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth, in a sermon before Parliament in 1647, denied that mere learning could ever make one a Christian, and argued for an intrinsic religious sense in all:

we shall not then care for peeping into those hidden records of Eternity to see whether our names be written there in golden characters: no, we shall find a copy of God's thoughts concerning us, written in our own breasts. There we may read the characters of his favour to us.<sup>6</sup>

The religious quiddity of the Christian was guaranteed in these accounts by the presence of an inner statute or text which, although intrinsic to the self, was part of the original code given by God to provide an internal measure of mortal behaviour. God's original writing encompassed natural, moral, and religious law. The good Christian was that person who could clearly *read* God's inner handwriting. Correct religious observance, then, was a form of corporeal literacy. The metaphor proved flexible and capable of different applications. Thus Richard Vines was able to argue that 'great sinners are oftentimes made great saints: God engraves his image in untoward wood, that the churlishness of the matter may the more commend the workman'.<sup>7</sup> Of course, the presence of divine inner legislation did not comfortably yield soteriological surety for everyone, it was merely the bare text with which everyone began.

One problem with this view of religious subjectivity is that it rests upon a concept of identity as something pre-existing and unalterable: an already printed text, a stamped coin, or the finished art of a woodcarver. No dialogue is possible with such an absolute text; where is there room for an active Christian agency which is not already written into the subject? It suggests too, that the obedient Christian is nothing more than an inert automaton, simply reading off the correct behaviour from the incorporated statute book and following it blindly. How then did religious writers reconcile the idea of the subject as an already printed text with the notion that the good Christian was expected to effect

their own religious direction?

In *Spiritual Thrift, or Meditations Wherein humble Christians (as in a Mirrour) may view the verity of their saving Graces* (1647), Elizabeth Warren described how Christ appointed the duties of his disciples:

teaching them the price and use of the creatures, and in directing them instructeth us also, in the thriving trade of considerate collection, for as we are bound by this precept and practice, to gather up necessaries for our bodily subsistence, so are we to labour in improving time and means. (p. 2)

Elizabeth Warren's work is an engaging articulation of this complex issue. Her works implicitly take issue with this theology of identity and see the religious subject as something brought into being and sustained by its economic relations with commodities and other people. Implicitly rejecting a politics of fixed and unalterable subject identities, she comes to regard the Word of God not as a rule of law permanently burned into the heart of the elect, but as a commodity which can be purchased with pious humility and gathered up as a precious resource.

This emphasis on theological practice as an 'economic' discipline produces a different kind of religious subject: one eager to incorporate external 'precepts' and acquire a different kind of doctrinal literacy. This chapter describes that subject in more detail and argues that Warren's concept of Christian subjectivity owes much to contemporary discussion of domestic arrangements and patriarchal family structure. I shall argue that she sustains a lengthy negotiation with the commonplaces of patriarchal ideology in her exposition of prudent economic behaviour. Her texts' major achievement is to extend the influence and authority of the good housewife as a model for the diligent Christian. She did this against the grain of contemporary patriarchal mythology, which sought to confine women to the household and reduce their economic and social influence.

David Zaret has recently argued that the idea of a heavenly contract 'with its connotations of exchange and reciprocity', forms an uneasy alliance with other more central ideas of Puritan divinity 'such as the doctrines of free grace and predestination'.<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Warren uses economic ideas, not to construct a covenant theology, but to create a practical Christian ethic. I shall argue that there need be no difficulty in reconciling concepts of reciprocity and exchange with the doctrines of Free Grace and Predestination. I aim to do this by explaining Elizabeth Warren's view of religious subjectivity and showing how this theory can be made to yield a feminist reading which is not an unreasonable distortion of her text nor wishful political thinking on my part. Sarah Heller Mendelson has recently argued that women's 'life and thought were so intertwined in practice that their world view is liable to be divested of meaning when divorced from its social context'.<sup>9</sup> I want to suggest that in the work of Elizabeth Warren, an essentially patriarchal view of women and domestic arrangement forms the basis for a theology which offers a moderate critique of patriarchy.

Elizabeth Warren published three lengthy tracts between December 1645 and 1649.<sup>10</sup> The first of these, *The Old and Good Way Vindicated*, went through a second impression within a year. It had evidently become a work of some consequence. All three were recorded in the Stationer's Register upon publication.<sup>11</sup> That Elizabeth Warren was possessed of a more extensive formal education than most Independent or Quaker women writers is evident from the learned style of her tracts. Her extensive use of sources and authorities would have been inconceivable for writers unversed in Church history or classical learning. Prolific marginal quotations from the Latin Vulgate Bible and from Latin Church Fathers such as St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostome lend her texts an impressively learned air.<sup>12</sup> In addition to biblical episodes she also drew on

classical stories to illustrate and confirm her theological theses. Her prose is grammatically ornate and employs a more eclectic vocabulary than that of her lower Church sisters. Her third text, *A Warning Peece from Heaven against the sins of the Times*, reveals her political views most succinctly. In it she condemns the rebelliousness of the parliamentary cause, which she compares to the conspiracy of Korah against Moses. She laments the error of regicide, complains about estate robbing, sabbath breaking, unwarranted innovation, the hypocrisy of the separatists and the numerous heresies which the modern age has revived. Careful to steer a course between sectarian excess and Catholic apostasy she takes comfort in the fact that God's daily judgement of the nation can be discerned by the conscientious. One remedy is for the repentant to adopt the manner of a contrite scholar:

it is sayd of Statists and deep Politicians, that they study men as Schollers bookes: I am sure it should be the care of Christians, to study God in his Word and Workes: for this will teach us to read and understand, the uncouth characters of these sad occurrents, and admiring and adore him, when by visible judgements the wrath of God is revealed from heaven. (AWP, p. 19)

Here Warren recommends a kind of masculine mimicry, implying that Christians should seek to become 'Statists' or 'deep Politicians'. Her two earlier tracts advocate, by way of contrast, a domestic and feminine model of ideal subjectivity.

The 1640s were a turbulent decade for the English clergy. After the breakdown of effective censorship in 1640, and the backlash against Archbishop Laud, culminating in his execution in 1645, and in part as a result of the controversies between Presbyterians and Independents in the middle part of the decade, the Church of England fell into a state of theological disarray. The ecclesiastical diversity openly practised by separatists and theological radicals brought with it many attacks on the established clergy. This naturally generated a body of writing which sought to defend their position.

Elizabeth Warren's work constitutes one such attempt at ministerial reinforcement. The technique she employs is to defend the position of the clergy by defining parishioners' obligations and responsibilities, and the means by which they were to be observed.

Her first tract is prompted by the threat of division within the Church and the 'attempt of the subtle serpent to draw contempt on the public ministry of God's sacred word'. Upholding the authority of clergy in the face of considerable lay pressure for a less hierarchical church, her text is organized around a complex defence of the importance of clerical office and the desire to preserve and justify the respect accorded to hieratic difference. There is little evidence, as one would expect from an Anglican,<sup>13</sup> that she believed in the Lutheran concept of the priesthood of all believers or that the idea of equality within the Church, as opposed to the idea of equality before God, occupied her theological thinking. Elizabeth Warren claims that ministers are spiritual superiors and rightly deserve from the laity the same respect owed by children to their parents (*OGW*, p. 24). The main part of her tract is subsequently taken up in an exhaustive meditation upon this scripture. At times adopting the register of spoken dispute, but more generally the tone of a sermon, the text is frequently broken up by anticipated objections, which are summarily dealt with.

Elizabeth Warren's texts quite consciously valorise Christian humility. To demand radically that authority be reinforced is part of her general project to promote weakness as the paramount Christian virtue. By taking up a position of powerlessness and advocating that others conform to this ideal, Elizabeth Warren is able to mount a conceptually coherent, if somewhat compromised, critique of patriarchy in its own terms. On the face of it, this argument does not seem convincing. It can be objected that to embrace the position of inferiority ordained for women by patriarchal social structures



cannot represent a liberation from that subjugated position. Furthermore, it can be suggested that to believe freedom can be achieved in this way demonstrates the unconscious internalization of an oppressive ideology. But this is to misunderstand the situation of writers like Elizabeth Warren. To play the garrulous woman, volubly objecting to enforced subservience, was only to occupy the other available position for women intervening in public life: that of the potentially unchaste, morally opprobrious, discursively loose women. If patriarchy assigned Elizabeth Warren a humble position, then the problem lay in discovering a way of occupying this position without confirming its definition of her worth, or acceding to the prejudice and misogyny that prompted it. One way of achieving this was to make a bigger claim for the virtue of that attributed position than patriarchy itself was prepared to make. By pursuing this strategy, humility - a feminine virtue - becomes a universally desirable quality rather than a form of false consciousness fostered in women to ensure their subordination. It is worth remembering that these ideas were not only a form of mental compensation thought up by women who lacked any way of attacking patriarchy directly. Writers like Elizabeth Warren might expect symbolic support from clerical patriarchal quarters.<sup>14</sup>

When she begins her analysis of the position of the clergy, Elizabeth Warren incorporates the primacy of lowly piety into her description of the demeanour of good clergymen. Taking as her text a verse from Paul's epistle to the Thessalonians, 'And we beseech you brethren, know them that labour among you, and are over you in the lord, and admonish you', she reads 'we beseech' as the epitome of a humble posture and observes:

it being not usual with persons of eminency, to petition other of inferior condition, yet here, and also in many passages, we see this holy and humble Servant of Christ, even divesting himself of Apostolical dignitie, to become a president to all faithfull Pastors. (*OGW*, p. 4)

Unnecessary self-abnegation quickly becomes a sign of genuine piety in her reading of those who labour over the multitude. They mistake themselves, she argues, who think such humility incompatible with ministerial calling. She praises Paul the Apostle for displaying 'humble condescension in his whole deportment, to the meanest of Christs servants'. In a further development of this idea, Paul's obsequious posture is compared to the lowly piety of

a tender nurse, who by love and labour breaks through all difficulties to nourish and cherish her weak and infant children, notwithstanding all discouragements which attend on that condition. (*OGW*, p. 5)

Here, a parallel is drawn between the disposition of the apostle and the supplicatory perseverance of a caring nurse. The attraction of humility as a virtue is that under its aegis, secular hierarchies and gender subordination can be dissolved simultaneously. Superior and inferior are then bound by reciprocal entreaty; feminine behaviour may be praised in a male subject; habitual social relations dispensed with, and any commitment to social practice determined by hierarchy and gender thereby rejected.<sup>15</sup>

With the outline of a theory of humility in place, Elizabeth Warren proceeds to limn some of its implications. The foremost of these is the reciprocal nature of lowly supplication. Since our well-doing in the world does not extend to God, who has no need of our duties, humility is primarily to be distributed amongst others. It was intended, she writes, to relieve 'the Saints and excellent on earth', who were 'the specious object of our deare affection' (*OGW*, p. 11). The Saints were to be called brethren - an appellation which encapsulated their right to dutiful treatment - and used by ministers with respect.<sup>16</sup> Those in authority by virtue of their greater learning were similarly to be respected, but they should not lord it over their parishioners' consciences, 'there being not only a paritie in nature, but also an equalitie in our sin and miserie' (*OGW*, p. 23). The ultimate goal

of reciprocal humility was a 'real union' achieved through labour, which would prove the propriety of the appellation 'brethren'. The act of giving rather than taking honour, as Elizabeth Warren put it, was a means by which the faithful might 'imitate our blessed Saviour, who in the daies of his flesh, was by precept and practice the most specious president of stupendious humilitie, his birth, life and death, being all a concurrence in humbling himself, to make us truly happie' (*OGW*, p. 9). Christ wreathed himself in ignominy, 'made of himself no reputation' and took upon himself the role of a servant. Christian humility thus becomes a virtuous disposition because it constitutes a form of *Imitatio Christi*. It is this last parallel which finally lifts Elizabeth Warren's theology beyond the charge of patriarchal internalisation. Christ is thus received as womanly and the duty of the faithful is to imitate his behaviour. Given all this, it is somewhat difficult to see why she defends the authority of hieratic office. If 'transcendental employments, or seraphical indowments, should not make them high in their own esteeme, but humble with the Apostle' (*OGW*, p. 26), it might seem pertinent to ask why the professional office of the clergy should be defended against those who favour eschatological autodidacticism and wish to make ministers redundant. The answer lies in the privileged liminal function of the clergy and the allocation of special responsibilities. Elizabeth Warren needed to legitimate the position of the clergy as a special class because in her later texts she valorized the position of the housewife as the paramount Christian economist. Clearly this concept rested in part on an argument for strict professional differentiation. Clerical office was weighty work: ministers were 'God's husbandmen and God's builders'. Was the effort of a conscientious minister 'who vigilantly careth for the whole weale of his flock, so light and easie as these suppose, who under-value their precious labours' (*OGW*, p. 14)? Evidently not. It was the job of ministers, she

argued, to 'unfold the mysterie of God manifested in the flesh, with more perspicuitie'. The rationale for her text is thus seen to spring directly from the apparent paradox in the idea of divine incarnation. In her introduction, Warren cites as a founding maxim the commonplace idea that 'grace divests nature of no true ornament'. Christianity is not a supplement to nature, it is its ultimate expression.<sup>17</sup>

In *The Old and Good Way Vindicated*, Warren attempts to connect laity and God by appealing to the nomenclature of language itself. Metaphysical connection is achieved, she argues, by the grammatical function of the clergy. If the problem is defined as a dispute about words, then a grammatical metaphor is an apt solution. The moral she draws from the first epistle to the Thessalonians counsels us:

that even the most excellent, or eminent Christians, may possibly faile in this particular duty, and have need of incitation, by the voyce of the Spirit, to know them that labour among us, the conjunctive particle implying a connexion between the precedent and subsequent matter. (*OGW*, p. 1)

The laity need a connective particle in the form of the clergy, because they need an intercessor to mediate between flesh and spirit. Continuing the grammatical metaphor, she parses her text into three sections: the petitioners and their posture; the petitioned and their character; and the matter of the petition. She also notes three relations: labour, dignity, and duty, which hold between petitioned and petitioners.

There is good reason for this somewhat laboured structural classification or naming of parts, and for Elizabeth Warren's general concern with language. Prelapsarian Adam had possessed the faculty of speculative knowledge and like a 'living Librarie'

was able by the clearnesse of his pure intelligible facultie, to give [the animals] names expressing their natures, and not doubt what he did in regard of these inferiors, was able to do the like in respect of celestially bodies, knowing the nature of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, with their several influences on the sublunary creatures. (*OGW*, p. 12)

The power effectively to name, which means something more than the mere allocation

of convenient labels, was once a human capacity, a perfection of linguistic power now possessed by God alone. The story of Adam and Eve's alienation from the Garden of Eden is the story of their loss of the power to apply language definitively to the sentient and phenomenal world. The Word is therefore the key to reconnecting those binary opposites and structural antagonisms which have characterized existence since the Fall: body and soul, mankind and God, clergy and laity, high and low, man and woman. But the Word is not produced by, or communicable in, ordinary language and the balm for all theological ailments must be sought in Scripture, a linguistic resource with the properties of a powerful physic, prescribed and allocated by God's conjunctive particle:

so doth he now in these latter dayes effect by means, what he then did immediately; for he unlocks his Cabinet of precious and necessary truth, and stores his Ministers with the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that they may be enabled, like good and faithful Stewards in dispensing his Word, to give every one their portion. (*OGW*, p. 3)

The distribution of truth is to remain firmly in the proper hands of God's administrators: the clergy. Warren thinks one consequence of the Fall is that God now acts by proxy in the course of history, and therefore the authority of his chosen servants should be accepted without question.

The unusual characteristic of doctrinal orthodoxy here is that it exists not as an intellectual entity but as a spatial category; it must be stored as a treasure and imbibed by the faithful. It is rather like a foodstuff *distributed* from God's store; the clergy are rather like storekeepers. In *The Old and Good Way*, the employment of physical or corporeal terms to describe the spiritual is a consistent rather than an exceptional practice. There seems to be no vocabulary of pure untrammelled spirit which is not dependent on physical metaphors. Nor is there recourse to noumenal mysticism, or to the excuse that since spirit is beyond language, no description of it is plausible. The

terms and images employed to annotate theological truth are all mediated by corporeal trope or metaphor. It is plausible to see this as the result of a scepticism and anxiety about language which converts the simple truths of Christian dogma into physical manifestations and bodily states. If the medium for their description is corrupt they cannot be described but must somehow be demonstrated.

Thus the description of ministerial work entails an appeal to conscience which is couched in the language of physical engagement:

what more pathetical or pressing motive, can be used to work upon our dull affections, than when Ministers (thirsting after our spirituall welfare) do hammer hard hearts by perswasive petitions. (*OGW*, p. 4)

The passage quoted here is awash not with intimations of spiritual constitution but with the description of recalcitrant flesh; ministers are employed not to persuade intellectually so much as to perform acts of somatic re-colonisation. If such petitions have power, it is surely by virtue of their assault on the body rather than by their perspicuous characterization of the soul. The truth about the soul divulged here is that in-and-of-itself it knows no conflict. The soul possessed of pristine purity is, after all, that part whose script is already written out in final copy.

Stating that no legitimate complaint can be made of ministers whose verbal dexterity or talent is unimpressive, Elizabeth Warren's position on the relationship between form and content valorizes pure content and castigates the meretricious dishonesty of form. To the suggestion that the believer should be free to seek out the best preacher for edification, she replies trenchantly that it matters not whether God's word is preached in an 'unpolished dialect' nor 'varnisht with the words of man's wisdom':

we have no cause for this to desert him, or to looke out for elegancie, to build up our faith and knowledge, but rather to remember that the lord is

pleased by such foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe, and that Christ's Gospel in its meanest attire is the power of God, and the wisdom of God; which reproves their practice who have itching ears, curiously affecting a smooth and silken language, and not so much regarding the precious matter delivered, as the painted or gilded forms in which it appears unto us. (*OGW*, p. 22)

We must be content, the argument goes, with a lexical diet of plain fare because human faculties are limited and not wholly trustworthy. For the soul - the spark of divinity - genuine access to fuller understanding is possible, but more difficult to encapsulate in language. We are thus driven towards the conclusion that higher knowledge of divine truth does not involve a form of ordinary perception. When Elizabeth Warren talks about enjoying 'pure conversation' with God, it is a concept curiously devoid of human speech. The truth of doctrine is not *perceived* so much as *inhabited*. Defects of style cannot be a rightful reason for deserting a minister, she argues, since many of the Old Testament Prophets had either 'bad voices or little eloquence'.

Although the efficacy of human language is subject to doubt, ministerial rhetoric is powerfully appropriate in contrast to the opprobrium meted out to those who challenge the verbal authority of God's apostles. The error of such self-authorizing preachers lies in their surfeit of physical capacity over and above their intellectual understanding:

some of such persons being merely mechanick, who leap from the limits of their lawfull station, affecting a dignity transcending their desert, and seeding like Cameleons on the aire of popular applause, *creeping into houses and as saith the apostle leading captive poor silly women, who laden with sins are soon led away with diverse lusts into snares of perdition.* (*OGW*, p. 15)

When ambitious 'mechanic' preachers refuse to accept that social organisation is sustained by hierarchy, their actions threaten to upset not just the niceties of social distinction but the control of animal lust itself. Popular applause is wild and unpredictable in its attention; it encourages those who respond to demand rather than issue supply. Jeroboam

made priests of the lowest people: 'those would soonest corrupt their consciences, being allured by the bait of worldly credit or profit' (*OGW*, p. 16). As we shall see, it is not the nature of profit or credit as concepts that is criticized here, but rather their rootedness in carnality which reveals in turn a misunderstanding of true or absolute credit and profit. It is, after all, Satan who stirs up 'pragmaticall' spirits. And who, asks Elizabeth Warren, 'must be his agents, but illiterate persons, transported by enthusiasms, or affected with prejudice'.

The effect of persecution upon Christian practice leads Warren to describe the religious conviction as the defence of valuable merchandise held securely within the body of the believer. In this manner, divine meaning can be directly absorbed by the flesh and the spirit can be sustained:

from whence we may fitly observe for our own instruction, that the sacred seed of the word of life, sowne in the hearts of sincere Christians, never fructifieth in more abundance, than when it is attended with persecutions and affliction, these being God's pruning hook; wherewith he takes away those luxuriant exorbitances, which hinder growth in grace, his dearest children being oftenest chastised, and tried in the furnace, to illustrate their graces. (*OGW*, p. 6)

The most remarkable feature of this passage is that by employing the metaphor of a harvest cycle, Christian grace is seen to be 'grown' like a holy crop in the earth of the Christian body. The production of grace can be achieved by physical affliction: distress the body and it will *show* grace.

He [Christ] left not his mansion of divine glory to reside in the palace of some potent Prince, but vailed the lustre of his inconceivable claritie under the obscure mantle of our fraile infirme nature. Yea denying and declining all pomp and state...making himself no reputation and taking upon himself the form of a servant. (*OGW*, p. 9)

The incarnation is itself an act of humility, a shunning of due reverence and an embracing of lowly position.



In her first tract, Elizabeth Warren develops a bias towards the somatic. Repeated attempts to articulate a description of spiritual value are tethered firmly by metaphors which suggest not the ethereal but the material. The metaphors which impart this message continue, throughout her work, to apply physical modes to spiritual subjects.

Elizabeth Warren notes how God

caused us to taste how good and gracious he is, that we might be enabled to set forth his ravishing sweetness, by telling the patient there is balme in Gilead. (*OGW*, p. 11)

Religious experience is not intellectual experience; on the contrary, it is encountered as a ravishing sweetness which is felt and tasted. The understanding acquired from such a process is sensual and events are grappled with through descriptions of bodily consumption. Physical metaphors enable metaphors of bodily consumption. The function of the clergy is now become to supply the congregation with suitable spiritual sustenance.

They are tasters to the multitude:

if we view them it will plainly appear, that such must be waking when others sleep...not only labouring to find out wholesome food, fit for the nourishment of severall persons; but to feed on those truths by divine meditation and holy practice, before he present them to others; first tasting the sweetness of that hidden Manna, those peculiar comforts of sweet soule-fattening dainties, and then inviting poor hungry Penitents to taste and see that the Lord is gracious; first satiating themselves with that surpassing banquet, to which the spouse invites his well-beloved, that being refreshed and strengthened thereby, they may draw out to the faithful the breasts of consolation, rightly dividing the word of truth, like workmen that need not be ashamed. (*OGW*, p. 15)

The metaphors which give the right account of Christian experience and properly communicate the inner change which accompanies faith are repeatedly those metaphors which gain access to a person's internal space. The problems associated with fallen language are avoided because doctrine is thought of as an edible entity. Over-reliance on the body to provide a fertile environment for the production of non-linguistic meaning

is difficult to sustain however, since it may begin to resemble a return to carnal values. The body is traditionally conceived of in Christian thought as the site of concupiscent urges which must be suppressed and overcome according to the discipline of conscience. To situate the metaphors of illumination in the base and fallen world, to which the body belongs, is to invite contradiction.

It is via the body of Christ that the truth of God's word can be literally accommodated. If the truth becomes a commodity which can be possessed by the body, then the disparity between human language and divine doctrine is relegated to the status of a minor inconvenience. By writing out doctrine as a series of corporeal metaphors, Elizabeth Warren bypasses the problem of the fallen state of human consciousness. When the faithful take in the Word of God, they are expected not to memorize it or appreciate it intellectually, but to hoard it like a precious and rare resource:

let it then be our care, to express our cordiall sincerity by our humble obedience to the word delivered, laying it up in our hearts, as an abiding treasure, that will make us rich unto all eternity. (*OGW*, p. 18)

Elizabeth Warren chooses to stress the intrinsic value of the Word as a treasure which will make one rich in the long run but whose short term attractiveness is not immediately obvious. It is the job of the clergy to allow us to grasp and entertain God's Word:

if we thus entertain the ambassage, receiving the word with all due reverence, though this treasure be brought us in earthen vessels, we shall highly esteeme those that bring it unto us. (*OGW*, p. 19)

The Word of God is here a precious organic matter brought by the clergy -God's diplomats - and presented as a gift of great value.

Ministers, warns Elizabeth Warren, must serve the flock and 'take heedful vigilance, lest wolves prey upon them'. The religious body is a vessel which can be occupied either by the holy or the profane. The only certainty is that the empty vessel

is liable to occupation and therefore the quality of dispositions which occupy it must be carefully controlled.

When she came to consider the condition of the English Church, Elizabeth Warren made it clear that she believed it had reached a point of great crisis. The reason adduced for decline is couched in familiar terms: congregations have become spiritually impoverished because they have failed to consume the food of true doctrine and have succumbed passively to external lusts:

carried away with every puffe and winde of strange doctrine, taking off the edge of that sincere affection and cordiall love we owe our godly Ministers: whilst we in the posture of right *Athenians*, are deeply affected with eare-tickling novelties, distasting that precious appointed foode, which we formerly prized, if our hearts had not deceived us, and waxing wanton, with full fed *Jeshuron* we kicke with the heele in contempt of the Ordinances. (*OGW*, p. 37)

Punishment for such theological misdemeanour will also come in edible form, since those who have paved the way to destruction will be the first 'to taste deeply of that cup of wrath and jealousie poured out upon all in the day of visitation'. It was the duty of ministers to admonish the congregation:

we that are dull by naturall stupiditie, had need to be roused by living Lectures: and had we no benefit by exemplary light, we should stumble and fall in darke and difficult passages. (*OGW*, p. 32)

Elizabeth Warren's second tract also employs the rhetoric of eating to describe the effects of true faith upon the body. She applauds Christ as a provider:

both feasting fainting souls and feeding hungry bodies in their several exigencies, presenteth to our due and serious meditation, a precious mirror of miraculous mercie, in the first by his word he raiseth the dead, in the latter he graciously preserved the living, his esteeme of our soules is revealed in the one, his care of our bodies is expressed in the other. (*ST*, p. 1)

The invocation of a metaphorical mirror to suggest the self-evident and transparent truthfulness of the proposition that Christ represents a perfect form is a familiar idea.

Here, Christian dualism extends to the employment of metaphors which designate both soul and body as consuming entities. Faith is physically supported by the action of soul and body in undoing the effects of religious hunger by feasting on faith and a knowledge of God's Word. There is no attempt to create a language of spiritual description. Instead an already well-formulated language of production and consumption is brought into play to annotate an unfamiliar area of experience.

There is more to Elizabeth Warren's rhetorical practice than the gradual domination and replacement of one rhetorical mode by another, however. In *Spiritual Thrift*, food metaphors are developed to include more direct consideration of her deepest theological concern: the question of value. This is accompanied by much metaphorical musing over exchange, price, cost and other economic concepts. When Elizabeth Warren refers to Christ as the 'price' of our redemption ('sith none could so well set a rate on the creatures, or value them rightly at their juste esteem' *ST*, p. 2), she is expressing a view held by many contemporaries and traditionally by Christian writers. What is intriguing is the specific and extended use of terms which describe economic relations to illustrate the relationship between man and God. Christ gave duties to his disciples:

teaching them the price and use of the creatures, and in directing them instructeth us also, in the thriving trade of considerate collection. (*ST*, p. 2)

It is not by accident that economic prudence and the restriction of expenditure are the moral laws which emerge from so economic a description of Christian virtue. The text which prefaces this tract is taken from the story of the feeding of the five thousand in John's Gospel. Elizabeth Warren turns its literal meaning into an allegory against waste and economic profligacy by quoting Christ's words to his disciples, 'gather up the fragments which remain that nothing be lost'. It is, it must be said, an apparently

marginal part of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, but perhaps so idiosyncratic a choice provides evidence of original thinking, since the explication of a scriptural commonplace might well produce nothing more than commonplace judgements. The platitudes that might arise from this practice would not meet one of the primary rhetorical motives of Elizabeth Warren's work, which is to produce invigorating and persuasive Christian explanation.

The final moral message of Elizabeth Warren's first tract entreats us to consider the advantages of true faith and to estimate its true value. *Spiritual Thrift* takes up where *The Old and Good Way Vindicated* leaves off and continues to elaborate a definition of true value and accurate estimation. The course of our behaviour, counsels Elizabeth Warren, should follow a path between two extremes. We should above all endeavour to avoid

those exorbitances which Epicures and Worldlings run headlong into for want of heavenly wisdom, who making a monopoly of pleasure or profit, are trapt up in the snares of profuseness or penury. (*ST*, p. 4)

When this middle way between the scylla of hedonistic abandon and the charybdis of obsessive materialism is further described, however, it becomes clear that the desired trajectory requires one to swerve in the direction of work and duty:

our Lord and master hath designed us a work, conducing to our present and future emolument, which precept if we practice with all painful diligence, the benefit will countervail our industrious sedulity, but if we be deficient or remisse in duty, neglecting or contemning what time or means affords, our poverty will come like the posting traveller, and our necessity rush in like an armed man. Let us then by labour improve opportunities. (*ST*, p. 4)

We must labour for spiritual welfare; to shirk this necessity will render us spiritually destitute. Elizabeth Warren suggests two remedies. First we must labour to improve our opportunities and secondly we must prize and value the meanest of creatures, 'as much

transcending what we can merit' (*ST*, p. 7).<sup>18</sup>

The second of these maxims carries with it the implication of a spiritual debt to God which is in some sense absolute. One central tenet of Lutheranism was the idea of man's total and absolute depravity before God. Elizabeth Warren uncharacteristically uses a similar rhetoric by appearing to claim that a debt is owed to God which can never be repaid: humanity can never hope to attain spiritual solvency before God. It must be perpetually worked for, however, since 'idleness', claims Elizabeth Warren, is 'the epidemical disease of these sinful times' (*ST*, p. 5), whereas 'our youth and health is compared to a harvest, wherein men gather winter provision' (*ST* p. 4). Yet if the value of the debt can never be accumulated, what sense can there be in working so diligently for its removal? Given this analysis, the use of economic metaphors to describe the relationship between the actions of God and the condition of man remains formally valid but fails to capture the true nature of that which it seeks to describe.

Part of the answer to this paradox lies in the fact that production and consumption are punishments for original sin. The language of labour often has a liminal function with regard to the rhetorical representation of the soul. This occurs when the rhetoric of labour - the labour of harvest and the production of food - is used to describe the action of the soul with regard to God. Youth and health are a harvest wherein man gathers winter provision, the poor and needy have 'a portion of it even that which falls from the hand of the reaper' and 'he that gathereth in summer is a son of wisdom, but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame' (*ST*, p. 4).

The work ethic adhered to in these claims raises diligent duty almost to the status of a sacrament. Household governors are ordinarily responsible for the labour and provision needed to maintain a domestic economy. In Elizabeth Warren's sacramental

version of this trope they become responsible for the state of the nation, a nation, she reminds us, which has recently paralleled the sins of Sodom:

and now if shee [England] strengthens not the hands of the needy, shee aggravates her guilt and hastens her judgement.

Hath it then been our care to collect such precepts, as the Word holds out for our ample direction, pouring forth our soules to satisfy the hungry, and drawing out our store to relieve the afflicted? have we contributed to them? not only with our purses, but also with the current of our prayers and tears, putting up frequently our passionate petitions, and sorrowful supplications at the Throne of Grace, if we finde ourselves thus fervently affected, with the sorrowful sufferings of the Church of God, it may prove us such members as are truly sensible, in partaking the dolours of the mysticall body. (*ST*, pp. 14-15)

To be economically and emotionally dutiful towards the needy is to undertake just the spiritual labour which will restore the country to its place as a godly nation. To be a good Christian and a good housewife is thus truly to become a member of Christ.

Resources not conserved will be winnowed away without thought until nothing remains. Christians may pass their lives purchased by the crucifixion of Christ, pursuing material possessions and neglecting the welfare of their souls, but Christ is both donor and purchaser of their advantage, standing in a double relation to their circumstance, both paying for salvation *and* donating it. Shouldering the mental, rather than the mere financial weight of his or her debt, the good Christian is compared to the wise householder:

his care is not so much to gather things temporall, which fade and perish both in keeping and using, as to trade for the treasures of the new Jerusalem, even those durable riches which abide to eternity. (*ST*, p. 10)

The Christian aim is to achieve by trade those treasures whose worth is measured not as exchange value but as absolute value: as pure worth for its own sake. Truth is found through diligent practice:

the practick part of Religion and holinesse is the acting of precepts in a pure conversation, not contenting ourselves with a naked Theory, but

clothing it comely with pious practice that our doing and suffering in the cause of God may outstrip all hypocrites and carnall professors, *who please themselves in gathering the husk*, or superficial shell of seeming sanctity. (ST, p. 11)

The real is favoured over the 'seeming' as active participation rather than intellectual recognition or the construction of theory. Religious truth is a deep truth. The body causes problems for this theology because it is defined largely in terms of its visible surfaces. Those are not truly faithful who

spend the strength of both brain and body, in gathering things impertinent and meerly superfluous, troubling themselves to conforme their garbe, to the Camelion change of all fantastick fashions. (ST, p. 5)

In the face of such frivolous attention to outward appearances and surface features, the body can form a sealed chamber, a treasure chest in which can be preserved the divine verities that possess eternal value. Decrying Independency because its followers prohibit the public ministry, Elizabeth Warren counsels: 'we must therefore with David hide the word in our hearts, as a means to keep us from such contagion, that we be not led away with the evil of the times' (ST, p. 13). Thus the carnal treasure chest can reside within the body, hidden and protected from the evil of present times.

Yet these valuable truths should not remain buried within the hearts of the faithful. If the pursuit of pure conversation is the true Christian aim, some attempt must be made to exchange or donate these spiritual goods. Accordingly, Elizabeth Warren recommends four courses of action: one should endeavour to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and harbour the stranger. In this way the eternal truths can be used practically, spread around a little and yet remain permanent features of the Christian life. For eternally valuable precepts are not associated with mortal exchange value: they do not decay or decrease in worth as they circulate.



Elizabeth Warren's writings adumbrate a scheme of Christian responsibility in which economic good sense and humble piety together provide for the nation's spiritual needs. Her work thus represents an innovative yet conservative response to much of the advice for women that was promulgated throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Her championing of household government, along with her interest in spiritual 'sustenance' can be read as a subtle siding with those responsible for provision. An indication of this position comes towards the end of *The Old and Good Way Vindicated*, where the figure of a humble provider is clearly valorized:

it was the commendation of worthy *Obadiah*, who, living as Governor of *Ahab's* house, the worst of Kings, and in the worst of times, yet not withstanding he feared God greatly; for, when wicked *Jezebel* raised persecution, taking away the lives of the Prophets of the Lord; noble *Obadiah* preserved a hundred of them, feeding and nourishing them at his proper charge; which transcendently pious and charitable worke he also performed with the danger of life, not deterred by the tyranny of those bloody persecutors, so great was his love to the Lord and his servants; yet, observe his humility, both in words and gesture, when he meets with the man so odious to his Master, the text tells us he fell on his face, saying, *Art not thou my Lord Elijah?* he did not expostulate with the holy prophet, nor charge him with *Ahab*, to be the cause of their present calamities, but humbly attendeth his heavenly message, performing the duty required of him. (*OGW*, p. 25)

Elizabeth Warren's theology is not entirely novel. Many commentators applauded the domestic governance accorded to women.<sup>19</sup> Bartholomew Parsons published a marriage sermon in 1633 replete with classical quotations praising women's household office.

Parsons argued that

the virtuous woman looketh well to the waies of her household Prov 31;27  
and chaste women must be keepers at home Tit 2;5, it is a duty imposed  
on married women to guide the house, 1 Tim 5;14.<sup>20</sup>

The difference between this and Warren's version of the proper domestic place of women is the way she raises it to the level of an exemplary universal Christian duty. Nehemiah

Rogers' annotation of the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel acknowledged that 'things within doors were committed into the good housewives hand',<sup>21</sup> but he uses the separation of male and female activity into a different spheres as a reason for the exclusion of women from Church culture at large:

their calling is within doores, and therefore should not be like those that Solomon tells us of Pro 7;11 whose feet will not keepe within their house, nor like those, Saint Paul reproveth abroad 1 Tim 5;13, but rather like Rachel and Leah who are noted to be in the house while Jacob was in the field, Gen 30;14,16, 31;4 Neither should they with those athenian women, give themselves to little else, then to hear and carry news.<sup>22</sup>

Xenophon's *Oeconomias*, translated in 1534 by Gentian Hervet, confined the good wife to the house, setting out a series of duties which resemble those adopted by Elizabeth Warren. Here, the advice to a good wife in Socrates and Critobaldus' dialogue is concerned with limited domestic economy:

and that that is brought in, ye must reveyve it, And that, whiche must be spent of it, ye must parte and divide it, And that that remaineth, ye must ley it up and keep it safe, tyll time of nede. And beware, that, that whiche was apoynted to be spent in a twelve monthe, be not spent in a monthe.<sup>23</sup>

Elizabeth Warren enlarged the areas of duty outlined here to include doctrinal as well as domestic accumulation and provision, and the division and distribution of spiritual wares on a national scale. She took the metaphors of domestic conduct for women and expanded their compass, privileging the realm of domestic governance and giving it a central place in the theological reconstruction of the nation.

## Notes

1. In *Spiritual Thrift. or Meditations Wherein humble Christians (as in a Mirrour) may view the verity of their saving Graces* (1647), Elizabeth Warren described how Christ appointed the duties of his disciples:  
teaching them the price and use of the creatures, and in directing them instructeth us also, in the thriving trade of considerate collection, for as we are bound by this precept and practice, to gather up necessaries for our bodily subsistence, so are we to labour in improving time and means (p. 2).
2. John Sedgewick, *Antinomianisme Anatomised or a Glasse for the Lawless* (1643), p. 15.
3. Richard Sibbes, *The Soules Conflict with itself and Victory over itself by Faith*, fourth edition (1638), p. 229.
4. John Collings, *The Spouses Hidden Glory* (1646), p. 14.
5. Dod and Cleaver, *A Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, p. 4.
6. Ralph Cudworth, *A Sermon before Parliament* (Cambridge, 1647), p. 10.
7. Richard Vines, *The Purifying of Unclean Hearts and Hands* (1646), p. 11.
8. David Zaret, *The Heavenly Contract: Ideology and Organisation in Pre-revolutionary Puritanism* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1985), p. 4.
9. Mendelson, *The Mental World of Stuart Women*, p. 11.
10. Elizabeth Warren: *The Old and Good Way vindicated: in a Treatise wherein Divers Errours (both in judgement and practice, incident to these declining Times) are unmasked, for the Caution of humble Christians* (1645) - all references that follow are to the second edition (1646), which contains an appended letter; *Spiritual Thrift* (1647), see n. 1 above; and *A Warning-Peece from Heaven, against the Sins of the Times, inciting us to fly from the Vengeance to come*, (1649). Hereafter I shall refer to these texts as *OGW*, *ST* and *AWP* respectively. References will be given parenthetically in the main text.
11. All three texts are recorded, *The Old and Good Way vindicated* on 11-12-1645, *Spiritual Thrift* on 2-1-1647 and *A Warning Peece* on 27-10-1649. See *A Transcript of Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers 1640-1790* (Eyre and Rivington, 1913), vol. 1, pp. 207, 258, 329.

12. She gives references to a large number of authorities, including Augustine, Gregory, Plutarch, Jerome, Cicero, Sophocles, Cyril, Hesiod, Ambrose, Juvenal, Euripides, Calvin, Anaxagoras.
13. The term is of course anachronistic here. But I use it to describe what it came to describe, a moderate episcopalian position.
14. See Stephen Marshall's defence of women in chapter one above.
15. There is some textual evidence to suggest that she disapproved of certain alterations in the translation of the King James Bible. Quoting Solomon on the sore travail of everyday work, she writes:  
     this sore travell (sayeth he) hath God given to the sonnes of  
     men to humble them thereby, or as it is rendered by reverend  
     Jamius, to be exercised in, as our latest translation has it (*ST*,  
     p. 7).
16. The term also carried radical connotations for Independents and Fifth Monarchists, implying the active participation of laity in sainthood.
17. Here she was advocating a Thomist doctrine reminiscent of the Scholastic *via antiqua*, which held that nature was never contradicted but merely perfected by faith.
18. Elizabeth Warren here expresses the conventional belief that work was originally a punishment for Edenic transgression. Adam's penalty for pride and disobedience was 'that in the sweat of his face he should eat his bread, till he returne to the earth from whence he was taken' (*ST*, p. 7).
19. Laurence Chaderton in *A fruitful sermon upon Romans 12;3-8* (1584), compared the pastor to a 'wise householder which hath filled and furnished al his treasure houses with al stoore new and old' (p. 71), illustrating the fact that the function of household governance was prudent economic management, even if he identified the householder as male. For the spiritualised household more generally see Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987), pp. 96-118.
20. Bartholomew Parsons, *Boaz and Ruth Blessed or a sacred contract honoured with a solemn benediction*, (Oxford, 1633), p. 21.
21. Nehemiah Rogers, *The True Convert or an exposition upon the 15th chapter of St. Lukes Gospell* (1632), p. 5.
22. Rogers, *The True Convert*, p. 7.
23. Xenophon, *Oeconomias*, translated by Gentian Hervet (1534), p. 25.

**'That it may be put out of question': Mary Pope's patriarchal constitution**

I hope these places will conclude, and put a full end, that so there may be no more questioning about this question, but that it may be put out of question, that God hath ordained thrones, and dominions in and over the church, and that God in Christ is over them, Revel 1;5. and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Now here we see that God in Christ is the setter up, and ordainer of these heads, and he is the king of them. Dan 2;47.<sup>1</sup>

If entering into debate in print was an activity publicly proscribed for women in Stuart England, it is easy to conclude from the evidence we have of hundreds of women writing for publication that they were doing so fully conscious of the extent to which they were defying masculine expectations. It is reasonable, therefore, to see the act of writing as a woman in the early modern period as the assertive self-proclamation of a voice traditionally condemned to silence.<sup>2</sup> Even if this voice was ushered into print by complex negotiation with patriarchal customs, and occasionally disavowed by itself, it is fair to find in such discourse a commitment to women's active participation in social polemic. We can legitimately call such an endeavour feminist. What, then, if the voice in question is consciously conformist, patriarchal, Erastian, and apparently royalist? Is a feminist reading compromised when the woman writer seems to read like a man? What if the text in question is furthermore conceived as a defence of the patriarchal power of the King and contains much shocked criticism of the extent to which the collapse of his power has been caused by the collapse of household harmony? One of Mary Pope's most pressing difficulties as the constructor of a narrative lamenting the national apostasy is that many of the examples of cultural disorder she uses to typify irreligious behaviour invoke the figure of the disorderly woman. She herself, by writing openly for a public audience, was in grave danger of appearing disorderly. Such an author might seem to be attacking

the very social changes which allow her the freedom, as a woman, to express her opinions. What should we make of texts which seem to sustain conflicting attitudes towards political patriarchy and women's writing? How is it possible to defend both at the same time?

When in 1647, Mary Pope published her *Treatise on Magistracy*, she sought to show that 'the magistrate hath been and for ever is to be the chief officer in the church'. Proclaiming herself a political observer of twenty years' experience, she tells her readers that the tract has taken her three years to complete, her work on it having begun around Christmas 1644-45. The structure of her text is testimony to the fractured nature of Stuart political language. She addresses, in three separate prefaces, first King Charles, then Parliament (Lords and Commons) and finally the Christian reader. Her treatise is further divided into two main sections, each with multiple subsections. In the first she attends to John the Baptist and the Apostles, the duties of inferiors to superiors, the Lord's Supper, baptism, the 'bearers of burdens', magistracy itself, Zachary's golden candlestick and the 'Ark of the moral law'. The second part of her book is divided into sections on bishops, Christ's three offices (king, priest, prophet), bishops and deacons, and God's holy people. She also appends to her text copies of two letters addressed to Parliament.

In her dedicatory epistle to the King, she employs the commonplaces of political patriarchal theory, addressing Charles I as 'bishop elder and steward of the churches'. She further defends him as 'God's vice-regent here on earth' and 'nursing father to the church...deriving your title from God's own name'. Her argument is that Church and Commonwealth are Charles' symbolic children, and relations of obedience and superiority hold between them as they do between father and child in the sphere of familial relations.

Children must obey their parents as servants obey their masters and, more generally, inferiors their superiors. Together the head and members of society make up one body. Charles (the head) and the populace (the members) had been separated by civil conflict, and part of Mary Pope's message was to express the hope that they would be kept apart no more. By putting forward two very different arguments for constitutional reconciliation however, Mary Pope invokes two metaphors for legitimate power whose tendency to contradict each other bedevils her text to its end. The first argument draws its inspiration from theories of patriarchal sovereignty, almost (but not quite) advocating patriarchal absolutism. The second draws less consciously, but problematically, on a discourse of membership of the body of Christ and suggests that Mary Pope is much closer to the beliefs of Civil War radical sectarians than a straightforward reading of her work might suggest. If Charles was to be thought of as a mere steward of the Church, then his power was not unrestrained: it was properly thought of as paternalistic, heavily prescribed by duty and responsibility and devoid of arbitrary might. If his power was patriarchal - the equivalent of that power exercised by fathers in families - it might well be more strictly absolutist, because more 'natural' and less bound by duty to the Commonwealth.

At the heart of Mary Pope's discussion of magistracy lies a profound ambiguity about the form of kingly stewardship; an ambiguity all the more remarkable for its presence in a text whose avowed intention is to put the matter out of question, to settle and rebuild the English constitution after the first period of civil war. Robert Filmer, the most famous contemporary exponent of patriarchal absolutism, held that the first kings were fathers. In so arguing, he was in part trying to prove that the idea of a mixed constitution was conceptually incoherent.<sup>3</sup> His argument was with those who argued for

a different beginning for sovereign power. For Mary Pope, the question was not so much one of the origin of civil power and social authority; rather, it was the question of how these cohesive social processes were to be reconstituted following the disruption of civil war. John Pocock has written of the Interregnum period that

the issue before the subject during these years was not where the legislative power justly lay, but which component of a sundered sovereignty might command his allegiance in the struggle to restore it to unity. This was a problem in conscience and casuistry, rather than in constitutional theory.<sup>4</sup>

For Mary Pope, committed to the idea of strict religious observance under a godly prince and parliament, the solution reached by following conscience is actually closer to a republican balance of power than a defence of Divine Right, despite her appeal on behalf of the King in patriarchal terms. The conception of monarchical power as constituted and authorized by the royal relationship with God was a modish one for Stuart kings. James I, in a speech to Parliament in 1610, had drawn on scripture for his claim that kings are by God himself called gods.<sup>5</sup> In James' view, kings were similarly God's lieutenants on earth, exercising a form of divine power and comparable in their position and authority to the fathers of families.<sup>6</sup> James sought to defend the right of a monarch to possess absolute civil power by discovering the foundation of his authority in God.

Mary Pope was equally concerned to justify the King's civil power; she wanted moreover to explain the nature of his ecclesiastical power and to defend the idea of a national religious culture, unified around the established Church and protected by legislation which required church attendance by law and imposed penalties for independent meeting and prayer. But this justification was not based on an origin; it was not simply a working-back to first practices to reassert principles; it was an act of restoration which recognized the significance of contemporary changes and sought to re-



establish balance by determining to whom the subject owed allegiance. Mary Pope bluntly argues at one point that all her comments are reducible to an entreaty to obey the fifth commandment: 'honour thy father and mother'. The problem remained that determining which father and mother to honour meant choosing between competing candidates without clear criteria for such a choice.

We have then to examine Mary Pope's arguments for Divine Right, together with her conceptions of paternal authority and to measure the interaction between, on the one hand, a defence of patriarchal authority which implicitly subordinates women to men, and on the other, her own attack on patriarchy immediately manifested by the act of writing, but also present as an argument from biblical exempla within the text. Does she write as a 'man' defending patriarchy and as a 'woman' supporting the interventions of women in political affairs? To do both would create a text divided within and against itself. How, then, is this difficulty negotiated and what effect do the requisite manoeuvres have on the overall 'integrity' of the text?

Historians of the Stuart constitutional crisis have not been slow to recognize the importance of language in contemporary debates about the nature of political society and the jurisdiction of those who exercised power within it. Numerous attempts have been made to define the political concepts which underpin Stuart explanations of society and so to understand the extent to which seventeenth-century explanations of power differ from our own. Thus Robert Ashton suggests that authority in seventeenth-century culture is an essentially paternal concept: 'Like the schoolmaster, the university don, the householder, the civil magistrate, and the king himself, the master wields an authority which is in essence paternalistic and contributes to the maintenance of order in society as a whole. For order is indivisible'.<sup>7</sup> The claim that a concept is indivisible is rather

difficult to assess. And while it may be true that one can detect in contemporary sources an overwhelming commitment to the idea of order, this perception in itself does nothing to further our understanding of dissent and disagreement.<sup>8</sup> What we need to understand is how it was that writers could defend dissimilar positions with similar claims. This can only be done by examining the fine detail of claim and counter-claim. It was, after all, only because so much was held in common that constitutional arguments could be so virulent. Bold and overwhelming differences produce mute incomprehension; it is only when policies differ with regard to fine distinction that detailed and ornate statements of justification are necessary. Every seventeenth-century churchgoer knew about order, and all had some interest in its preservation as the foundation of social concord. Yet it was not order that concerned the constitutional theorists of the mid-seventeenth century so much as the particular method by which order was to be confirmed and the arrangements and structures of power that were to secure it. James I thought that power was the motor of order and that its filtered movement through the social hierarchy was what supported the whole edifice. Power diffused through society, flowing downwards from superior to inferior, and the ideal hierarchy it supported was characterized by absolute stasis.<sup>9</sup>

The idea that those relations of degree which composed the hierarchy were universally accepted has led historians to argue that certain concepts which we now associate with the distribution of power were simply not present in the minds of Stuart men and women. Kevin Sharpe thinks that resistance, contract, and popular sovereignty, though available in literary form from the Continent and the past, were not significant in English political thought. He finds concern for these ideas anachronistic because they rely on a model of the State as an artificial construct which constitutional theorists then sought to justify. This premise, he concludes, marks an approach 'essentially alien to

early Stuart thinking'.<sup>10</sup> One objection to this line of argument might concentrate on the extent to which it is possible to talk about 'Stuart thinking' as a homogenous and coherent entity. Certainly the idea of the state as artificial was alien to some, but by no means to all Stuart thinkers. Sharpe finds political theory concerned not with contract, but with natural harmony, not with relationships of individuals to each other, but with one relationship: that of all to all. In religious terms, these ideas were expressed in the organic truth of one Church. The most difficult part of Sharpe's thesis to accept is the idea that there was some 'essential' characteristic of 'Stuart thought' to which more radical ideas were unavoidably alien. It asks us to take ideas which do not appear to fit the pattern, to label them unthinkable, and then to discriminate against them. It is far better simply to examine the ideas and see what their proponents tried to achieve using them.

Derek Hirst finds support for the idea that royal authority was generally accepted as a concept because even in 1642, while fighting against the King, Parliament could claim that it was attempting to liberate him from the evil influence of corrupt counsel. In Hirst's view, the contortions of Parliament in attempting to distinguish the King's office from the King's person are testimony to the degree to which the power of the Crown was understood to be part of the fabric of political order.<sup>11</sup> David Wooton, in his study of Divine Right and democracy, finds the 'great chain of being'<sup>12</sup> less important in the minds of political commentators of the period than Scripture. Rather 'both the defence and the subversion of authority were naturally conducted in language drawn from the Bible'.<sup>13</sup>

In 1549, Walter Lynne 'englished' a sermon by Henry Bullinger,<sup>14</sup> Zwingli's successor in Zurich, concerning magistrates and the obedience of subjects. It will be

useful to consider Bullinger's conclusions at the outset since they offer a standard by which to assess both changes in theory and the demands of historical circumstance on textual expression. War, thinks Bullinger, is a thing pertaining to the magistrate's sword and given by God for two purposes: firstly to punish trespassers and secondly to repel enemies and destroy seditious rebellion. In war, one should guard against three things: taking pleasure in causing suffering, revenge, and greed for dominion. Bullinger has the idea that soldiers are protectors of the public wealth. Magistrates may fight and so may subjects when commanded by them. Righteousness however, is something which inheres in the deed itself, not in the orderer. One important consequence of this doctrine is that it may not be lawful to obey the orders of a tyrannical magistrate. One of the lessons Bullinger is keen to impress upon his audience is the difficulty of determining whether a just cause is being pressed. Often when someone thinks they have a just case for war, it is simply an opportunity for God to punish their sins at the hands of those against whom the war is to be waged.<sup>15</sup> The status of justifying claims in God's eyes cannot be judged until events play themselves out. According to this theory, victory is evidence of righteousness and defeat of God's wrath at sin. Thus Bullinger could claim that European domination by the Turks was God's punishment for ungodly attitudes. Overall, the effect of claims like these is to reduce the efficacy of human agency in the process of history. When Bullinger argues with regard to the victorious soldier that we should 'let his victory only stand in God and not in himself',<sup>16</sup> it is clear that Providence is being defined as the most important single contributor to the final outcome of events.

Bullinger goes on to consider the Anabaptist claim that Christians should not hold public office because 'Christians do not contend in the market place'. This reclusive claim is vigorously countered with the argument that 'the greatest charge of a Christian

is to set forward with all industry the safeguard and wealth of men'. The office of the magistrate requires the execution of judgement and has as its goal the maintenance of public peace. There is no reason why these duties should not be undertaken by a Christian. Although the Anabaptists claimed that Christ had disavowed all temporal office (based on the utterance 'my kingdom is not of this world') Bullinger believed this did not prevent temporal kings and princes from serving the Lord. Unless they do so, he asks, how can Christ be called the king of kings? According to Bullinger, the subject should receive princes and magistrates as God's messengers, but princes should take care lest they lose their authority with their subjects by bringing themselves into contempt. To make such claims is to inject into the relations between ruled and rulers the idea of dynamic and conditional authority. Bullinger later makes this explicit when he argues that subjects are not bound to obey the commands of unlawful magistrates, that is, those whose laws are contrary to the Word of God. He makes the God-given authority of rulers conditional upon the just exercise of power. Tyranny can be legitimately opposed since its practitioners are no longer sanctioned by the Word of God. Yet in the midst of these conditional claims, a chronic hesitancy pervades Bullinger's arguments. In a text so clear and precise about many things it is all the more noticeable that he vacillates over the crucial question of a priority in subjects' loyalties: first to God and then to temporal magistrates. On the question of the power of subjects to depose corrupt magistrates, Bullinger fails to make clear his theoretical preferences. There is a manifest contradiction between, on the one hand, the claim that subjects should obey princes and magistrates as ordained by God, and on the other, the claim that their authority is conditional and legitimate only when subsumed under the law of God. It is not easy to reconcile the idea that by resisting the higher power you resist God's ordained messenger

with the notion that princes must gain the approval of their subjects to protect their authority. Bullinger thinks subjects ought to obey the laws of magistrates 'if they be good and equal' and he calls upon those in authority to show tenderness toward their subjects for, although 'God abhorreth unmeasurable exactions, tares or tolles...he doth blesse gentyl and moderate princes' (sig. Er). Yet despite these warnings that ungenerous princes will lose favour and be lawfully opposed, Bullinger seems technically committed to the idea that Providence orders the affairs of man, and that by this mechanism, God metes out punishment and reward for sin and virtue.<sup>17</sup> Unable to explain the fine distinctions of the theory and its obvious problems, Bullinger ends by stating that superiors and inferiors must coexist harmoniously, else riches are nothing; since the poorer realm with a greater degree of agreement between superiors and inferiors is stronger than the richer realm with a lesser degree of agreement. Abandoning theory, Bullinger states that 'commen experience testifieth the same' and concludes with the tendentious idea that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

There can be little doubt that Bullinger's articulation of the duties and responsibilities of magistrates and subjects was coloured by the need to oppose the contemporary practices of Anabaptist radicals. Yet many of his positions and problems were to dog discussion of the powers of magistrates well into the seventeenth century.

Henry Hammond's *Resisting the lawful magistrate upon colour of religion* was published in 1643 and reprinted in 1647. Hammond concerns himself with the outward powers of magistrates insofar as they supplemented God, 'that searcher of hearts to which the hypocrite can be bound over'. To acknowledge that God is the final and appropriate judge of transgressions is not sufficient, since there exists a continual need 'of communities to provide some violent restraint at the present for those whom those greater

but future deterrents cannot sufficiently work on'.<sup>18</sup> The plain truth of Christian eschatology is not a sufficiently powerful force for obedience to capture the hearts and minds of all. Magistrates are needed, argues Hammond, to persuade of the certainty of God's will, since 'all men will not do their duties for love or feare of God, and therefore for good mens sakes, and for peace sake, and for the maintaining of communities, those superadditions have been thought necessary, as some thorns in the hedge of Gods law'.<sup>19</sup> The rules for societies are thus understood to possess jurisdiction outside the Church, since Hammond claims that such laws must hold good both for Christians and atheists alike. To support this idea, Hammond argues that religion is the action of the soul; as such it needs no outward act to perform it. One may be as religious under tyranny as under anarchy. The practice of religious observation does not require any particular set of social conditions because the essential nature of religious behaviour is socially invisible.

The next stage in Hammond's argument is to put forward the idea that political pacifism follows on naturally from the inner liberty of religious disposition. There is no more certain mark of false religion, says Hammond, than one which is propagated by violence. The power of magistrates should be considered absolute except where that power is thwarted or overruled by superior magistrates. Power, in Hammond's scheme of things, exists within the boundaries of commission. Until a command is directly countermanded by a superior, an inferior magistrate must be treated as *sui generis*.

Hammond chides his opponents for arguing

that the inferior governor requires that which is only honest etc, as to do our best to defend ourselves against those that, contrary to law and conscience, assault us, the superior that which is contrary to both, viz, to sit still.<sup>20</sup>

Hammond objects most strongly to the phrase 'only honest' and restates the principle that

inferior magistrates are only inferior when contradicted by superior powers. In isolation their commands should not be thought a sub-species of lesser orders, the breaking of which is a lesser offence, but as completely binding insofar as they command that which is legal in itself:

the short is, if that which is here spoken of, be in itself necessary, we must do it, as in spite of all countermands of the superior, so without all commands or invitations of the inferior magistrate; but if it be not necessary in itself, neither will the commands of an inferior make it necessary to any who stands prohibited by a superior.<sup>21</sup>

In a startling technical manoeuvre however, Hammond finally abandons all talk of the limits of jurisdiction and introduces a new criterion for judging the necessity of things. If things are necessary in themselves, claims Hammond, then the demands made by magistrates on our obedience count for nothing, since the thing itself commands its own obedience. In one fell swoop the discussion is turned around and steered away from the question of when obedience to one magistrate can be rescinded in favour of another. Hammond then attempts to define Christianity itself in a way which begins with legal differences:

as it differs from the laws both of Moses and Nature, so it constantly reforms and perfects those (dissolves not anything that was moral in them, nor promises impunity for non-performance, but upon repentance and reformation) elevates and raises them up to an higher pitch.<sup>22</sup>

The looming doctrinal danger, which Mary Pope would have regarded as anathema, is that contemporary Christianity takes it upon itself to supplement doctrine and redefine the duties of Christian practice. Henry Hammond lives up to these expectations by describing the purpose of modern doctrine as theological repair. It is required

to fill up all vacuities in those former laws, and adde unto them that perfection which should be proportionable to that greater measure of grace now afforded under the gossell.<sup>23</sup>



No-one doubted that there should be a form of government. The question was, given that government necessitated the exercise of power, how was that power to be justified in the hands of those who held it? It was recognised that any theory which legitimized power was likely to raise the question of the nature and extent of that power. If the King held power as supreme magistrate in secular and ecclesiastical matters - Mary Pope's position - then the form of government over which he presided needed a clear description which would enable other groups to understand the original allocation of power and by what arguments it continued to be authorized. The task of constitutional theory was to produce a rolling justification for the original division of power, and to make coherent the limit of those actions which could be authorized legitimately by that power.

To take the issue of kingly authority: the question which occupied constitutional theorists was not so much whether the King was ordained by God but rather if the King was so protected - and most thought he was - what was the nature of his correspondence to God? If the King's powers were deemed to be comparable on earth to those held by God in heaven then monarchical power was metaphoric in nature. This conception of power went along with the anatomical metaphor for civil power. On earth, the King was like the head of a body, possessing final dominion over all the members. His power was naturalized by this metaphor because the idea that a body's members could rebel against the authority of the head invoked the idea of monstrous physical deformity rather than legal demands for political representation. The metaphor controlled the way in which it was possible to think about political relationships and, as long as one thought within it, the thought-experiment with members' rights always turned up a 'monster in nature'. If the King's power were hierarchical and his correspondence with God a metonymic rather than metaphoric relation however, then theories of resistance to corrupt magistrates which

also stressed the conditional power of magistrates' positions - an idea enshrined in the claim that authority required duty to subjects and that only God, who stood at the pinnacle of hierarchy, was not bound by such a requirement - stood a much greater chance of success. If the King was subject to God, a conclusion more coherent under the metonymic model than under the metaphoric, then the hierarchy, which defined relations between classes, included in its structure the relationship of everyone on earth to God. If the King was metaphoric, he stood on earth as God stood in heaven and the relationship between individual subjects and God remained untheorized: the King became a kind of proxy middleman between the people and God. If, however, the King was just another link in the chain that led to God then the connection between any individual and God was direct and unbroken. Was the King to be thought of as God's metonymic delegate or as his metaphoric representative? The former theory strengthened the case of resistance theorists while the latter weakened it.

Mary Pope begins her defence of Charles as the chief secular and ecclesiastical magistrate, not with a resume of his rights and their derivation from God, but with a warning of his responsibilities. Unlike Bullinger, she makes no mention of the suppression of seditious rebellion. Taking her maxims from Pauline epistles and the Old Testament, she argues that Charles and all those sent of him 'are to hold forth the sword of justice, for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well'.<sup>24</sup> She also reminds the magistrate of his responsibilities laid down in 2 Sam 23;3: 'he that ruleth over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of the lord'. The divine ordination of monarchs is here carefully defined as an office which carries with it onerous and inescapable responsibilities. The power of the King to rule is not an arbitrary power possessing its own justification.

Nor was Mary Pope unwilling to criticize Charles. In her preface to Parliament she claims that the father has been unnatural towards his children. In ecclesiastical affairs, the example of Uzziah - who offered incense in the temple and was struck down with leprosy upon the instant - is a clear warning that there are limits on the authority of magistrates.<sup>25</sup> In spite of this they are still owed the duty of obedience. Whilst the doctrine of duty can be expected to govern children, more is required of a lapsed parent. A king has not only the power, but also the duty to punish evil and reward good. And while he must enforce God's rules; he is most definitely not free to adapt them to his own purposes. By adhering to these ideas, Mary Pope stresses not so much the freedom of royal prerogative but the inalienable responsibilities of sovereign power. The monarch is effectively bound by the nature of these duties, to enact policy based on the moral imperatives contained in God's written laws. The purpose of the King's jurisdiction over society is to serve God's providential historical blueprint. The Bible is the most important legal expression of God's will and as such should form the central plank of royal policy. Mary Pope has no doubt that Charles will be reinstated over his kingdoms, but warned that he should 'read and exercise your self in the same word, that the ministers are to exercise themselves in' (sig. A2r). She offers further warning to Charles by invoking Jeroboam and Nebuchadnezzar as examples of the fate which befalls godly kings who shirk their responsibilities. She reminds him too of Ahab, who, though he had the law, neglected to remember that God's law was above him.<sup>26</sup> Contemporaries could easily have drawn parallels with Charles in all three instances.

The redefinition of sovereign responsibility undertaken by Mary Pope is called for by the unfortunate and ungodly state into which the kingdom has fallen. In particular she draws attention to the 'sinne of confusions' which God has suffered to be 'stretched out'

over Charles' realm. In calling for the resolution of these confusions, the importance of the King is stressed in an anatomical fashion:

and now that these our Kingdomes may see, that God hath exceedingly blasted their composures, and the time hath manifested the bodie to be a monster, therefore now I hope *the rod will be heard*, Micah 6;9, and hee that hath appointed it, and his Word, will be observed, which is that head and members make a compleate body, 1 Cor 12;21. And therefore those whom God hath already joyned together, let no man put asunder; but God hath made you King CHARLES supream head in and over these Kingdomes, therefore let none dare to make void this manifest act of God, or keepe you our king and people asunder any longer. (sig. A2v)

Yet it is clear that in attempting to understand the confusion wreaking havoc in society, Mary Pope inadvertently propagates a metaphorical confusion which lies at the heart of Bullinger's text and of which Calvin is also guilty. The kingdom is conceived of as a body, but also - at the end of this passage - as a wife. A tension exists between these models of relationship on two counts: firstly because although the latter analogy was largely taken for granted, the former was denaturalized and already the subject of debate.<sup>27</sup> The two models therefore have differing status as analogies. In the second place, one concerns the body's internal relations, whereas the other describes the external relations of different bodies. The one legitimates Divine Right while the other recognizes the existence of an external relationship in the State *to* some other body.

To claim then that Charles' position was righteous because he stood in relation to the country as a husband did to a wife put the relation between royal and patriarchal power into question. As Johann Sommerville has noted, there is a tendency to claim that Stuart political thought was based on analogy; the family supported the State because both were construed as a series of rigid relations that held between superiors and inferiors. But as Sommerville points out, analogies only served to illustrate that two relations had the same structure; they did nothing to prove that such arrangements were righteous.<sup>28</sup>

The King's contractual obligations are not those later discussed by Locke and Hobbes which hold between monarch and people, but rather those which God ordains to hold between a monarch and his people. The King's responsibilities to his people are determined and judged in their place by God. In Mary Pope's constitutional theory all contractual justice involves not two but three parties. Like Bullinger, she suggests contractual obligation when discussing the responsibilities of kings to subjects, but denies this vocabulary when describing the state as an organic body; that is, a system in which members are governed by the head and in which it makes little sense - except in monstrous cases - to talk of differences in opinion between head and body. It is the choice of two different metaphorical models for the structure of power and authority which gives rise to these problems. For it is clear that the idea of a body, when it is used to represent a complete organic whole, lends itself willingly to political ideas which stress unity and singularity of purpose. Discussion of mutual duties as the social cement which informs relationships between groups utilizes a political vocabulary which threatens to expose the coherence of the very antagonisms that, using the other vocabulary, are defined as both irrational and incoherent.<sup>29</sup> The first model submerges group interests by stressing the higher purpose of overall social coherence, while the second runs the risk, in attempting to explain the nature of hierarchical relationships, of encouraging the perception that different groups have simply incompatible interests. One explanation of Stuart constitutional rhetoric is that two political languages were being used simultaneously to describe political situations. Part of the crisis stems from the fact that these metaphorical models were coherent when taken individually, but mutually exclusive when employed simultaneously. The theoretical impasse abandoned by Bullinger in 1549 is repeated, because it had not yet been solved, in Mary Pope's treatise in 1647.

Once the anatomical metaphor is established in Mary Pope's treatise, it is effectively challenged by biblical references which dictate the shape of relationships between superiors and inferiors. Children must obey their parents, servants must obey their masters and magistrates must rule their own houses as they rule the Commonwealth. The neglect of these appropriate forms of relationship is the keystone of Pope's critique of English society. Reminding her readership that God's laws outweigh man's laws, she argues that there is a direct causal link between domestic and political ills:

this neglect of inferiors to obey superiors, by Gods Commandment is the very cause that hath brought all these confusions and distractions among us. (sig. B1r)

The power exercised in proper relations between superior and inferior - now sadly absent - is principally that which allows the regulation of conscience. The lamentable situation in families is that many are

divided, as this treatise speaks of, into I know not how many parts; so that neither Father, nor Master, nor Magistrates hath power (as they say) to binde their consciences, but they are at libertie to go whither they will, so as they say, they go to the service of God. (sig. B1r)

Some refuse to keep fast days, saying that it goes against their consciences, others conduct business on the Sabbath and recalcitrantly claim that their consciences will not be ordered by others. Some set up teaching themselves, and companies gather in fields and yards and teach blasphemies against the Trinity. The actions of women in this respect are a strong sign of religious disorder:

and heretofore in the prophet Jeremies time, the women did not bake cakes to the Queene of heaven without their husbands. Jer 44;19. But now in our time there be found some teachers, that have taught our women to follow their new found truths, without their husbands: and I thinke in some families their are as many opinions as people. (p. 39)

The disruption of gender identity provided by cross dressing also causes Mary Pope to inveigh against it. Concluding her discussion of Paul and the distinction between

fundamental doctrine and *adiaphora*<sup>30</sup> practices she gives Paul's criteria for fundamentalism in Phil 4;8 and continues:

so the prophet Deut 22;5 leads men and women to a generall fundamentall, and telleth them, that a woman shall not weare that which is pertaining to man, neither shall a man put on a womans garments, for all that do so are abomination to the lord. (p. 19)

Her concern for 'correct' gender differentiation appears pedantic in this instance. It is patently an odd way to conclude discussion of an *adiaphora* issue. But in a text written by a woman in which much space is devoted to a defence of gendered authorship, it takes on the resonance of a plea for separate space. It is also a strategy for accruing praise for good behaviour, since it offers the reader assurance that this woman author will remain in her 'proper place'.

Mary Pope's criticisms of the status-quo relate to the control of doctrine and find fault with poor discipline which leads to maladministration. She also sees great error in the conscience-relativism which she perceives pervading the population at large:

and is there not a great want of the sword of the Magistrate, and the sword of God's mouth, and hardly a maide-servant is to be hired, but they will indent to go hither and thither, whither they please: and though they covenant for a year, yet if their Master or Mistris doth not observe them, to let them have their wills, they presently give warning, and are gone; and this Liberty of Conscience hath been a means to bring such confusions among us, that very few know the latitude of their line. (sig. B1)

Again the mobility of women provides sure evidence that the ordinary pattern of social life is being subjected to abnormal pressures. But if the social and geographical liberty of women is a sign of the chaos that has come upon the realm, Mary Pope faces the counter objection that her own literary mobility suggests the same conclusion. She mitigates such a conclusion first by invoking women's voices as liminal gender motifs in earlier biblical narratives, and second by making a gender-neutral claim on membership of the body of Christ. The important question here is whether such diametrically opposed

interpretative strategies sit comfortably together. It is a sign of the confusion rampant within society that women who have their own way with their consciences are uncontrollable, but Mary Pope is herself at once such a woman - because she writes - and not such a woman, because she advocates adherence to the moral law of God. She laments that liberty of conscience usurps the place of loyalty to covenants and brings confusion, levelling social hierarchy and making formerly differentiated degrees of people separately and privately conscious individuals. If consciences are isolated and unique only the individual conscience can be the final judge in specific cases. If this doctrine is adopted, the power of external decree to coerce and order individual behaviour is fatally compromised. Mary Pope articulates her fear of the levelling effect of conscience by drawing attention to that section of Isaiah which envisages an equalising of social ranks. Here, the punishment for a people who have transgressed God's laws is to suffer the topsy-turvy of equal treatment regardless of degree.<sup>31</sup> Mary Pope argues that contemporary political events have made good that very prophecy. It is precisely this claim which paradoxically legitimates her own entry into print, since in the prelude to the Second Coming, the formerly powerless will speak in warning and the end of the world will be signalled by the prevalence of false teachers. She blames the nation's parlous state on the abandonment of the Book of Common Prayer, saying that it provided religious support for the laity who in former times knew much of it by heart. In her opinion the preaching practice of an ignorant clergy has had the undesirable effect of producing an ignorant people. The proliferation of sects and factions is a direct consequence of the abandonment of God's precepts. It is no defence to claim the privacy of conscience. The prelates almost extinguish the light of the gospel by setting themselves up as 'copartners' with God:



and now under pretence of publishing the Gospel, the Law is put by, and conscience set up to be obeyed in the roome of it, so that more and more, all of all sorts begin to live as without God in the world. (p. 5)

The Church is consumed by 'pride' and 'boiling of the spirit' and the moral law of God is thought abolished with the ceremonial law. Mary Pope's position is unequivocal. To the objection that the law is called the 'oldness of the letter' and that this has been superseded, she retorts that 'it stands for ever as a rule of life' (p. 7).

A fear of Free Grace and great loathing of antinomian liberty prompts in Mary Pope the desire for strict adherence to publically verifiable certainties in doctrinal matters. Thus her main difficulty with beliefs and behaviours moderated by conscience is that the principles by which they are deduced remain, like feelings, the private experiences of single individuals. The certainty of a feeling is of itself no guarantee of the validity or righteousness of that feeling. She reminds us of Jeremiah 17, to the effect that the Lord has shown us 'that the heart is deceitful above all things, and therefore subject to errors especially when it is most secure in a way of blind zeal' (p. 4). This position is most eloquently expressed when Mary Pope comes to examine the relationship between laws of nature and the language bound opinions of persons.

Principles of nature vary not as languages doe, and if principles of nature be inviolable, and indispensible, much more is Divinity. Opinions ought not to be the rule of things, but the nature of the things itself. Errors in manners do not shake the foundation nor un-church a people. (p. 32)

Only papists claim that Scripture is to be interpreted according to the judgement of men. For Mary Pope's exegetical practice the moral is clear: Scripture imparts factual laws which must be straightforwardly obeyed without human supplement insofar as those additions do not subtract from the fundamental precepts of God's will. This small caveat to absolute obedience allows her to claim that some aspects of Church life are not subject to official doctrine. She finds Paul's advice - to the effect that marriage is good but

celibacy far better - to be the kind of scripture in which fundamentals are not treated. Paul's words, written at a time when the Church was suffering persecution, were 'in regard of the times'. Yet when fundamental issues can be discerned, absolute fidelity to the Word is the prerequisite of correct doctrine, 'or shall' she asks, 'the scriptures be this age wrested one way, and another age another way, like a nose of wax?' (p. 32).

Mary Pope was convinced of the absolute longevity of God's laws and this opinion receives much emphasis in her text; not simply as a point of historical controversy but because her own certainty depends upon the moral severity of God's precepts. She castigates those who question the authority of the Bible because it is translated, and condemns those who think that ceremonial law has been superceded.

The idea that the decalogue preserves God's original intentions - and that these remain unaltered - reaches its acme in an aside which charges innovators with the crime of lacking a vocabulary with which to articulate their notions:

now seeing that God is unchangeable, and his word unchangeable, *and that there is no new thing under the sunne*, Eccl. 9. Why should we relie upon those that are subject to change without having a Word for it. (p. 37)

There has been no change in God's Word, *ipso facto* there are no words in scripture to justify innovation. If magistrates mismanage their duties they are indeed at fault, but this should not lure their subjects into the belief that they can oppose them. God binds subjects to him as the King binds citizens to the royal person, and both are bound in reciprocal agreement. If parents provoke children to wrath, no political course of action is available to them, because 'there is no new truth that teacheth children to erect laws to regulate their parents, but that law that the great God hath set over both parents and children' (p. 3). When Pope comes to consider the question of obedience to temporal magistrates, the significant difficulty of that law 'set over both parents and children'

becomes apparent:

Christ himself gave the command, that *Caesar* should have that which belonged to him, and this remains still in force to us, and all ages; that whatsoever Governors we are under, whether Magistrates, Minister, Husbands, Fathers or Masters, wee should not obey them in their commands, no farther than is according to God's commission. (p. 42)

This is a reassertion of the familiar claim from Romans 13;1 and 1 Peter 2;13 that subjects should be in obedience to the higher powers, since they were ordained by God.<sup>32</sup>

As a way of resolving the question of subject obedience however, it leads only to confusion, because of the insistence that there is a limit - God's commission - to the extent of Christian service. Here the question of obedience is linked to the question of fundamentals and indifference in ceremonial law. Thus when discussing the sacrament of Communion, Mary Pope lambasts those who make addition to the ceremony:

Colos 2;28. Which things indeed have a shew of wisdom, will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to Christ, but for the satisfying of the flesh, and soe to tie the conscience where Christ never tied, adding example to substance, and making their own example a substance, and so to unsettle the spirits of the people, that they doe not know substances from ceremonies, but now I hope this is somewhat left, but it was very hot when I began this work, (which was about christmas next so called three years) among some whom I could name. (p. 21)

Despite the coolness of the issue, the problem of determining whether the subject owed allegiance to the Word as it related to indifferent acts of ceremony, and whether this obedience was expected in cases where the higher power was acting outside God's commission, remained intractable. Mary Pope could even speak at times of an interdependence between the members of the body of Christ:

and all members of the body, that hold Christ for their Head, must manifest it by having their dependence one upon the other, as eyes and hands belonging to their head, as in the I Cor 12;21. (p. 37)

The composition of the head was also a controversial matter. In some cases it too gave rise to interestingly un-patriarchal judgements:

so now under the Gospel, God hath so ordained that the Church in generall being one body, should be governed by one Spiritual Head, which is Christ, but there are temporall heads ordained by Christ, and in particular families there should be but one head 1 Cor 11;3, every man is the head of the wife, and they two make one head in the family. (p. 49)

The model of the body politic applied here has unlooked-for consequences. The first of these is that no-one is independent save God; dependency is thus the natural condition of humanity. The second involves the idea that Christ is the head of the 'body' which informs social relationships. What is the King's relation to the religious 'body' if Christ stands as the head? Is he reduced to the status of a mere member? Is the head a member of the body?

Occasionally the relationship between an individual member of the body of Christ and God is expressed in terms more resonant of the radical sectarians:

and now that the Lords portion are his people Deut 32;9, and the Lord he is theirs, psalm 16;5 psalm 119, 57 Lament 2;24, Zachary 2;12 And Christ hath betrothed himself to them, and God in him is become their Father, and they his children, and Christ hath prayed that they may be one, John 17;21 that they may be all one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee. (p. 114)

Despite her failure to reach a workable compromise on the question of constitutional authority, Mary Pope does have significant things to say about the role of women in political debate. Indeed her work is a sustained defence of their right to participate in national political culture, even though she never discusses representation, calls for suffrage, or invokes the idea that Parliament and the monarch should be the people's delegates. The absence of these ideas should come as no surprise to the modern reader. But we should not be led into thinking that the position of women was of no interest to her. It forms a crux in her work which accounts for the difficulties which I have outlined above.

Whenever biblical women are invoked by Mary Pope they function as guarantors

of the veracity of her speaking position. Her narrative produces them as exemplary figures whose effect is to licence her own activity. She commands Parliament to listen to the King by invoking the woman of Tekoah from 2 Samuel 14;1-21. In that text the woman of Tekoah was persuaded by Joab to speak to King David on the matter of Absalom's banishment. Produced before the King on a legal matter, she asks to speak one more word before David:

and the woman said, wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of god? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished: For we needs must die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him.

David listens to the advice of the Tekoahan woman and revokes Absalom's banishment. Mary Pope quotes in full the passage above, then comments: 'and now that God hath by me (as you may see) found out the way to fetch our King from Holmby to be at home', (sig. Cr, Cv).<sup>33</sup> In the copy of a letter to Parliament, she argues that it is no dishonour for the Lords and Commons to heed the advice of woman, it 'being nothing but what is according to the word' (p. 123). She cites in proof the example of Joab, who followed the advice of a handmaid in 2 Samuel 20;15-21. Through her mediation the city of Abel was saved.<sup>34</sup>

In Pope's dedicatory epistle to Charles, Huldah the prophetess from 2 Kings 22;1-20 is used to stress the need for monarchical loyalty to the law of God. Huldah was consulted by Hilkiyah, high priest to Josiah, over the question of Josiah's inadvertent apostasy. She delivered a warning of the wrath of God and the need for royal obedience.<sup>35</sup> As a result of her protestations, Josiah repented and took a new covenant before all the people 'both great and small' to preserve God's Word, to walk in his ways and keep his commandments, testimonies and statutes. The promotion of elite piety was

Mary Pope's avowed purpose. Charles and his opponents had between them torn the fabric of state; her writing illustrated how the rent could be repaired. In her epistle to the Christian reader, she offers a defence of her participation in religious debate by claiming that women were originally builders of the Church:

and seeing there hath been long sitting, yet no settled course taken, for the making out of God's mind and for the making up, and composing of these past differences in the church and out of the Church, I say beholding this, and God having made me a mother in Israel, I thought it my duty to put my helping hand, having good warrant out of God's word so to doe, and example from the women that brought the work of their hands to Moses, for the helping forward of the building of the Tabernacle and the Ark; and finding God over-powring my spirit and as it were forcing me on, for the improvements of the tallents he hath given me for his glory, and serving of my generation, and for the helping to settle these unsettled times, for he onely hath been my helper, and none else, and my childe (a youth) the writer. (sig. C2v)

The women who brought the 'work of their hands' to Moses for the construction of the tabernacle are from Exodus 35;25-29:

and all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats hair...The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.

Mary Pope can thus be seen to put forward an argument by example, both for the utility of work traditionally assumed to belong to women, and for her own literary production as analogically 'women's work'. Exodus 35;35 concludes by figuring the wise as God's filled vessels.

Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.<sup>36</sup>

Towards the end of her text, Mary Pope openly defends her right to contribute by

example from the Bible.

And seeing David held it no disparagement, though a King, to take the advice of a woman, 1 Sam 25;33, and seeing that God himself, hath in many great acts honoured women as well as men, in that special promise that was made to Eve of the Messias, and in Eve to Adam, she being taken out of his side, Gen 2;21 Gen 3;15 And do to all mankinde. I say if God will have it so, in the midst of these distractions, to enable a weak woman to cast in her mite willingly, let it not repent you, nor disparage the assembly, but let it be accepted, and received willingly, as Moses willingly received the womens helps for the building of the tabernacle and the Ark, and I desire, God may be onely seene, who hath wrought in me to will this, and inabled me to do it, Mat 21;2. (pp. 108-109)

What Mary Pope achieves by cross-referencing her scriptures is polemical comment by sleight of hand. Instead of claiming her right to speak in secular terms, she draws attention to scriptures which appear to grant women powerful status. By rooting her justifications in an authoritative text she avoids the calumny of indulging her own pride and places her arguments beyond reproach.<sup>37</sup>

Despite this, the tone of her justifications is not positive throughout. The fact that she needs to claim full authorship attests to the likelihood of an accusation that her work was the result of someone else's labours. The claim to liminal power is also curbed by patriarchal theory. Mary Pope tends to argue that it is only because the times are so unsettled and do not respond to conventional remedy that she, a woman, feels compelled by a sense of cultural emergency to offer her thoughts. In her discussion of Zachary's golden candlestick she offers just such a patriarchally embedded justification:

and now that the Lord hath by his poore weak, worthlesse, and unworthy handmaid, (I say) God hath by me a contemptible woman, made out the full directory which is his word, and Government in his church, under the ceremoniall law. (p. 59)<sup>38</sup>

The patriarchal obduracy of claims such as this could be mitigated by an appeal to the need for humility in all Christian subjects. Mary Pope had earlier cited Richard Sibbes to the effect that the purpose of preaching was 'to levell proud thoughts, and to make us

stoope to Christ, to walke worthy in the grace that we receive' (p. 31).

Prophecy also provides Mary Pope with opportunities for self-legitimation. Linked to the idea that all are members of the body of Christ, prophecy allows for the exercise of talents which might otherwise be restricted by patriarchal norms. She rejects the idea that prophecy is no longer a legitimate activity, a view she says she heard propounded when she first came to London in 1645, and cites Anna, the daughter of Philip of Cesarea, as a modern prophet of the Gospel. The power of the prophets in post-New-Testament theology comes from Christ's claim that the law and the prophets were inseparable.<sup>39</sup> Naturally this gives anyone acting in a prophetic fashion a strong doctrinal justification. Her treatise contains the claim, fully supported by scripture, that 'all the lord's people are priests...and holy, and all speak one language, and all acknowledge one God' (p. 99). The apostle Paul was also a prophet in Mary Pope's eyes since he made no supplement to the Word of God from his own mind. Self-effacement is thus an important and universal part of prophetic power, not an attribute required only in women prophets. When Mary Pope claimed that she had been instructed to pray for the nation like Daniel in Jer 29, she was at once entreating God and her readership on behalf of humanity and infusing herself with divine authority. Prophecy was a way of taking responsibility for the nation and at the same time separating one's own culpability from the greater shame. Having begun her address to Charles by urging him to verse himself in scripture, she ends up arguing via Colos 3;6 that the Word should dwell richly in all. Her presentation of her text as a child 'which is neither Independent nor Presbyterian' in the first letter to Parliament borrows Elihu's words from Job 32;8 in a shift of emphasis away from royal and towards individual responsibility:

there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him his understanding, great men are not always wise, neither do the aged



understand judgement, therefore I said, hearken to me; I also will show my opinion. Behold I waited for your words, I gave ear to your reasons, whiles you searched out what to say, yea, I attended unto you, and behold there was none of you convinced Job or that answered his words. (p. 125)

She follows this by remarking that the question of whether Church government is *jure divino* is still unsettled, and continues with more words from Elihu:<sup>40</sup>

when I had waited (for they spake not, but stood still and answered no more) I said I will answer also my part, I also will show my opinion, for I am full of matter, the spirit within me, constraineth me, behold my belly is as wine which hath no vent, tis ready to burst like new bottles, I will speake that I may be refreshed, I will open my lips and answer, let me not I pray you accept any mans person, neither let me give flattering titles to man. (p. 126)

Such vigorous defence of her own religious calling to speak must be set against her earlier pleas for loyalty and obedience to Charles I.

Just as Sarah figures as the originating point for temporal kings who act as magistrates over the Church, so Mary Pope turns her text into a metaphorical child whose birth signalled a new era in divine history. Of course such a metaphorical turn serves her purpose well. The text/child is a paragon of Christian humility and obedience. It is brought forth too as a redemptive figure in time of national crisis, as she writes in her epistle to Parliament:

for God hath given me faith to believe that this child shall not be abortive, but shall be brought forth in due time, and be borne a goodly child, and so afterwards a child of joy and rejoycing. And seeing there hath been much contending to find out who are the true parents of it, therefore the right way must be taken, that so it may be known: for there is no child but hath a father and a mother and so hath the church, looke unto *Abraham* and *Sarah* that bare you ; and seeing that the seat of justice is the right place appointed by God to heare, to judge, and decide causes and to find out the truth, and so to put an end to cavills and contentions; therefore that this child may be nourished, comforted, and well brought up by its naturall and native father; and though he hath been unnaturall, and so hath willingly left it, yet God's word teacheth children to do their duties to their native and natural parents, though their parents neglect them. (sig. B4r)

In the second letter sent to Parliament, she praises God's help in making her instrumental in bringing forth

this desired child that hath so long stuck in the birth...now the child is dressed and makes its appeale to you the Solomons of our age, and this is to make known to you Worthies, that the right father is found out, and the direct way warranted by the word of God, brought about, so that you and the father shall agree together, without doubt; and that he come and embrace his new borne sonne and give him the name Benjamin. (p. 128)

There is a particular poignancy in the reference to Benjamin, the youngest son of Jacob and founder of one of the twelve tribes, since his mother Rachel died giving birth to him.<sup>41</sup> It is tempting to read this last symbolic reversal as testimony to the cruel irony by which patriarchy removes women's textual production from their authorship by re-gendering their texts as male. The production of this text has as its symbolic price the death of the mother.

#### Notes

1. Mary Pope, *A Treatise of Magistracy, shewing the Magistrate hath beene, and for ever is to be the cheife Officer in the Church, out of the Church, and over the Church* (1647), p. 50. Hereafter references to this work occurring in the main text will be given in parenthesis.

2. Mary Pope, Katherine Chidley, Anna Trapnel, Jane Turner, Anne Venn, Elizabeth Warren, Mary Cary and many of the early Quaker women writers all apologise for their entry into print, often proclaiming that their textual production is prompted and supplied by the generosity of God. The willingness to trace authorial productivity back to God is a constant feature of women's writing across doctrinal, sectarian and class barriers in this period.

3. See the introduction to *Patriarcha and other writings*, edited by Johann Sommerville (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991).

4. J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, originally published 1957), p. 312.

5. Psalm 82:6:  
I have said Ye are Gods; and all of you are children of the most high.
6. See *Divine Right and Democracy: An Anthology of political writing in Stuart England*, edited by David Wooton (Penguin, 1986) pp. 107-109, and Andrew Sharp, *Political Ideas of the English civil wars 1641-1649* (Longman, 1983). For the theory of Divine Right kingship see J. P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640* (Longman, 1986), pp. 9-57.
7. Robert Ashton, *The English Civil War: Conservatism and Revolution 1603-1649*, second edition (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), p. 9.
8. The extent to which Stuart political discourse enabled contemporaries to talk of political debate as ideological conflict has generated much discussion recently. Revisionist historians are often thought of as evacuating from the period the very possibility of political conflict. See the introduction to Richard Cust and Ann Hughes' *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in religion and Politics 1603-1642* (Longman, 1989) pp. 1-47, for excellent discussion of the issues.
9. See James' *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598) quoted in Wooton, *Divine Right and Democracy*, where he draws a parallel between love and power:  
and although we see by the course of nature that love useth to descend more than to ascend, in case it were true that the father hated and wronged the children never so much, will any man endowed with the least spunk of reason think it lawful for them to meet him with the line? (pp. 99-100)
10. Kevin Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England* (Pinter, 1989), p. 10.
11. Derek Hirst, *Authority and Conflict*, p. 27.
12. See E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (Chatto and Windus, 1943) for a description of correspondences. Tillyard has been much vilified by modern historicists who have criticised the rigidity and monolithic nature of his ideal system and denied it the contemporary universal currency he claimed for it. What is certainly true is that Tillyard leaves out much of the different protestant world view which would have lent greater balance to his book.
13. Wooton, *Divine Right and Democracy*, p. 27.
14. For a brief description of his life and thought see Bernard Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Reformation* (Longman, 1981), pp. 112-14.
15. Elizabeth Warren argues the same point. See chapter four above.
16. Henry Bullinger, *A Sermon concerning magistrates and the obedience of subjects*, translated by Walter Lynne (1549), sig. C2v.

17. Calvin too is notoriously ambiguous on the question of the interrelation of providence and obedience. In his *Institutes* Calvin distinguishes too harshly between temporal and divine government to gain favour with later absolutist theorists. Nevertheless he makes the familiar claim that those who reject the civil magistrate reject God. Magistrates were bound by God to be holy and responsible, allegiance was owed to them by subjects and they in turn were required to be just. Calvin does allow however that sometimes God raises up avengers from his servants and 'arms them with his commission to punish unrighteous domination'. He also allows the family analogy to restrain the actions of would-be revolutionaries:

for husbands owe mutual duties to their wives, and parents to their children. Now if husbands and parents violate their obligations; if parents conduct themselves with discouraging severity and fastidious moroseness towards their children, who they are forbidden to provoke to wrath, if husbands despise and vex their wives, whom they are commanded to love and to spare as the weaker vessels; does it follow that children should be less obedient to their parents, or wives to their husbands? They are still subject, even to those who are wicked and unkind.(iv, 20, 19)

Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, translated by John Allen, 2 vols (Philadelphia, 1935), p. 660. See also Quentin Skinner *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* 2 vols (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978), 2, pp. 190-95.

18. Hammond, *Resisting the lawful Magistrate upon colour of Religion* (1643), p. 3.

19. Hammond, *Resisting*, p. 3.

20. Hammond, *Resisting*, p. 19.

21. Hammond, *Resisting*, p. 20.

22. Hammond, *Resisting*, p. 29.

23. Hammond, *Resisting*, p. 29.

24. This comes from 1 Peter 2;14, a text also used by Bullinger. The other text often used in this context is Romans 13;1:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher power for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

25. See Pope, p. 89. The story of Uzziah occurs in 2 Kings 15;1-5.

26. Jeroboam succeeded Solomon as ruler over the ten tribes but seceded the ten northern tribes from those in the south. He established two new centres of worship - Dan and Bethel - in the north, to compete with Jerusalem in the south, and instituted a non-levitical priesthood. He was also responsible for the idolatrous golden calves, (1 Kings 11, 12). His division of the kingdom was responsible for the ruin of its land and peoples and their subjection to surrounding forces, (2 Kings 17;21-23). The

parallels with Charles are self evident.

Ahab was the King of Israel who married Jezebel and was converted by her to the worship of Baal (1 Kings 16;30) and threatened the whole of Israel with the new religion. He was eventually slain at Ramoth Gilead. His downfall was prophesied by Elijah (see 2 Chron 18;1-34). Mary Pope cites as one reason for the country's ignorance of true righteousness the heathen faith of Charles' wife, Queen Henrietta Maria, who was a Catholic.

27. The wealth of Stuart conduct books and polemical tracts which treat of the relations between husband and wife is testimony to the contemporary discussion they generated. It seems fair to assume that they were being written about so much because they were under discussion more widely. There is little need to 'settle' through publication, those issues which enjoy wide consensus.

28. See John Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in Stuart England 1603-1640*, (Longman, 1986) p. 48.

29. The key text for the idea of the unity of the body politic is I Corinthians 12. It was a text however capable of sustaining both radical and reactionary positions with equal efficiency. This was because in part it supported the idea that all members of the body politic were levelled in membership before God while at the same time allowing that the body was subject to the orders of the head.

30. Adiaphora issues were 'things indifferent', which some believed the faithful could not legitimately be compelled to believe. The notion originates in Thomas Starkey's *Exhortation to the People instructing them to Virtue and Obedience* (1535). See W. J. Sheils, *The English Reformation 1530-1570* (Longman, 1989), p. 20.

31. Isaiah 24;2-4:

And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant so with the master; as with the maid so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.

The King James text promotes a crucial ambiguity by footnoting 'prince' as an alternative to 'priest'.

32. 1 Peter 2;13-14:

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the lords sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Romans 13;1,2:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.

Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God.

33. Charles had been handed over by the Scots on 30 January 1647. He was held under parliamentary guard at Holmby House, in Northamptonshire, from the 16 February until the 3 June when he was seized by Cornet Joyce and moved to Newmarket. There Fairfax had ordered a general rendezvous of the army. Mary Pope finished the main text of her treatise on 16 April 1647. She dated the epistle dedicatory to Charles 24 August 1647, and the two letters to Parliament appended to her text are dated 27 January 1646 - old style - and 16 April.

34. As Joab besieges the city, a handmaid calls out to him over the wall. Joab says that he does not want to sack Abel but that he must avenge the disloyalty to King David of Sheba son of Bichri. The handmaid goes to the people 'in her wisdom' and arranges for Sheba to be decapitated and his head tossed over the wall to Joab. He leaves without harming the city and returns to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 20;22).

35. Josiah's predecessors, Manasseh and Amon, both idolaters, met untimely ends after great sin against the Word of God. Amon was murdered in his house by his own servants. Upon Josiah's assumption of kingship the book of the law that had been lost during the reign of Manasseh and Amon was rediscovered. Though Josiah was naturally good he feared God's punishment would fall on him and so repented. First he consulted Huldah who spoke the word of God. Her warning is graphic:

thus sayeth the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: because they have foresaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched (2 Kings 22;16,17).

Josiah is shown leniency in Huldah's prophecy

because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me: I also have heard thee, saith the lord. Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place (2 Kings 22;19,20).

Mary Pope had criticized James for the Book of Sports, issued in 1618, which allowed recreational activities after divine service on Sunday and was reissued by Charles and Archbishop Laud in 1633. James is thus compared to the idolatrous Amon and Manasseh. The parallels between Josiah and Charles, especially in 1647 when it was still possible to believe that he might repent, are tempting. See Pope, p. 100.

36. The image Mary Pope uses to appeal to Parliament at the end of her treatise similarly evokes spinning: 'I refer you to the 59 of Isaiah, for I desire the web which hath been long in your hand might become a garment' (p. 126).

37. To say this is not to claim her as a modern feminist since it reveals the extent to which she was restricted. Such gentle and convoluted arguments for women's religious participation are evidence of the power of patriarchal hegemony.

38. She defends her version of Church government *jure divino* in similarly self-effacing terms. See Pope, p. 91.

39. Mary Pope reads this claim, somewhat idiosyncratically, into Matthew 7;12. See Pope, p. 70-72.

40. She notes when discussing *jure divino* that 'Mr Coleman is dead', indicating a familiarity with the figure, if not necessarily the works, of the Lincolnshire rector Thomas Coleman, member of the Westminster Assembly and an Erastian, who died in 1647.

41. Gen 35;16-20.

Millenarian expectation took many forms in the first half of the seventeenth century. This is hardly surprising since chiliastic hope seems to have been endemic in English culture in the period.<sup>1</sup> While it is important to be aware of the differences between those who merely hoped Christ might rescue the three kingdoms from their self-created constitutional agony and those who wished to help Christ in the violent overthrow of an ungodly establishment, this chapter will argue that Mary Cary's Fifth Monarchist tracts, although part of the continuum of millenarian literature, possess several features which distinguish them from masculine texts and indicate the extent to which she was writing in response to the pressures of patriarchal exclusion.

As I have already established, one intractable problem for women writers in the revolutionary period lay in avoiding the kind of exceptional acclaim they often received at the hands of male preface writers. The need to disarm such praise stemmed from a realization that a liminal reading of women writers, which makes female publication a desperate but necessary response to deeply chaotic times, has the effect of reducing the significance of the content of their treatises whilst capitalizing on the outrageous fact of their publications to illustrate just how deeply out-of-joint times have become. Thus when Henry Jessey prefaced Mary Cary's *The Little Horn's Doom and Downfall* in 1651, he praised her for raising questions of millenarian chronology which 'deserve to be well weighed'. It is clear, however, that he considered the timeliness of her text more important than the content of her conclusions. Indeed he politely questioned the accuracy of her millenarian table:



and whereas both here, and in the *Authors* former *book* on Rev. 11 (called the RESURRECTION of the WITNESSES) their *slaying* is said to be past, and they are said to be risen again, henceforth no more to be slain, nor to be under *Babels* power or yoke; to this I may say with Jeremiah in another case, *Amen*; though yet I know some others, acquainted with much of the *Lords* minde, that do judge that *the slaying of the witnesses is not yet past, but to come shortly*, (some of them judge before the yeer 1654).<sup>2</sup>

Cary's two other preface writers, Christopher Feake and Hugh Peters, both read her text as conclusive evidence of the purity of her mind and the virtue of her person. They invoke what Sue Wiseman has called the return of the repressed, whereby the desire to praise spiritual virtue is haunted by the return of corporeal purity as the founding moment of women's literary productivity. Jessey's 'appreciation' of Cary's text is a slightly different version of the same phenomenon.<sup>3</sup>

Mary Cary tries to avoid, or at least to out-manoeuvre arguments of this nature by adopting a strategy which transforms her text from a dry and mathematical explication of Revelation and Daniel into a self-reflexive meditation which obliquely but persistently justifies its own production and seeks to vindicate, by an elaborate process of implication, the participation of the female Saint in theological controversy. To this end, Cary's texts are less technically prophetic than might be expected. Indeed, because of their preoccupation with immediate justification, they are prophetic not of the social and political metamorphosis to come, but of the contemporary presence of many of the features attendant upon Christ's thousand year reign. The commonplace calculations of millenary mathematicians are thus less important in her writings (although still very much in evidence) than in other Fifth Monarchist texts. Reducing the significance of millenarian hermeneutics in this way, she engages in an elaborate and technical defence of the contemporary status of the Saints and pointedly implicates her own authorial position as a vibrant voice in new times, thereby subtly legitimating her own position as

a prophet. She claims by this strategy not a liminal power, the kind temporarily attributed to the weak and powerless by ministers like Stephen Marshall,<sup>4</sup> but the right to political status as a member of the body of Christ.<sup>5</sup>

The book of Revelation was a notoriously obscure text for contemporary theologians, as the anonymous *Revelation Unrevealed* of 1649 admitted:

if there be any deeps in Divine Scripture wherein the Elephant may swim, they are surely to be found in the Book of Revelation, wherein many great wits have both exercised and lost themselves.<sup>6</sup>

This apprehension is upheld by a story in which the great Dr Andrews is asked his opinion of an obscure passage by a 'plaine man'. He replies: 'my friend I am not come so far'. In spite of such scholarly modesty, this text remains faithful to the idea that the Second Coming is at hand. Indeed the author persists with this view, in the face of great scriptural opacity:

let me therefore preingage my Reader, not to mis-take my discourse or my intentions; For my part I am perswaded in my soul, that the coming of our saviour is neer at hand, and that before that great Day God hath decreed, and will yet effect a more happy and flourishing condition of his Church here on earth...for the particularities of the time, and manner, I both have learned and do teach silence.<sup>7</sup>

Millenarian belief did not require a concomitant belief in the interpretability of the Book of Revelation. Indeed the author of *Revelation Unrevealed* took the multitudes of prophetic annotators to task for pedantic literalism:

they put a meerly literall construction upon the prophecies and promises of scripture, which the holy ghost intended onely to be spiritually understood...hence it is that those frequent predictions, which we meet in every page of the prophets, concerning the kingdome of Christs, the re-edifying of the Jewish critics, the pompe and magnificence of restored Israel, their large priviledges and marvailous achievements, are altogether drawn to a grosse, corporall, and syllabical sense.<sup>8</sup>

According to this view the literalist fails to understand the spiritual truth of the Bible's more obscure books of prophecy, because he is 'a slave to his syllables; binding himself

up to a mere sound of words, with neglect of the true sense intended'.<sup>9</sup> This conclusion of the discussion of allegory leaves the 'true sense intended' entirely open to question. Commentators of the prophetic and obscure books of scripture divided broadly into those soft Puritans or Anglicans who accepted metaphorical or allegorical readings and those stricter Puritans who would admit of nothing more than rigidly literal interpretations.<sup>10</sup>

William Aspinwall put the literalist case in his discussion of the 'little horn' in Daniel:

if it can be said that all these expressions are metaphorical, I deny it, nor can it be safe for us to coin metaphors of scripture where no necessity doth require it.<sup>11</sup>

John Tillinghast's *Knowledge of the Times* of 1654 put the radical Puritan and Fifth Monarchist case against interpretation:<sup>12</sup>

it is a most dangerous thing therefore to run from the naked Letter of the text, when the meaning of any Prophecy is sought after, to Allegorical flourishes, because where the Letter is set aside, and the Allegory made the rule of interpretation, there can be no certainty of truth, in regard Allegorical interpretations are as various as mens inventions. Now how a man shall ever bee able to judge of truth in variety, in case he have not some other rule to walk by than that which produceth this variety, I cannot tell.<sup>13</sup>

And Henry Archer, a London lecturer silenced by Archbishop Laud in 1629, argued that the error of the scholars had been precisely to reject the literalism of the thousand year reign. He believed that Saints should

long for it, and so hasten to it in our desires and fervent affections, 2 Pet 3;12. For, though we cannot hasten its time, to come to us; yet we may hasten to it, by our longing for its coming: And there is no losse by such love of Christs appearing. And surely, they who most love and long for it, shall speed best at it: and therefore it is pittie that this doctrine of Christs kingdom is no more studyed.<sup>14</sup>

It is this sense of saintly agency, of the curious ability of the faithful to participate actively in the bringing on of the Second Coming - even though theoretically they could do nothing to hasten it - which invigorates Mary Cary's writings.

Christopher Hill has recently noted the propensity of women to engage in millenarian activity in the early modern period.<sup>15</sup> But when we turn to the texts of prominent Fifth Monarchists for evidence of the belief that women possessed particular prognostic skill, or that they were licensed by God to participate in religious polemic, we discover a curiously ambiguous commitment to the position of women in the congregation.

John Rogers' *Tabernacle for the Sun* devotes an entire chapter to the position of women in the Church. His initial position appears to champion the equal rights of women in the congregation, but this view is substantially compromised by later comments. Rogers began his defence of women's place in the Church by arguing for their participation on the basis of the prior separation of the precious from the vile, the saved from the reprobate.<sup>16</sup> It was this distinction, rather than any difference of 'sexes, ages, or relations' which defined the righteous. When *Tabernacle* was published in 1653, Rogers had recently returned from Dublin, weary of a schism which had sprung up in the separatist congregation he had gathered there. At the beginning of Book 2, chapter 8, he claims that 'bitter contentions' over women's place were in part to blame for the division in the Dublin Church.<sup>17</sup> Rogers sees no warrant for masculine exclusivity and says he will draw reasons from 'prophecy, precept and practice' for the inclusion of women. Part of his argument is based on the idea of the liberty of the spirit and the promise (Joel 2:28-9) that in the last days the spirit will be poured out liberally 'upon *all* flesh', (emphasis added) thereby enabling 'sons and daughters' to prophesy. He cites Luther and Calvin as authorities on the matter, and notes the presence of servants and handmaids as particular receivers of spiritual beneficence. One of his marginal notes puts it bluntly: 'the weakest sort and sex he will exalt most' (p. 464). Rogers' ensuing

argument puts the case for women's membership of the body of Christ. The crucial scripture here is Matthew 18;17, 'go tell the Church', which Rogers believes means 'the whole body consisting of men and women...a people called together in one body' (p. 465). According to this premise, women are as responsible for the purity and orderliness of church practice as men. In support of this, he cites the example of the early Church described in 1 Cor 5;4,5, where no exception is made of women in ecclesiastical business. Rogers expresses surprise at contemporary circumstances:

and yet men now think much to allow them that *common liberty* (in *Christs Kingdome*, which is the *liberty of the subject*) to *vote* or *object*, or *ask*, or *answer*, or *say*, or *consent* as need requires, which *liberty* they are, (as I may say, as they are *members of the Church*) *born to*, and cannot (by right) be *deprived* off. (p. 566)

Rogers' final ploy in this respect is to produce a grand list of Church Fathers (after Samuel Rutherford): Beza, Calvin, Bucer, Bullinger, Melancton, Bucan, Paraeus, Rivetus, Sibrandus, Junius, Treleatius, Cyprian, Jerome, Augustin, Nazianzen, Ambrose, and Chrysostome; 'who all require that Church affairs be conducted *plebe consentiente*, by the consent of all' (p. 567). Having established this principle in regard to antiquity, Rogers enlists the aid of modern English authorities: Thomas Hooker, Dudley Venner, Richard Sibbes, Dr Whitaker, Paul Baynes, William Ames and William Perkins, to prove his point. Rogers makes a clear distinction here, however, between civil and spiritual realms:

in *Christ* there is no such thing as *subjection* one to another, all *equall*, (so saith *Perkins* in loc) all *sorts* of *beleEVERS* are under a civil or spiritual rule: in the civill there are such differences of *Fathers*, *children*, *Masters*, *servants*, *Magistrates*, *subjects*, *men* and *women*; but in the spiritual rule, and government of *Christ* in his church and *Saints* are all one, without respect of persons; no difference should arise amongst them. There is no such thing as *Jew*, i.e. as opposed to *Gentile*: nor as *Presbyterian*, i.e. as opposed to *Independent*: nor *Independent*, i.e. as opposed to *Anabaptist*: nor as a *Servant*, i.e. as opposed to the *Free*: nor as *rich*, i.e. as opposed

to *poor*: nor as the *learned*, i.e. as opposed to the *unlearned* in tongues and arts: nor as a *man* or a *brother*, i.e. as opposed to a *woman* or *sister*; for they are *all one in Christ's* account. (p. 471)

Despite this egalitarian attempt to erase differences in the spiritual realm, they re-emerge in Rogers' final discussion. He sums up the case for female participation with a list of noble biblical women and remarks on their strong affection for the truth. He then extends this affection to all women and reintroduces the very same exclusive differences of the civil realm which he earlier exorcized from spiritual life:

when once they be in the way of Christ...and for the most part they are exceeding men therein. Hence it is that Satan so often makes the first triall of women for his turn and service, seeing where they take, their affections are strongest (for the most part) and he sped so well at first, that he can't forget it, so he found a Delilah for Sampson, a Jezebel for Ahab, Pharoahs daughter for Solomon etc. For where they are bad, they are extreme bad; but where they are good, they are extreme good, and most fondly affected with the *things of God*: thus Acts 13;50 you read of the *devout woman*, or as the word will have it *earnestly* or *eagerly religious* and resolved. For as the *gold* which is of the *purest substance* soonest receives the *form*, and much sooner than the sturdy steel, or hard iron which is of grosse and massie metall (saies Cawdrey) so are women more readily wrought upon, and sooner perswaded and formed into the truth than men, who are for the most part like sturdy steel and iron, hard to work upon. (p. 475)

While women are part of the Church as a whole, their rights, duties and functions within the organisation of the Church are nevertheless circumscribed. Individual contributions to the whole power of the Church do not completely transcend or invalidate gender differences. Rogers is fully prepared to accept that women can be *as* diligent and as pious as men; he even goes as far as to acknowledge that they may be more devout, but he cannot, in practice, sustain the relationship between genders he suggests is theoretically possible. This is partly because his theory of the greater religiosity of women provides for a theory of their greater potential for evil. So that even if, as Rogers argues, *salus populi suprema lex* is

the highest *law* to look to, and after, i.e. the preservation and welfare of the whole; and this lies in every *brother* and *sister* to be active in, (p. 470)

this does not prevent him from restricting the position of women in respect of some activities. Although the women in Rogers' Dublin Church were granted voting rights, they were expected, as Rogers makes clear, to heed the advice of Paul in 1 Cor 14;34,35 and keep silent in Church:

grant it in that sense the Apostle spake it, which he declares all along in the chapter, both before in vers 1, 2,3,22,24,31,32, and after in vers 37, 39 which is, that they keep from publick preaching, or prophesying, or teaching as Officers or Ministers do; or the like etc, which all Expositors grant that I have met with. Now we plead not for this; but for the common ordinary liberty due to them as members of the church, viz, to speak, object, offer, or vote with the rest, which this scripture (nor no other as I know of) doth in the least hinder, but rather help, being rightly considered. (p. 475)

There is no doubt that this position represents a retreat from the high ground of female equality which Rogers appeared to occupy early on in his discussion. The advice he offers women - urging demure piety in place of bold proselytizing - denotes a return to the rhetoric of the conduct book authors so popular with the gentry:<sup>18</sup>

be swift to hear, slow to speak, Jam 1;19 unlesse occasion requires you; your silence may sometimes be the best advocate of your orderly liberty, and the sweetest evidence of your prudence and modesty, (as one saies, Silentium saepissime addit foemine gratiam et decus, maxime apud viros, cum de rebus seriis agitur) and yet ye ought not by your silence to betray your liberty...but I say be not too hasty nor too high; for as the note which comes too nigh the margent, is in danger to run into the text in the text the next impression, so spirits that run too high at first may soon fall into disorder, and irregularity. It is said, when Cyrus was young, his Grandfather made Sacas his overseer, to order him both in his diet, time, and recreations; but when he came to riper years, he became a Sacas to himself, and took not so much liberty as he had leave to do, and as was allowed him by his governor Sacas. And so indeed that may be lawfull to you, that is not (as yet) expedient for you; and rather then run into disorder and confusion, hold your liberty a little in suspense, and wave it on some occasions wherein you lawfully may, but lose it not for all the world which Christ payed so great a price for, and prepare for fairer gales. (p. 477)

Rogers comes perilously close in this extract to arguing against the content of the texts he ostensibly adduces to support women's action in the congregation. Where there is a conflict between what women are legally entitled to - in case of Church government according to scripture - and political expediency, Rogers advocates acting in a restrained way to support the practicalities of the latter.

Rogers was not the only Fifth Monarchist author to express ambiguous support for women in the Church. Christopher Feake, one of the movement's leaders in the 1650s, undermines the intellectual authority of Mary Cary's prophetic text in a preface written apparently in praise of her work. Two features of her text recommended it to Feake. The first was her collection of so many 'of those precious promises which concern the times yet to come, and the presenting them to the Readers view, (in words at length, and) not in figures, as the manner of many is'. The second concerned the level of humility and piety expressed by the text, a feature shown by her

vigilant care to insert here and there, as occasion is offered, such necessary cautions as tend to the wiping off of those unjust aspersions which *Hierom* and others would cast upon the *Millenaries*, as they are called. For in the book thou wilt find her pleading for the advance of holiness in the midst of all that happiness which is prepared for the saints in that *thousand years*. As for her thoughts concerning the *little Horn*, thou wilt say (when thou readest) they are new and singular; therefore, be thou the more careful, and, if thou canst serve the saints with a more probable Exposition, and see the Apology in the 45 and 46 pages. (*LHDD*, preface)

By drawing attention to her apology, Feake foregrounds those elements of the text which aid the reader's construction of a pious, moderate and humble author. Feake seems to be suggesting, despite his acknowledgement of the truth of Daniel 12:4: 'many are running too and fro and knowledge is increasing', that the ideal feminine text is the obsequious text. The apology which Cary offered for her particular interpretation took an appropriately Feakeian form:



I do not pretend to be any more exempted from uncertainty, then any other of the deare servants of God have been, to whom God hath very often revealed his secrets; though sometimes, some things of their own suppositions have slipped from them: and therefore I shall not presse any to believe these things, because I have said them, unlesse they do herein hear the voice of Christ and his spirit setting them home upon them. For this I know, that truth is powerful enough to prevail with Saints; and for the truth of these things of which I have spoken, or of whatever is laid down in the following discourse, I leave them to the great God, who hath put me upon the publishing of them, to make them prevalent with as many as hee intends good unto by them. (*LHDD*, pp. 45-46)

This is a stock-in-trade apology designed to anticipate and placate the charge of intellectual arrogance which readers might be tempted to level against a female author. Feake considers its commonplace excuse sufficiently important to single out from a very long text in his own introductory preface, which is no more than a few pages long. It is no accident, I suggest, that he chose to advertise Mary Cary's book by counselling the reader to study a passage which disables the agency of the author as the primary source of the text. His technique works by asking us to consider the blasphemous possibility that if we believe *The Little Horn's Doom and Downfall* to be divinely inspired, then to find fault with it will be to find fault with none other than God himself. In the same way that Rogers' support for women preachers moderates into caution, Feake takes away by implication the praise that he proffers explicitly. What both texts demonstrate is that even within the sectarian culture which allowed them to publish speculative theological tracts or participate in Church government, there was considerable resistance to the idea that women should practise what Scripture preached.

It is this fact which in part explains the difference of emphasis in the less apologetic sections of Cary's texts. Her argument in these places is that women do have the right to preach and to minister publicly, by virtue of their membership of the Saints and the 'body of Christ'. Cary's is a strong and practical reading of Feake's and Rogers'

weak and attenuated theoretical defences of women.

Kate Lilley has recently offered an interpretation of Mary Cary which notes the presence of utopian gender-awareness in her texts. Her argument is that Cary offers to men the benefits of her own position as a woman and to masculine traits the benefits of feminine ones. If men take up the utopian position offered by her text they too can become brides of Christ, since at the millennium, the feminine or wifely position of subordination before a masculine Godhead will be taken up by all Saints, whether male or female. Lilley's argument is that Cary uses her access to the feminine to underline and authorize gender-inflected roles, thus giving space to women and to the feminine.

At the level of representation and textual authority, Cary's *Christian Utopia*, like other Millenarian commentaries, is always written as if in the margins of nominated and carefully chosen sacred texts, particularly the Book of Daniel...It offers itself as a reading, as always secondary but in an active sense of exegetical responsibility. Its own textual presence is diffuse and displaced, with Cary's authorial voice always figured as subsumed in the voices of Heaven, and the voices of other saints, in pre-emptive fantasy of collective effectual voice.<sup>19</sup>

My reading begins from agreement with this position. Cary's authorial voice is indeed generally connected to other voices in the providential unity of collective power, scriptural authority and the Second Coming. I think her texts are not so much deliberately diffuse and displaced, however, as necessarily caught between the danger of immodest prolixity and the need to prophesy, to bear witness, felt naturally by all Saints. In contrast to Lilley, the collective fantasy of 'effectual voice' seems to me to veil a personal justification which is initially argued by implication but which comes to dominate Cary's writing. There is in her work therefore an antagonism between a collective desire for utopia, in which the Saints speak a single univocal truth, and the justification of female authorship and authority which occurs in sometimes gendered and sometimes individual terms. The fluidity or slipperiness of gender roles in her text partly conceals

an uncompromising justification of self and partly functions to create space for her own endeavours. Where Lilley sees Cary indulging in a 'disavowal of the possessive ideology of authorship and invention...which is consonant with the importance of collective forms in Cary's New Jerusalem',<sup>20</sup> I see her avowals of collective experience as a re-routed defence of personal intervention; an implicit personal justification which remains submerged for reasons of literary diplomacy. While contributing ostensibly to the exposure of a providential narrative, her texts become increasingly obsessed, and for good reasons, with their own simultaneous justification. It is not the veracity of prophetic content which is at stake here but the legitimacy of the textualized voice. In defending the position of the Saints, Cary defends herself by association. The rhetoric of saintly justification is code for personal licence. Lilley sees Cary's argument as a claim that there is no difference between the voice of one Saint and another and feminizing these voices, whereas I see her not so much offering feminine space to men, but rather carving out a space for herself, perhaps even to the extent of excluding the masculine.

This difference is one of interpretive emphasis rather than argument; it will become clearer in what follows. My view of Cary is one which depends upon reading her work as produced by its dialogic relationship with inimical masculine Fifth Monarchist orthodoxy. We must therefore read her texts as written in response to assumptions which form absent presences in her work. Inter-textual complications of this nature make her polemic difficult to interpret, especially since I shall be arguing that male and female Fifth Monarchist writers utilize the same biblical texts but interpret them in markedly different ways. This is largely because texts by women require justification via a kind of stylistic solipsism that simply isn't needed by male writers. All Cary's texts are made problematic too by an ever present oscillation between constantly reiterated modesty

tropes - scattered apologetic excuses for publishing which permeate her writing - and the arrogating rhetoric of Fifth Monarchist revolutionary zeal. My view is that we should stop reading modesty tropes as carriers of the substantial intellectual content of women's writing.

The main scope of *A New and more Exact Mappe or Description of New Jerusalem's Glory*, published together with *The Little Horn's Doom and Downfall* in 1651, was 'to make this present age more sensible of the late past, and present footsteps of God in the world' (*LHDD*, sig A3v). Her intention was to convince some of their persistent folly in opposing God's designs and to confirm those who already discerned divine manifestations. Her text is thus not prophetic; it is a work of historical analysis. It tries to perceive whether the present age is indeed the one offered in prognosis by scripture and suggests affirmative answers to its own question. One way of proving that the prophecies of Daniel do indeed correspond to contemporary reality is to show that the accompanying effects forecast by scripture are currently occurring. Cary argues the case with evident relish:

and now if it do appear that it is already so come to passe, that God hath lifted up the heads of his people, and that they are no longer trodden under-foot nor overcome by the beast or his adherants, but that they overcome the beast, in all those that defend his quarrell. THEN CERTAINLY, these forty and two moneths are already expired (*LHDD*, p. 21-22).

Since the Saints are not downtrodden, Cary argues that we can be sure God is appearing both 'in and for his people'. And of course, according to her, part of the evidence for the vitality of the Saints in the present age is the production and publication of texts like *The Little Horn's Doom and Downfall* and *New Jerusalem's Glory*! But the precise nature of divine agency is difficult to assess here since God both instructs and gives power to

his servants. They are, intriguingly, both autonomous representatives *and* programmed delegates:

so that, God giving judgement to his saints, he brings to passe the great designes he hath in the world by them, as his instruments: so that he does it, and they do it; and they must doe it, and are alwaies ready, and shall be so. (LHDD, p. 30)

That all prophecies are best understood in their fulfilling is something Cary takes to be sufficiently demonstrated by the recent abolition of monarchy. Much is set aside for the Saints, but divine chronology must be observed. Though Cary cites 1 Corinthians 6;2 and Psalm 149;4-8 to argue the ability of the Saints to judge the world, she confesses to gradualist views about the shift of power from secular to divine bodies. She expects the influence of secular authorities to wither away gradually as the millennium approaches. But what concerns her most is the kind of relationship the Saints can expect to enjoy with Christ when he is head of State. One view she puts forward is that the Saints' relation to Christ is - and will be - analogous to the position of husband and wife in a domestic economy:

the truth is, that which is given to the head is given to the members, that which is given to the Husband the wife must partake of: for there is nothing that he possesses which she hath not a right unto. And the saints of Christ are the Lambs wife: and having given himself unto them he will not with-hold anything that is his from them.<sup>21</sup>

This conception of the relationship between husband and wife allows for the genuine transfer of power from former to latter. It is not being used here, as it was so often elsewhere, to support the absolute power of the 'husband', but to legitimate the equal power-by-proxy of the 'wife'. If there appears no great difference between this view and the one put forward by John Rogers, Cary does depart from his theory in her description of the attributes required by Saints. In Cary's view those eligible for such transfer and accumulation of power will be those who desire it least. Spiritual wealth will be lavished

upon those who most reluctantly seek it, just as those who crave worldly treasures will be denied them. In apposite topsy-turvy fashion, spiritual eagerness will have the unlooked-for consequence of providing the pious with secular and economic power. When Cary asks rhetorically 'who is to be rewarded?', her answer is constructed so as to provide for her own spiritual bounty. In noting the nature of those upon whom God will bestow munificence, we learn that the purpose of Cary's text is to justify its construction of herself as both worthy of sainthood and accurately described as such. The Saints are meek, humble and symbolically female.

The feminist reading of gender symbolism into which this passage tempts the modern reader is not altogether straightforward however, since elsewhere in the same text Cary reads the Saints as symbolically male. By yoking together Psalm 68;13 and Romans 8;19, Cary produces a reading of them which combines the peaceful qualities of the dove and the masculinity of the sons of God:

they shall then arise, and be as the wings of a Dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold; for then shall be the manifestation of the sonnes of God. (*NJG*, p. 84)

Romans 8;14 provides a precise interpretation of the sons of God: 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God'. Troping the Saints as sons of God is consistent too with Cary's forcefully expressed conviction that military action may be taken legitimately against the enemies of the Saints. One of the mainstays of this position is to be found in Revelation 11;5, where a warning is given to those who would oppress the Saints:

and if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

Threats like this disrupt the attempt to read a consistent theory of gender into Cary's

reworking of Scripture. Elsewhere she draws on both feminine and masculine behavioural traits; privileging the position of the Saints as the position of the weak and humble whilst employing masculine threats. These features together constitute a defence of women by unavoidable implication, since Cary both extends masculine behaviour to women and privileges weakness as an allegory of women and sainthood.

The extended meditation upon weakness given below supports this conclusion and further suggests that virile and wilful conceptions of masculinity are excluded from the constitution of the Saints. There is also some evidence that the citation of scriptures by implicit juxtaposition may strengthen the sense that Cary's comments are specifically concerned with women. While enlarging upon the righteous and just deeds that will be done by the Saints on the basis of scripture gathered from Isaiah 32;16 - 'judgement shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field' - Cary notes that

in the verse before, it is said, that the spirit shall be so poured out, as that those that had been as a barren wilderness, should now become as a fruitful field. (*NJG*, p. 261)

Isaiah 32;15 is the culmination of an argument which is specifically addressed to women, however. It is worth giving the text in full:

Rise up ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech. Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come. Tremble ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins. They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. Upon the lands of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

It is easy to see how Cary, or indeed the reader, can insert a specifically female self into this providential narrative. For Cary, England abounds with thorns and briars, and in her

own text she becomes a woman rising up from ease in order to rouse others from their own torpor. This suggests that in this case at least, the spirit poured forth is poured forth upon women. The structural meekness of the Saints' deportment also supports this view:

by this abundant pouring out of the Spirit upon the Saints in that time, they shall be put into a very meek and sweet frame of spirit. In Psalm 149...at verse 4 it is said, that the Lord will beautifie the meek with salvation: whereby it is clear, that they shall be meek spirits that shall then be beautified with salvation, that shall be members of that kingdom. And indeed, it must needs be so, for their saviour is so: they do learn, and shall learn of him, to be meek and sweet, and lowly in their hearts and carriages: but not so, but as this meekness shall be consistent with courage, stoutness and valour also, when God calls them to exercise it: And therefore as our Saviour is a Lamb, and a Lion; so they shall be as meek as Lambs, and yet as bold as Lions; and not fear to do the work about which they are set as appears vers 6,7 Wherein it is said *They shall have the praises of God in their mouths, and a two-edged sword in their hands, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.* (NJG, pp 262-263)

Cary claims too that Matthew 5;5, '*Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth*', is correctly read as a prediction of the government of the Saints. Where Cary discusses the pure language, the language of Canaan, which God will use to reunify his people, she cites a text, Zeph 3;9-10 which produces in the next verse a proximate justification for the female voice:

for then I will turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, *even* the daughters of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

Further evidence that Cary's reading of God's 'pouring out' is gender-specific in relation to her own text (if not to all prophecy) is to be found in her elaborate reading of Joel 2;28:

and it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.



Her concern to estimate properly the time of this 'pouring out' is bound up with a criticism of contemporary clerical inefficiency:

again, when was the spirit so abundantly upon all ages, degrees, and sexes, as that all might prophesie, that is, (in the lowest sence) be able to speak to edification, exhortation and comfort? How few of those that are Saints, have the spirit of Prophesie in this sence, to any purpose upon them, carrying of them forth to publish this Gospel, for the edifying, comforting, or conversion of others? The number of those is very small; witness the complaints of many country towns and parishes even within this kingdom, which they make for the want of faithful able men to preach the Gospel among them. And if there are many godly women, many indeed who have received the spirit: but in how small a measure is it? How weak are they? and how unable to prophesie? for it is that that I am speaking of, which this text says they shall do; which yet we see not fulfilled. Indeed they have tasted the sweetness of the spirit; and having tasted are longing for more, and are ready to receive from those few that are in any measure furnished with the gifts of the spirit for prophesying; but they are generally very unable to communicate to others, though they would do it many times in their families, among their children and servants: and when they would be communicating to others into whose company they come, though sometimes some sprinklings come from them, yet at other times they find themselves dry and barren. But the time is coming when this promise shall be fulfilled, and the saints shall be abundantly filled with the spirit; and not only men, but women shall prophesie; not only aged men, but young men, not only superiors, but inferiors; not onely those that have university learning but those that have it not; even servants and handmaids. For this by the way let me say, there is nothing absolutely necessary to the making of a convert, and of a convert a publisher of the gospel, which a soul that is but furnished onely with Understanding and Reason is not capable of if the spirit be poured out upon it; whether it be a Heathen (so called for distinction sake) or one brought up in the profession of Christianity; or whether it be learned, or unlearned; or whether it be male or female: I say, a soul indued with Understanding and Reason is capable of religion, and all religious performances, if it be indued with the spirit; and there is no other thing absolutely necessary thereunto. And when the spirit shall be more abundantly poured out upon the Saints this shall be made evident; so that, according to this gracious promise, sons and daughters, servants and handmaids, old men and young men shall prophesie. (*NJG*, pp. 237-238)

Despite its evident engagement with the future, this passage sustains a cogent if oblique justification for Cary's own prophesying intervention in the present. Unlike the masculine works considered earlier, it puts forward a principled defence of women's preaching

which is not mitigated or undone by pragmatic consideration. Cary allows for the political and theological power of all Saints in a way specifically curbed by Rogers' comments on the place of women. It is a powerful example of the justification of her own text by implication.

Towards the end of *New Jerusalem's Glory* Cary offers a definition of Christian duty which explicitly provides for political and theological power:

its the presence of the spirit in the fulnes of it, that beautifies the Saints, and cloths them with beautiful garments, and is their strength; and by it they arise, and mount up above the world, and shake themselves from the dust; and are losed from all their bonds and are made free.  
(*NJG* p.242)

The nature of this freedom is such that it does not merely enable and endorse prophesying by all those, regardless of rank, degree or education, who consider themselves qualified; on the contrary, it proclaims the escape of the righteous from bondage and oppression. This original position is not available to all. The eventual triumph of the lowly which this passage suggests is later made explicit:

though these be times in which Saints shall be advanced higher than ever they were; yet being filled with the spirit they shall walk more humbly than ever. The truth is, none but such as are humble shall be the citizens of this New Jerusalem. (*NJG*, p. 248)

This position secures the ascendancy of the humble, pious, meek and - according to my argument - feminine Saint in the thousand year reign of Christ. It also transforms Cary's modesty tropes, from gendered weaknesses required by patriarchal ideology into theological assertions of righteousness. For Cary, demonstrating her piety is the initial step in an argument which proves that she will achieve not only personal redemption but a hand in Christian government.

Cary's other major text *The Resurrection of the Witnesses and Englands Fall from*

*the Mystical Babylon clearly demonstrated to be accomplished*, published in 1648, and again in 1653 in an enlarged and corrected form, argues that the events prophesied in the eleventh chapter of Revelation occurred in England between 1641 and 1645. The witnesses whose slaying and resurrection presaged the Second Coming were deemed by Cary to have been restored by the founding of the New Model Army in 1645. Written in part for the Saints gathered at Christchurch, Blackfriars, and dedicated to two Fifth Monarchist MPs, the work is written as its own retrospective confirmation. In the later edition, the events explained in 1648 are reaffirmed by *addenda* and the text further celebrates the vengeance visited by God upon those who torment his instruments and mock the power of those instruments to give voice to divine intention. The modesty tropes utilized so effectively in *New Jerusalem's Glory* recur in similar forms: thus Cary says in preface that she wants the reader to witness the constancy of her views over time; that God has made use of a weak instrument; that readers should not patronize anything in the text not authorized by scripture, and that although she sought to write with brevity the reader must understand that the Saints are *obliged* to act as God's Word instructs them. Although it repeats many of the arguments put forward in her earlier book, *Resurrection* does advance her position in several respects. The claims made indirectly for preaching rights in *New Jerusalem's Glory* are expanded to include explicit discussion of clerical function, and the arguments made by scriptural association for the right of women to participate in evangelic activity are made more directly. The sense of fulfilment akin to a form of linguistic ecstasy or *jouissance* experienced during divine conversation is produced as an aesthetic authority for inspiration. In addition, therefore, to a theory of pastoral and political activity which licenses women's contributions, Cary develops an aesthetic of prophetic production. This last strategy is designed to provide

Cary herself and her readers with compelling justification for her publication. Moreover, as she freely confesses, Cary writes because she needs to communicate and because she believes what she has to say to be original.

In the preface added to the text for its second edition Cary neatly authorizes scriptural women by invoking their voices and placing herself in a position inferior to theirs. The sense of her justification is still weakly associative - she refuses to compare herself mimetically to Anna and Mary Magdalene - but it is more openly implied here than previously. Their justification is not based in gender but on the truthfulness of their testimony. Cary is careful to anchor the general authority for women's interpretation firmly in fitting discussion of scripture. Their authority, and by extension her own, can then be seen to rest on perspicuous exegesis rather than on gendered notions of the hysteric gaining access to truths hidden from public view in times of national crisis. Despite this subtle reasoning it is clear that the choice of biblical women who were prophetically accurate does support and underwrite her own position. Noting that many who kept the law were unaware of the power of prophecy, Cary argues the position of those humble Christians who did perceive God's footsteps in the world:

and as old Simeon so Anna the Prophetess knew also what the Lord was then doing, even that his annointed or Messiah was come into the world, and gave thanks for it. And as she, so did some others, for it is said she spoke of him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem...And so, again when our Lord Jesus was arisen from the dead, his own disciples believed it not when they were told it by Mary Magdalen and the other women.<sup>22</sup>

After this passage, which celebrates the theological acuity of women, Cary offers an exact definition of women's behaviour in such cases, together with an explanation of her own confidence on the question of chapter eleven of Revelation:

though Jesus Christ will at last reveal his truth unto them, yet it will be with reprovng them, saying, *O fools and slow of Heart to believe all the*

*prophets have spoken;* because what those women had told them concerning the resurrection of our Lord was according to what the Prophets had spoken, how Christ ought to have suffered these things, and to have entered to his glory, and that he was to see no corruption etc. Here let me be not mistaken, as though I made any comparison with the Prophets, or with those women in the Gospel, I say not that I have any immediate revelation that the witnesses are risen, or that I have been told it by an Angel, or the like.

But this only I do assert, that I have from my childhood, but especially since I was fifteen years of age<sup>23</sup> been (I doubt not but I may say) by the spirit of God, set upon a serious and continual study of the scriptures in general, and more particularly of the Book of the Revelation, and of the Prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, wherein so many things concerning these latter daies are spoken of. (*Resurrection*, sig. C2)

Mary and the 'other women' are vindicated by association with prophetic truth. Despite Cary's careful efforts to disassociate herself from 'any comparison with the prophets', it is nevertheless clear that the reader is being invited to make appropriate comparison. The opening 'but' of her next paragraph fully gives the lie to the earlier denial. Cary may not have been instructed by an angel, but she has - perhaps more importantly - studied scripture, and she is, like the examples she gives, a woman. The lesson to be drawn here is that England's citizens must not pass over the truth contained in the prophets nor those whose voices accord with their wisdom. As in *New Jerusalem's Glory*, an apparent universalism masks the priority accorded to the weak. Though scripture is available to all, the Christian should expect a levelling down:

let him according to his place oppose the Beast, and act for the welfare of all that wish well to Sion, and do justice unto all, from the highest unto the lowest, and he move forward to act for the meanest, than for the highest. Let him suppose the condition of the meanest man that seeks to him for just things, to be his own condition, and act for him. (*Resurrection*, preface)

And although Cary repeats the idea that God reveals his will to servants as a husband 'unbosomes himself' to his wife, she suggests a masculine model as well, that of a man revealing a secret to a friend:

if his friend should slight him in it, and take no notice of what he discovers to him, he were a very unkind, and a very unworthy friend. (*Resurrection*, p. 7)

In the same way, Cary argues, Saints cannot be silent when God commissions them to do his work. Luther is adduced here as an example of unavoidable duty repeated in every Saint.

One constant theme of *Resurrection* is the idea that those traditionally responsible for ecclesiastical governance are not to be thought of as solely responsible for pastoral affairs in their own congregations. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that even though Cary pays lip service to the idea that bishops - whom she conflates with elders and presbyters and who, along with deacons, are ordained by the laying on of hands - have exclusive duties, she feels nonetheless that all Church functions can be conducted by lay members of the congregation. Cary makes use of a text employed by Elizabeth Warren to defend the clergy - 1 Thessalonians 5;12,13: 'we beseech you brethren to know them which labour among you' - to justify lay prophecy. In her discussion of bishops in detail, what begins as an attempt to preserve their difference degenerates into an advertisement of communal responsibility irrespective of hierarchy.

The division between bishops and the congregation is initially clear: bishops must guide, govern and rule the Church (1 Tim 5;7); they must rule their own houses well if they are similarly to serve the Church (1 Tim 3;4) and they must attend to the provision of bishops in Churches where they are lacking (1 Tim 5;22). All the other duties ordinarily carried out by bishops may also be legitimately undertaken by others. Bishops, argues Cary, ought to 'feed' their congregations and 'instruct and admonish' them, but she further argues - at some length - that this is not their duty alone, but 'the duty of all the brethren, according to their several abilities' (*Resurrection*, p. 77). Other duties, such

as setting proper Christian example and watching over the souls of the people, are similarly the preserve not merely of certain individuals but of the collective body of the Church. In the case of more practical matters, Cary repeatedly unearths collective rather than hierarchical responsibility. In a long discussion of Ephesians 4;10-13, she asserts

*that Jesus Christ when he ascended up farre above all heavens, gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; So this word hath been fulfilled, Jesus Christ hath alwaies continued these. (Resurrection, p. 72)*

Cary argues that all the specific functions collected in this passage are subsumed under the title 'prophet'. The apostle Paul, she claims, clearly undertook all of the several functions described in Ephesians. Addressing herself to the objection that if all are present in many, why does scripture discuss them separately, Cary replies with two arguments. The first is that although some may possess one gift but not others, this should not entail a downgrading of their pedagogic function within the Church.

Her second argument is that there is a sense in which some gifts are necessary for others. To be a prophet requires one to be an evangelist, a pastor and a teacher, so these gifts must of necessity coincide in the prophetic personality. Since all gifts support the life of the Church but only bishops and deacons require ordination by the laying on of hands, Cary is effectively licensing lay evangelism, teaching, and prophecy of its own motivation. The ambitious or called lay member is thus enabled, in theory, to express individual gifts for the benefit of the whole body of the Church, especially since gifts are not the measure of an individual, they are given for collective benefit. Thus she argues:

*consider that Jesus Christ saith, I will give unto you my two witnesses and they shall prophesie. It is the gift of Jesus Christ unto his people, which he gives not only for the good of the persons in whom it is, but for the good of others also. Saints have an interest in one anothers gifts; and*

therefore Paul speaking of such as were Prophets, as himself and Peter, a Apollo, saith he to the Saints (1 Cor 3;21-2) all are yours...Thus the gifts that are given to others, are given to them for me, and the gifts that are given to me, how weak soever, are not altogether for myself, but for others also; for Jesus Christ hath so disposed of it; to give several gifts to several Saints, to this end, to maintain Communion among Saints. (*Resurrection*, p. 80)

Cary has already argued that every Saint may be considered a prophet, since those to whom God 'discovers his secrets' are *ipso facto* prophets. This divine 'discovery' has profound repercussions for the aesthetic state of the soul imbued with scriptural truth:

for when the Lord hath revealed himself unto the soul, and discovered his secrets to it, made it to see the wonderful things of his Law, and caused it to rejoice in the sweet discoveries of his grace, the soul cannot choose but declare them to others. Yea the word is as a fire in its bosome, and it cannot hold it in, according to that Rule, *when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*. This is ever the sweet temper of a real Saint, he cannot but give vent to the bubblings of Christ upon his heart: and that in opposing gain-sayers, contending earnestly for the faith, and in the edifying, exhorting, and comforting of other Saints.

Now that this is prophesying, is most evident in the Scriptures 1 Cor 14;3 *He that prophesieth, speaketh unto men, to edification, and exhortation, and comfort*. Now this, all Saints in some measure or other can do, though some Saints can do it more excellently than others, yet he that speaketh to edification, exhortation, and consolation, though with much weakness, doth as truly prophesy as he that hath greatest abilities. (*Resurrection*, pp. 36-37)

The Saints' participation in Church office is here a justification by joy. This is another form of modesty trope which at first reading evacuates agency from the 'bubbling heart'. But it is used here to back up arguments for personal intervention.

Cary's final conception of the union of the Saints erodes utterly the rationalized hierarchies which she spent time explaining and defending earlier, since

the beast in making war against the Saints in one particular nation, maketh war against all the Witnesses all the world over, since their interest is one and the same, for as they are the Saints and Witnesses of Jesus Christ, they are but one body politique, or one common-wealth, for they are all united into one common interest in what part of the world soever they be, and he that maketh war against one part of the commonwealth offends



against the whole body. (*Resurrection*, p. 119)

Having established the privilege of female prophecy, Cary combines this with the idea that the members of a body politic only make up the whole together, and therefore to exclude or demean any of the members is to reduce absolutely the representative unity of the body politic.

Where Feake and Rogers procrastinate on the question of female participation in Church affairs, counselling caution on an issue they fully acknowledge is already decided in scripture according to egalitarian principles, Cary develops in her two major works a lengthy defence of women's prophetic abilities in relation to scriptural authority. She manages too to argue the case for a justification of women which is gender-relative and subsequently to enlarge her definitions so as to include Saints in general. Thus while gender is important - indeed fundamental - at one level, it is sufficiently flexible a category to be incorporated into a symbolic definition of democracy at another.

That Cary is sensitive to gender and the way gendered roles map areas of social experience is shown by her use of masculine and feminine figures to claim rights of government for women and military rights for all Saints. Feminine models are used to justify the former, while masculine models occasionally assure the reader of the latter. Because she is selective in the use of such models, it is fair to conclude that they are significant; that they reflect a consistent symbolic structure or mental *habitus*.<sup>24</sup>

Cary's text is certainly unable to reconcile fully the evident conflict between individualistic authorial justification - which she achieves with an argument from class membership: all Saints are prophets; many prophets are women - and collective government in unity which is one goal of Fifth-Monarchist utopian belief. But given the impossible difficulty of her position, arguing a justification for herself and women from

scripture on the one hand and asserting that no justification is sufficient or necessary to explain divine immanence on the other, we should not be too concerned by the persistence of such contrary positions. They are evidence of Cary wrestling with patriarchal and Christian exclusion.

One thing Cary's texts ably demonstrate is that there were different masculine and feminine readings of saintly humility within sectarian political circles. Rogers and Feake treat Cary's piety as appropriately feminine and therefore as a kind of transgressive reminder of universal Christian abjection before God. As men are women before God, it reminds them of a position which they occupy hypothetically, even if this position is not adopted by them in regard to Cary's text. Here they stand as God stands to men. The feminine thus provides for male commentators a temporary release from the ordinary structure of theological authority. For Cary, of course, these positions are not only unavailable, but unlooked for. She reads herself as possessing self-effacing attributes and therefore as part of the underclass that will be permanently restored by godly revolution. Her radical creed requires her to deepen her own position symbolically, rather than to adopt the opposite of the everyday; to become more fully what she felt she already was: an abject, deferential, but quietly confident future member of Christ's government. While men looked forward to a future in which the structure of social institutions would be altogether changed, believing women's writings to be a liminal anticipation of the social disintegration to come, women looked forward to a future - Mary Cary believed it had already arrived - when they would wield lasting and equal executive power for the first time.

## Notes

1. See Christopher Hill's *The World Turned Upside Down* (1972) for an enthusiastic account of the heady flavour of millenarian expectation. For a more recent assessment of Utopian thought in the period see James Holstun, *A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth Century England and America* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987) and J. C. Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing 1516-1700* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981).

2. *The Little Horns Doom and Downfall: or a Scripture-Prophecie of King James, and King Charles, and of this present Parliament, unfolded* (1651), preface. Hereafter referred to as LHDD; all further references to this work will be given in parenthesis in the main text.

3. See Sue Wiseman, 'Unsilent instruments and the devil's cushions: authority in seventeenth-century women's prophetic discourse' in *New Feminist Discourses*, edited by Isobel Armstrong (Routledge, 1992), pp. 176-197.

4. For Marshall's defence of liminal femininity see chapter one above.

5. Mary Pope argues women's right to political status as members of the body of Christ. See pages 162-164 above.

6. *The Revelation Unrevealed* (1649), p. 1.

7. *The Revelation Unrevealed*, p. 11.

8. *The Revelation Unrevealed*, p. 102.

9. *The Revelation Unrevealed*, p. 125.

10. Many of the discussions were based on spurious methodological foundations. Thus John Tillinghast (1604-1655) the Independent Minister and Fifth Monarchist who visited Christopher Feake in Goal in 1655, in his *Knowledge of the Times or the Resolution of the Question how long it shall be unto the end of Wonders* (1654), gives both a reasonable and impossible guide to good exegetical practice:

it is a most certain truth, That every Prophecie left us in the word of God, hath in it self-sufficient Characters to lead us, by comparing the characters of it with the mind of God in other prophecies, to the knowledge of the substance of that truth that is held forth; for otherwise the word should be imperfect, and not able to expound itself. These characters are the keys of this or that Prophecy, which when found, it will be easie to unlock it; but if these be missed, all mens endeavours in opening prophecies will be in vain, and their labours lost. These keys, in some prophecies where a man can hardly go any way but one, are quickly and with ease found; but in others, where by reason of the various turnings and windings there seem to be as

many ways to go in as there are words, the finding of them is a thing most hard; and the searcher, in case he have not a better guide than himself, shall never finde them. (p. 311-312)

11. William Aspinwall, *A Brief Description of the Fifth Monarchy or Kingdome That shortly is to come to the World*, printed by Martha Simmonds (1653), p. 2.

12. Katherine Chidley argued, like Tillinghast, against running from the naked letter of the text to allegorical explanation. See page 101 above.

13. Tillinghast, *Knowledge of the Times*, p. 313.

14. Henry Archer, *The Personal Reign of Christ* (1642), p. 58. Archer became a pastor at Arnhem in 1638 but died in 1642 before the rise of the Fifth Monarchists in England.

15. Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1993), p. 307.

16. Chidley's Justification of the Independent Churches of Christ employs exactly the same argument, see pages 91 and 96 above.

17. John Rogers, *A Tabernacle for the Sun or Irenicum Evangelicum. An Idea of Church Discipline, in the Theorick and Practick Parts* (1653), Book two, chapter eight, is erroneously paginated: beginning on 563 it runs 464, 465, 566, 567, 468, and then correctly to finish on page 477. Hereafter references to this work are given parenthetically in the main text.

18. On conduct books, see Ann Jones, 'Nets and Bridles: early modern conduct books and sixteenth-century women's lyrics', pp. 39-73, in *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in the history of sexuality*, edited by Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (Methuen, 1987).

19. Kate Lilley, 'Blazing Worlds: Seventeenth Century Women's Utopian Writing' in *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760*, edited by Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (Routledge, 1992), p.109.

20. Lilley, *Blazing Worlds*, p. 110.

21. Cary, *A New or more Exact Mappe or Description of New Jerusalem's Glory* (1651), p. 54. Hereafter referred to as *NJG*, all further references to this work are given in parenthesis in the main text.

22. Cary, *The Resurrection of the Witnesses and England's Fall from the Mystical Babylon clearly demonstrated to be accomplished* (1653), preface. Hereafter referred to as *Resurrection*; all further references to this text are given in parenthesis in the main text.

23. Cary provides a marginal note to indicate that she was fifteen in 1636, suggesting a birth date sometime in 1621 and a writing career beginning when she was twenty-one in 1642 and extending at least until 1653 when she would have been thirty-two. She married, changing her name from Cary to Rande at some time between 1648 and 1653.

24. I draw here on the work of Pierre Bourdieu. In *The Logic of Practice* (Polity, 1990), he gives the following definition of *habitus*:

the theory of practice as practice insists, contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and, contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions. (p. 52)

## Generating sufficiency: the spiritual autobiography of Jane Turner

I am conscious to myself of some extreme in minding truth as it relates to the inward man, though truly I know not that I did slight any ordinance or command of Christ, but that I did rather highly esteem of them; but not to lessen sin, it is possible there may be something of that nature though I know it not.<sup>1</sup>

Jane Turner begins her book *Choice Experiences* with the sort of conventional apology common in much women's writing of the interregnum period. Her text, she writes, was intended for private use and its publication was her husband's idea. She was conscious, moreover, that it was written in a 'broken, scittering way', and that it manifested 'too much weakness and unworthiness to be an instrument for the good of souls' (p. 1). Despite her commitment to self-abnegation, Jane Turner wrote an autobiographical text which purposefully generates redemptive certainty. The purpose of this chapter is to discern how such confidence was produced by a deliberately self-effacing text. First I want to discuss Jane Turner's conversion narrative, in order to explain the means by which legitimate doctrine is distinguished from illegitimate belief.

Jane Turner has greater doubts about her work than those expressed in the preface which apologizes for her unworthiness. These generic apologies are matched by an anxiety that is less easy for her to absorb generically. She admits to a fear of walking on an untrodden path, since she has never seen anything like this written before. She relates briefly the manner, grounds and reasons by which she was put to write her testimony. Turner lived in Newcastle for a time (the work is written to churches in Newcastle, Berwick and Scotland) and over one particular period of seven or eight weeks enjoyed 'sweet communion with God' to a degree she had not previously experienced. She describes her spiritual state at that time as a dialogical relationship: 'I was in a

continual converse and exchanging love with God, as it were lodging and living in the bosome of Christ' (p. 2). Fearing she would forget the piquancy and significance of this brief dynamic interaction, she sought to write down and thereby preserve her experiences. That she reads the crux of her own spiritual life as predicated on her active and participatory relationship with God is significant, since it allows us to see that religious practice need not take the form of an alienating and isolated insecurity, dominated by anxiety, and that conversation, in which the dynamic of interruption and response creates for the participants 'passing' subject positions, is an apposite description of the religious act.<sup>2</sup> It is often claimed that the propriety of a woman's prophetic utterance depends upon the idea that the prophet is a mere cipher of divine discourse, unable to control her outpourings or supplement them with her own thoughts.<sup>3</sup> Turner is not a prophet, but she does seek to proselytise and invokes dialogistic exchange in place of feminine prophetic abnegation.

Initially Turner is beset by the problem of the authenticity of her memories. She fears that when she comes to write, she will have forgotten the original order of pertinent events. She records, after some thought, that the Lord 'satisfies' her in this difficulty. Next she is worried that she might, because of the vagaries of her own memory, unintentionally falsify the truth and add to her account incidents and events which did not happen. On this doubt she again finds that God can 'satisfy' her nascent scepticism. But Turner's theory is not merely an unprincipled faith in God's ability to structure her own history correctly, either in her mind or at the point of writing; rather it represents the strength of God transmuted into an interpretative principle which is then set to work censoring and selecting her raw recollections. She decides to leave out plain additions, and undertakes that if one sure memory cannot be brought into the story without

requiring the support of an uncertain one, she would 'rather leave out the one than write the other' (p. 5). In all cases of uncertainty over personal memory, it is, according to the principle, wiser to write only that which is certainly true and supported only by other certain truths than to support even certain truths on uncertain foundations. Perhaps such a position mirrors the caution which Turner articulates towards personal authority expressed under the aegis of Church authority, since she believes that gifts of public preaching should be licensed by the Church in order 'that the saints may not be burthened nor the world blaspheme' (p. 7). Here it seems that the act of speaking, with or without official sanction, in church or in private, is subject to the concept of propriety. This conceptual practice, which defines public and private speaking as licensed or unlicensed, proper or improper, according to the presence or absence of an authorizing power, can nevertheless be seen to protect both speaker and institution. The Oxford English Dictionary gives as a subsidiary meaning of 'burden', 'to charge (a person) with (an accusation)', and it seems clear that Jane Turner's doctrine seeks both to protect preachers from accusation - by seeing to it that they are, in theory at least, institutionalized by higher authority - and to protect the world from the threat of blasphemies which might issue forth from the mouths of false or heretical preachers.

Turner professes a desire to 'live more singly on God, so also to presse after and long for, that perfect state in which we shall be at the appearance of our lord Jesus Christ' (p. 8). Part of this religious project involves a meta-desire, that is, a desire that one should possess certain desires. Interesting too is the way that the expression of concrete certainty - 'that perfect state in which we shall be' - is mixed with rather more contingent hopes and political goals. That some things can be taken for granted is, it seems, no reason to take up an attitude of indifference towards them. Indeed the



cumulative effect of religious certainty seems to entail precisely the opposite reaction, not quietism but active and engaged fervour. There is an unorthodox but believable Calvinist logic behind this which suggests that greater emotional and spiritual energy is justly, more usefully, and successfully expended on events whose outcome is already certain. The advantage of this strategy is that it provides good reasons for belief and religious practice in case of failure, ensuring that one's conceptual scheme is validated from within while remaining immune to challenges from without. If events will happen, no time need be wasted on discussions of their likelihood and no time must be lost deciding upon one's orientation in the dispute. The authority of God, which lies outside the individual, is not challenged, but on the contrary, it is grounded by prophetic message. The pursuit of events prophetically preordained is political action that conforms to and confirms the will of God. The aligning of one's actions with the necessary events decreed by holy order is also a profound demonstration of obedience. It affords one the seemingly contradictory opportunity to be both selfless and committed, since one may rally to the cause precisely because it is, in a sense, already victorious. The messenger stands apart from the truth of the message but also partakes of, and engages in, the news. Despite these advantages, indeed because of the way they are structured to orchestrate what counts as legitimate belief and its practical corollaries in political and social action, the argument falls into a kind of circularity which is a direct consequence of its remarkable proclivity for self-sustenance. This is because it purports to advocate a practical and ethical politics concerned with truth and the individual. Given its methodology no such project is possible. Values may be argued, even contextually valid, but they will never deserve the status of truths because they are private and therefore incoherent rules, not subject to public scrutiny.

The urge to be internally whole led to the adoption of arguments which so effectively insulate the larger structure from critique that all dialogue is virtually silenced. The paradox of neatly self-sustaining arguments is that they collapse inwards, unable to support the weight of their own powerful and overbearing self-scrutiny.

Jane Turner tells us that she grew up taking the religion 'in force from king and bishops' for granted. In practice this meant that her faith inhered in fasting, book prayer, and the observation of 'days and times'.<sup>4</sup> She thought that these actions, dutifully performed, could save her soul. They were complemented by a vigorous but unthinking anti-Catholic perspective.

Turner's narrative goes on to tell of her meetings with Puritans whose different beliefs lead her to question her own condition. She began, she writes, to read the Bible, but her 'understanding was not yet opened' (p. 15). She reveals that her early religious understanding was structured around two exclusive poles of emotional experience. The first is a heightened religious euphoria in which she feels that the 'love and sweetness' of Christ might 'melt' her heart. Spiritual intensity is described as the de-incarnation or dissolving of the body in which the believer resides. The second tempers this exhilaration by reminding her oppressively of the punishment that God metes out to sinners. This contrary feeling makes her 'heart tremble' (p. 18).

Turner's text is broken up by observations upon its own progress which condense the substance of religious biography and draw from it theological conclusions which lead into and support further sections of biography. In this way, experience and reflection upon experience constitute a constant and mutually reinforcing pair of narrative impulses whose interaction doubly enhances Jane Turner's ability to make sense of her individual history.

Shortly after the account of her meeting with Puritans, Jane Turner offers a brief meditation on the question - naturally thrown up by her experience of dissimilar beliefs - of truth and religious allegiance. She ponders the nature of unthinking loyalty and offers a theory of its operation. She concludes:

that ignorant persons in hearing truth may have their reason so far touched, that they may assent to it, and be much affected with it, and yet understand nothing so as to have it seated in the heart and judgement. (p. 18)

Mere subscription to a faith, without the authenticity of inner explanation and the attendant guarantee of genuine understanding, is a fraudulent and indulgent theology of mental obedience to whimsy, which has dire practical consequences:

so truth not being rooted in the heart and judgement, though it spring up in much affection, yet it comes to nothing. (p. 21)

The ignorant, argues Turner, 'spend all in affection, running it all into one channel', whereas the wise expend all the faculties of their souls, dispersing their strength and coming to a broader and more subtle knowledge. The stubborn difficulty lay in providing grounds for the feeling of having been saved. The conversion narrative stages mistakenness and a final coming-to-truth so as to enable the narrator to recognize false hope and thus to differentiate it from the authentic feeling of salvation. Turner delineates a *via media* between the irrationalism of mere affection and the intellectualism of judgement. She concludes that since judgement so often depends upon the absence of affection, it is better to have the latter without the former until one's certainty is so well grounded as to withstand the dangers of affection. Judgement thereby gains an *a priori* advantage over affection, since it is to be effected before affection can be implemented. The result of meditation, given that the ideal situation is to feel affected by judgements knowing them to be true, is to enforce a hierarchy of precedence using the separate

components of religious belief. The task of affection can only ever be supplementary because judgement must be the foundation for all true combinations. We are left with a binary edifice which cannot sustain its own interpretative weight. On its own, judgement suffers from the same lack of proof which affects the original combination of judgement and affection. Judgement might preserve some form of methodological consistency, but it cannot protect us against reasoned errors. These are errors for which we have good grounds but whose nature we have no means of discovering by judgement alone. We cannot 'reason' our way out of them.

In Turner's work, the binary structure which demarcates faith and reason as separate and distinct areas of critical enquiry rests on a structural division which rapidly becomes incoherent, and is ultimately unintelligible. Neither faith nor reason are distinguishable as an argument for the foundation of belief, since for Jane Turner they are threatened not by mutual exclusion but by compatibility; they seem to collapse one into the other. Turner accepts the irony 'that in the days of ignorance before we have received grace to restrain us from sin, its a mercy to be restrained by something else' (p. 15). Early religious experience is, she suggests, largely characterized by its inherent capacity for ironic contingencies of this kind. We can see that one consequence of the supposed separation of truth from affection is 'that a person may oppose an error, and yet live that time in the same error for the nature of it, though only in a lower degree, and not know it' (p. 16). Individual perception does not secure righteousness, since one may be mistaken without perceiving one's mistake. It is not sufficient to have a command of doctrine; one must also pursue a critical self-consciousness as the only - by no means infallible - defence against unperceived sin. The difficulty with this formulation of religious duty is that one's inner preparations against the danger of

unthinking sin can only guard against such a foe blindly.

One corollary of this inability to be an accurate and trustworthy judge of one's own religious conduct is the fact that genuine religious behaviour may stem from the unconverted unknowingly. It is possible, observes Jane Turner, 'that a person before conversion may (for ought I know) truly pray and that from a secret work of God upon the heart' (p. 17). Access to reliable knowledge about one's own spiritual condition is difficult to obtain since judgement requires the adoption of an impartial position beyond all those conceivably available to the individual. It requires the external position in which all minds are public and none private; a position accessible only to an omniscient God and not to mortal believers. For a Calvinist like Turner, the difficulty of gaining access to the truth about other minds is equal to the difficulty of gaining access to the truth about one's own mind. The Protestant moral at work here has something like the following form: 'the truth of my own condition is no more present to myself than is yours, and my knowledge of both these spiritual states is subject to radical uncertainty'. The messenger cannot guarantee the truth of her news by appealing to her status as messenger.

Jane Turner continues her spiritual education by travelling on foot to sermons held six miles away. She then suffers a temptation to question the being of God, writing: 'and I remember it usually came upon me when I was alone, but especially as I was going by myself to hear the aforesaid minister' (p. 25).<sup>5</sup> She takes to heart the words of the Puritans and gradually becomes convinced of her sin under the law. In this condition she begins to wonder about salvation and admits that in her growing despair: 'the more strict I was, still looking through the glasse of the law, the more my bondage was increased; for I could see nothing but an addition of sin in all that I did' (p. 26).

She is rescued from these despairing thoughts by the anonymous preacher whom she hears deliver a sermon on free grace and from whom she borrows a book on the subject. She reads the book and is at first much taken with it: 'and finding the drift and scope of the book was to exalt god and lay low the creature, I was much affected with it' (p. 51). When the content of the doctrine of free grace is revealed however, Jane Turner's reaction encompasses not merely doctrinal shock but a very real fear of the naked effect of language: 'When I came about the middle of it I was so surprised with fear of carnal liberty, merely by their words, that I durst read it no further, but sent it home again' (p. 52). Six months later she hears ministers decrying the book and feels that an interpretative injustice is being done: 'sometimes I thought they spoke more than was true' (p. 53). Seeking to read the book again she finds that she cannot get hold of a copy and discovers that it has been suppressed. She commits herself to the doctrine of free grace and comes to believe that sins are freely and fully forgiven to those who are committed to Christ. For a long time after this, she tells us, she desired to be continually meditating and speaking on free grace.

At this point, the text halts for a further set of observations. Italicized in the original printing so as to privilege their appearance, these form a conclusion to the retelling of experiential events that has gone before. She concludes that the confident can be falsely confident; that it is not confidence which makes a condition good, but the grounds of it; that it is dangerous to esteem persons too lightly and that free grace is not a licence to sin. Turner claims that being tied by legal bonds to Christ is an insult to him. Inspired by the implications of the doctrine of free grace she writes: 'all must centre here, and without this all is nothing'.

Despair at the finality and contractual meanness of religious law is conquered by

the adoption of the doctrine of free grace and the liberation from binding religious rules that it offers. Temporarily content, Jane Turner thinks about becoming an Independent. She finds no grounds for infant baptism in scripture however, and comes to London, where she attends many sermons given before various congregations. Reflection moves her to express several regrets. She finds the small number of believers gathered together in single churches a source of religious claustrophobia, despite the fact that it represents the continuation of the original practice of the first apostles. In addition to this, she is worried by the failings of certain believers within these churches, and by the rigid conformity imposed on members of their congregations by collective coercion. Reflecting on personal behaviour she remarks: 'I thought it my liberty to do or not do it' (p. 84). After a narrow escape in London where she is almost confused by a preacher, she informs us that she was at this time about to be married. Describing her actions she says that she lingered in Babylon until the Lord's clear voice and stretched-out arm called her to be baptized. The relationship between inspiration and the believer is still dialogic in nature; here it takes the form of a physical and verbal relationship. Jane Turner responds to a voice, but also to the shape of a body calling. She mentions this calling to her husband, whom she finds to be in the same state, and they are both accordingly baptized the following week. The narrative contains no sustained discussion of her marriage or of her husband. Turner confesses that since baptism she has never desired to hear preaching outside the Church. There then follows a set of observations which collectively reiterate her concern for the practice that ought to ensue from a correct appreciation and recognition of Free Grace. Grace, she asserts, requires activity, not passivity. This conclusion provides effective protection against two possible reactions to the doctrine of free grace. On the one hand, it steps back from the kind of radical

libertinism which was advocated by Ranters like Abiezer Coppe; on the other it requires more than the passive and conservative quietism which might follow upon such an apparently catch-all doctrine. Further outlining her concept of activity, she writes - in a manner reminiscent of earlier comments - that persons may have experience in privilege but be ignorant in duty. Adding a reminder that things may be other than first appearances suggest, particularly if one reads them only in an habituated way, she writes: 'and though truth be never so plainly expressed, yet ignorance cannot apprehend it' (p. 92). Religious truth here takes on the form of a kind of gestalt switch, which one may or may not recognize. There exists no formula for determining the nature of truths such as these since one perceives them clearly or not at all. They impress themselves upon us as instantaneous and irreversible realizations. This further undermines the idea that reason and judgement can lead one towards truth, since in these circumstances they are both effectively paralysed; no longer able in any way to aid comprehension. Turner then redefines the concept of liberty in a way which appears to include the paradoxical idea that it is best understood when accepted as a form of bondage. Jane Turner writes: 'that through ignorance of the nature of Christian Liberty, we are too subject to think that Bondage, which is not only liberty but a great privilege' (p. 93). Liberty is to be found, according to this theory, in the practice of religious behaviour in which the individual is indeed 'too subject to think', since only the unthinking nature of observance, the bondage of obedience, can facilitate true liberty. For Baptist writers like Jane Turner this definition of liberty is at odds with the use of the concept we encounter in their texts. In Turner's case, liberty signifies not the removal of burdens which hinder unrestrained behaviour but ironically the very opposite of this: the imposition of burdens which liberate individuality from the onerous weight of personal responsibility for righteousness.



Liberty is that state which is so actively sought because it allows the construction of an individuality 'too subject to think'. Liberty, in this condition, resides in the absence not of restraining burdens, but in the presence of a code which allows the reconciliation of sin and grace. Liberty is freedom from the law of divine revenge for sin and is manifested not by unrestrained actions, not that is, by anarchic tendencies, but by freely chosen loyalty to the forms of behaviour that it would have been rational to adopt if free grace had not delivered believers from self-serving rationality. Bondage freely chosen, not while under duress, constitutes for writers like Jane Turner an absolute liberty. This, it is important to recall, is a definition of Christian liberty. Modern freedom represents the kind of liberty which Jane Turner identifies as mere satanic laxity. 'We are', she writes, 'naturally so addicted to liberty , that we are many times ready to cast off all obedience, and to look upon the ordinances of Christ as indifferent things' (p. 94).

The desire to involve one's life with a codified set of instructions which will direct personal action by proxy (by subjecting the mind of that person to an external and rule-determined dynamic of right and wrong) might seem to the modern reader like the abdication of personal responsibility. This might be seen to be the case because the system of rules followed by the religious subject is either wholly external - given by God and therefore not questionable - or internal, in a way which prevents the possibility of external verification and community judgment, since whatever the subject says is the case *with her conscience* is indeed the case. Truth is relative to the inner processes of the minds of the faithful, and only to them as individuals, never to them as groups. To writers like Jane Turner however, this theology offered an authentic and purposeful liberty, because it privileged and authorized the subject, loosening the bonds of state, family and society.

Faith comes by hearing, argues Jane Turner, but she goes on to accept the logical inference that there may equally well exist hearings which prejudice faith. She defends congregational separation on the principle that one should be true to one's conscience. In cases where one's conscience comes into conflict with the institutions of organized religion, therefore, one is justified in separating from these institutions and setting up an individual Church. By way of a codicil, Jane Turner sets forth the objection that she nevertheless loves many who are not of her own persuasion.

The concept of Christian liberty embraced by Jane Turner might seem to advance a static and dormant *status quo* in which, once achieved, religious practice lends itself to a quietist politics. Quietism is banished by the thought that the present operates as a symbolic introduction to the future. To further enhance the validity of this vision, Jane Turner outlines several positions which indicate the degree to which the present is theologically enmeshed in the future. The faithful, she suggests, are in a state of waiting for the fulfilment of promises which will render them a pure language. In such a language, the inescapably solipsistic nature of current religious existence will be undone and 'we shall have one heart and one way' (p. 104). Herein lies a further justification of present actions since: 'none can truly wait for the accomplishment of promises but such as do wait in a close walking with God'. For an eschatology of history such as this, the re-unification of disparate believers is the single most significant change that will accompany the 'later days'. The importance of ordinances lies in their capacity to make visible the religious orientation of the performer. Ordinances are a social and theological space in which practice can be publicly witnessed, thereby easing the otherwise intolerable burden born in private by individual consciences.

Spiritual love must have a spiritual object, writes Jane Turner, 'and as the object

is more or less visible so is that love' (p. 107). A wholly self-validating religious practice, one which requires of its followers only an inner verification for its spiritual foundation, lacks any justification in the public realm. It may appear to modern readers that believers in a religion such as this couldn't avoid playing a private language game in which no single inner act could be verified either by the believer or by other members of the congregation. But Jane Turner authorises her own feminine subjectivity, becomes the author of her self, through this very solipsism. Giving religious expression an object - in this case ordinances - focuses behaviour on a public object which stands in for the religious feeling which cannot be conveyed publicly. That this love-object represents feelings which cannot be made visible themselves does not reduce its usefulness or threaten its validity. This is because public knowledge is gained for the community not by 'seeing' genuine religious feelings but by coming to know that feelings are occurring individually and giving rise to practice.

Jane Turner goes on to describe the testing of these doctrines in experience. Her itinerant life (she was married to an army officer) gave her the opportunity to accumulate great knowledge of sectarian practices and individual religiosity. In the course of her travels she admits to discovering so much 'fractioning' among churches that it was, she confesses, difficult to find one individual, let alone an entire church, possessed of sound principle.

At this point, Turner begins her discussion of her discovery of, and subsequent dealings with, Quaker theology. Originally a possible antidote to her burgeoning scepticism of institutionalized forms of religious calling, Quakerism comes to leave her, she says, deceived of three or four things. Firstly, 'concerning Godliness being a mystery' (p. 113), she was led to believe that it 'consisted' internally rather than

externally and that life and salvation came from Christ within, rather than Christ without. Saints (that is converted Quakers) acted from commands which were received inwardly rather than from outward prompting. Quaker doctrine also profoundly modifies the central position of scripture in religious practice and the primary authority of the written word as a faith-founding instrument. Quakers believed, she writes, 'that the word command in scripture was not a command to them till they had a word within them' (p. 114). The procedure for the performance of ordinances was to 'wait for the movings of the spirit to carry them forth'. For Jane Turner, such noumenal qualities made emotive and disturbing chaos of religious desire. Quaker practice was so dominated by this rational fluidity that she was finally unable to adopt its tenets for herself. She did nevertheless recognize certain progressive and democratic features which, while insufficiently strong fully to engage her sympathy by themselves, did constitute enlightened Christian practice. Thus she remarks on their habit of meeting in order 'to come together, and there sit and wait till they had a power, and then to speak, whether man or woman' (p. 115). Jane Turner finds this waiting for inspiration too vague a theology to be meaningful, because it fails to impose a firm structure upon worship in which all can lay claim to effective practice. That one should speak 'man or woman' is an equitable feature of Quakerism which she appears to endorse, but the unfortunate consequence of Quaker practice is that it encourages the formation of an experiential elite. She claims in conclusion never to have fully 'owned' Quaker beliefs, either in judgement or in practice, since she believed that it led to a 'looseness'. Thus she continues her religious duties without the 'power of affirming', but after a time she discovers that she has lost her dialogic relationship with God, having nothing to communicate to him and receiving no communion from him. In this state she is again

assailed by doubt in the existence of God. She finally abandons the idea of Quaker spirituality despite (but most probably because of) its 'shew' of spirituality. Perhaps what causes her disquiet is the profoundly theatrical nature of Quaker activity which could easily lead to the suspicion that it represents 'shew' without inner reality, action without conviction, outside without inside. Without community practice and the verification of interpersonal performance, inner and self-known pious actions are wreathed in epistemological uncertainty. The danger of relying on outward show, which is transparently visible, is that one loses sight of the inner event beneath its outward manifestation; nothing can be known unless it is felt. The paradox is that investment in either one of these forms, inner or outer practice, will lead to the epistemological diminution of the other. On one side, the identity of inner religious acts falls prey to radical doubts that inevitably accompany such 'private language games'. On the other a religious practice which invests 'shew' with the depth of feeling which Quaker theology holds it to manifest leaves too much symbolic work - too much in the way of exhibition - to be done in public which should ideally be done inside every believer, and which can only be done well if it is done privately. Without a visible distinction between inner feeling and outer praxis, the individual believer is subjected to a homogenising process which puts unbearable strain on the capacity for personal consistency. The cultural defence against such strict synthesis of thought and action takes the form of a numbing religious vacuum, an empty space in which sheer mental inactivity threatens to put an end to all religious life.

With the horror of such a religious style hanging over her, Jane Turner undertakes a sea voyage from London to Newcastle in the course of which her vessel is racked by terrible storms. In a state of not inconsiderable religious anguish, she discovers her

husband to be in a similar condition and rethinks her previous position, undertaking to discover the inherent contradiction in her thought. She writes that since she had received Quakerism - although she has not yet mentioned it by that name - 'the lord as were hid his face from me.' Waiting for the truth within brings the soul into great uncertainties of the kind never encountered by a soul accompanied by truth. Personal disquiet at Quaker self-confidence provides the foundation for her scepticism, since, she writes, 'I could not, nor durst not, rest on any thing in myself as a ground of hope for life or salvation' (p. 127). When she finally turns away from Quakerism, an alteration of religious loyalty in which she is accompanied by her husband, the sense of relief is acutely felt. Both, she recalls, had their hearts melted into tears of joy. The rhetorical flourish here contains an important transformation, since as the burden of false practice is lifted from their bodies certain physiological products - tears - have their pure carnal characteristics supplemented by non-biological, voluntary, and thoroughly intellectual emotional functions. This anti-Cartesian impulse is apparently capable of rhetorically unifying the higher rational faculties of the mind and the lower, stubbornly physical, attributes of the body. Unification is achieved by sub-dividing the body into grace-full and carnal matter, and this symbolic division of the flesh into dual categories is then further elaborated as Jane Turner analyses the constituents of 'gracious' and 'carnal' hearts.<sup>6</sup> She observes that:

errors in gracious hearts interrupt communion with God...  
errors in carnal hearts are most evil for such hearts run  
from one notion to another, not being seasoned with grace, until they stand  
directly in opposition to God. (p. 137)

Gracious hearts may be diverted temporarily from the presence of God by incorrect doctrine. But the temporary nature of such interruptions to spiritual dialogue reveals the underlying soundness of gracious hearts. Carnal hearts, in contrast, are frenetically

oscillating consumers of ever-varying doctrine, always lacking the capacity - provided by grace - to discriminate faithfully between doctrinal options. This second position is not a relativism since it is not the case that any one theological position is as valid as another; it is rather that at any one time, one position is seen to be utterly righteous. Over longer periods of time this righteousness decays and is relocated in another doctrine. It is this inconsistency which creates a conceptual incoherence in the second carnal position. The final and question-begging argument claims that these positions can be seen to be erroneous since, argues Jane Turner, they lead people into evil ways and the most extreme carnal practitioners may even conclude by denying the resurrection of Christ!

Her attempt to provide a reasoned justification of her dalliance with Quaker theology, leads Jane Turner to engage in a more detailed analysis of the religious milieu of her time. The claim that Satan makes use of false doctrine to overcome the Saints is supported by the use of examples drawn from contemporary constitutional history. 'We may remember', she writes, 'how exceedingly he did prevail, with them about five or six years since in this nation' (p. 147). At that time, she claims, it was hard to find one person not corrupted with false doctrines:

many of the most eminent saints in those days were most incident to be deceived by them, I mean the most eminent as to personal grace and qualifications, and as to a strict conversation, though I cannot say as to a sound judgement in knowledge and understanding of the principles of truth; for questionless there was something of that nature wanting, for had they been as well principled in truth, as they were really united to truth, they would have discerned Satan at a distance, and not been so deceived by him. (p. 150)

During the Civil War period, so the argument goes, many Saints practised a false doctrine; not because they failed to honour their relationship with God, but because they pursued a dialogue in another language. Yet Jane Turner's argument is marked by a circularity, since its major premise begs the question of the veracity of religious practice

which it purports to resolve. Despite the problematic and circular (or more accurately, evasive) nature of this analysis, it serves as the foundation for a further historical insight. Jane Turner argues that by opposing the bishops before, and the Presbyterians after, the Civil War, the Independents became addicted to a politics of permanent opposition. The effect of this was that although they constituted a coherent political community, the careful evaluation of doctrine was neglected. They were, Jane Turner concludes, weak in judgment: 'though (it may be) strong in affection, like children ready to catch up anything that hath a glorious appearance, not weighing and considering whether it really be so' (p. 151). Her criticism of Independency is that, like Quakerism, it sacrifices truth upon the altar of righteous appearance. The remedy for this condition is neither simple nor single; one can be kept on the path of righteousness by a good teacher, and one may undertake the examination of one's own recurring spiritual afflictions and failings. Jane Turner finds herself weak in principles, and then remarks:

I am conscious to myself of some extreme in minding truth as it relates to the inward man, though truly I know not that I did slight any ordinance or command of Christ, but that I did rather highly esteem of them; but not to lessen sin, it is possible there may be something of that nature though I know it not. (p. 157)

The alarming conclusion reached by this meditation concerns the degree to which any individual can judge their own righteousness legitimately. Nor must one deny the possibility of fault since to do so incorrectly would be to sin doubly, since one compounds a sin by denying it.

Jane Turner attempts to bypass the difficulties thrown up by the impossibility of self-assessment by observing the practice followed by the early Church apostles. A series of biblical references are then given which direct us to the kinds of apostolic position to which she refers. I give these below in full.



**I Cor 15;12**

**Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead.**

**I Tim 1;19**

**Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.**

**2 Tim 2;18**

**Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already; and overthrow the faith of some.**

**2 Pet 2;12**

**Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

**Acts 20;30**

**Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.**

These references testify to the importance of such concepts as conscience, loyalty to Christ's words, and the priority of the social practice of faith in the kind of social code constructed by belief. Once persuaded of these virtues, Jane Turner argues that followers of these principles are indeed obeying God's will, and that this may be concluded from the fact of their preservation 'unto this day'. Even by her own reasoning, such an argument does not hold. If it were valid, and the currently iniquitous distribution of social power and the predominance of irreligious government were also willed by God - in a universe entirely subject to the operation of his will - the fact of continuing existence would prove nothing about the attitude of God towards any current or past practice. The argument that what prevails is godly has the unfortunate consequence of justifying all existing social and religious relations. To affirm that even evil is God-willed provides no dialectical struggle in which one can usefully participate, and it is the conviction that such a struggle is part of reality that constantly animates the evolution of Jane Turner's practical faith. Evil may be trivially God-willed, since it acts as the spur

to righteousness, but it is not part of the ultimate furniture of the universe.

Personal tribulation also takes its justification from a higher good. Perhaps, speculates Jane Turner, this good has the form of praise, since when those holding erroneous beliefs come to the truth they will praise God wholeheartedly for their deliverance from the snares of falsehood. She is personally confident that the experience of weathering doubt has a spiritual value far in excess of that which might have been gained from the intellectual and emotional stability of a more constant faith. Accompanying this reflection is an undeniably ironic caveat. She comments 'yet through mercy my gain by those things is so great, that I would not be without it, though I desire not to purchase any more at that rate' (p. 167). Those experienced, the argument runs, are able to warn others of the trials that follow upon error. The objection is then countered that she cannot criticize by experience because she has not had *full* experience of those heresies she condemns. She asserts her belief that when considered, this objection will be thought 'lighter than vanity', and remains convinced that her experience is *sufficient* for the analysis she performs and the judgements she makes.

Even as this certainty is uttered however, it succumbs to anxieties which Jane Turner seems incapable either of suppressing or answering. Towards the end of her treatise, she confesses that the fruit of the spirit lies in love, self denial, patience and humility. Viewing her own heart, she thinks she comes short of these qualities, but claims nonetheless to have a measure of all of them:

and by experience [I] do know, if my heart deceive me not, wherein I am weak and wherein strong, and though I am sure in those in which I am strongest I am but weake, considering how I ought to be. (p. 184)

Christian humility is a desirable attribute which stalls the movement towards certainty. In the work of conversion, Turner asserts, we are ultimately passive; our sufficiency, if

we are to acquire any, is solely of God:

experience is more than a bare knowledge, and hath alwaies relation to some rule, whether it be in natural or spiritual changes; if in natural things, it must answer to a rule of nature, if in spiritual rule, and the holy scripture is that rule by which all Christian's experience must be tried.  
(p. 198)

None can have experience of that which they do not understand. Raw experience is not equivalent to sense data, or the facts of existence, it is always modified by the interpretative code of scripture. Security of faith is thus a quality which cannot be suggested without risking arrogance. Christian propriety requires the enunciation of doubt, even in texts whose purpose has been to ascertain faith. Modesty attenuates the fantasy of autocephalous faith, leaving us with the circular argument for distinguishing between faith and reason and a certainty whose expression must be silent. Jane Turner's sufficiency is said in the act of its own unsaying; as the subject is abrogated so it is iterated.

Jane Turner continued a fruitful dialogue with God, learning to integrate the principles of faith she deduced from her 'righteous conversation', over a period of several years. She opposed the theology of the Quakers because she believed that their beliefs were self-authorized and lacked the presence of a different voice to point out error and self-delusion. Turner's fondness for the dialogue is thus partly a doctrinal position, but partly too it is indicative of a gendered theological difference. She interacts with God but does not become one with him, either by metaphoric substitution or by way of spiritual union. This reluctance to merge with the godhead may characterize women's writing more generally than men's (in radical religious circles) simply because women felt themselves more unlike God than men. It may be too that in part they were reproducing an ideology of subordination and interaction for themselves because Puritan

ideology suggested that this was how one ought to behave and because it was a familiar part of their everyday lives. Whatever the combination of reasons it is a feature which distinguishes women's writing throughout the period 1640-1660. Even if she was unable fully to assuage the solipsistic doubts that accompanied her theology Jane Turner's greatest achievement was to free herself for divine conversation.

#### Notes

1. Jane Turner, *Choice Experiences of the Kind Dealings of God, before, in and after Conversion* (1653), p. 1. Hereafter all references to Turner will be to this text and will be given in parenthesis in the main text.

2. For 'passing' subject positions see Donald Davidson, 'A Nice Derangement of epitaphs' in *Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson* edited by Ernest Lapore (Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 433-446. Christopher Norris explains Davidson's ideas perspicuously in *Spinoza and the Origins of Modern Critical Theory* (Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 103-143.

3. See Diane Purkiss, 'Producing the voice, Consuming the body: Women Prophets of the seventeenth century', in *Women, Writing, History, 1640-1740*, p. 140.

4. Patrick Collinson has observed that 'the Reformation amounted to the intrusion of the working season into the months traditionally associated with a kind of holy play', *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (Macmillan, 1988), p. 54.

5. John Stachniewski cites Turner as a depressive Christian. See his *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1991), pp. 43, 105, 135, 160, 170.

6. Jacques Derrida has examined the 'scandal' of the incest taboo in the work of the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss; it acquires this label by upsetting the binary divide between culture and nature ('Structure, Sign and Play in the discourse of the Human Sciences' in *Writing and Difference*, pp. 278-295.) Jane Turner seems to propose what Derrida examines in Levi-Strauss, the ratiocination of a dialogue between concepts which threatens to render unthinkable the distinction between the language of reason and that of the body.

It has recently become fashionable to applaud the excessive and speculative nature of the published tracts of the Fifth Monarchist Anna Trapnel. But too often critics articulate deep questions about dislocation and semiotic riot only lamely to champion her as a woman publishing at a time when entry into print was difficult for women to achieve.<sup>1</sup> Her texts, composed around her notorious twelve day trance at Whitehall in January 1654, are often read as centrally concerned with the radical refiguring of traditional models of feminine piety. Modern readers perceive in her outpourings a powerful and concentrated female spirituality which challenges patriarchal authority by exposing to scrutiny its most deeply held assumptions. On this radical feminist view Trapnel goads patriarchal ideology by illustrating the original power of female stereotype. Circumscribed by relation to a monological culture (patriarchy), she inhabits the multiple and exaggerated position of the hysteric, in order both to achieve a voice in masculine terms and to safeguard the genuine difference of a feminist or feminine view. On this reading, it is argued, patriarchal structures are subverted by showing that what patriarchy fears in the feminine is, in part at least, genuinely there. This roughly corresponds to the kind of cultural politics espoused by Luce Irigaray.<sup>2</sup>

More recently critics have argued that enquiries into the social significance of prophetic discourse must attend to the nature of the prophetic voice. For it is easy to see that to ask 'who is speaking?' of a prophet, is a question not easily answered. Do prophets participate egotistically in divine politics or are they merely God's automatic agents?<sup>3</sup> If prophecy is a form of free speech, unencumbered by social restraint or cultural propriety, then it offers the politically ambitious a sanctioned position from which

to disseminate revolutionary propaganda. It is tempting here to argue that women took advantage of this prophetic licence to acquire for themselves a public voice proscribed in other walks of life. No one denied in seventeenth-century England that God might make use of human instruments to spread his word, but is the prophet a mere conduit or an agent for God's discourse? If the prophet is an agent then political praxis and purpose can be successfully attributed to women prophets, and the feminist reading stands. If however, the prophet is a conduit without agency, a vessel without volition, then prophecy is a form of spiritual prostitution and the feminist argument is compromised.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter will attempt to clarify this question by examining not the identity of Trapnel's prophetic voice but its narrative relationship with God. In any case, 'who is speaking?', is not necessarily the best question to ask since it is difficult to see how evidence which would show that either Trapnel or God was vocally dominant could be provided, because ambiguity of voice is the goal of prophetic style. Even though the voice of her texts is on occasion sometimes her own and sometimes God's, the very power and difficulty of her prophetic speech stems from the fact that it refuses to provide answers to questions about origin and identity. What the prophetic voice cannot function without, however, is a theory of its relationship to God. My argument is that Trapnel's writings compose a rhetoric of the relation to God which is characterized by contradiction and novelty. Her work invokes two conflicting theories of inspiration, each supported by a different politics of the subject, which Trapnel attempts to maintain in equilibrium.

Why should such apparently contradictory impulses bedevil the work of a female prophet? Here I shall argue that Trapnel's descriptions of divine relation are contradictory because they are related to gender and because they involve a critique of analogical thought of the kind which underlies patriarchalism (the doctrine that the first states were

families and that the position of kings in relation to states is analogous to the position of fathers in relation to families). It is a commonplace of political history that during the revolutionary crisis in England great emphasis came to be placed on contractual and consensual descriptions of power as successive monarchs became increasingly wedded to absolute and unrepresentative models of power. This period of political history is often seen as an eventful struggle towards constitutional democracy which concludes with the triumph of Locke's contractualism over the patriarchalism of Robert Filmer.<sup>5</sup> Although Locke isolated the family from the state, thus making familial authority irrelevant in political theory, other political thinkers developed the obvious alternative: rather than making the family a special case, they discovered a contractual ethic at its centre which enabled them to dispense with notions of absolute patriarchal duty.

Whatever the merit of competing narratives of this period in the history of political theory, it is my contention that this antagonism in political theory between hierarchical and neo-egalitarian models of state power finds rich and momentary focus in the writings of Anna Trapnel. Her apparent preoccupation with private theology and allegories of familial relation masks a deep concern for constitutional models of executive power.

Any reading of Trapnel's oeuvre is further complicated by the fact that her methods of composition produce these politically sensitive variant rhetorics in different degrees. Texts which are largely autobiographical and written by Trapnel herself, such as *A Legacy for Saints*, describe interpersonal relations which are contractual and reciprocal, whereas texts which are largely recorded notices of Trapnel's trance prayings, such as *The Cry of a Stone*, taken down by third person and written up later, suggest readings of the relation between Trapnel and God which emphasize hierarchy and authority. Before God in her own words Trapnel furnishes the reader with descriptions

of mutuality, interdependence and shared purpose; when her speech is taken down what emerges instead is a reiteration of the traditional, and politically familiar, father-child relationship. This difference, I suggest, is a consequence of gender-inflected readings of prophetic behaviour. Trapnel's male transcribers attribute to her a liminal position in which prophecy marks the beginning of a new dominion and testifies to the use God makes of servile and quietist instruments.<sup>6</sup> Trapnel herself is more interested in preserving a private and exclusive relationship with God which remains untrammelled by inequality.

*The Cry of a Stone* begins with a preface by two of Trapnel's male supporters which addresses 'all the wise virgins in Sion'. It pleads tolerance for 'any thing that pretends to be a witness, a voice, or a message from God to this Nation'.<sup>7</sup> Trapnel's publishers were naturally worried that her testimony would be dismissed as the unreliable inchoate discourse of a disturbed woman. They argued pre-emptively that nothing in her speech should be rejected merely because 'it is administered by a simple and unlikely hand'. They had, they assured readers, 'seen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, babes and children to bring to nothing the scribes and disputers of this world'. Trapnel's editors believed that if God chose to act through the lowly they must be obedient to his wishes, since the apparently random acts of God concealed a divine pattern too far reaching to perceive; 'who may bind where God hath loosed' they asked, quoting John 7;37, 'he openeth and no man shutteth'. The sense here is clearly of involuntary agency bound up with an apocalyptic ideology of the last days in which the chosen will be detectable by the extent to which they invert social conventions. If incongruous persons began to prophesy, 'let us rejoyce and be glad, for the summer is nigh at hand'. The word of mouth testimony that follows, whose job is to establish



Trapnel's authenticity and religious credentials, has her confess to her own instrumentality. The Lord makes use of her after her first experience 'for the refreshing of afflicted and tempted ones' (*Cry*, p. 3). For a year she performed these duties as instructed and when this period of pastoral work was over she asked for, and received, divine approval; adopting in prayer the demeanour of a servant or employee on probation, 'I being in my chamber, desired of the Lord to tell me whether I had done that which was of and from himself.' God's response is to make her an instrument 'of much more' since she has 'been faithfull in a little'. When her visions concerning the activity of the army are confirmed by events she gives thanks to God for making the truth available to one of such humble estate. She has visions of victory over the Scots and the Dutch and keeps her transcendent state active through fasting. In April 1653 she succumbed to a prolonged depression during which Satan tempted her to suicide and she neglected prayer through fear of hypocrisy. God finally appears to her and asks to hear her desire. She wishes for a 'humble, broken, melting frame of spirit' (*Cry*, p. 9), and receives it at once. To ask for servility and have it bestowed as the gift of a superior is the action of an individual profoundly constructed by the ideology of hierarchy. Having settled God's will in her heart she considers it appropriate to desire from God a confirming scripture. It is given to her from Job:

thou hast been tied in fetters, and holden in Chains of Affliction, and it is that the Lord might shew thee thy work, and thy transgression which hath exceeded in this time of thy Assaults; Now he openeth thine ear to discipline, and he commandeth that thou return from iniquity. (*Cry*, p. 9)

To be saved from temptation requires divine edict; it is not something achieved by individual struggle. The single soul steps back from the brink of error only when commanded to do so. Under these conditions the soul can ordinarily profess only abject humility and inferiority before God. Trapnel's early religious experiences are genuinely

characterized by complete helplessness and reliance on the absolute generosity of God.

In September 1653 Trapnel began to have loosely allegorical visions of Cromwell's persecution of the Saints. Before they set out the events of her notorious Whitehall visions Trapnel's editors offer a considered definition of her state of mind. At the heart of their deliberate interrogation of her sensory functions lies the issue of involuntary and craven agency:

one Question was asked her some weeks after she left Whitehal, and was this. What frame of spirit was upon you in uttering those things in Whitehal, was it only a spirit of faith that was upon you, or was it Vision wrapping up your outward senses in trances, so that you had not your senses free to see, hear, nor take notice of the people present? She answered, I neither saw, nor heard, nor perceived the noise and distractions of the people, but was as one that heard only the voice of God sounding forth unto me; besides her own word, the effects of a spirit caught up in the visions of God, did abundantly appear in the fixedness, and immoveableness of her speech in prayer, but more especially in her songs: notwithstanding the distractions among the people occasioned by rude spirits, that unawares crept in, which was observed by many who heard her, who seemed to us to be as one whose ears and eyes were locked up, that all was to her as a perfect silence. (*Cry*, p. 14)

Despite appearing to give the answer prompted by the question Trapnel remains of, but not in, the world served by her words. Her state of sensorial inadequacy assures her witnesses that she is authentically taken up by God. She is a servant listening attentively and exclusively to the voice of her master. Her editors also take care to establish that her silence stems from the frequent reception of her soul into God's glory. From their own observation they confirm her explanation that she ceases to speak not from her own discretion but because she is swallowed up in God's presence.

Where the text reproduces Trapnel's visionary speech much emphasis is placed on her conception of herself as instrumental. Though she readily adopts the revolutionary inversions of social degree that preoccupy Mary Cary's writings, Trapnel's use of such motifs often retains their original political values intact. The poor, the fatherless and the

widow are not the companions of the religious because they are to be liberated from oppressive hierarchies but because God deliberately chooses the weak and the powerless to demonstrate the absolute nature of his authority. Although God has promised to perform great things through nothing, his actions are designed to illustrate general contempt for all human social structures rather than dissatisfaction with particular political arrangements. Trapnel confesses herself forcibly chosen and relates that on occasion she urged God to make use of another:

Oh, thou knowest that thy servant hath often wrastled with thee that thou wouldst employ some other, but thou hast over-ruled her, and hast put her to silence? and shall I not be willing to do or suffer thy will?

And thou givest strength unto her, and bearest up the spirit of thy servant to go thorow with the Work, thy servant is not an enemy to these men, thou knowest, but a friend; Oh, it is for thy sake, and for thy servants sakes, that thy servant is made a voyce, a sound, it is a voyce within a voyce, anothers voyce, even thy voyce through her; Thy servant knew that she was beloved of thee, and that she lay in thy bosome from a child...and when thy servant has done thy work, she shall be willing to lock up her selfe in her Closet again and not to be seen of men; Oh Lord, thy servant knows there is no selfe in this thing. (*Cry*, p. 42)

The open collusion with patriarchy advertised by this confession serves to protect Trapnel from aspersion; God is a tender if absolute Master/Father/husband and she a hesitant though finally wiling servant/child/wife. 'Thine are of a stammering speech' she argues, further lessening the risk that she will be attacked as a hypocrite for pursuing her own ambition behind a veil of divine instrumentality. The prophet is protected by not being fully in command of her speech, by abrogating responsibility for it, and by appearing to shun social contact. Trapnel's willingness to return to the privacy of her closet signals appropriate feminine modesty, another attribute often thought duplicitously missing from the female prophetic personality.

On the question of the substance of her prayers and visions Trapnel similarly empties herself of culpability by accusing the clergy of dressing up false wisdom and

personal opinion as the word of God:

you will not hear; you will say, do you think to contradict us who are wise, great Schollars, and University men? Yea Lord, thou wilt make a poor silly Creature to come out against them, because they have acted so sillily... Oh poor Clergy! you have put off the outward badge of Antichrist, and you have retained the inward: What is become of your Zeal and Exhaltations of Christ, have you ever a New-Covenant-Sermon to bring to your greatest Ruler? you will mud it before you come; the Lord will have it set out in the freeness, and fulness, and Glory of it in all the tendency and fruits of it; Are they like to the Sermons of the Saints formerly, to the Apostles Sermons which the Lord Jesus brought forth? more of their own heads and fancies are in it, then of thy dainties; of their flowers, then of thine; Thou doest not, Lord, look at the curious decking of the dishes; No, thou lookest at the meat in it: Flowers will soon wither, and their fine adornings will come to nothing, but the true meat, that will abide forever. (*Cry*, p. 69)

The absence of self, of personal 'heads and fancies' and 'flowers' or adornments is seen by Trapnel implicitly to guarantee the authenticity of her own activity. Her own worthlessness and ignorance sustain the argument by eliminating the very possibility of contaminating God's message with human desire. Since the clergy will not speak the truth plainly:

therefore the Lord hath sent a poor handmaid into the pallace, and there she shall declare it, and though you will not come your selves, yet your Servants shall declare it to you and it shall be left on the beams and walls of this house against you. (*Cry*, p. 70)

She concludes by asking that they pray for the 'preservation of thy poor worm'.<sup>8</sup>

Despite this overbearing piety there were good typological reasons for taking Trapnel seriously. As she herself argued:

let them see Jesus Christ to be the true Rest, the true first-day: Thou first appeared as the first day to poor contemptible Creatures, to poor Women. Oh *Mary*, I am thy Rest, and she answered, *Rabboni*. (*Cry*. p. 46)

Though they might only temporarily occupy important religious space as privileged heralds of a new era women could expect a vicarious holiday of real authority in the brief power vacuum between the old human and new divine social order.

But if Trapnel placed herself in the foreground only more effectively to ensure the obliteration of self, thinking of her body as a carcass which God enlivened by breathing her soul into it, the very public and physical demands of her trance state ensured notoriety. She was visited by London's fashionable cognoscenti, her activities were the subject of Parliamentary investigation, and after her journey to Cornwall she was imprisoned at Plymouth Fort before being incarcerated in Bridewell. Though her editors were content to describe her as 'beyond and besides her thoughts or intentions, having much trouble in her heart, and being seized upon by the Lord' (*Cry*, p. 1), their evident concern to efface Trapnel's personality is eloquent testimony to the possibility that her viewing public sought just that. The crowds of all sorts and degrees that visited her visionary bed witnessed a figure whose eyes remained shut, whose hands were still, but who might nevertheless speak extempore for between 2 and 5 hours each day. Trapnel offered inspired prayer, vision and song to her 'audience', who in this respect probably got what they desired: a living gateway between this world and the next. The speed of her speech and the logistic difficulties exacerbated by the sheer number of observers were such that her editor often apologizes for his text, admitting that she spoke much more than he was able to take down or that her low voice was lost behind the noise of her audience.

Amid all the entertainment and the sobriety of Trapnel's comportment there clearly developed a cult of her personality. Some of the terms Trapnel uses to describe herself in *The Cry* enable this cult. No avowal of modesty could undermine her evident relish for publicity. She eagerly embraces the public duty of the Saints; 'Let thy servants now be of a publique spirit, let them now flie high above the Skie, not into vaine conceits, vaine speculations, and high notions' (*Cry*, p. 38). The 'King Jesus' was coming to set

all at liberty in a 'glorious freedom', a freedom which Trapnel implicitly claimed for herself in advance. Her own prophetic accuracy, of which she was certain, was also a source of personal pride:

is not the Narrative come from Heaven concerning what thou art a doing?  
Oh, let all thine know it in time; they that are such as are true Students,  
doe thou fill them more and more, let them come forth as Trumpeters with  
a ful sound, for if they give forth an imperfect sound, how shall the Horse  
prepare to the Battel? (*Cry*, p. 44)

Christ would inevitably discover the righteous and by relating the story of her own salvation Trapnel ensured that when the time came, she *would have been saved* by allowing God to inhabit her soul and by her own meticulous attention to theological truth. More significantly, Trapnel tropes herself as an intercessor on behalf of the English nation. When she lamented Cromwell's refusal to tolerate Fifth Monarchist politics her plea was to be allowed by God to change his mind, 'Oh but blessed Lord, let thy handmaid intreat thee to perswade him;'. The nation had turned from God:

Oh but can these dry bones live? Give thy handmaid leave to tell thee that  
thy children are like the dead bones now in the Valley...Let thy servant  
never be silent till they be brought out of the Valley. (*Cry*, p. 24)

As the prophetic period of female licence becomes the central focus of her text Trapnel is increasingly willing to claim special privileges for the Lord's handmaids. She becomes more confident of her claim that executive power on behalf of a greater power is tantamount to independent power wielded by appointment:

let thy Servant beg high springs for Saints; come in with full springs in  
such a time as this, when that the waters are brought so high, that thy poor  
children are ready to be overwhelmed by them, in their snares and  
entanglements; they say these waters are very clear and sweet that come  
from men, but at length they make the Soule very muddy; Why is thy  
Handmaid so long with thee upon the Mount, seeing thy sparkling glory,  
and those reviving springs, but that thy Handmaid may plead with thee  
concerning thy Saints, thine Inheritance, and that her heart may take in the  
things concerning thy Saints. (*Cry*, p. 35)

When Trapnel appeals to God on behalf of mortal communities, rather than appealing to them on behalf of God, the traditional flow of authority in Stuart culture (from greater to lesser, from Master to Servant, from Father to Child) is reversed. If the Saint is an envoy to God, rather than one from God, she negotiates with the divine on human behalf, rather than merely receiving and relaying instructions. This language of diplomatic intervention suggests that Trapnel saw herself enjoying a special relationship with God, a private relationship with public consequences, which was not available to all. Further evidence for this view is to be found in Trapnel's nearly ecstatic description of true prayer:

Oh, they love alwayes to be praying, they can never be weary; not that Prayer that is called a Gift, or an Habit, but it is a spirit, it is the outgoings of thy Spirit, it is an Harmony that they that have only a Gift cannot understand, and it is but like the beating of brasse; true Prayer is an excellent talking to the most High, it kindles up the affections and sokes into the judgement; for thy people are accounted by the world a people of much affections, but of little judgement; but by this thou dost try thy people, for they that have little affection doe soone change their note; but they that have sound judgements, soaking judgements, and then their affections right set, they Center then in thee alone, every way the soule is raised that is indeed wrapt up in thee. (*Cry*, p. 44)

The Saint talks to God and is raised in every way. Trapnel's formula is a simple and elitist one. But it does create, ironically, a space for a more egalitarian relationship with God. Although her holy conversation may well be private and beyond the perception of those with ordinary gifts, it is also intimate, harmonious and touchingly personal. In this respect the prophet is not merely a relay-station for divine commands but a privileged translator of the mystic singularity of heaven into terms simple enough to enable mortal understanding. Towards the end of *The Cry of a Stone* Trapnel asserts the invincible nature of her own Sainthood:

thy spirit informs and teacheth, and brings forth new things and declared old things; thy Spirit brings forth what the ways of men are, it doth

declare the great overturnings and disappointments that men shall meet with; when thou openest, who can shut? it is not all their jealousies and surmisings concerning designings...it is not all these things that can stop the pipes of Christ that are golden; can you hinder the oyl that runs so sweet? Blessed be thy Name for that glorious priviledge that thine have, they are made partakers of thy Anointing, and he calls them fellows; oh they are poor Mortals that he should call them fellows. (*Cry*, p. 66)

To be a partaker in God's anointing, to be called 'fellow' by divine presence is veritably to be more than an empty vessel for the Holy Spirit or a dumb agent of divine will. In her most liberated moments Trapnel reads herself as possessing a true privilege before God, grounded in a non-hierarchical non-patriarchal relationship, which brings with it the assumption of real political and social power.

In *The Cry of a Stone* this subversive and politically innovative reading, though present, is difficult to pick out. I have suggested that this is because her editors are keener to stress her temporary and liminal function as a prophet of the Second Coming, than to argue that her conception of the political relationship between God and his chosen people is at odds with current practice. Her editors wanted to protect her from charges of feminine immodesty and rightly saw that to emphasize the momentary nature of social or political inversions, produced by a faceless and empty woman filled against her will with God's spirit, was one way of achieving it. Trapnel's autobiography, which she largely composed, even if its sections were edited together by others, reverses this emphasis. In this text the nature of her private but publically powerful relationship with Christ and the mutuality espoused therein achieve greater pre-eminence. Trapnel's editors were thoroughly consistent with the views put forward by doctrinal authorities. John Dod and Robert Cleaver's *A Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments* argued that no one was prevented from accepting advice from the lowly by virtue of their station. Thus David took advice from Abigail, 'a woman and meane person in comparisen of



him'.<sup>9</sup> A wife must fear her husband 'even as Christ is the head of the Church' and in all imitate Sarah:

and this inward fear, must be shewed by an outward meeknesse, and lowlinesse in the speeches, and carriages to the husband...she must not be passionate and froward to him or any of the family, especially in his sight; but she should have such a regard of his presence, as that he should govern her tongue and countenance so, that it may not be offensive or troublesome unto him.<sup>10</sup>

A husband's duties, though embracing a degree of reciprocity, were largely concerned with the control and edification of his wife. If Dod and Cleaver were at pains to preserve patriarchy, they were considerably more enlightened about the dissolution of servile relations between master and servant:

he that made me in the wombe, did he not make him? So that both were made in the womb, both had one nature, one creator and Redeemer. In all the former respects there is no difference of bond or free: But there is an equalitie between the servant and the master. The servant, if he be elect and holy, hath as much right in the blood of Christ, and shall have as good part of the glory of Christ in heaven as the master.<sup>11</sup>

The ease with which Dod and Cleaver are able to dispense with hierarchy on the question of master/servant relations, the central prop of early modern social lore, contrasts with the relative immunity of patriarchal gender relations from carnivalesque dissolution even in cases of conscience. To alter the gendered relationships that pertained in Christian symbolism by adding to them a veneer of egalitarian reciprocity was more subversive of conventional ideology than to stress the power of the lowly *in extremis*. In her autobiographical texts Trapnel attempts the former.

The group that published *A Legacy for Saints* in 1654 noted in their introduction to the work Anna's desire for communion with the Saints 'upon that old, large and universal principle of Saintship and union with Christ, wherein we know her to be very excellent'.<sup>12</sup> However, the doctrine of union with Christ was a politically sensitive one

and on more than one occasion Trapnel explicitly differentiates herself from those who profess union with Christ.<sup>13</sup> There was good reason to proceed with caution. The terms of the 1650 Blasphemy Act, introduced to curb the worst theological excesses of the Ranters, theoretically made such claims a capital offence. The language Trapnel uses thereafter to describe her relationship with Christ is sensitive to the political dangers thus courted (*Legacy*, pp. 57, 66). Trapnel's enraptured faith had an early beginning; she recalled as an adolescent hearing Cromwell's chaplain Hugh Peters speak from Isaiah 26;20. Trapnel had a strong conviction that with these words Peters 'opened the marriage Covenant that is between God and his Spouse'. Seized by this idea she falls, because it remains unrealized, into her first bout of theological despair. Sunk to her nadir the only prayer left her is an agonized plea for assistance, 'Give me Christ or else I die' (*Legacy*, p. 3). This form of last request from a position of utter abjection is a common feature of protestant conversion narratives. A period of false assurance and misery rejected, conventionally precedes and validates the genuine adoption of Free Grace. It is a plea not for acceptance, however, but for spiritual bonus.

Trapnel's adoption after despair is interesting because she casts it in conjugal terms. She asks for Christ to be given to her as if in marital donation. When he is given she receives assurance of equal bond, 'Christ is thine; thou art his' (*Legacy*, p. 7), in the form of a voice which is so intellectually sonorous she at first mistakenly turns in the street to apprehend the speaker. On Sunday January 1 1642 Trapnel attended a sermon on Romans 8 given by John Simpson. Towards the end of the sermon her spirit cried out to the Lord for assurance. Desperate for a clear manifestation of divine love she was suddenly granted it:

my soul was filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory in believing, the spirit witnessing in that word, Christ is thy wel-beloved, and thou art his.

*(Legacy, p. 9)*

On the Tuesday following she was lodging with relatives in Stepney when her Aunt came into her chamber and counselled, 'Cosen, the Lord hath taken your mother from you, now labour to be married to Christ'. Trapnel replied that she hoped she was married to Christ and was immediately beset by dark fears of reprobation because she had expressed hope for, and not certainty of, adoption by Christ. Though included in her narrative to illustrate the danger of luke-warm faith, this incident clearly shows Trapnel favouring reciprocal marital bonds over and above obsequious hierarchical servitude in her relations with Christ. The ideal model was adopted from the spousal allegory in Canticles rather than the punitive and liminal prophets of the Old Testament.

Her relation with God could, on occasion, offer even more than marital union. At the height of ecstatic inspiration Trapnel is offered not absorption into the divine whole but rather her own glorious and powerful centre:

a glorious impression and stamp was set on my spirit, now I felt, saw and heard, that I never did before: Oh that Arras of glory, that now was my clothing! now was I made like my Saviour, a crown given me, not made with pearls or rich diamonds but far richer, not to be valued; earth cannot wear this crown, its onely the heaven of God that must enjoy this prerogative, its those that are made Kings and Priests unto God, that are thus honoured. *(Legacy, p. 11)*

Despite previous and subsequent denial, the personal will exposed here plays an important part in Trapnel's autobiography. God gives her, 'life to accomplish *my desire*, which is to leave the Saints a Legacy of experiences' (emphasis added). After such powerful declarations of intent, it is difficult fully to accept the professions of abasement that constantly seek to convince the reader that there is no self in her text. If Christ is first offered to Trapnel by the Saints as a marital replacement for her own mother he quickly becomes more tender, a 'double comforter', 'bringing love tokens to my soul, and setting

before me varieties of dishes at every banquet' (*Legacy*, p. 13). The thoroughly spiritualized Saint loves 'dearly to walk inclosed in the arms of its saviour, and to be imbraced by him and kissed with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is better than wine' (*Legacy*, p. 16). This close, reciprocally affective and private relationship with Christ is one Trapnel develops, with occasional reassurances of Saintly communality, throughout *A Legacy for Saints*. It stands behind her position on ordinances and forms of worship. Like Mary Cary, Trapnel doesn't have a great deal to say about these things. For her, inner mental communication was far more important, 'and though we be at a loss in respect of externals, yet that sweet internal converse will delight our spirits' (*Legacy*, p. 19). She wandered in error trying to search out an appropriate form of congregational worship until she realized God was causing her dissatisfaction. She could not find a church that practised a form of worship 'like the pattern in mount Sion'. As with Cary this difficulty is a coded justification. The churches she first attended didn't allow her space to promulgate her own view of the union and perfection of the Saints. They lacked the willingness to acknowledge Trapnel's theological activity as the worthy work of one of God's chosen people.

Trapnel records that in June 1646 she was seized by a 'distemper of body'. On June 28 she took to her chamber, nearly recovered but relapsed. It is during this episode that the intimacy of her dialogue with God first becomes apparent. She receives a vision of God 'that tongue is not able to express', raptures so great that she is not sensible of her body. The next day she pleads with God to be allowed to leave her body. God presents her with a scripture from Hosea 6: 'after two days he will revive us: and in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight', which she accepts as a 'full perswasion' that she is to recover. She asks for confirmation and receives it in the form

of shining glory and 'the sweet odour of the savour of the spirit'. Later when she lies in some pain, her stomach 'being shut up' the scripture is presented to her again. This time God reveals its real meaning, which is that allegorically two days in Scripture are the equivalent of two weeks of contemporary time. Trapnel can expect revival after this period has elapsed. Confirming his intention to 'work a wonder in Israel', he suggests that she should not be afraid of living in the body, because grace is sufficient for its sustenance. After her dialogue with divinity produces the prospect of personal resurrection Trapnel notes that her companions knew nothing of her 'conversation' and were calmly awaiting her death. Her dealings with God are privately revealed to the reader just as they were publically concealed - except for the uttering of a few gnomic scriptural phrases - from her carers. They attend her in a state of mute amazement. When she grows dangerously weak, they argue the case for feeding the 'tabernacle'. Believing to speak of her body 'was but lost time' Trapnel finds arguments from God to deny theirs. The secret assurances she obtains all confirm the extent to which she is coterminous with God and simultaneously alienated from, though lovingly disposed towards, her companion Saints. Visited by William Greenhill<sup>14</sup> and John Simpson she celebrates them as men of God and engages them in abstract theological debate. She confesses disappointment that Simpson doesn't challenge her further, 'since true gold is made more manifest by the touchstone, and is more purified in the Furnace' (*Legacy*, p. 32). The desire to communicate her state of being to the Saints is strong, but it is fatally compromised by the unbridgeable gulf between mortal linguistic capability and the sheer expressionless glory of God's manifestation:

if I could speak to you as it was spoken to me (I told them) it would appear far more glorious: but it come from men at second hand, which is as water running through the channel but it came to me as water out of a fountain, that is, from one it came not so swiftly into me; now it came so

fast from me, to the astonishment of friends. (*Legacy*, p. 31)

The extra-linguistic nature of inspiration, the perplexed incredulousness of her friends, and her supremely confident willingness to debate with Fifth-Monarchist ministers all strengthen Trapnel's conception of the egalitarian nature of her personal relationship with God. Her eagerness to engage in debate in particular runs counter to the conventional requirements of feminine modesty. She knows the mind of God and creates a compact with him on the basis of shared knowledge. The relationship this makes possible takes its symbolic form from one of the most sensitive social relations in early modern England. Trapnel offers a reading of Samson's famous riddle in Judges 14 and reveals in passing the model of her confidence.

So the great God spake to me in the whisperings of his spirit; and said; in believing in my son Christ, which is typed out by an Heyfer, and Plowing may signifie believing, that in believing in thy saviour thou shalt understand my secrets; God I may say spoke to me as a man speaks to his friend, but in a far more transcendent manner. (*Legacy*, pp. 35-36)<sup>15</sup>

In conceptualising her relationship with God in terms of male friendship, Trapnel has moved a considerable distance from patriarchal and absolute models of the distribution of power towards contractual and egalitarian alternatives.

Despite her persistent conviction of connection with God - she writes from prison in one of the epistles appended to *A Legacy for Saints* of her 'constant intimate familiarity with God' - Trapnel is keen to avoid all rhetoric of union and congruity which might attract accusations of Ranter extremism. Her emphasis on relation, rather than unity, is specifically designed to preempt such criticisms. Indeed one of her most elaborately developed metaphors demonstrates quite clearly just how serious an error she took perceived unity with God to be. Pondering the nature of the sun, which shines 'in beams and streams accompanied by shadows' she wonders why it doesn't shine on earth as it

does in the firmament:

it was answered me, should it shine on the Earth, as it is in the Firmament, it would suddenly burn up all things on the earth, no fruits of the earth, nor any creature could live or breathe, and therefore that it might be for the comfort of the fruits of the earth, and of all creatures, it was spread forth in the beams and streams of it; so the Lord said to me, should I thy God dwell in thee, as I am in my essential glory, thou couldst not breathe in the body, but immediately thou wouldst dye in the body, it could not bear the weight of glory: therefore I shine on thee on beams and streams of glory, which produces those effects spoken of in scripture; I was filled with joy: now I knew not wherefore God spake this to me, till a while after: I was going to speak of it, and this voice came to me, This was brought to thee for the rectifying of thy Judgement: the erring spirit shall come to understand, Isa 29. last: now I considered how I had erred, in that I had held forth before I sickened, that God dwelt essentially in his Saints, when I considered in Scripture, where it is said, God in us, and likewise when I viewed Gal 5, which holds out the fruits and operations of the spirit. (*Legacy*, p. 36)

If God cannot dwell directly in his Saints without burning up the corporeal vessel then the faithful need to construct a form of intimate mental presence. They must seek to achieve a familiar discursive relationship which eschews the destructive potential of incongruous physical proximity. Aware of her error, Trapnel requires a theory of Saintly inspiration. She finds one in horticultural metaphor:

but now I shall tell you Saints, how God presented himself to me in many similitudes, which I never heard mentioned before by any, they were brought immediately from God and Scripture, presented that I never took notice of before...this similitude of a Tree was set before me, God the root, his Son Christ the Tree, the Spirit the Sap, and as the Root, and Tree, and Sap are but one in a natural sence, for the Sap and Tree looked on in the Root, there is but one substance which lies hid till such time as it puts forth it self in a Tree...But I desired the Lord to shew me this similitude by Scripture, in which he opened the Trinity by way of Root, Tree and Sap; God is said to be love, and he that dwelleth in God dwelleth in love; So that from this, God appeared as the Root of man's happiness, being infolded in the first person in Trinity from Eternity; by this Root, which the scripture calls love, the first glorious person in Trinity appearing in the second person the Tree; But how is he called a Tree in scripture? It was presently presented before me, that he was that Tree spoken of in Paradise, that Tree of life, Gen 2, But how may the spirit be called sap from Scripture? Thus it is called a holy anoynting, it is compared to Oyle, *To the Oyntment Psalm 133.2 which was upon Aaron's head, and ran*

*down upon his beard, and so to the skirts of his garment; And from the word Oyl or Oyntment, so the third glorious person in Trinity is likened unto sap, and thus it appeared to me that as the sap runs from the Root through the Tree into the branches, so the Spirit, the holy Oyle runs from out of the Root, which is the Father through the Tree, which is the Son, into the Branches; For so the Saints are called in Scripture Branches of the Vine Christ Jesus, and as the Sap drops into the branches and Twigs of the Tree, which causes them to live and appear green, and the efficacy of this Sap produces fruit, it is very Vertual, it descends of its vertue into the leavs, which else would wither; as for instance in the fall of the leaf, when the Sap returns to the Root, the leaves wither and fail; And as there is a Vertual Union of the Root, Tree, and Sap, and Branches, and Fruit, and Leaves; so there is a glorious Union and Congruity, that the Saints have in the holy Trinity, their life is in the Root, and it appears in the Tree and manifested by the Sap to the Branches, the Elect appear dead till the Spirit which is the sap quickneth them, and no fruit is brought forth, though they may have a profession, yet it is but as dead leaves which falls and crumbles to dust; So that from the spirit flows sweet waters, it produces sound fruit, it makes also professors green and lively; and as when the bark is pulled of the Tree, the Sap is more discerned: so when the humanity of Christ is taken from the Saints view, then the spirit is more discerned. (*Legacy*, p. 34)*

Trapnel's view of the relation which flows between roots and leaves makes the Saints synechdochic of the Holy Spirit and, although very much in union with God, easily distinguishable from his original holy substance. This metonymic argument claims a fundamental connectedness between God and his Saints but avoids Ranter professions of essential and indivisible oneness.

When Anna Trapnel achieves union with Christ she more often than not does so by refusing to acknowledge the stubborn persistence of corporeal identity. When the spirit soars with Christ the body is relegated to an inferior position. Diane Purkiss has rightly pointed out that spiritual equality was the only egalitarian possibility available to women in the seventeenth century. In her important article on prophecy Purkiss examines corporeal realms as they pertain to women prophets by looking at inedia, food imagery and metaphors of bodily dissolution and bodily reproduction. She concludes that 'women prophets explore the contradictory possibilities of a female body autonomy and an



autonomy beyond or outside the gendered body'.<sup>16</sup>

But it would be wrong to argue that pleas for spiritual equality were quasi-liberal arguments for equal rights applied to a universal subject regardless of social background. The notion of equality with God that Trapnel invokes is itself a consequence of her own gendered position. Purkiss notes astutely that women were ineffective icons of God because they were made not in God's image, but in man's. Because women couldn't adopt iconic metaphoric positions in relation to God they adopted agnate positions which were already familiar, because they were part of women's social experience and which they found replicated in the language of Scripture. If the icon is a repetition, a mirror image suggesting only the sterility of exact reproduction, the narratives of relational interaction by women like Trapnel illustrate a concern for consanguine interconnectedness, for metonymic and synecdochic structures in which the part is valued of itself and for its integral association with the whole. Trapnel most clearly expresses this idea in a letter written from Tregasow near Truro on the '15th of the 2nd month' 1654 and appended to *A Legacy for Saints*. She notes, 'seeing all members make but one body, let the same mind be in us, which dwelt in Jesus Christ'. Radical masculine theology in the mid-seventeenth century was dominated by structures of inversion, liminal reversal and metaphoric substitution. The political ideas which underlay the Stuart state often invoked a similar theology. The basis of both ideologies was that relations between individuals were absolute but analogical. They could be replicated and reproduced at a different social levels quite easily.

Anna Trapnel's challenge to patriarchy consists not only in her fundamental insistence that society be viewed as a collective whole whose duty was to preserve the dignity and importance of all individuals, rather than seeing society as a conglomerate of

isolated interest groups such as households, counties, religious denominations and social classes, but also in her refusal to accept the transferable validity of analogy, and her subsequent refiguring of the relationships which held between individuals, both in social groups and in relation to God. Trapnel's views are a consequence of her own position insofar as the metonymic structures she designs partially replicate the ordinary social experience of women. Because she brings to her writings a desire to repeat the expected humility of feminine experience together with a bolder vision of feminine empowerment her works often appear to put forward impossible or contrary positions. Indeed Trapnel herself is at once everything and nothing, a bold lion for Christ and a voided carcass for divine inspiration; a person who cannot but speak in invigorated tones and one who counsels inactive patience before the millennium; now an occasionally vitriolic challenger of masculine quietism (witness her frustration with Greenhill and Simpson's weak arguments) and now a terrified and meek prophet periodically beset by Christian despair.

If it is a truism that in a rigidly hierarchical society those at the top tend to feel themselves hardly restrained by connection to anyone, while those at the bottom readily feel the weight of the entire system metaphorically pressing down upon them, it is true that Trapnel manages to depart from this model by virtue of her utopian individualism. Trapnel undoubtedly exercised discursive power in her writings and she was able to shape the intimate and non-servile relationship she enjoyed with God. Her reformulation of patriarchal lore, in a theory of relation which exposes the arbitrary and therefore unessential nature of analogical thought, is a novel and moderately successful endeavour, despite the fact that her 'constant intimate familiarity' with God at once enforced an ideology of feminine modesty by emphasising privacy and threatened a kind of elitist companionable blasphemy by suggesting that she was much more than the dumb servant

of a deity. The modern reader must finally accept that Trapnel's rhetorical practice produces conflicting meanings in relation to those questions about gender with which we hope to interrogate her work. Despite ample evidence of her awareness of gender and her skilful manipulation of its problematic and often overdetermined presence in the popular theology of the time, these conflicts stubbornly resist easy or coherent resolution.

#### Notes

1. See Gary Waller's comments quoted in chapter one, pp. 34 - 37 above.
2. See chapters one and two above for an argument for the relevance of Luce Irigaray's theories of feminine subjectivity to early modern women's writing.
3. The question was put most interestingly by Sue Wiseman in 'Unsilent instruments', pp. 176-177. See also Diane Purkiss' illuminating article 'Producing the voice, consuming the body: Women prophets of the seventeenth century'.
4. This latter argument was first put by Philippa Berry and Christine Berg in 'Spiritual Whoredom: An Essay on Female Prophets in the Seventeenth Century' in *1642: Literature and Power in the Seventeenth Century*, edited by Francis Barker et al (University of Essex, Colchester, 1981), pp. 37-54.
5. See Gordon J. Schochet, *The Authoritarian Family and Political Attitudes in Seventeenth Century England; Patriarchalism in Political Thought* (Transaction Books, New Jersey, 1988).
6. Many Fifth Monarchists were willing to accept God's use of the ordinary people to proclaim his disquiet, but not to tolerate the idea that political power could be shared democratically. Thus Hanserd Knollys in *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory* (1641) in *Puritanism and Liberty* edited by A.S.P. Woodhouse (Everyman, 1986), pp. 233-241, accepted the contribution the common people might make in the beginning but limited their political power nonetheless:  
the voice of Jesus Christ reigning in his Church, comes first from the multitude, the common people... Though the voice of Christ's reign came first from the multitude; yet it comes but in a confused manner, as the noise of many waters. Though the multitude may begin a thing, and their intention may be good

in it, yet it is not for them to bring it to perfection: that which they do commonly is mixed with much confusion and a great deal of disorder. (p. 234)

7. Anna Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone: or a Relation of something spoken in Whitehall by Anna Trapnel, being in the visions of God* (1654), sig A2r. Further references to this text, hereafter *Cry*, will be given in parenthesis in the main text.

8. Katherine Chidley uses this phrase to describe herself when challenging Edwards to debate. See Chidley, *Justification*, p. 81.

9. Dod and Cleaver (1618), p. 6.

10. Dod and Cleaver, *A Plaine Exposition*, p. 226.

11. Dod and Cleaver, *A Plaine Exposition*, p. 374.

12. Trapnel, *A Legacy for Saints; Being several experiences of the dealings of God with Anna Trapnel, In and after her Conversion (written some years hence with her own hand)* (1654). Thomason's copy B.L. E806 (1) is dated 24 July. Further references to this text, hereafter *Legacy*, will be given parenthetically in the main text.

13. Jane Turner disavowed the Quakers for precisely this reason. See chapter seven, pp. 219 - 220 above.

14. The same Independent minister harangued by Katherine Chidley for his anti-separatist views. See chapter three above.

15. Trapnel, *Legacy* pp. 35-36. The example of male friendship is used by Mary Cary to describe the duty she owes to God's private confidence. See chapter 7.

16. Purkiss, p. 158.

## **Saintly spouses and heavenly husbands: masculine and feminine models in the work of Dorothy White and Abiezer Coppe**

This chapter examines the role of gender and gendered economies of the subject in two groups of texts from the radical religious literature of the Civil War and interregnum period. It is an attempt at historical analysis using the conceptual tools which have been forged by contemporary feminist theory. It also attempts to open up existing historical debate by invoking a modern theoretical perspective. A great deal of contemporary feminist criticism elucidates textual differences which are the product of gender. Work by modern French feminists suggests that it is possible to read literary works as embodying different symbolic economies of gender, systematic associations of binary opposites - open/closed, night/day, nature/society, clear/opaque, truthful/deceptive - which can be mapped onto cultural conceptions of gender. In a recent collection of essays on Helene Cixous, Judith Still suggests some of the differences which might distinguish masculine and feminine economies:

whereas a masculine economy requires strict delineation of property (from the ownership of one's body onwards to the ownership of the fruits of one's labour and so on) a feminine economy is one (of proximity) of taking the other into oneself and being taken into the other also. A feminine economy is about mutual knowing.<sup>1</sup>

Such a model promises much as a reading hypothesis for radical religious pamphlets in the early modern period.

With this in mind, this I intend to look at the work of the Quaker Dorothy White, who published nineteen pamphlets between 1659 and 1684, and the ranter Abiezer Coppe, (1616-1672) whose published writings were notorious and whose perceived blasphemy was in part responsible for the passing of the 1650 Blasphemy Act. The reason for

bringing together Quaker and Ranter texts is to show that texts of similar theological provenance (the distinction between early radical Quakers and Ranters like Coppe is, despite later Quaker denials, insubstantial) reveal profound differences in the way the texts organize a gendered subject for their respective narrators and in the way existing symbolic meanings for gender are utilized.

Recent criticism of some of the more colourful revolutionary characters of the Civil War period, and of Quakerism in its formative phase, has suggested that the published writings of these radical fringe groups can be read sympathetically, in ways which promise to generate a deeper understanding of texts which until recently have seemed impenetrable and obscure. One of the ways in which this can be achieved is via the construction of a cultural poetics for radical religious discourse.<sup>2</sup> What a cultural poetics attempts to do is to explain systematically the way in which texts create meaning, by interpreting the syntax and vocabulary of meaning for a particular text so as to gauge the relationship between individual and general cultural meanings.

Nigel Smith's recent work on radical religion suggests many ways of conceptualizing a cultural poetics for the study of Ranter and Quaker writing in the 1640s and 1650s.<sup>3</sup> In what follows I shall attempt to describe and utilize this structure in a reading of Dorothy White and Abiezer Coppe. I shall extend Smith's ideas by suggesting that if gender is placed at the centre of any poetics of radical religious discourse, many of the difficulties which hamper a clear understanding cease to trouble us. Where Smith does draw attention to gender, he follows the work of historians in concentrating on the extent to which women were accorded greater freedoms within certain of the Civil War religious sects. 'What should be noted', he writes:

is the tendency among some puritans (the more radical the puritanism the greater the tendency) to regard women as the spiritual equals of men:

'Christ was one in the male and in the female; and as he arises in both', (Sarah Blackborow *The Just and Equal Balance* 1660). Women were singled out for their ability to prophesy and in this respect they were allowed to speak in meetings. Gifted sectarian women displayed particular types of expression and language which are not dissimilar to those of medieval mystics and anchoresses.<sup>4</sup>

We need to know whether the licence granted to women to participate meant according to them a different female symbolic; whether their authority was specifically female, or whether it was an extension of the same authority - or agency - which applied to men. We need most importantly to do this from the point of view of women writers themselves, since it is clear by now that even male sectarians did not comprehensively endorse the activities of their female counterparts. Did spiritual equality erase the symbolic differences between the sexes or did it merely complement them in a way which left them unchanged? Were women able to manipulate existing patterns of female piety?

Despite a certain vagueness about how gender affected prophetic licence, Smith effectively elaborates a critical agenda for the examination of radical religious texts. Areas which he identifies and which seem crucial for the identification of a poetic include: the nature of millenarian message promoted by the text; the role of feigned madness; the form of relationship to God implied by the text; the concept of subjectivity underpinning this relationship; the definition of hypostatic union in play in particular texts; the question of narrative authority; the use of biblical sources; and registered attitudes towards the unregenerate, the law, language, knowledge, speaking and silence. In addition, attitudes towards social structure, hierarchy and authority are detectable in the use of certain metaphors and images to illustrate fundamental truths and relations with the divine.

Abiezer Coppe was born in Warwickshire on 20 May 1616, the son of Walter Coppe. He went up to Oxford University in 1636, initially to All Souls college, but he

subsequently became postmaster at Merton.<sup>5</sup> At this early stage in his career as self-appointed demagogue, he was already notorious for licentious behaviour. It is recorded that he often entertained loose 'huswives', pretending when challenged that the prodigious quantities of meat with which he retired to his rooms were for his cat. He left Oxford in 1642 and acquired some reputation as an Anabaptist preacher in Warwickshire. In 1646 he was imprisoned in Coventry gaol. His first published work appeared in 1648. In 1649, he wrote a preface to the Ranter John Coppin's *Divine Teachings*, and published his first important text, *Some Sweet Sips of Some Spiritual Wine*. In January 1650, *A Fiery Flying Roll* was published (Thomason's copy is dated fourth January 1649/50) and by thirteenth January 1650, he was under arrest in Coventry. He was brought to Newgate in March of the same year. In February the Commons ordered that his text be publicly burnt by the hangman. In September he was examined by parliamentary committee and he remained in Newgate gaol until 1651. After Coppe's release and the publication of two retractions, he seems to have remained in London. Christopher Hill records that he changed his name, took up physic and was buried in Barnes in Surrey in 1672.<sup>6</sup>

The critic A. L. Morton found in the Ranters

a deep concern for the poor, a denunciation of the rich and a primitive biblical communism that is more menacing and urban than that of Winstanley and the Diggers.<sup>7</sup>

He also thought Coppe's emphasis on sexual libertinism and his promulgation of a sexuality free from the hypocrisy of much Christian moralizing was revolutionary. Although Morton doubts the veracity of the stories which have Coppe sleeping freely with two women at a time, he sees Coppe's theological ideas as clear precursors for later Quaker beliefs; in short they are no more than, 'an exaggeration of a constant trend



within puritanism'.<sup>8</sup>

Coppe's texts are dense and difficult to read, written in a vertiginous prose style which Christopher Hill describes as 'unlike anything else in the seventeenth century'.<sup>9</sup> They are heavy with biblical allusion and narrated in a 'voice' whose identity is often uncertain. In *Some Sweet Sips*, Coppe is concerned to communicate his sense of impending apocalypse and the corporeal havoc Christ is soon to wreak upon earth. In his vision, Christ is the

sword of the Lord-General, devouring from one end of the land to the other. And the point therof, set at the very heart of the flesh, to let out its very heartblood, and every drop therof.<sup>10</sup>

Condemnation of the flesh by way of threats to the social realm in general and the individual in particular are characteristic of a good deal of Coppe's thought. Much of his prose is taken up with the fight against dead formalism in religious practice and he fulminates frequently against those who 'cannot live without shadows signs, representations, it is death to them, to hear of living upon a pure and naked God' (*SSS*, p. 49). It is this desire for divine presence, to identify oneself in God and find God in oneself, which lies at the heart of Coppe's conception of living on a pure and naked God, a God unencumbered by representation, and which differentiates his poetic from Dorothy White's. Coppe's relation to God, given the consensus that all relations with God are of superior with inferior, is of male to male.

Nigel Smith argues that the notion of the prophet as social leader, one inspired to cry out against the iniquity and oppression of contemporary social life, was important to Coppe's own sense of prophetic purpose. To answer the question posed at the beginning of this chapter we need to assess to what extent this conception of self depends upon the kind of symbolic possibilities allowed by conventional gender roles.

Coppe explicitly claims knowledge of God's design in *Some Sweet Sips*, and Smith draws attention to the self in this text as an 'emanating centre of extreme cohortive phrases' (SSS, p. 57). We might easily read this as just the kind of powerful self-authorizing fiction favoured by a phallic masculine poetic, given Coppe's avowed belief that he is indeed conveying the word of God. Smith argues convincingly that Coppe's narrative technique often blurs the difference between the 'I' of God and Coppe's own narrative self, and he notes too the gradual drift away from strict delineation of self and text, so that the pamphlet becomes an appendage of the writer. Thus in Coppe's work, the idea of prophecy as the transfer of divine knowledge via a human conduit, the unknowing messenger, is superseded by the masculine need to repossess and authenticate the original, to endow what is broadcast with a powerful sense of overriding personal presence.

Coppe can be a guarded and jealous prophet too. Following a comment about biblical style he confesses

the father would have it so; and I partly know his design in it, and hear him secretly whispering in me the reason thereof which I must (yet) burie in silence. (SSS, p. 47)

There is no free flow of prophetic information here. Coppe's relationship with God is conspiratorial. Both possess arcane knowledge which Coppe divulges as he sees fit, given the contingencies of time and occasion. The connection between God and Coppe thus takes the form of a secretive conversation between two centred selves. Despite, or perhaps because of, this intersubjective model of communication, Coppe wishes for subjective annihilation:

only I must let you know, that I long to be utterly undone, and that the pride of my fleshly glory is stained: and that I, either am, or would be nothing, and see the Lord all, in all, I am, or would be nothing. (SSS, p. 49)

On one level, this desire for the substantive collapse of the physical subject seems to offer one way of avoiding solipsism, by making corporeal identity insignificant. Yet as eagerly as he claims privileged access to higher knowledge, Coppe relinquishes it, oscillating between the antithetical poles of knowledge and faith, the corporeal and the spiritual. Coppe's rejection of prelatical formalism is one with his rejection of the flesh (all flesh is grass and must be burnt, he claims, following Isaiah). Nigel Smith has noted that this latter aspect leads Coppe to doubt the efficiency and righteousness of the language in which he speaks. Thus he longs for a new voice - one uncontaminated by fleshly values - and is simultaneously aware of the hermeneutic impermeability of silence. Coppe hoped that the action of God in the last days was merely the Lord putting his law in the 'inward parts' of his followers and writing it 'in their hearts'. For many women, as we have seen, this was a process of liberation which allowed them to preach and prophesy as God's chosen disciples. For Coppe, the presence of God liminally relieves him of the responsibilities of personal identity. The difference is that women achieve identity through the active agency of prophecy, whereas Coppe relinquishes differentiation from God through prophecy.

Constantly aware of the tendency of the flesh to corrupt spiritual expression, Coppe seeks to overcome the disparity between the two by invoking the idea of disguise. He warns readers not to be forgetful of entertaining beggars since they may turn out to be angels incognito. His preoccupation with masking relates to his obsession with the idea that truth is often hidden within and that one cannot accurately detect virtue by reference to its external appearance. Thus the Lord will speak through a wide variety of sources: 'fishers, publicans, tanners, tent makers etc'. Coppe is clearly appealing here to a God who imbues those lower down in the social hierarchy with apocalyptic power.

This relocation of enlivened spirituality challenges the hold of the learned and monied on theological understanding. But Coppe's scepticism about appearances is in accord with the root belief of much male theorizing about the inadequacy of women's constitution. Women, for most early modern theorists of gender, are inevitably dissemblers of truth.

In attacking doctrinal ownership, Coppe also attacks the wider concept of social ownership. In this respect he clearly challenges the class order. This challenge may amount to nothing more than the view that all may have the truth; Coppe may simply desire a fuller acknowledgement of the perspicuity of all sections of society before God. So although Coppe has communistic leanings, it is not clear that a similar egalitarianism characterizes his views of the relationship between gender and the religious subject.

Illustrating the ill-effects of formalism in religion, Coppe has cause to publish the extract of a letter to him from one Mrs T. P. of Hook Norton, who recounts a dream in which, encountering a number of wild creatures, T. P. was smitten by the desire to put one to her bosom. She traps one and places a collar around its neck. Once captured, however, the inappropriateness of its enforced captivity is immediately apparent and she realizes that the weakness lies on her part; the desire to keep it by her was really a longing to appropriate it to herself. This leads to the conclusion: 'and here comes in all our bondage and death'. Thus Coppe identifies the desire to tame enthusiasm, to own the fruit of theological speculation and the acquisition of material goods, as errors which allow damnation. We are lost, he thinks, if we remain hostages to unbridled material concupiscence. This is the immediate context which allows Coppe to claim the genderlessness of souls. Admonishing T. P. for excusing her thoughts with the phrase 'what though we be the weaker vessel', Coppe exhorts thus:

I know that male and female are all one in Christ, and they are all one in me. I had a lieve hear a daughter as a sonne prophecy. (SSS, p. 66)

As if to confirm this claim, Coppe shortly invokes the Old Testament prophet Deborah as a source of righteous song. Similarly, as if to confirm his thesis that male and female are all one in him, Coppe turns his image of the Lord risen into an idea of childbirth:

the lord is risen indeed I see him, not only risen out of Joseph's tomb, without me, but risen out of the bowels of the earth within me, and is alive in me, formed in me, grows in me: the babe springs in my innermost wombe, leapes for joy there, and then I sing, and never but then, O lord my song! to me a child is born. (SSS, p. 68)

Even where Coppe adopts the language of childbirth, it is difficult to see this as an extension of prophetic rights to women, particularly since his overriding concern appears to be to garner all symbolic resources to his own notion of personal fecundity. Coppe advocates a gendered economy of religious symbols in order to consume and replicate them himself. Elsewhere his attachment to conventional images of female piety is apparent. When he comes to consider the relations between God and man, he is content to draw upon conventional patriarchal terms:

O lord what is man that thou art thus mindful of him? What is man? Man is the woman, and thou art the man, the saints are thy spouse, our maker is our husband; we are no more twaine, but one, halleluja. (SSS, p. 69)

Coppe sees the relationship between God and the Saints as analogous to the relationship which holds between husband and wife in the ideal patriarchal marriage. Although Coppe's narrative in *Some Sweet Sips* invokes muliebrity, or womanhood, seemingly at every turn, the tropes he employs to communicate narrative fecundity fail to divorce his use of feminine symbolism from its original patriarchal context.

In chapter three of Coppe's second *Fiery Flying Roule*, he recounts an experience which occurred on Sunday 30 September 1649. While on horseback he met a poor man in open fields, 'clad with patcht clouts' who looking 'wishly' on him. Coppe asked if he was poor, and learning that he was, felt inspired to act charitably. He records that the

'great love' within burned hot towards the man and he asks a second time if he is poor.

Whereupon

the strange woman who flattereth with her lips, and is subtile of heart, said within me, its a poor wretch give him two pence.<sup>11</sup>

At this, the excellency and majesty within Coppe scorn these words, 'confound her language', and kick her out of his presence. Coppe is again besieged from within by the strange woman whom he calls the 'wel favoured harlot'. She rises up within him and says 'its a poor wretch give him 6d'. She chants a collection of scriptural texts which promote self help, (true love begins at home; have a care of the main chance) which initially persuade Coppe that he has done the right thing:

and thus she flattereth with her lips, and her words being smoother than oile; and her lips dropping as the honeycomb, I was fired to hasten my hand into my pocket; and pulling out a shilling, said to the poor wretch; give me sixpence, heers a shilling for thee.<sup>12</sup>

Since the beggar is unable to furnish Coppe with change, he rides off shouting back that he will leave sixpence at the house of a friend in the next town, from where the beggar may collect it. Coppe then leaves, but almost immediately feels the wrath of God, '(as God judged me) I, as she, was struck down dead'.<sup>13</sup> Coppe rides back and flings all his money at the beggar, takes off his hat and bows to him seven times. He leaves, somewhat enigmatically, upon an aside, 'because I am king, I have done this, but you need not tell anyone'.

Nigel Smith has drawn attention to this passage as evidence of a thematic association in Coppe between money and illicit seduction.<sup>14</sup> It is perfectly true that the anxiety provoked by privilege in Coppe's work is frequently conceptualized as a horror of falling victim to the comforting effects of materialistic pleasure. Perhaps a more obvious point, but one which needs exploration, is that Coppe uses the well-favoured

harlot as an icon of dishonesty, a figure whose womanly wiles are inseparable from her theological mendacity. That her words are smoother than oil and her lips dripping with honeycomb is good evidence of her duplicity. She represents the extent to which beauty may conceal perfidy, a view consistent with Coppe's earlier caution that beggars may conceal angels in disguise. Coppe's world is thus full of beauty concealing evil, indignity and degradation hiding marvellous grace. But just as poverty proves a suitable metaphor for righteousness, so Coppe allows feminine duplicity, a culturally hegemonic meaning, to stand for the disingenuousness of evil. He thus challenges the association of righteousness with those high up in the social hierarchy, but conspicuously fails to challenge the idea of women as inherently liable to possession by deceptive and demonic forces. The harlot is consumed by fire and brimstone, a conflagration which purges both Coppe's inner self and all Churches, 'except those of the first born'. Coppe's attitude to the harlot is inherited in part from scripture and from the masculine fear of female sexuality often expressed there. Coppe's excision of harlotry - speaking seductively, cleverly, rhetorically - from his own persona, and the rejection of women it implies, are born out straightforwardly by the exploitation of the feminine his work enacts. Coppe's interpretative anxieties are resolved by an inversion of the normative hegemony he finds in place. The inner truth makes the man or woman, and may bear no relation to the external signs one must read through to discover it. For Coppe, visible evidence is a travesty of inner reality. Coppe's major example of this is the 'wel favoured harlot', a more discursive resonant temptress than the beggars who might turn out to be angels. It is significant too that concealed virtue is accorded a masculine identity, while concealed evil is symbolized by the feminine. The beggar/angel is docile and meek, whereas the harlot is verbally, as well as visually, deceptive. For Coppe, the harlot is detectably evil

but the beggar invisibly virtuous.

Dorothy White's Quaker pamphlets suggest a particular and precise economy of conversion. She repeatedly invites her readership to repent and turn to the light within, returning persistently to the same themes throughout her nineteen pamphlets.

In *A Call from God out of Egypt by his Son Christ the Light of Life* printed in London in 1662, she sets down her ideas relating to the light within. The light shines internally in everyone; those who turn to it and surrender to its authority can become 'Children of the Day of God'.<sup>15</sup> To hold up the status of children as something which the religious subject should embrace is to emphasize the agency of the weak and the value of servitude. In the early modern period, the child is not the possessor of innocence so much as someone whose inferior status is so archetypal as to be beyond question. Dorothy White's metaphor is suggestive therefore not of edenic grace, but rather of the kind of humility appropriate before a powerful parent or father-figure.

Dorothy White's argument was that formal religion lacked not structure but authenticity; false forms of worship and invalid professions of God had obscured the truth. The souls of the majority of ordinary folk remained uninvigorated by divine presence. This state of affairs was more than an unfortunate error, since the apocalypse was imminent:

now the seeker must return home to within, to find that there which you have been seeking within, you must come home to find it at home within thy own house, and seek and sweep there, for the kingdom of God is within you: the lost piece of silver which the woman had lost, which she sought diligently, and swept her own house, and never left sweeping until she had found that which she had lost; and when she had found it being filled with joy, she calleth to her neighbours, saying, rejoyce with me, for I have found that which I had lost. She could not contain it in herself no more than the woman of samaria could when she had found the messiah at the well, she goeth and leaveth her pitcher, and hasteneth, being filled with good matter, telling such glad tydings unto them, saying, come and see a man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ.<sup>16</sup>



Twice in this passage the observant women serves as a metaphor for the good Christian. Both instances serve as contemporary justification for Dorothy White's similar enunciation of divine presence. The desire to produce constant and effective scriptural precedent as a means of authorizing one's own textual intervention is a constant refrain throughout her work. But it did not always invoke images of virtuous biblical women:

and the lord God hath spoken, and therefore I will speak, for God hath unloosed my tongue to speak the praise of his name.<sup>17</sup>

This more traditional image of God authorizing through his divine occupation of the Christian subject was often cited directly:

God's glory and Renown, I do send forth and declare, being fuller than my life can bear, of the waters out of Jacob's well.<sup>18</sup>

This version of prophetic inspiration explains the desire to speak as a kind of irresistible swelling within which exonerates Dorothy White from responsibility for her own agency.

Dorothy White also argues that God specifically ordains those who speak in warning of the wrath to come:

he hath touched their tongues with a coal from his burning altar, and for sions sake, such cannot hold their peace, and for Jerusalem's sake they cannot cease, but their leader they must obey.<sup>19</sup>

However, she claims no exclusive right to hariolatic authority. The Word is available to all:

he is near to everyone, yea, to show to everyone his thoughts; the Lord of hosts is his name; the word is nigh in the heart and in the mouth, that every one may hear it and do it; the more surer word of prophesie, the ingrafted word, which is able to save all.<sup>20</sup>

Once reinvigorated, the conscience was thought to be beyond the control of worldly authorities. It was deemed wholly inappropriate

for any man to command the conscience to be silent from speaking, prophesying, or praying, seeing God hath set no limit over the conscience of any, either to speak, or to be silent: for who hath formed the mouth?

Who hath created the tongue? Who hath breathed upon the spirit the breath of life and made it a living soul?<sup>21</sup>

Her affection for the light, and the anticipation of beauty which accompanies her conception of final judgement, suggest that Dorothy White attached great importance to visual elements in her prophetic utterances. Together with this emphasis on visual perception, her work carries a warning of the vulnerability of worldly language to the violence of God's wrath and offers a discourse of innate knowing, a sensory rather than an intellectual perception of moral categories, as the heir to Babylonian chatter:

God is bringing all to truth in the innerparts, which is the one language which must remain for ever. And now is the bridegroom's voice heard in the land of the living.<sup>22</sup>

The internal presence of truths plainly and immediately known, unmediated by language or sign system, guarantees genuine connection between God and subject. Understanding is not conveyed, it arises not as a result of communication, it is rather produced by prolonged exposure and desire; the subject perceives inner light and embraces its wholeness.

If this conversion pattern appears solipsistic, it is important to heed the deliberate advocacy of interpersonal solidarity which Dorothy White promotes:

but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then have we fellowship, one with the another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.<sup>23</sup>

Given that the experience of inner revelation is identical in each case, a congregation of similarly redeemed Saints will come into existence whose experiences are mutually self-validating. Once the individual path to salvation and recognition has been delineated, the emphasis shifts from personal procedure to collective gain. In fellowship, argues Dorothy White, 'here is our victory, even our faith, by which we overcome the world'. Those whom Christ knows, asserts Dorothy White, 'know his power to create them anew into

his heavenly image and divine majesty'. Those turning to Christ will be dramatically transformed, forged anew in Christ's guise. Again, the process invoked here is predicated upon the helplessness and subsequent empowerment of the subject.

Many theologians invoked the ideal helplessness of the subject before God in their theological tracts. Thomas Hooker, writing in 1637, placed great emphasis on mansuetude as an emotional prerequisite for interaction with God. In Hooker's redemptive scheme, the soul was first to be prepared, and then engrafted to Christ:

the humbled broken hearted sinner is the fittest subject to set out these praises of this glorious work of our redemption, he is the fittest for God to work upon.<sup>24</sup>

Hooker's subject becomes a possession of Christ and then progresses to a degree of reciprocal possession: 'Christ possetheth him, and by this means, he comes to be possessed of Christ'. Dorothy White is clearly following high Calvinists like Hooker when she describes Christ's effect upon the soul as a subtle moulding of human faculties to God's will. According to Hooker, God performs three actions, fitting, maintaining and improving the soul's fitness for praise of his name. Hooker claims too that God's presence in the creature should not be thought to depend on glorious recognition. The soul can be possessed of Christ and be unaware of its own condition. There is thus, for Hooker, an element within the soul which leans towards salvation, and which cannot be erased unless the soul be deliberately neglectful of its own state. This permanent reminder of heavenly origin allows universal access to redemption, an opportunity for grace which cannot be erased. Dorothy White makes the point succinctly:

and no other foundation can any man lay than that which is already laid in people.<sup>25</sup>

John Preston's 1638 text, *The Church's Marriage*, seeks to determine with some precision the kind of similarity that exists between the 'marriage' of a believer with God

and its humbler earthly form. He believes the similarity to hold in five respects: in the consent of parents, in the mutual consent of matched parties, in covenant, in union (following marriage) and lastly in mutual exchange. Both types of marriage are conceived of in startlingly economic terms. When good Christians are betrothed to God (Hos 2;19), they experience divine reciprocity:

wee have part in his goods, whatsoever is his, is ours, and ours is made his, our debts are made his, and againe, all his honours and riches, and privileged are made ours, their is an union between the parties.<sup>26</sup>

If this sounds surprisingly egalitarian, depending less on the preservation of distinctions between inferior and superior than on the reciprocal exchange of all debts and undertakings, we can perhaps grasp more clearly the implications of Preston's ideal Christian relationship by analysing his version of Christian subjectivity.

Preston's subject is an all-or-nothing creature, wholly committed to the eradication of all vestiges of the fleshly self:

except thou be married to Christ, that thou have the lord himselfe, thou hast nothing to do with anything that is his. (p. 6)

Although he concedes that one requires the words and witness of the spirit to fully know assurance of salvation, Preston's mode of affirmation is curiously ethereal. The spiritual witness is an ineffable knowingness,

a certain divine expression of Christ to the soule, whereby a man is secretly assured without any argument or reason, that hee is in salvation. (p. 10)

Persuaded Christian subjectivity paradoxically involves assuming a position in which rational argument is a superfluous irrelevance. Some, it is a relief to learn, are more keenly aware of their own status as saved subjects than others:

it is true, in some the spirit speaks more evidently and audibly with joy unspeakable and glorious, the flashes of comfort are much more bright and glorious to some than others, and such special witness of the holy ghost

are very rare, and dispensed to us for some special purpose, commonly after some great humiliation or prayer, or to preface us for some great enterprise or spiritual conflict. (p. 12)

If the spirit speaks directly only in exceptional circumstances, the ordinary work of the Holy Ghost involves the radical destruction of human carnality:

it is a special work of the holy ghost that must mould the spirit anew, and break all in pieces, and cast thee into a new frame. (p. 14)

Preston explicitly compares this revamping of the subject before God to the bending of a wife's will to his own by a husband. As the faithful give themselves up to God, to have him replace their fallen spirits with divine presence, so 'women give themselves up to their husbands so long as they live together' (p. 14). Preston counsels that many are currently prone to the making of negligent vows and warns that:

it is essential to the marriage covenant, that it be *verbis de praesenti*, for the present, that is, I do take this man for my wedded husband etc, not that I promise I will, but that I am willing at this time to myself up to him, this present resigning of oneself; this is the consent that makes marriage. (p. 15)

In Preston's view, to accept God is literally to resign the self to divine oblivion, not so much to validate the self before God as to dissolve the dull and lethargic substance of human will at the point of greatest desire for incorporation. Those who accept God in this way free themselves from the possibility of narcissism.

If the married woman is cowed in obedience before her husband, abdicating her own self in favour of her husband, just as the Christian genuflects in spirit before God, the Christian without God

is like a woman that is friendlesse, that hath none to stand for her...that hath no counsell to direct her. (p. 25)

That one be subject to a husband in some form was, for Preston, a universal requirement:

whosoever is not married to Christ, is subject to another husband, that is, the law. (p. 33)

Being subject to the law, for Preston, means to live under the rubric of marital obligation. Political and domestic religious subjectivity are analogous, conceivable as varieties of the relation between husband and wife. Indeed this last description is the basic unit of subjectivity. It is a conception of the individual which extends deep into the interior of the self:

the morall law that is written in every man's conscience, it rules there like an hard husband, a severe cruel husband, that gets an hard task to do, and gives no strength to do it. (p. 37)

The subject succumbs to Christ as a wise virgin. To refuse his amorous attention is to run the risk of invoking a dark eroticized anger:

for thee then to refuse, thou provokest him to anger...for know this, he is not a bare suter, but a suter that hath paid deare for his wife; hee hath purchased thee at a deare price. (p. 35)

The price must be accepted before Christ will consent to work a marvellous change in his newly-bought subject:

onely when he hath married thee, then he will change thy nature, he will change the skin of the blackamore, then he will put a new beauty on thee. (p. 41)

Subjection requires that inferiors maintain a position below their superiors. This relation cannot be reversed; if superiors are 'subject' to inferiors the relation is one of mere 'yielding'. Subjection between equals goes under the name of agreement or compact. Furthermore, subjection involves willing submission; to be carried captive, claims Preston, is not to be made subject. If Preston's Christian subject is akin to Dorothy White's, this causes problems for a modern reading of Christian agency in her self-justification, since the early modern religious subject is here required to embrace a sense of self which conflicts with the modern idea of self as a point of confident origin. Preston's subject replaces personal ethic with 'a proclivitie planted in them that makes

them obedient to their head Christ Jesus'. His faithful Christians take on the appearance of Christian zombies, blindly finding themselves in accordance with divine will:

the headship of Christ is not an imaginary thing: he is not like the politicke head of a body, but he is like a natural head, that is, there comes a natural true living influence from Christ to his members, that workes upon their hearts and wills, as the head doth on the members. (p. 139)

It is one thing to be subject as a servant, who has no choice in the matter; it is, Preston has it, a much more worthy thing to be subject as a wife who differs from the servant in that she is, ideally, subject to her husband out of choice and love. To be 'compleat in Christ' the subject should be like the good wife.

Where Coppe focuses the reader's attention on his own intrinsic value as an icon of Christian righteousness, Dorothy White chooses to employ a domestic metaphor to characterize Christian relation:

but all, before they come into this, must come into silence, and so learn of Christ, the husband the head of the woman, which is to keep silence: in the Church all flesh ought to be silenced, but he or she that is born of God, who are members of the same body which was raised by the eternal power of the Father, such as are witnesses of his Resurrection, in whom he is come; and as this prophet speaketh, here the man speaketh, which is Christ in all: but all who speak, and not from the power of living God, ought to keep silence in the church of Christ.<sup>27</sup>

The ways in which this passage negotiates with patriarchal Pauline assumption are both subtle and complex. Two metaphysical conceptions of gender are combined: first, the equivalence of Christ/husband, flesh/wife is confirmed in the argument that flesh should be silent in Church. If 'women' does not refer to actual women, but is a metaphor, then the literal command of these particular passages is diminished. All humanity becomes flesh/woman before God/husband, and ought to observe quiet in his presence. In the second argument, which rests on another passage from 1 Cor 12 : 'for as the body is one, an hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body,

and so also is Christ', having freed the term 'women' from its literal specificity, Dorothy White replaces denigrated female fleshliness with prophetic power. This in turn is figured as male: 'as this prophet speaketh, here the man speaketh, which is Christ in all'. All who speak without God's power ought to keep silent in Church because they are allegorically and symbolically women, irrespective of their actual gender. Thus, even though Dorothy White fails to disrupt fully the symbolic associations aligned with male/female, husband/wife, she does lessen their literal attachment to biological sex, and overcomes the command to stay silent by arguing that spiritually, she is a man, or at least she is metaphorically aligned with masculinity. The authority of husband over wife, male over female, remains an arbitrary symbolic given, but the subject positions implied by these categories are made open to both sexes.

Much of Dorothy White's prophetic textual record makes use of pointedly female images or metaphors. In some lines of doggerel verse appended to *A Call from God out of Egypt*, the importance of marriage as a metaphor for relation with Christ and the significance of humility in feminine theology are made plain:

And in Christ the head is the hidden life  
Of all the Bride's children who are the lamb's wife...  
And the worm Jacob who hath been under all  
Shall now arise, triumphing over Death and the Fall.

Here the bride of Christ is the Church, and the lamb is Agnus Dei, the lamb of God, or Christ himself. Where Christ figures as a bridegroom, humanity is perceived to be his bride. Many of Dorothy White's tracts bear witness to the Second Coming as the celebration of a marriage between the divine and the human:

the marriage of the lamb is come, the beautiful garments are prepared, for  
the lamb's wife, the bridegroom hath met the bride and the holy city is  
prepared.<sup>28</sup>

And just as humanity can be symbolically female, so can culture:



O Zion, behold thy king cometh unto thee, shining in his glory and majesty; behold he rideth meekly on...he is coming to prepare thy waste places and to raise the desolations of Jerusalem and to make her a fenced city, with walls on every side...that she may be known to be his bride.<sup>29</sup>

With the arrival of Christ the bridegroom, the patience, obedience, humility and meekness of his servants/bride is acknowledged and vindicated. There is evidence too to suggest that the term 'women' is used metaphorically to refer to naive Christians likely to be led astray by the improper wiles of other preachers. Dorothy White exploits this trope to confirm the accuracy of earlier prognostication:

*the servant of the Lord fore-writ of certain men were craftily crept into houses leading silly women captive, laden with sin and with divers lusts having the form of godliness but denying the power thereof, ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth: These are the men he fore-writ of, that are craftily crept into houses (and calls them churches) but they are wells without water and clouds without rain carryed about with a tempest; and these are the deceivers that call houses churches, and these are the silly women led by them captive (marke) captive into sin: Divers lusts is divers sins, and they that are led in them are led into captivity.<sup>30</sup>*

The 'silly women' led captive are precisely those without the right kind of theological faculties which would enable them to perceive their own error. Contemporaries used this scripture to argue for women's exclusion from religious discussion; Dorothy White employs the term 'silly women' as a metaphor for the ignorant, without necessarily reproducing the connection between gender and ignorance.

Other arguments are often made using examples which seem heavy with significance for a reading attentive to gender. The significance of obedience is expressed as a moral about the proper attitude of inferiors towards superiors:

*such are with their eyes unto him to please him, as the eyes of the maid is to her mistris; such are not men pleasers neither can they daub with untempered mortar.<sup>31</sup>*

The language which Dorothy White uses to describe the relations between Christ and his

cohorts of faithful believers replicates much of the official and scriptural rhetoric about obedience and the subordination of wives, children and servants to their husbands, parents and masters. And although these terms no longer apply in the ordinary social realm but to a wild celebration of apocalyptic excess and the destruction of habitual social relations, it would be an exaggeration to claim that her use of conventional relations is a complete departure from popular ideological structures. Yet even when her message is universal, it is significantly expressed in terms of gender: the appeal to all is an appeal to all as women. In the same tract, she likens the faithful, the 'honest hearted' to those

who singly wait for the appearance of the bridegroom. Such are the virgins that slumber not, whose oil is burning; and so if he should come at midnight, such will be found ready to enter within the gates of paradise.<sup>32</sup>

Individually the Saints are honoured by God, who considers them

vessels purified like fine gold, vessels of honour, in whom he delights to dwell, to fill them with his glory, with his majesty and beauty, the kings daughters are all glorious within, so he is glorifying his work (*GPP*, p. 2),

whilst the Lord is collectively

restoring and bringing up the church, the true spouse, who is coming up out of the wilderness leaning upon her beloved. (*GPP*, p. 4)

Even as images of women as the humble, faithful servant/bride are promulgated and valorized, scriptural echoes place them within a greater patriarchal scheme:

hear what the spirit saith, what the bride saith, what the bridegroom saith, for he that hath the bride is the bridegroom, for he that hath Christ hath life, he that hath the son hath life, he that hath not the son hath not life. (*GPP*, p. 5)

The valorization of female forms occurs elsewhere. When Dorothy White plays on the traditional view of wisdom (*Sophia*) as female, she can be seen, at one level, to be proclaiming the validity of her own sex (wise virgins) and the need to speak out unhindered by custom:

wisdom cryeth aloud, she is uttering her voice in the market place. (*GPP*, p. 7)

This voice is personalised, virginal and authorized by God:

it is I; it is I; I am a wise virgin, have I oyl in my lamp, and is my lamp made ready, and it is burning, for the midnight cry is gone forth, behold the Bridegroom cometh.<sup>33</sup>

There is evidence too to suggest that the patrilineal bond between Christ and God, a homosocial bond which in reformed religions had little need for Mary's maternal presence, is subject to some modification in Dorothy White's work. As John the Evangelist was carried up into the true spirit:

so must the true church, the spouse, the bride, the lamb's wife, be caught up into God and into his throne, where the man child must rule, which is the seed of the woman, which God will exhalt this day, and so dignifie and he shall bear the sway, he shall become the top-stone. (*GPP*, p. 9)

There is something akin to a re-routing of divine influence through the maternal here; a traditional enough image, but one often suppressed or ignored by Protestant writers.

In a further twist, the gender identity of Christ and his Church are subject to a functional reversal. Telling us that 'he is come that the world upside down will turn', Dorothy White describes how

he [Christ] nourishes her [Church], she leans upon his breast; out of which flows sweet milk and consolation. (*GPP*, p. 9)

Where Christ becomes the symbolic, phallic mother, does the Church become an infant boy or simply the child requiring maternal care? Whatever the case, it is surely clear that gender roles are transferable. Christ can be a maternal bridegroom, irrespective of biological association, but the hierarchy which places Christ as superior to each believer remains unchallenged. Throughout Dorothy White's complex negotiation with doctrine, gender proves a malleable concept, in contrast to the rigidity of her hierarchical ideas.

On some occasions the association between divine wrath and images of femaleness seems to create a rejuvenating power in White's polemic and wrathful narratives:

for God is coming to try all foundations of the sons of men and tried stones are fit for the building of the most high, living stones, elect and precious, these must be tryed through the fire, for there is a fire in Sion for the purging and purifying of the Daughter of Jerusalem, and she shall come forth shining in the glory of the Lord God...and now rejoyce thou barren womb, which hath brought forth the first begotten of God, for more shall be thy children that her that was the married wife, for the vine shall yield its increase, and the blessing of the lord shall multiply the works of his hands.<sup>34</sup>

This is almost an identification of the narrative voice with the female figures invoked in the text.

Gender categories thus assume a liberating fluidity in Dorothy White's work. Narrow literalistic interpretations of Pauline injunction are rejected in favour of symbolic ones, in which gender comes to represent a spiritual state or suggests the nature of a wider relationship with God. Gender characteristics partake of this less strict exegetical hermeneutic and can be freely ascribed across customarily inviolate gender divisions - Christ can be a mother to his bride the Church.

It is tempting to enquire after the political implications of this narrative technique. Does this transfer of gendered characteristics suggest the cessation of moral division between the sexes, making floating signifiers out of their symbolic meanings and becoming, via this process, just the vehicle for the description of dependent relations? Or does Dorothy White's narrative technique remain caught within patriarchal structures, softening the harshness and exclusivity of Paul's judgements of women, but remaining tied to his underlying misogynistic principles?

It is difficult to pinpoint a single politics behind the inclusion of gendered terms. In a tract published in 1661 White rejoices:

the Bridegroom is come, and the Virgins have met him, and the Damosels dance at the glory of his Brightness, who heareth the sound of the harp of David.<sup>35</sup>

But this feminine position in relation to Christ is carefully accompanied by arguments which claim that God justly loosens the tongues of those with whom he communicates. Virgins who hear the harp of David have license to speak. When Dorothy White argued that God was 'bringing all to truth in inner parts', it was because 'now is the Bridegroom's voice heard in the land of the living'. Here, inner authenticity is a function of symbolic union, conceptualized either as the marital relation between Christ and the Church or between Christ and the individual. Despite arguing that everyone should 'learn of Christ, the husband, the head of the woman,' and thus appearing to advocate submissiveness in women/believers before God, White clearly believes that spousal models liberate the faithful. If spiritual strength comes from Christ within his followers, it licenses political authority on their own behalf. One problem here is that even if her adoption of spousal rhetoric leads to a partial reduction of patriarchal influence over prophetic licence, it does so partly by keeping intact a symbolic of gender which privileges masculinity. In other texts, Dorothy White suggests that Christ has come to be wedded to the 'women' who have waited for him.

In spiritual terms, betrothal could be thought of as a liberation to speak, perhaps partly because the espoused was licensed by her prospective partner and less vulnerable to accusations of looseness or lack of chastity. Women who spoke from this position on theological matters were licensed by a divine husband. They were showing obedience to a heavenly master, which, because of the biblical commonplace to obey the higher power, superseded any obligation they owed to earthly propriety. Because they had a lot to gain as women from such arguments, female Quaker prophets often adopt the idea of Christ

as a garment or robe with which the perfect believer is clothed. The usefulness of this idea is that it preserves the relationship, and thus the spousal connection, between male Christ and female prophet. Dorothy White says 'this Lily God will cloath with a more glorious Garment, with a more beautiful Rainment than Solomon the wise king was cloathed with'.<sup>36</sup> Where righteousness was found, it could be associated symbolically with female figures from scripture. Thus Dorothy White asserts that 'if the truth sets you free, then ye are free indeed, no more children of the Bondwoman, but of the free woman'.<sup>37</sup> In another text she makes clear the contractual nature of this freedom:

these are of one spirit with him, born of the spirit, begotten by the eternal word of life; such are not the children of the flesh, nor of the bond woman, but of the free woman, which is married and in covenant with Christ her husband.<sup>38</sup>

Where gendered examples conflicted with a feminist politics, it was sometimes possible, as we have already seen, to universalize these incidents, or at least remove the aspersion they cast on women by reformulating their gendered metaphors. Even if Dorothy White is not successful in her attempt to dismantle the patriarchal logic of the theological discourse in which she wrote, her texts manage nevertheless to valorize female figures, transform some anti-feminine texts into universal warnings and establish the right of those who feel so chosen to express their religious convictions. These features, I suggest, exist in marked contrast to Coppe's masculine economy. Coppe desires an economy of undoing. For him union with God is a gargantuan and excessive consumption, founded on an aesthetic of oscillation between identities, derived in turn from the partial abandonment of spiritual norms. No symbolic position is beyond Coppe's reach, yet none provides the theological satisfaction he craves. Coppe's attachment to feminine symbols is provoked by his desire for liminal fluidity, but he recoils from the interpretative duplicity these symbols inevitably provide. Dorothy White advocates a politics not

dissimilar from Coppe's but is careful both to provide space for women to preach and to avoid leaving unchallenged the culturally hegemonic models of femininity which sustain Coppe's theology.

#### Notes

1. Judith Still, 'A Feminine Economy: Some preliminary thoughts', in *The Body and the Text: Helene Cixous, Reading and Teaching* (Harvester, Sussex, 1990), pp. 49-63.

2. A poetics of any given culture or subculture consists of a rigorously understood structural system of interrelated and reciprocally conditional rules and conventions for the expression (in a religious subculture) of spiritual states and desires. It is a good guess at the mental map of culture which in turn allows the interpreter to understand and describe the way in which language and the world conspire to organise social subjectivity.

See Stephen Greenblatt, 'Towards a poetics of culture', in *The New Historicism*, edited by Hiram Veeser (Routledge, 1989), pp. 1-15, and the first chapter of Greenblatt's *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1988), pp. 1-21.

3. See Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion 1640-1660* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1989).

4. Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed*, p. 13.

5. Postmaster was the name given to Wylliot poor scholars at Merton.

6. This paragraph is heavily indebted to Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, pp. 210-213; A. L. Morton, *The World of the Ranters*, pp.70-114; Abiezer Coppe: *Selected Writings*, edited by Andrew Hopton (Aporia Press, 1987), pp. 3-13; and Nigel Smith, *A Collection of Ranter Writings* (Junction Books, 1983).

7. Morton, *The World of the Ranters*, p. 71.

8. Morton, *The World of the Ranters*, p. 83.

9. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, p. 210.

10. Coppe's text is to be found in Nigel Smith's *A Collection of Ranter Writings*, pp. 42-73. All subsequent references are to this edition, hereafter SSS, and are given parenthetically in the main text.
11. Coppe, *A Second Fiery Flying Roule*, in *Abiezer Coppe: Selected Writings*, p. 39. All further references to this text are from this edition.
12. Coppe, *A Second Fiery Flying Roule*, pp. 39-40.
13. Coppe, *A Second Fiery Flying Roule*, p. 40.
14. Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed*, p. 71.
15. White, *A call from God out of Egypt by his son Christ the Light of Life* (1662), p. 3.
16. Dorothy White, *Universal Love to the Lost* (1684), p. 10.
17. White, *An Epistle of Love and Consolation unto Israel* (1661), p. 2.
18. White, *An Epistle*, p. 9.
19. White, *A salutation of love to all the tender hearted* (1661), p. 10.
20. White, *Universal Love* (no pag).
21. White, *Greetings of Pure Peace and Perfect Love*, (1662), p. 22. All further references to this text, hereafter known as *GPP* are given in parenthesis in the main text.
22. White, *A call from God*, p. 5.
23. White, *A call from God*, p. 5.
24. Thomas Hooker, *The Soules Implantation* (1637), in *Redemption: three Sermons*, a facsimilie edition with an introduction by Everett H. Emerson (Florida), p. 96.
25. White, *A call from God*, p. 6. She was citing 1 Cor 3;11.
26. John Preston, *The Church's Marriage, or Dignitie delivered in sundry sermons at Lincolns Inne* (1638), p. 6. All further references are given in parenthesis.
27. White, *A call from God*, p. 6.
28. White, *An Epistle*, p. 11.
29. White, *A salutation of love*, p. 3.
30. White, *A Diligent Search*, p. 7.



31. White, *A salutation of love*, p. 7.
32. White, *A call from God*, p. 11.
33. White, *The Day Dawned* (1684), p. 12
34. White, *A Trumpet*, p. 15.
35. White, *An Epistle*, p. 5.
36. White, *An Epistle*, p. 3.
37. White, *The Day Dawned* p. 6. The scripture is from Galatians 4;31.
38. White, *Universal Love to the Lost*, p. 10.

Like many sectarian groups in the seventeenth century, the Quakers wrote about their experience of faith in order to confirm and give expression to the quality of their relationship with God. The purpose of this chapter is to explore Quaker descriptions of relationship with God, and to ascertain the degree to which the symbolic resources employed to articulate this propinquity are subversive of ordinary and official ideologies of gender. The idea that rhetorical form expresses political views might seem obscure to modern readers. To the opponents of Quakerism, however, it was the single most important explanation of their theological and political folly. One anonymous commentator offered a lengthy explanation in 1655. In a discussion of the relation between language and discipline, he claimed:

these two are joynd together, because they help one the other, for as their language is too great, so is their discipline too little, and yet they may as well be separated, for their language is without any discipline at all, they are no soldiers, for they observe no Orders, they do potinuss latrere quam orare, rather houle or bark, then preach or pray; yet as subtill as they are, they are no Conjurers, for they love not to keep within Compasse, their Language is as wild as their Nature, neither keeps time, method, nor matter; they seem to be enemies to all musick for they keep no stops, and yet they may have some skill in it, for they run upon Divisions and Quavers, Prick-song pleases them, for they squeale above Elah, and are excellent at the Base... their language aims at the new building of old Babel for their babling and bawling tends to all confusion; we may safely say these creatures were not born tongue-tyed, they are so voluable, though they give such License to their tongues, yet they do it without license, neither ever had they the gift of Tongues, their language is not substantial but frothy, for they foam at the mouth while they prate...A man may easier bind up a bushel of sand in a halter, then carry away four or five hours of their illiterate non-sence and confused bablings. In brief, their language is too irreverent for a Temple, and too uncivill for a Tavern, yet such tongues their are at the sign of the Mouth.<sup>1</sup>

This propaganda piece overstates the case. But it was the Quakers' dangerous ability to

bridge the gap between Church and tavern, between public ceremonial and private conscience, which in part accounts for their prodigious popularity. They were popular with women as well as men; probably appealing more to women than any other sectarian group in the period. Is it possible to account for this popularity by drawing attention to the symbolic freedom which the Quakers accorded prophecy, a freedom which led them to countenance women's desire to reflect in their writing the feminine experience of God? When Isaac Pennington defined love in his pamphlet *Some Mysteries of God's Kingdom glanced at*, published in 1663, he craved an identity with God:

oh how shall I in words express its nature! It is the sweetness of life, it is the sweet, tender, melting nature of God, flowing up through his seed of life into the creature, and of all things making the creature most like unto himself, both in nature and operation.<sup>2</sup>

It can be argued that for male sectarians, enjoying a unity with God continued and extended their own sense of masculine identity. In an inspired state, man could duplicate the powerful piety of Christ, transforming the creature and coming to behave in a divine manner. But deepened male identities of this kind were not freely available to women. For women to become Christlike, according to this theory, would require a form of spiritual and symbolic transvestism. When we examine women's writings, however, nowhere do we find a symbolic language which wholly invokes such a transvestism. When Quaker women sought communion with God, they clearly did so not as surrogate men but as women, employing feminine terms and testifying to women's experience.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that the Quakers were fond of discussing their relationship to God in gendered terms.<sup>3</sup> When Edward Burrough describes his early apostasy in *A True Description of my manner of Life*, published in 1663, he takes up a symbolically female identity:

here I ran from my husband, after other lovers, and had left the Lord, my

maker; and I spent the portion of the gift of God as among harlots, and iniquity and sin increased.<sup>4</sup>

Burrough feels he has behaved before God like an adulterous woman. Later in the same text, when he perceives his sin, he describes his suffering in female terms: 'for many days I was compassed with pain, as a Travelling woman'. In these descriptions, is Burrough engaging cultural meanings which were universal - and largely inescapable - in interregnum culture, or can we read his apparent collusion with patriarchal rhetoric as a specifically male Quaker reading of Old Testament rhetoric?

Most historians think that although the radical sects of the 1640s and 1650s made a significant contribution to intellectual culture they were of limited contemporary political importance. Indeed Lawrence Stone famously blamed them for the harshness of the Restoration settlement. So extreme were their views, he argued, that they frightened the authorities into suppressing all moderate attempts at reform for the next hundred years. If liberal historians have recoiled from the too prescient radical views of the civil war sects, left-wing historians have occasionally been similarly disillusioned with Quakerism in particular. Christopher Hill views the Quaker movement as the last gasp of a radical utopianism, encroached upon by increasingly repressive republican authorities, and ultimately, part of the 'experience of defeat' which characterized radical culture after the execution of Charles in 1649 and the loss of republican idealism following Cromwell's dissolution of the Rump Parliament in 1653.

If, as Ronald Hutton has recently argued, the historical significance of the radical sects lies in their contribution to the intellectual culture of their age, it is also true that some other judgements of this contribution have sought to play down its wider significance.<sup>5</sup> As I have already noted,<sup>6</sup> Susan Amussen believes that the radical groups of the civil war period challenged the class order, but not the gender order. Amussen

thinks that challenges to the patriarchal culture of early modern England only became possible much later, after the position of the father ceased to function as ubiquitous political ideology. Her argument is that this could only occur *after* the differentiation of the political and domestic spheres in cultural theory. When the family no longer functioned analogically to support patriarchal theories of government, it became possible to question the authority of its head.<sup>7</sup> More recently, Deborah Shuger has challenged the relevance of the analogical model of patriarchal politics. Whereas it has been widely assumed in discussions of gender in early modern English culture that father, king and God formed a triple tiered patriarchy - just as the subject bowed down before the King, so the wife submitted to the husband, the child to the father, and the believer to God - the argument put forward by Shuger suggests on the contrary that

patriarchy principally refers to the relation between father and child, not husband and wife. Renaissance writers describe the latter as a variant of the former, not the reverse...The relation of father to child is paradigmatic, not only for marital order but for all other forms of social subordination...The relation between husband and wife rarely provides a model for other social relations, almost never for spiritual ones.<sup>8</sup>

Shuger modifies the picture of paternal authority as repressive and authoritarian, arguing that our own conceptions of gender differentiation 'may post date the Renaissance'.<sup>9</sup> In the Renaissance, she concludes, although the idea that fathers presided over a strict hierarchical family economy was widespread, it 'is by no means the only or even the most common interpretation of a paternal figure...father usually does not connote authority, discipline, rationality, law and so on, but rather forgiveness, nurturing, and tenderness'. She adds the interesting claim that 'this is almost always the case in discussions of God the father'.<sup>10</sup> According to this view, paternity in God partakes equally of masculine and feminine traits.

This chapter seeks to assess this argument in relation to Quaker texts. Do the

Quakers describe God as a nurturing father? Did they never employ marital models of divine sanction to describe spiritual relations? Were spousal relations dependent on patriarchal models for their form and content? Finally we need to ask whether men and women employ these categories of thought in the same manner.

Another argument put forward by Shuger is that emotional connection in Renaissance cultural theory flows between high and low places, from superior to inferior. Love flowed down because property and obligation flowed down: from the powerful to the weak, from parents to children, from God to the faithful. My argument is that just as Quakers employed spousal models of relation which contravene Shugers Renaissance norms, so their models of gender modify her thesis about the unidirectional flow of power. We should not be unduly surprised by this conclusion, since gender differences cut across and operate in contrast to the social distinctions imposed by hierarchy and class, and cannot be simply conflated with them.

In part, Shuger's assumptions are questionable *a priori*; the Quakers did use the relationship between husband and wife as a model for spiritual relations. They took a model of betrothal from scripture and made it the symbolic foundation for their own experiential religion.<sup>11</sup> What is at issue is the nature of this relationship. Is it, as Shuger suggests, merely a mimic of the parent-child relation? Or does it have particular symbolic consequences which embody merciful paternalism and nurturing tenderness: qualities which manifest themselves in spousal reciprocity and female advocacy? I shall argue that rather than being - analogically - just another version of the parent-child scheme, the marital model conflicts with the patriarchal ideal which Shuger sees it underpinning. And while it remains true that much Quaker prophecy depends upon a notion of the speaker acting as a passive conduit for the Word of God which flows down

through them from above, it is also true that implicit in Quakerism is the idea that believers are active and motivated participants in their relationship with God. It was because every believer had a personal relationship with Christ, and might be filled with prophecy at any time during a meeting, that the Quakers rejected the authority of Church of England priests, and in theory allowed all who were part of the movement to speak as the spirit moved them. This widening of vocal rights extended not only to women, but to children as well.<sup>12</sup>

Caroline Walker Bynum's critique of Victor Turner's theory of liminal and processual social dramas suggests that the Quaker use of model gendered relationships to describe the relationship between Christ and the individual ought to register differences according to the gender of the writer.<sup>13</sup> Walker argues that

women's stories insofar as they can be discerned behind the tales told by male biographers are in fact less processual than men's; they don't have turning points. And when women recount their own lives, the themes are less climax, conversion, reintegration and triumph, the liminality of reversal or elevation, than continuity. Moreover, women's images and symbols - which, according to Turner's model, should reflect either inversion (for example, poverty) insofar as women are superior (for example, of aristocratic status), or elevation, (for example, maleness, military prowess) insofar as women *qua* women are inferior - do not quite do either. Rather, they continue or enhance in image (for example, bride, sick person) what the woman's ordinary experience is, so that one either has to see the woman's religious stance as permanently liminal or as never quite becoming so.<sup>14</sup>

So although women and men may employ the same phrases and examples from scripture to describe their relationship to Christ, they manage to produce very different meanings from apparently homogenous motifs. Indeed, we may need to interpret identical examples in different ways according to the gender of the author. In 1660, Thomas Salthouse warned his fellow Quakers to respect children:

let not your own wills, or a zeale before true knowledge usurp authority over them, because they are the fruit of your body, but look upon them

who are begotten of God, and have received the truth, as upon the offspring of God, and equal with you, as in that relation, and if they be such as have chosen the better part, and are made truly wise unto salvation, despise not their youth, but be ready to receive instruction, or information from them, as well as to administer to them.<sup>15</sup>

Here the ordinary relationship between parent and child is not merely modified in the light of a version of parenthood which incorporates the idea of nursing fathers, it is completely inverted. If the child has received the 'Truth', it is at least equal to the parents, and moreover capable of offering instruction and edification in spiritual matters. Here the direction or gravity of relationship which Shuger (following Alan McFarlane) found flowing downwards, is flowing upwards. Since the Quakers were known as the 'Children of the Light', and prophetic tracts often call the movement the 'Children of Sion' or the 'Children of Christ', we must ask how far such changes to the ordinary economy of familial relations permeated Quaker thinking. If parents received from their children, might not Christ receive from his children? But if some hierarchies were challenged by Quakerism, others, for male Quakers at any rate, remained intact. Salthouse could espouse a radical politics of inspiration with regard to the outpourings of children while arguing a thoroughly traditional role for women as wives. In the same text he counselled:

and you that are husbands love your wives, who are joyned unto you, and given as meet helps for you, and watch over them for good, to instruct, cherish, comfort, confirme, and establish them in the truth, that you may both come to be joyned, and in everlastingly betrothed to one Head and Husband in the Spirit and the Truth...And wives submit your selves to your husbands, in the fear of the Lord, as head over you, to order, guide, and counsell, comfort and direct, and in all wisdome, meeknesse, and moderation, as meet helps and faithfull yoakfellowes, behave yourselves towards them, So will you have praise of men and favour with Gods.<sup>16</sup>

In Salthouse's divine scheme, women were twice subject to husbands, once to their mortal companions and a second time to Christ. For Quaker women, the effects of this



constantly reiterated double bondage proved difficult to escape.

If Shuger's analysis is based on a normative idea of the family masquerading as a natural form, it must be observed that despite the commonplace assertion that traditional familial forms carried greater social power in early modern England, they were not uncritically adhered to by religious sects. The Quakers held complex and not entirely consistent views on the matter. In a tract published in 1662, Esther Biddle expressed a desire for the swift collapse of traditional familial relations while at the same time castigating corporate London for having caused the dislocation of so many family relationships. Ventriloquizing God, she explained:

I the lord of Hosts hath caused my Sons, and Daughters, and handmaids to leave both father and mother, house and land, wife and children, and indeed all outward things, to come unto thee.<sup>17</sup>

Here she testifies not only to a theoretical ideal, that obedience to God should come before all the personal and social benefits of family, but also to a practical reality: many Quakers became itinerant pesterers of Church services and consciously alienated themselves from ordinary social relations. When Biddle attacks London however, she castigates the deleterious effect its corruptions have had upon family structure:

how many families hast thou separated, the wife from the husband, and the husband from the wife, and the mother from her children, and the servant from the master, not suffering them to see each other for a time.<sup>18</sup>

Here she evokes the phraseology of the Book of Homilies, in which

some are in high degree some in low, some kings and princes, some inferiors and subjects, priests and laymen, masters and servants, fathers and children, husbands and wives, riche and poore, and every one hath need of the other.<sup>19</sup>

On one hand she sees the breakdown of familial relations as a necessary process in the reuniting of each individual with God, but on the other she blames London for causing just the social degeneration which she earlier welcomed.

That Biddle both loathed the early modern family and lamented its destruction illustrates the extent to which these issues are not separable in the way Shuger suggests. The Quakers articulated versions of fatherhood and family, and ideological attitudes towards them in complex and inconsistent ways. Biddle conflates 'London' and the 'Whore of Babylon' who is punished in Revelations:

oh Wo is me for thee, my heart is even broken within me, and mine eyes  
as a fountain floweth forth before the lord in thy behalf, that the bitter cup  
which thou and thy joyning sister hath to drink, may be taken away if it  
is his will.<sup>20</sup>

As Babylon was made to drink the cup of her fornications in the book of Revelation, so Biddle argues, London will be forced to confront the enormity of her sins. Here Biddle perpetuates with alacrity the equation of femininity with moral culpability. Ann Travers and Elizabeth Coleman readily invoked the same images of moral depravity linked to femininity in an attack on Elizabeth Atkinson (an apostatical Quaker) in a tract entitled *The Harlots Veil rent and her impudency rebuked*. They labelled her a 'silly ignorant woman', and her prose wanton and immodest. In a style redolent with the kind of doubt expressed by male preface writers, they pretend to ask who helped her compose her duplicitous text and comment that whoever did so must be an 'angry, dark conceited man who glories in his folly, and yet thinks he is wise'.<sup>21</sup> It is significant that whoredom is made the repository of negative moral value. It had a more accessible cultural meaning in the 1650s than it has now, but women pamphleteers were able, on occasion, to reject its underlying belief that women and evil were naturally associated. Behind the example of Travers and Coleman is the more general cultural practice which makes women available as sites of meaning. That the condemnation of femininity is not inescapable is shown by Esther Biddle's plea to the city:

oh thou city! saith the Lord, who formed thee in the womb, and gave thee

life and Breath, and hath been as a tender father and loving nurse even from thy cradle, have not I made the earth to bring forth her corn and oyl, and wine for thee.<sup>22</sup>

Here we encounter the idea of a feminized, masculine God taking on motherly attributes and functions and offering hope to London. At one symbolic level, femininity is clearly a concept capable of carrying moral extremes. These meanings are not limited in referential scope by the biological gender of scriptural figures. Although Biddle participates in an oppressive social meaning - the idea that the whoredom and duplicity are synonymous - she simultaneously reallocates positive female traits to God. This looks like collusion with a particularly obnoxious form of patriarchy, since her text appears to impose upon itself the rule that negative moral meanings can be attached to female protagonists, but positive moral meanings, even ones associated with women, must be re-colonized by a specifically masculine divinity. But where Biddle deals explicitly with human gender, she makes some startling comments. Warning those whom she prophetically labels 'high and lofty ones', she asks:

did not the lord make all men and women upon the earth of one mould, why then should there be so much honour and respect unto some men and women, and not unto others, but they are almost naked for want of clothing, and almost starved for want of bread.<sup>23</sup>

It was far from clear to many contemporaries that the Lord had made all men and women from one mould. One might argue that this statement denies the priority of Adam for those who seek to place men above women and makes a case for the equality of the sexes and classes, not only before God, but within lived social relations.

Esther Biddle's text seems thus implicitly to invoke current gendered models of social meaning while at the same time explicitly subjecting these meanings to critique or revision. It may be that Shuger's nursing father occurs here as she defines it: a version of fatherhood at the heart of early modern patriarchy and prior to our modern concepts

of gender. My view is that Esther Biddle is actively adding the feminine to a masculine God. If post-Reformation Protestantism removed femininity from the holy family, opting instead for a male trinity, then we can construe Biddle's text as consciously reintroducing the feminine to an otherwise exclusively male theology.

In a tract written against the town of Dartmouth in 1659, Biddle displays ambivalence towards feminine images. But in this text the concept of fatherhood attributed to God is sternly patriarchal. God is a consuming fire, come to raze the town and burn away its unregenerate and sinful inhabitants. Biddle warns that 'he will uncrown the devil which sitteth within thee the mother of harlots, who hath made thee drunk with the wine of her fornication'.<sup>24</sup> In the face of God's anger, the town is to discover the emptiness of its ways: 'thy religion shall be as the untimely fruit of a woman, repent and abhor thyself in dust and ashes'.<sup>25</sup> Here Biddle adopts motifs which blame the figurative immorality of the whore of Babylon for the immorality of the town. The town is accused too of 'joyning issue with Jerusalem, which is below and in bondage with her children, thou art found in her steps'.<sup>26</sup> But when Biddle comes to describe the salvation of man, she positions Christ in a temporal scheme which importantly includes the notion of a woman as origin. Man must be redeemed by Christ: 'which in fulness of time was made manifest, born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem from the curse of the law'.<sup>27</sup> Biddle is made a representative of God's love sent to the the town to make known its transgressions. Although she does not mention women specifically, it is clear that Biddle feels no compunction about extending prophetic rights to all those who merit them, irrespective of gender or class. She describes how God

sent his messengers into thy streets, who freely gave up their lives in obedience to God's command, who did not dread man, they spared not young nor old, rich nor poor, but lifted up their voice as a Trumpet, who were harmless and innocent like the Lamb.<sup>28</sup>

Here the absence of a gender category from her list implies the universality of preaching and receiving. Biddle makes the point in favour of women's activity by assuming it to be chosen by God. It is clear, however, that challenging class hierarchy was easier than challenging the hegemony of husband over wife.

Where Quaker language was apocalyptic, it threatened with the stretched-out arm of a wrathful God. Although this was Quakerism's social message, it required a more sensitive offer of salvation to attract each convert individually. It is here that Quakerism seems to have adopted, especially among women, the rhetoric not of the nursing father, but of the bride awaiting the bridegroom. In this tradition, based largely on the description of the Church as the Christ's bride in the Song of Solomon, every Quaker, taking up the position of the wife, could endeavour to be married to Christ. Preparation for salvation was understood symbolically as a preparation for marriage. Thus Margaret Fell could exclaim in 1660, 'awake, Awake, put on thy strength, O sion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem'.<sup>29</sup> Here, the wedding preparation involves the costly attiring of the bride; a genuine display of beauty in marked contrast to the hypocritical show of Babylon the whore. Fell incorporated Zechariah 9;9-11 into her text to legitimate this sartorial celebration:

rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem:  
behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly,  
and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Here the invocation of a jubilant daughter serves to legitimate not only Margaret Fell's joy at the approach of God, but also her entry into print, itself a form of public shouting. In a tract published in 1657, she had assured readers that if they turned to the 'light within':

so you will come to hear the voice of joy, and the voice of gladnesse, the  
voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that

say, praise the lord of hosts for the lord is good.<sup>30</sup>

Earlier still, in 1655, Fell had used the potency of scriptural representations of women to describe God's own militancy for righteousness:

I have been still and refrained myself: now I will cry like a travelling woman. I will destroy and devour at once, and I will make waste, mountaines, and hills, and dry up all their hearbs.<sup>31</sup>

She also drew on the prophecies of Jeremiah, quoting 31;22, 'for the Lord hath created a new thing in the Earth; a woman shall compass a man'. It is difficult when reading these quotations always to keep in mind the distinction between a model of individual relation to God as theologically female - and therefore appropriately submissive - and an argument being put forward indirectly and metaphorically for the legitimacy of women's prophetic speech. In the case of Margaret Fell the reason for the inclusion of feminine terms may be to emphasize the gendered implications for women of the assertion that 'the day of the Lord's power is come, in which he makes his people willing, and as many as receives him, to them he gives power'.<sup>32</sup> That the gender of preachers does not matter is a point emphasized, oddly enough, by *including* feminine figures. If we choose to read the female Quaker delineation of marital arrangements not as a feminine subjection to masculine estate, but as a vindication of the just display of feminine beauty, a processual empowerment enabled by matrimony, then we are close to attributing to it a consciously feminist Quaker aesthetic. It is important to note however, that such texts can be seen as both observing a protocol of humility and suggesting something more subversive of theological orthodoxy.

It is certainly not the case that invocations of bridal submissiveness are absent from the rhetorical representations of relationship in the writings of male Quakers. What is different is their theological meaning in relation to authorial gender. Whereas women

writers invoke the feminine in relation to Christ, not to prove their submissiveness but to carve out a space for their display, to connect themselves to Christ's humanity by adopting normative feminine posture, male writers adopt a feminine position in order to encounter God in a liminal way. Some contemporaries thought likewise: the polemicist William Prynne believed that male and female Quakers took role models from male and female Catholic saints respectively.<sup>33</sup> The Quaker William Britten criticizes the carnal world in a way which makes it clear that the ideal position for a man to adopt before God is that of a wife before a husband:

as one must come forth of the house which intends to see it round about; so we in obedience to God being separate and come forth from the world, can the better see how the major part of the people came to their worship, as to a market, dressed up in their fashions, with their tongues in carnal discourse, both going hither and returning back; the eye gazing upon vanity and filth; the ear ready to receive such stuff as defiles, and the heart as an Anvil to forge within; whereby they come, not enquiring, like the spouse of Christ, cant 1;7 or as a people to do the work of God; as a true wife to rejoice in her Husband; but as an Harlot, that wantons and sports herself; yea if they stay a while for their coming together, what scoffing, playing, quarreling, carnal talk, unseemly behaviour, and sinful actions are taken up amongst them.<sup>34</sup>

It may be that, in religious discourse, for the masculine self to be related as an inferior to any other self meant adopting a feminine role. This might explain why both subject positions available to Britten are feminine. John Anderdon invoked a similar structure in 1660:

he that is joyned to an harlot is one with the harlot, and he that is joyned to the lord, is one spirit, unto which no unclean thing can be joyned; therefore he that will be joyned to the lord, and know his maker to be Husband must first know a separation from sin and from satan.<sup>35</sup>

Social joining requires a symbolic heterosexual union. To be joined to a harlot is a masculine error, but when Anderdon approaches God, liminal gender roles allow him to relinquish masculinity before God. To adopt womanhood symbolically preserves the

heterosexual nature of social and personal bonds and explains the absence of personal power. Utterly to change gender also avoids any accusation of male effeminacy or emasculation. Anderdon's Quaker subject is therefore not a lesser male, a degenerate male; he is a thoroughly liminal woman. William Dewsbury thought of Jesus as a 'husband to the desolate widdow', a male protector and authority before the weakness of femininity. James Naylor believed that humility was glorious and that its power lay in liminal reversal:

humility is our glory, and he is our saviour who saith, Learn of me, for I am lowly, and ye shall find rest upon your souls. And this we have proved, and we find his words truth, and all loftiness a lye...But man's pride is not the higher power, in Humility we finde a power above pride, higher than oppression, higher than men's wills.<sup>36</sup>

Isaac Penington expressed this politics of the liminal in more elaborate but essentially similar terms:

now who will be wise? let him become a fool in the flesh: who will be strong? Let him become weak in the man's part. Who will be saved by the eternal power? Let him cease from the man in himself, who ever would be able, in the life, to do all things, let him sink into that himself which is not, that it may bring to nought all things in him that are, that so it alone may be; and he, by it being brought to nothing, will easily become all in it. This is the true way of Restoration of Redemption; first to be lost, to be overcome, to be drowned, to be made nothing by that *which is not*, that that may overcome to BE in him, and he be quickned raised up and perfected in that, and so become possessor of the Fulness. *The race is not to the swift, nor the battel to the strong; but he that daily loseth his strength, and his ability to know, or so much as to will or desire (even till at length he become nothing at all) in him is the Corrupt at last destroyed, and the mortal swallowed up of the life.*<sup>37</sup>

Penington's religious ideal empties the subject of self-will and authoritarian impulse, precisely the attributes required in women by patriarchal theory. If those burdened in social theory by patriarchal responsibilities sought their theological *dissolution* in acts of liminal reversal, then those contrarily weighed down by the obligation to yield to 'higher



powers' equally desired liminal *empowerment* by faith. But women who were attracted to the Quaker movement because of its egalitarian ethic found that their position in ecclesiastical life still needed to be defended. Their writings demonstrate consistent and repeated interest in images of women and metaphors of femininity. Their arguments for feminine recognition fall into three specific areas: spousal rhetoric which empowers women by providing relation; a series of metaphors which suggest the feminization of God; and motivated reworkings of widely quoted misogynistic scriptures.

Rebeckah Travers offers a consideration of 'Christ the garment' as an idea which extends the power of those who choose to wear it:

you all may put him on, as he is manifest from the fathers bosome, and ...you be cloathed therewith, from heaven, so plentifully, that you may have to cast over a Brothers nakednesse a garment of the same love.<sup>38</sup>

She linked Quaker prophecy to God by anatomical analogy, assuring vengeance on those who have

been weary of the good old way, which is prepared for the simple, where the body is preserved nourished, and strengthened by virtue of the head, which giveth life to every member.<sup>39</sup>

Her utopian Quakerism culminated in the idea that those who were prepared to devote themselves to the work of God could expect reward. Although they must be willing

to give your neck to the yoke of Christ, and to bear the burthens of the weak, till the brotherhood arise and the body of Christ be perfected in one.<sup>40</sup>

Here, union is offered in the terms Caroline Walker Bynum suggests: as a continuation of ordinary feminine position, rather than as a liminal release.

The conceptualization of the Second Coming as a marriage feast at which those who had waited patiently would be amply rewarded, is a common motif in Quaker writing by women. Its advantage to women is that it enables relation and participation

in gendered terms, even if these terms are themselves embedded in patriarchal rhetorics which dissociate power from femininity. Spousal rhetoric is authorized by association. Margaret Fell argues that in the latter days, Christians will hear both 'the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, praise the Lord of Hosts for the Lord is good'.<sup>41</sup> Rebeckah Travers felt united with other Quakers because they were all 'drawing from the one breast the milk of the word'<sup>42</sup>. She also emphasized the fecundity of Zion in feminine terms:

thy Armour is felt the defence of the innocent, there we learned thee, and must thee inherit; pure and harmlesse, Chast and undefiled is shee that conceived thee, and she shall bring forth even the lowly, to her thou hast regard, thy treasures are in her, and thy pleasure with her, her walls are glorious, and her gates precious, her rivers are life and her fruits fadeth not, but her leaves are flourishing and green, Wherewith the nations shall be healed.<sup>43</sup>

But God could be feminized more directly. Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole implored their readers to consider that 'there is the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent in the world...Now it lieth upon you all to know what generation you are of'.<sup>44</sup>

If women were adept at finding an origin for piety in Scripture, they also managed to find a contemporary social space for femininity in the Church. Sarah Blackborough urged her readers to love Christ:

that into my mothers house you may all come, and into the chamber of her that conceived me, where you may embrace and be embraced of my dearly beloved one.<sup>45</sup>

Here the domestic household, an area increasingly the responsibility of women, is transformed into a spiritual realm under female dominion. In another tract, Blackborough repeats Dorothy White's argument about gender and women's speaking in Church. Speaking of apostolic precedent, she recalls the necessity of divine inspiration in former times:

and wherever they found either the male or the female out of the power, not learned of their Husband the Head, they were forbid to Pray or Prophecie; And therefore the man whose head was covered might not pray or prophesie, for in so doing he dishonoured his head, but the woman having her head covered, might pray or prophesie, and so she honours her head and that which uncovereth the head of the man covers the head of the woman, and this is no mystery to those that are ministers in the spirit, whose eye is in their head; these saw both male and female, in the Gospell were true labourers with them; and therefore writ that those women should be helpt that laboured with them in the Gospels, and these knew that Christ was one in the male and female.<sup>46</sup>

This argument implicitly allows women to participate in ecclesiastical matters where they are truly learned of their husband Christ. Where they do so and declare the will of the spirit:

here the woman usurps not Authority over the man, but hath power on her head because of the Angells; And who shall appoint in what place or in what vessel this power shall minister itself forth, or what spirit is that which would limit it.<sup>47</sup>

The argument that Christ erased the social differences produced by gender was also put forward by Margaret Fell, who repeated the argument that 'neither male nor female but they are all one in Christ'.<sup>48</sup> The holy city of Sion, or new Jerusalem, was also frequently described in feminine terms. Rebeckah Travers thought it a mother setting free the Saints: 'Jerusalem that's from above the mother of us all/ Hath set us free in liberty, in Holiness to call'.<sup>49</sup> Whatever the meaning intended in individual cases doubt remains about the political specificity of feminine figures because of the theological bivalence of feminine attributes and the difficulty, *pace* Shugar, of determining whether feminine submissiveness represents collusion with patriarchal antagonism towards women or the legitimate adoption of feminine qualities by female authors as a way of emphasizing the humanity of Christ and by it their spousal connection to him. Some examples provide intimations of deliberate policy towards the use of feminine figures; others do not. Where blatantly negative interpretations of femininity are reworked, or

where areas of experience which remain stubbornly feminine are invoked, we have good reason to interpret the texts as incorporating feminist politics.

The radical contribution of Quakers to the language of gender in the early modern period needs reassessment in the light of the texts adduced above. It is wrong to see the Quakers as retreating into a pious quietism. If they turned their attention to the personal and private realm in the 1660s, this certainly did not dissolve the ability of women in the movement to reorder the symbolic relationships that governed both their domestic and religious lives. In sympathy with many of the other radical religious groups of the 1640s and 1650s, they reformulated their spirituality to allow the congregational activity of women and consciously inverted the politics of hierarchy which represented the dominant social ideology. Because the use of gendered terms exaggerated and intensified theological and social meanings in the early modern period, the Quakers were quick to seize upon them as useful evangelical tools. They gloried, with earnest sincerity, in their excesses, but also used them to challenge prevailing attitudes and gender stereotypes.

Quaker women, in particular, argued for equality in a number of ways. They attacked scriptural exclusions of women by claiming that gendered interdictions employed terms such as 'women' allegorically and should thus be read as referring universally to those who lacked preaching skill or pastoral talent. Conversely they used explicitly feminine models of piety and female symbolism to argue for the inclusion of women *qua* women in Church affairs. They also employed spousal models which differed from liminal versions of masculine wifhood by valorizing feminine roles without advocating union with God. Quaker men envisaged two models of relation to God. In the first, they adopted female identities and gave up all power and authority as women. In the second, they adopted divine power and authority by merging with the divine centre. Quaker

women rejected both alternatives and advocated instead greater power for women in religious affairs and reciprocal relations between God and humanity. Their texts empowered women as God's real and symbolic spousal partner.

#### Notes

1. Anon, *The Quacking mountebank or the Jesuit turned Quaker* (1655), p. 5.
2. Isaac Penington, *Some Mysteries of God's Kingdom glanced at* (1663), p. 9.
3. They also instituted women's meetings at an early stage in their development, although it is possible to see in this the politically motivated attempts of a predominantly male leadership to bring the more zealous sections of the Quaker women's movement to heel. See Irene L. Edwards 'The Women Friends of London: the Two-Weeks and Box Meetings', *JOFHS*, 47 (1954), pp. 3-21.
4. Edward Burrough, *A True Description of my manner of Life* (1663), pp. 6-7.
5. See Ronald Hutton, *The British Republic 1649-1660* (Macmillan, 1990), p. 134.
6. See chapter one above, pp. 20-21..
7. See Susan Amussen, 'Gender, Family and the Social Order 1560-1725', pp. 196-218.
8. Deborah Kuller Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics and the Dominant Culture*, (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1990), p. 219.
9. Shugar, *Habits of Thought*, p. 223.
10. Shugar, *Habits of Thought*, p. 220.
11. Dorothy White uses a similar strategy in her writings. See chapter nine above.
12. See Nigel Smith, 'A Child Prophet: Martha Hatfield as *The Wise Virgin*', in *Children and their Books*, edited by Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989), pp. 79-93.
13. For Caroline Walker Bynum's critique of Turner see *Fragmentation and Redemption*, pp. 27-53.

14. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 32-33.
15. Thomas Salthouse, *A Manifestation of Divine Love* (1660), p. 6.
16. Salthouse, *A Manifestation of Divine Love*, pp. 7-8.
17. Esther Biddle, *The Trumpet of The Lord Sounded forth unto these three Nations*, written in Newgate (1662), p. 5.
18. Biddle, *Trumpet*, p. 7.
19. This is from 'An exhortation concerning good order and obedience to Rulers and Magistrates', in the Book of Homilies, (1640, originally published 1562), pp. 69-79.
20. Biddle, *Trumpet*, p. 3.
21. Ann Travers and Elizabeth Coleman, *The Harlots veil rent and her Impudency rebuked* (1669), p. 22.
22. Biddle, *Trumpet*, p. 4.
23. Biddle, *Trumpet*, p. 12.
24. Esther Biddle, *Oh Wo, Wo, from the Lord God of Heaven and of Earth, be unto ye Inhabitants of the Town of Dartmouth* (1659), p. 5.
25. Biddle, *Wo Wo*, p. 3.
26. Biddle, *Wo, Wo*, p. 1.
27. Biddle, *Wo, Wo*, p. 3.
28. Biddle, *Wo, Wo*, p. 2.
29. Margaret Fell, *A Call to the Seed of Israel that they may come out of Egypts Darkness* (1660), p. 1.
30. Margaret Fell, *A Loving salutation to the seed of Abraham among the Jewes* (1657), p. 4.
31. Margaret Fell, *For Manasseh Ben Israel, the call of the Jews out of Babylon* (1655), p. 9.
32. Fell, *Manesseh*, p. 21.
33. But then Prynne also believed they were Jesuits! See his *The Quakers unmasked, And clearly detected to be but the spawn of Romish Frogs, Jesuits and Franciscan Freers; sent from Rome to intoxicate the Giddy-headed English Nation* (1655), p. 6, where he claims that men follow St. Dominick and women Katherine of Siena and Bridget of Sweden, the latter taking their example specifically from

Bridget's life and revelations as recorded in a Folio printed in Nuremberg in 1524.

34. William Britten, *Silent Meeting, A wonder to the World* (1660), p. 3.
35. John Anderdon, *Against Babylon and her Merchants in England One Groan More* (1660), p. 4.
36. James Naylor, *Behold you Rulers and hearken proud men and women, who hæe let in the spirit of the world into your hearts, whereby you are lifted up in the earth, hear what truth saith* (1658), p. 3.
37. Isaac Penington the Younger, *A Warning of love from the Bowels of life to the several generations of Professors of this Age that they may waken and run towards the life* (1660), p. 8.
38. Rebeckah Travers, *A Message from the Spirit of Truth unto the Holy Seed, who are chosen out of the world and are lovers and followers of the light* (1658), p. 8.
39. Rebeckah Travers, *A testimony concerning the light and life of Jesus*, (1663), p. 7.
40. Rebeckah Travers, *Testimony for God's everlasting Truth* (1669), p. 14.
41. Margaret Fell, *A Loving Salutaton*, p. 4.
42. Rebeckah Travers, *A Testimony Concerning the Light and Life of Jesus*, sig A2.
43. Travers, *A Testimony*, p. 13.
44. Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole, *To the Priests and People of England, we discharge our consciences and give them warning* (1655), sig A1r.
45. Sarah Blackborough, *A Visit to the Spirit in Prison* (1658), p. 10.
46. Sarah Blackborough, *The Just and Equal balance discovered* (1659), p. 13.
47. Sarah Blackborough, *Just and Equal Balance*, p. 14.
48. Margaret Fell, *A Demonstration of God's Elect* (1660), p. 4.
49. Rebeckah Travers, *This is for all or any of those (by what name or title soever they be distinguished) that resist the Spirit* (1664), p. 10.

## Conclusion: Hermaphrodite Councils

In a work devoted to the analysis of women's religious writing in the early modern period it is easy to forget that men constantly argued the illegality or immorality of women's clerical activity. Even those men who 'approved' of virtuous women often cautioned that preaching and theological discussion were inadvisable even where they were allowed by scripture.

John Bastwick, the Presbyterian whose *Independency Not God's Ordinance* was published in 1645, adduced Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians to argue that women had no entitlement to an active role in Church affairs. Bastwick wanted to confine women to the domestic realm, claiming that any intellectual curiosity felt by women should be directed at their husbands, who could contain and quell their inquisitiveness. In his tirade against modern women's activity, however, Bastwick's attempts to disqualify women *a priori* from Church service ironically indicate the extent to which women could be considered as able and enthusiastic as their male counterparts. In attempting to argue that women should not contribute to Church affairs Bastwick inadvertently demonstrated that women were more than capable of the subjectivity he tried to deny them:

and yet in these our days, and in many of the new congregations they [women] have they voyces in choosing of officers and admitting of members, and have all of them, Peter's keys at their girdle, and make learned parts of speech in the congregation, and dispute questions and debate of matters and give their reasons con & pro as it is credibly reported and others of them set forth and print learned treatises in polemical divinity with great applause and admiration of the Independent ministers who cite their authority and quote them in their writings as classical authors: to the shame of the Nation and ludibry and howsoever there is not any that shall more honour the truly vertuous and pious of that sex than myselfe, yet I must confesse when I see how farre they become transgressors of the law of God & ado those things that the holy apostle hath not only forbidden but proclaimed a shame; I cannot but exceedingly



blame them, & those ministers that allow of and approve such rebellion against God and nature.<sup>1</sup>

All 'hermaphrodite counsels' as Bastwick termed bodies in which women were represented, were clear signs of a country close to ruin and destruction.

John Brinsley, preacher of the Word in Great Yarmouth, argued along the same lines as Bastwick, demonstrating that women's preaching in public was prohibited and suggesting that Satan singled out women as fitting objects and instruments for the effecting of his devilish designs for a number of reasons. Women, he thought, were discontent with their present position, inordinately desirous of bettering it by any means, prone to the excessive effects of novelty and curiosity and attracted by 'faire and beautifull outsides'.<sup>2</sup> They succumbed to the increase of knowledge offered by satanic indulgence in activities officially denied them because of immoral curiosity, the same 'incogitancy' that tempted Eve.

Despite this constant and consistent opposition the number and frequency of women's publications increased dramatically after 1640. In a society contorted by civil war the ordinary constraints on publishing were relaxed. Moreover, the activities of numerous religious sects produced and attracted women eager to publish accounts of their salvation or theological treatises. The more radical sects invested prophecy, an activity many believed defunct, with renewed relevance. Women were enabled by this emphasis and many produced lengthy and theologically complex texts.

The two early modern responses to patriarchal exclusion adumbrated in my introduction suggest the existence of on one hand a conservative, quietistic response to the problem of women's writing and on the other a speculative, antagonistic attack on male strictures. But to concur with the politics of such a view would be to fail to understand the extent to which both positions are in part compromised responses to the

pressure of patriarchal culture. Indeed they are often the expression of that culture itself. It was not possible for women simply to resist this culture by adopting a language or rhetoric of resistance which valorized those values and styles execrated by patriarchal culture. But resistance was possible. For the women whose writings I have examined patriarchy formed an ideological template, a pervasive and unavoidable set of intellectual motifs. But, as I have made clear, it was never a system fully capable of controlling either the symbolic resources or the individuals that it affected. It proved finally incapable of preventing and containing the resistance to it generated by a variety of sectarian women throughout the 1640s and 1650s. However, neither were these writers able to evade its effects completely.

Women's writing in this period thus occupies a paradoxical position, neither wholly complicit with nor fully opposed to the patriarchal framework of its time. The writers examined here all negotiated with its strictures from different positions. To speak of one strategy as more effective than another is to stray from the larger point, which is that being neither fully outside nor inside ideology is a precondition of contributing to culture in written discourse.

Although the women writers examined above had different and often antagonistic theological beliefs it will have become obvious that similarities of theme and approach sometimes override these differences. Here I want simply to make these similarities explicit. There are suggestive groupings that could easily have ordered the narrative of this thesis. Elizabeth Warren and the Quakers both reevaluate established models of iconic femininity. Mary Pope, Mary Cary and Katherine Chidley establish a position for women in national politics. Dorothy White and Jane Turner, and to some extent Anna Trapnel, argue that dialogue with God is more seemly than quiet servility. These last

three all offer a model of personal relationship with God which contains radical implications for the analogical model of political relations which formed such an important component of Stuart culture. Trapnel and Chidley explicitly reject the hierarchical model of Church government and the dominant metaphor of power which it expressed. Despite these promising connections the study is organized chronologically in order to allow other more general similarities to emerge.

All the writers in this study consciously engaged in politics, a proscribed activity for women, and all advocated dialogic relations with God, most consciously revalued existing patterns of female spiritual experience; most excoriated types of relation to the Divine which I have called masculine (union with godhead, liminal reversal) and all sought to establish for themselves a religious position which avoids accusations of immodesty but which doesn't merely adopt the pious modesty traditionally accorded to women as patterns of humble piety. The question of whether or not they advocated a new feminine form of religious subjectivity is more complex. Insofar as they championed the position of the congregation as members of the body of Christ, they advocate ecclesiastical democracy. On its own, this would not define a specifically 'feminine' subjectivity, but where they draw on feminine models and reject liminal (masculine) femininity they do begin to shape a deliberately feminine subjectivity. Mary Pope and Elizabeth Warren invoke contrary desires in this respect, because they advocate non-involvement in clerical affairs, whilst entering fully into the aggressive world of published polemic to do so. The kinds of practice urged by these two women writers fashion feminine affections into universal requirements. In offering solutions to pressing theological and social problems they did speak with a consistent voice, a voice united by the degree to which they saw their experience as common to women. As we might

expect, and as Irigaray would argue, there was no easy way out of the imposed fictions of patriarchal theory by sheer force of will. Indeed, perhaps it would not have been possible to offer the positive alternatives to masculine theology that so many early modern women writers did without possessing the kind of intellectual constitution with which contemporary patriarchal culture provided them. Women were not free to alter by fiat the ideological models of femininity which constrained them, even as they provided a separate identity for women writers to take up and apply to masculine models of political power and Christian obedience. Recent work on the idea of freedom in the period suggests that it is anachronistic to believe that seventeenth-century radicals sought individual liberty through religious expression. J. C. Davis suggests that the liberty they sought was paradoxical. They desired the removal of external constraint in order to subject themselves more strictly to God.<sup>3</sup> If this is true sectarian women writers express more clearly than their male counterparts the paradox of radical religious liberty. Neither free fully to adopt the positions offered by patriarchy nor utterly to reject them in favour of a pristine femininity unsullied by masculine myth the authors examined here all had no choice but to negotiate with the patriarchal culture that fashioned them.

#### Notes

1. John Bastwick, *Independency Not God's Ordinance* (1645), p. 110.
2. John Brinsley, *A Looking Glasse for Good Women...as it was lately presented to the Church of God at Great Yarmouth* (1645), p. 30.
3. J. C. Davis, 'Religion and the Struggle for Freedom in the English Revolution', *The Historical Journal*, 35 (1992), pp. 507-530.

## Bibliography

### Primary Works

- A., E., *The Presbyterian Brother and Sister: a reply to Mr Bastwick's Vindication* (1645).
- Agrippa, Henricus Cornelius, *Commendation of Matrimony*, translated by D. Clapham (1540).
- Ainsworth, Henry, *Annotations upon the Psalms* (1612).
- Anderdon, John, *Against Babylon and Her Merchants* (1666).
- Archer, Henry, *The Personal Reign of Christ* (1642).
- Aspinwall, William, *A Brief Description of the Fifth Monarchy* (1653).
- Atkinson, Elizabeth, *A Brief and Plain Discovery* (1669).
- Audland, Anne, *A Warning* (1655).
- *A True Declaration of The Suffering of Anne Audland* (1655).
- *The Saints Testimony* (1655).
- Aylett, Robert, *Five Moral Meditations; Concord, Chastitie, Constancie, Courtecie, Gravitie* (1622).
- *Susanna, or the arraignment of two unjust elders* (1622).
- Bastwick, John, *Independency Not God's Ordinance* (1645).
- Bate, George, *Lives of prime actors of Charles execution* (1661).
- Bedford, Thomas, *The Chief Points of Antinomianism* (1647).
- Biddle, Esther, *Oh Wo, Wo, from the Lord God of Heaven and of Earth...unto Dartmouth* (1659).
- *A Warning From the Lord* (1660).
- *The Trumpet of the Lord* (1662).
- Blackborow, Sarah, *A Visit to the Spirit in Prison* (1658).
- *Herein is Held forth the Gift* (1659).
- *The Just and Equal Balance Discovered* (1660).
- Blackwell, Elidad, *A Caveat for Magistrates* (1644).
- Boehme, Jacob, *The Second Book Concerning the three Principles of Divine Essence* (1648).
- Bolton, John, *A Justification of the Judgement of God on Nathaniel Smith* (1669).
- Brathwait, Richard, *Nature's Embassy* (1621).
- *The English Gentlewoman* (1641).
- Brinsley, John, *Sacred/Sovereign Church remedie* (1645).
- *A Looking Glasse for Good Women* (1645).
- Britten, William, *Silent Meeting, A wonder to the World* (1660).
- Brown, David, *Two Conferences between Separatists and Independents* (1650).
- *The Naked Woman* (1652).
- Bullinger, Henry, *A Sermon concerning magistrates and the obedience of subjects*, translated by Walter Lynne (1549).
- Bulmer, John, *Chirologia, or the Natural Language of the Hand* (1644).
- Burch, Dorothy, *Catechisme of severall heads of Christian Religion* (1646).
- Burrough, Edward, *Something in Answer to a book called Choice Experiences* (1654).
- Caesar, P., *Usury* (1578).
- Ch., Anthony, *God's Presence Man's Comfort, the heads of a sermon* (1646).
- Cary, Mary, *The Little Horn's Doom and Downfall* (1651).

- *Twelve Humble Proposals* (1653).
- *The Resurrection of the Witnesses*, second edition (1653).
- *A Word in Season to the Kingdom of England* (1647).
- Chaderton, Lawrence, *A Fruitful Sermon on Romans 12;3-8* (1584).
- Channel, Elinor, *A Message from God by a Dumb Woman to his Highness the Lord Protector* (1653).
- Chidley, Katherine, *The Justification of the Independent Churches of Christ* (1641).
- *Good Counsell to the Petitioners* (1645).
- *A New Years Gift* (1645).
- Chidley, Samuel, *Clothing for the Naked Woman* (1652).
- *The Dissembling Scot* (1652).
- Clarke, Samuel, *A Martyrology* (1652).
- Clarkson, Lawrence, *The Lost Sheep Found* (1660).
- Coachman, R., *A Just Reproof of such as are called Brownists* (1642).
- Coleman, Thomas, *The Heart's Engagement* (1643).
- Collings, John, *The Spouses Hidden Glory* (1646).
- Cotton, Clement, *None but Christ* (1644).
- Cotton, Priscilla, *A Visitation of Love* (1661).
- and Cole, Mary, *To the Priests and People of England We Discharge our Consciences* (1655).
- Cradock, Walter, *Works* (1800).
- Cudworth, Ralph, *A Sermon before Parliament* (Cambridge, 1647).
- Denison, John, *The Christian Petitioner, shewing how we must sue in the courts of heaven: both for reward and remission* (1611).
- Derham, Richard, *A Brief Discourse Proving Independency Destructive* (1646).
- Devenish, Thomas, *Certain Observations concerning the Duty of Love* (1642).
- Digby, Kenelm, *Discourse on Bodies* (1645).
- Dod, John, and Cleaver, Robert, *A Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (1618).
- Edgar, Thomas, *The Lawes Resolution of Women's Rights* (1632).
- Edwards, Thomas, *Reasons Against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations* (1641).
- *Gangraena* (1646).
- Fell, Margaret, *For Manasseh Ben Israel* (1655).
- *False Prophets Antichrists Deceivers* (1655).
- *A Testimony of the Touchstone of all Professions* (1656).
- *A Loving Salutation to the Seed of Abraham* (1657).
- *A Paper concerning such as are made...* (1659).
- *A Demonstration of God's Elect* (1660).
- *A True Testimony* (1660).
- *Women's Speaking Justified* (1660).
- *A Touchstone or a Perfect Trial* (1667).
- *A Brief Collection* (1710).
- Ferrand, Jacques, *Erotomania, a Treatise on Love* (1640).
- Fisher, Edward, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (1646).
- Fox, George, *The Woman Learning in Silence* (1656).
- *A Battle Door for Teachers and Professors* (1660).

- Fulke, William, *A Confutation of the Rhemish New Testament* (1633).  
 ---- *A Most Pleasant Prospect into the Garden of Naturall Contemplation: Meteors* (1654).
- G., M., *Cheap and Good Husbandry* (1648).
- Gataker, Thomas, *Two Marriage Sermons* (1624).  
 ---- *Marriage Duties briefly couched together out of Col 3;18,19* (1620).
- Gilman, Ann, *An Epistle to Friends* (1662).
- Goodwin, John, *Anapologies Antapologias* (1646).  
 ---- *Anti-Cavalierisme* (1643).
- Goodwin, Thomas, *The Vanity of Thoughts* (1637).  
 ---- *The Return of Prayers* (1641).  
 ---- *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory* (1641).
- H., I., *A Strange wonder: the True Nature of Women expressed* (1642).
- H., T., *A Looking Glasse for Women* (1644).
- Hammond, Henry, *Resisting the lawful Magistrate upon colour of Religion* (1643).
- Homes, Nathaniel, *The Peasant's Price of Spiritual Liberty* (1642).
- Hooker, Thomas, *Writings in England and Holland 1626-1633* ed. S. Bush, W. Herget, N. Pettit, G. H. Williams, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1975).  
 ---- *The Poor Doubting Christian Drawne to Christ* (1638).  
 ---- *Redemption: Three Sermons 1637-1656* ed. Everest H. Emerson (Scholars Facsimilies and reprints, Gainesville Fla, 1956).
- Howgill, Mary, *A Remarkable Letter* (1657).
- Hughes, George, *A Dry Rod Blooming and Fruit bearing, or a Treatise on the pain, gain and use of chastenings* (1644).
- Ireton, Henry, *Army Remonstrance* (1648).
- J., S., *The Way to Thrift* (1597).
- Johnson, Robert, *Lux and Lex or Light and Law in Jacob's house* (1647).
- Jones, Sarah, *To Sion's Lovers: the doctrine of laying on of hands* (1644).
- Kilcop, Thomas, *A Short Treatise on Baptism* (1642).
- Knox, John, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstruous Regiment of Women* (1558).
- Langthorne, L., *Mary Sitting at Christ's feet* (1611).
- Manwood, John, *A Treatise and Discourse of the Lawes of the Forest* (1598).
- Martyr, Peter, *Commentary on Romans* (1568).
- Medwall, Henry, *Interludes of Nature* (1538).
- More, Henry, *An Antidote against Atheisme* (1653).  
 ---- *Paralipomena Prophetica* (1685).
- Mosse, Miles, *Arraignment and Conviction of Usury* (1602).
- N., B., *The True Character tending to Love* (1647).
- Naylor, James, *Behold you Rulers and hearken proud men and women* (1658).
- Neville, Henry, *The Parliament of Ladies* (1647).  
 ---- *The Ladies second Assembly* (1647).
- Nutt, Thomas, *A Baptist Petition* (1643).
- Pagitt, Ephraim, *Heresiography* (1661).
- Parsons, Bartholomew, *Boaz and Ruth Blessed* (Oxford, 1633).  
 ---- *Honos and Onus Levitarum, or Tythes vindicated* (1636).

Peacham, Henry, *The Garden of Eloquence* (1593).  
 Penington, Isaac, *Some Mysteries of God's Kingdom glanced at* (1663).  
 Perkins, William, *A Discourse on Conscience* (1596).  
 ---- *A Golden Chain/Whether a Man* (1600).  
 ---- *The true gaine: more in worth than all the goods of this world* (1601).  
 ---- *A Treatise of man's Imagination* (1607).  
 ---- Christian Economy translated by W. Pickering (1609).  
 ---- *Directions for the Government of the Tongue* (1621).  
 ---- *Combat of the Flesh* (1625).  
 Poole, Elizabeth, *An Alarum of War: a vision* (1648).  
 Pope, Mary, *Behold Here is a Word* (1649).  
 ---- *A Treatise on Magistracy* (1647).  
 Powel, G., *Theological Positions Concerning Usury* (1602).  
 Preston, John, *The Church's Marriage, or a Dignitie delivered in Sunday sermons at Lincolns Inn* (1638).  
 ---- *A Heavenly treatise on the Divine Love of Christ, shewing motives means marks and kindes therof, five sermons* (1640).  
*The Breastplate of Faith and Love: A treatise in three parts* (1651).  
 Prynne, William, *Independency Examined* (1651).  
 ---- *The Quakers unmasked* (1655).  
 Rainbowe, Edward, *A Sermon preached at Walden in Essex on May 29 at the interring of the corps of the right honourable Susanna countesse of Suffolk* (1649).  
 Richardson, Elizabeth, *A Ladies Legacie to her Daughters* (1645).  
 Robinson, Henry, *Liberty of Conscience* (1644).  
 Robinson, John, *A Just and Necessary Apologie* (1625).  
 ---- A Justification of Separation from the Church of England (1639).  
 Rogers, John, *Ohel or Beth-Shemesh* (1653).  
 ---- *A Tabernacle for the Sun* (1653).  
 Rogers, Nehemiah, *The True Convert or an Exposition upon the 15th chapter of St. Luke's Gospell* (1632).  
 Rogers, Timothy, *The Righteous Man's evidences for Heaven* (1619).  
 Saltmarsh, John, *A New Quire* (1645).  
 ---- *Groans for Liberty* (1646).  
 Salthouse, Thomas, *A Manifestation of Divine Love* (1660).  
 Sedgewick, John, *Antinomianisme Anatomised or a Glasse for the Lawless* (1643).  
 Sedgewick, Obadiah, *Haman's Vanity* (1643).  
 Sibbes, Richard, *The Christian's Portion* (1638).  
 ---- *The Bride's longing for her Bridegroom* (1638).  
 ---- *The Soules Conflict with itself and Victory over itself by Faith*, fourth edition (1638).  
 ---- *Bowels Opened* (1639).  
 Simmonds, Martha, *A Lamentation for the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel* (1655).  
 Smith, Henry *An examination of Usury, in two sermons* (1591).  
 Smith, John, *Select Discourses* (1660).  
 Sterry, Peter, *The Spirit's Conviction of Sin* (1645).  
 Strong, James, *Joanereidos, or Feminine Valour in Western Women* (1645).  
 Taylor, Jeremy, *Treatises* (1648).  
 Taylor, John, *Anatomy of Separatists* (1642).



Tasso, Torquato, *Of Marriage and Wiving*, translated by R.T. (1599).  
 Tillinghast, John, *Knowledge of the Times* (1654).  
 Trapnel, Anna, *Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea* (1654).  
 ---- *A Legacy for Saints* (1654).  
 ---- *Strange and Wonderful News from Whitehall* (1654).  
 ---- *The Cry of a Stone* (1654).  
 ---- *A Voice for the King of Saints* (1658).  
 Travers, Ann, and Coleman, Elizabeth, *A Backslider Reproved* (1669)  
 Travers, Rebecca, *A Message from the spirit of Truth* (1652).  
 ---- *This is for any of that generation looking for the Kingdom of God* (1659).  
 ---- *A Message concerning the Light and Life of Jesus* (1663).  
 ---- *Testimony for God's everlasting Truth* (1669).  
 Tuke, Thomas, *A Treatise Against Painting* (1616).  
 Turner, Jane, *Choice Experiences* (1653).  
 Ursinius, Zacharius, *Summe of Christian Religion* (1633).  
 Vicars, John, *A Picture of Independency* (1645).  
 ---- *The Schismatic Sifted* (1646).  
 Venn, Anne, *A Wise Virgin's Lamp Burning* (1658).  
 Vines, Richard, *Sermon* (1646).  
 Vives, Johannes L., *The Instruction of Christian Women* (1547).  
 Warren, Elizabeth, *The Good and Old Way Vindicated* (1646).  
 ---- *Spiritual Thrift* (1647).  
 ---- *A Warning peece from Heaven* (1649).  
 Whately, William, *A Bride Bush: Directions for Married Persons* (1623).  
 White, Dorothy, *Upon the 22nd day...* (1659).  
 ---- *This to be delivered to the counsellors* (1659).  
 ---- *A diligent search amongst rulers, priests, professors and people* (1659).  
 ---- *A visitation of heavenly love* (1660).  
 ---- *Unto all God's host in England* (1660).  
 ---- *Lamentation unto this Nation...* (1660).  
 ---- *An epistle of love and consolation* (1661).  
 ---- *An alarm to England's inhabitants* (1661).  
 ---- *An Alarum sounded forth* (1662).  
 ---- *A trumpet of the Lord of hosts* (1662).  
 ---- *A call from God out of Egypt* (1662).  
 ---- *Friends, You that are of Parliament* (1662).  
 ---- *The Voice of the Lord* (1662).  
 ---- *Greetings of Pure Peace* (1662).  
 ---- *To all that worship in temples made of hands* (1663).  
 ---- *A visitation of Love* (1684).  
 ---- *The Day Dawned* (1684).  
 ---- *A Salutation of Love to all the tender hearted* (1684).  
 ---- *Universal Love to the Lost* (1684).  
 Woodcock, Francis, *The Two Witnesses of Revelation* (1643).  
 Xenophon, *Oeconomias*, translated by Gentian Hervet (1534).

## Anonymous Primary Works

The following works are all drawn from the collection assembled by the London bookseller George Thomason and now held in the British Library.

- The Account Audited, or the Date of the Resurrection of the Witnesses, pretended to be demonstrated by M. Cary a Minister* (1649).  
*Bloody News from Dover: being a true relation of a great and bloody murder, committed by Mary Champion* (1647).  
*Brief Anatomie of Women* (1653).  
*Brief collection out of Magna Charter* (1653).  
*Brothers of the blade answerable to the sisters of the scaberd* (1641).  
*The Brownist's Synagogue* (1641).  
*City Dames petition on behalf of Cavaliers* (1647).  
*Discourse of the power of magistracy* (1649).  
*Hey Hoe for a husband* (1647).  
*Hilgard's prophecy against Bishops* (1641).  
*Laws against Witches* (1645).  
*Maid's Petition to both houses* (1647).  
*Mary Wilmore delivered of a headless child* (1642).  
*Mother Shipton's prophecies* (1642).  
*Margaret Hooper possessed* (1641).  
*Murder Murder* (1641).  
*New Parliament of Women* (1656).  
*New Trial of the Ladies* (2nd ed. 1658).  
*Parliament of Ladies* (1647).  
*Petition of Wives and Matrons* (1643).  
*Petition of the Women of Middleton* (1641).  
*Quacking mountebank or the Jesuit turned Quaker* (1655).  
*Queen Elizabeth's last speech to Parliament* (1642).  
*Ranter's Last sermon* (1654).  
*Remonstrance of London's Occurrences in a Brief, Real and Ingenius Demonstration of all particulars* (1641).  
*Remonstrance of shee citizens of London desiring free trade* (1647).  
*Revelation Unrevealed* (1649).  
*Sectary Dissected* (1647).  
*Seven Churches Confession* (1646).  
*Seven Women confessors* (1642).  
*Sisters of the Scaberd's Holiday* (1641).  
*Syons Prerogative Royal* (Amsterdam, 1641).  
*Trial of the Ladies* (1656).  
*Trodden down strength, Mrs Drake revived* (1647).  
*The Virgin's complaint* (1643).  
*Widow's Lament* (1643).  
*Wonderful Relation of two sleepers* (1646).  
*Women's New Law* (1656).  
*A Wife and No Wife: A marriage sermon* (1641).

## Secondary Works

- Acheson, R. J., *Radical Puritans in England 1550-1660* (Longman, Harlow, 1990).
- Agnew, Jean Christophe, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo American Thought* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985).
- Arenal, Electa, and Schlauf, Stacey, 'Strategems of the Strong, Strategems of the weak: Autobiographical prose of the seventeenth century Hispanic convent', *TSWL*, 9 (1990), pp. 25-42.
- Armstrong, Isobel, ed. *New Feminist Discourses: Critical Essays on Theories and Texts* (Routledge, 1992).
- Armstrong, Nancy and Tennenhouse, Leonard, eds. *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in the History of Sexuality* (Methuen, 1987).
- Ashton, Robert, *The English Civil War: Conservatism and Revolution 1603-1649*, second edition (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989).
- Aylmer, G. E., *Rebellion or Revolution* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986).
- Barker, Francis, *The Tremulous Private Body* (Methuen, 1984).
- ed. *Literature and Power 1642* (University of Essex, Colchester, 1981).
- Bauman, Richard, *Let Your Words be Few: Symbolic Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983).
- Beilin, Elaine, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1987).
- Belsey, Catherine, *The subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance drama* (Methuen, 1985).
- 'Richard Levin and In-different Reading', *NLR*, 21 (1990), pp. 449-456
- Berg, Elizabeth L., 'The Third Woman', *Diacritics*, 12, No. 2 (1982), pp.11-20.
- Berg, Maggie, 'Luce Irigaray's "Contradictions": Poststructuralism and Feminism', *Signs*, 17, No. 1 (1991), pp. 50-70.
- Blamires, David, *Quakerism and its Manchester Connections*, (John Rylands University Library, Manchester, 1991).
- Bocock, Robert and Thompson Kenneth eds. *Religion and Ideology: A Reader* (Manchester University Press, 1985).
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Logic of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice (Polity, 1990).
- Brailsford, H. N., *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, second edition, (Spokesman, Nottingham, 1983).
- Brailsford, Mabel, *Quaker Women 1650-1690* (Duckworth, 1968, originally published 1915).
- Bray, Alan, 'Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England', *HWJ*, 29 (Spring 1990), pp. 1-17.
- Brennan, Teresa, ed. *Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (Routledge, 1989).
- Carroll, Kenneth L., 'Early Quakers and "Going Naked as a Sign"', *Quaker History*, 67 (1978), pp. 69-87.
- Capp, Bernard, *Fifth Monarchy Men* (Faber, 1972).
- Clark, Alice, *Working life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (Routledge 1982, originally published 1919).
- Clark, J. D. C., *Revolution and Rebellion: State and Society in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986).

- Chadwick, Owen, *The Reformation*, vol 3 in *The Pelican History of The Church* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972).
- Cohen, Charles L, 'Two biblical models of conversion: An example of puritan hermeneutics', *CH*, 58, No. 2 (1989), pp. 182-196.
- Collinson, Patrick, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (Macmillan, 1983).
- Cope, Esther S., '"Dame Eleanor Davies Never soe mad a Ladie"?' , *HLQ*, 50 (1987), pp. 133-144.
- Cope, Jackson I., 'Seventeenth Century Quaker Style', *PMLA*, 71 (1956), pp.725-754.
- Coward, Barry, *The Stuart Age* (Longman, 1980).
- Cross, Claire, *Church and People 1450-1660* (Fontana, 1976).
- ' "He Goats before the Flocks": A Note on the part played by Women in the founding of some Civil War Churches', in *Popular Belief and Practice*, ed. D. J. Cuming and Derek Baker (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972).
- Cust, Richard, 'News and Politics in early seventeenth-century England' ,*P&P*, 112 (1986), pp. 60-90.
- and Hughes, Ann, *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1642* (Longman, 1987).
- and Lake, Peter, 'Sir Richard Grosvenor and the Rhetoric of Magistracy', *BIHR* (1981), pp. 40-53.
- Davies, Kathleen M, 'Continuity and Change in Literary Advice on Marriage', in *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage*, ed. R. B. Outhwaite (Europa, 1981), pp. 58-80.
- Davis, J. C., *Utopia and the ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981).
- 'Religion and the Struggle for Freedom in the English Revolution', *The Historical Journal*, 35 (1992), pp. 507-530.
- Derrida, Jacques, *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).
- *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Spivak, (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1976).
- Disbrey, Claire, 'George Foxe and some theories of innovation in religion', *Religious Studies*, 25 (1989), pp. 61-74.
- Disley, Emma, 'Degrees of Glory: Protestant doctrine and the concept of rewards hereafter', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 42 (April 1990), pp. 77-105.
- Dollimore, Jonathan, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries* (Harvester, Sussex, 1984).
- 'Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Marxist Humanism', *NLH*, 21, No. 3 (1990), pp. 471-493.
- Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger: an analysis of the concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Ark 1984, first published 1966).
- *Food in the Social Order* (Russell Sage Foundation, 1984).
- Dow, F. D., *Radicalism in the English Revolution 1640-1660* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1985).
- Edwards, Irene L., 'The Women Friends of London', *JOFHS*, 47 (1954), pp. 3-21.
- Evans, G. R., 'Calvin on signs: an Augustinian dilemma', *RS*, 3, No. 1. (March 1989), pp. 35-45.
- Erskine-Hill, Howard and Storey, Graham, *Revolutionary Prose of the English Civil War*

- (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983).
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E., *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1965).
- Ferguson, Moira, *First Feminists: British Women Writers 1578-1799* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1985).
- Finke, Laurie, 'Mystical Bodies and the Dialogics of Vision', *Philological Quarterly*, 67 (1988), pp. 439-449.
- Fletcher, Anthony and Stevenson, John, eds. *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985).
- Flower MacCannell, Juliet, *Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious* (Croom Helm, 1986).
- Fraser, Antonia, *The Weaker Vessel* (Methuen, 1984).
- Geertz, Clifford, 'History and Anthropology', *NLH*, 21, No. 2 (Winter 1990), pp. 321-335.
- *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books, New York, 1973).
- Gentles, Ian, 'London Levellers in the English Revolution: the Chidleys and their circle', *JEH*, 29, No.3 (1978), pp. 281-309.
- George, Margaret, *Women in the First Capitalist Society: Experiences in Seventeenth-Century England* (Harvester, Sussex, 1988).
- Goreau, Angeline, *The Whole Duty of a Woman: Female Writers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Dial Press, New York, 1985).
- Graham, Elspeth, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby, and Wilcox, Helen, eds. *Her Own Life: Autobiographical writings by seventeenth-century Englishwomen* (Routledge, 1989).
- Greenblatt, Stephen, *Renaissance self-fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1980).
- *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988).
- Greer, Germaine, Jeslyn Medoff, Melinda Sansone, and Susan Hastings, eds., *Kissing the Rod: an Anthology of Seventeenth Century Women's Verse* (Virago, 1988).
- Greaves, Richard L ed., *Triumph Over Silence: Women in Protestant History* (Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1985).
- Griffiths, Morwenna and Margaret Whitford, eds., *Feminist Perspectives in Philosophy* (Macmillan, 1988).
- Grosz, Elizabeth, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Allen and Unwin, 1989).
- Hageman, Elizabeth, 'Recent studies in Women Writers of the English Seventeenth Century' *ELR*, 18, No. 1 (1988), pp. 138-167.
- Haller, William, and G. Davies eds., *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution 1638-1647*, vol 2 (Columbia University Press, New York, 1933).
- Hanbury, B., *Historical Memorials relating to the Independents or Congregationalists*, 2 vols (1839).
- Hannay, Margaret Patterson, *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and writers of Religious Works* (Kent State University Press, Ohio, 1985).
- Heller Mendelson, Sara, *The Mental World of Stuart Women* (Harvester, Sussex, 1987).
- Heyd, Michael, 'The reaction to enthusiasm in the seventeenth century: Towards an integrative approach', *JMH*, 53 (1981), pp. 258-280.
- Hill, Christopher, *Puritanism and Revolution* (Peregrine 1986, first published by Martin

- Secker and Warburg, 1958).
- *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (Peregrine, 1964).
- *Reformation to Industrial Revolution* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967).
- *The World Turned Upside Down* (Peregrine, 1972).
- *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714*, second edition (Van Nostrand, Wokingham, 1980).
- *Collected Essays vol I: Writing and Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England* (Harvester, Sussex, 1985).
- *Collected Essays vol II: Religion and Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Harvester, Sussex, 1986).
- *A Turbulent, Seditious and Factious People: John Bunyan and his Church* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989).
- Hirst, Derek, *Authority and Conflict: England 1603-1642* (Edward Arnold, 1986).
- Hobby, Elaine, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1649-1688* (Virago, 1988).
- Holstun, James, 'Ranting at the New Historicism', *ELR*, 19, No. 2 (1989) pp. 189-225.
- *A Rational Millenium :Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987).
- Hogrefe, Pearl, 'Legal rights of Tudor Women and their Circumvention by Men and Women' , *SCJ*, 3, No. 1 (1972), pp. 97-105.
- Howard, Jean E., 'The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies', *ELR*, 16 (1986), pp. 13-43.
- Hutton, Ronald, *The British Republic 1649-1660* (Macmillan, 1990).
- Huxon, Thomas L, 'Calvin and Bunyan on Word and Image: Is there a text in interpreter's house?', *ELR*, 18, No 3 (Autumn 1988), pp. 438-459.
- Irigaray, Luce, 'This Sex Which Is Not One', in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (Harvester, Sussex, 1981), pp. 99-107.
- *This Sex Which Is Not One* translated by Catherine Porter (Cornell University Press, New York, 1985).
- 'Equal to Whom?', *Differences*, 1, No. 2 (1989), pp. 59-76.
- 'Questions a Emmanuel Levinas', *Critique*, 46, No. 522 (1990), pp. 911-920.
- *Sexes et Genealogies*, translated by Gillian C. Gill (Columbia University Press, New York, 1993).
- Jardine, Lisa, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, second edition (Harvester, Sussex, 1989).
- 'Cultural Confusion and Shakespeare's Learned Heroines: "These are old paradoxes"', *SQ*, 38 (1987), pp. 1-18.
- and Grafton, Anthony, '"Studied for action": How Gabriel Harvey read his Livy', *P&P*, 129 (1990), pp. 30-78.
- Jones, A. T., *The Early Days of the Stepney Meeting* (1887).
- Jordan, Constance, 'Women's Rule in Sixteenth Century British Political Thought', *RQ*, 40 (1987), pp. 421-451.
- 'Feminism and the Humanists: The Case of Sir Thomas Elyot's *Defence of Good Women*', *RQ*, 36 (1983), pp. 181-210.
- Kay, Sarah, 'Investing the Wild: Women's beliefs in the *chansons de geste*', *Paragraph*, 13, No. 2 (1990), pp. 147-163.

- Keeble, N. H., *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity* (Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1987).
- Kenyon, John, *The Stuart Constitution*, second edition (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986).
- King, Ursula, *Women and Spirituality: Voices of Protest and Promise* (Macmillan 1989).
- Kuller Shugar, Deborah, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990).
- La Coureye Blecki, Catherine, 'Alice Hayes and Mary Pennington: Personal identity within the tradition of Quaker spiritual autobiography', *Quaker History*, 65 (1976), pp. 19-31.
- Lake, Peter, 'Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635', P&P, 114 (1987), pp. 32-76.
- 'Feminine Piety and Personal Potency: The 'emancipation' of Mrs Jane Ratcliffe', TSC, 2, No. 2 (1987), pp. 143-165.
- Lamont, William, *Godly Rule: Religion and Politics 1603-1660* (St Martins Press, New York, 1969).
- Leach, Edmund, and Alan Laycock, *Structuralist Interpretations of Biblical Myth* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983).
- Leech, Geoffrey, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (Longman, 1969).
- Ledesdorff, Selma, 'Politics, identification and the writing of women's history' in *Current Issues in Women's History*, ed. Geerte Binnema, Annemieke Kennen, Vefie Poels, and Jacqueline Zirkzee (Routledge, 1989).
- Levin, Richard, 'Unthinkable thoughts in the New Historicizing of English Renaissance Drama', NLH 21, No. 3 (1990), pp. 433-447.
- 'Feminist Thematics and Shakespearean Tragedy', PMLA, 103 (1988), pp. 125-138.
- Lilley, Kate, 'Blazing Worlds: seventeenth-century women's utopian writing', in *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760* ed. Claire Brant and Diane Purkiss (Routledge, 1992), pp. 102-134.
- Lyall, Francis, 'Of metaphors and analogies: Legal language and covenant theology', SJT, 32, No. 1 (1979), pp. 1-17.
- Macek, Ellen, 'The emergence of a Feminine Spirituality in *The Book of Martyrs*', SCJ, 19, No. 1 (1988), pp. 63-80.
- Maclean, Ian, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A study of the fortunes of scholasticism and medical science in European intellectual life* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980).
- Maclure, Millar, *Register of Sermons at Pauls Cross 1534-1642*, revised by Peter Pauls and Jackson Campbell Boswell (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1989).
- Mahl, Mary R., and Koon, Helene, *The Female Spectator: English Women Writers before 1800* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1977).
- Manning, Brian, *Politics and Religion in the English Civil War* (Edward Arnold, 1973).
- Marks, Elaine, and de Courtivron, Isabelle, eds. *New French Feminisms* (Harvester, Sussex, 1981).
- Marshall, Sherrin, *Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe: Public and Private Worlds* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1989).
- Marten Soskice, Janet, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Clarendon Press

- Oxford, 1985).
- Michael, Emily and Fred S., *Corporeal ideas in Seventeenth Century Psychology*, JOHI, 50, No. 1 (1989), pp. 31-48.
- Miller, Sarah E., 'Bringing up Demons', *Diacritics*, 18 (Spring 1988), pp. 2-17.
- Moi, Toril, *Sexual/Textual Politics* (Methuen, 1985).
- *Feminist Theory and Simone de Beauvoir* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990).
- Moltmann, Jurgen, 'Theology of mystical experience', SJT, 32, No 6 (1979), pp. 501-520.
- Moore, Henrietta, L., *Feminism and Anthropology* (Polity, 1988).
- Morgan, John, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning and Education 1560-1640* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986).
- Morton, A. L., *Freedom In Arms: A Selection of Ranter Writings* (Lawrence and Wishart 1975).
- Newman, Karen, 'Renaissance Family Politics and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*', ELR, 16, No. 1 (1986), pp. 86-100.
- 'Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice*', SQ, 38 (1987), pp. 19-33.
- Newton Brooks, Peter, *Cranmer in Context* (Lutterworth Press, 1989).
- Niccoli, Ottavia, 'The End of Prophecy', JMH, 61 (1989), pp. 667-682.
- Nuttall, Geoffrey, *Visible Saints: The congregational Way 1640-1660* (Basil Blackwell Oxford, 1957).
- Olofson, Margaret Thickstun, 'Mothers in Israel: The Puritan Rhetoric of Childbearing', in *Praise Disjoined: Changing patterns of salvation in seventeenth century English Literature*, ed. William P. Shaw (Peter Lang, 1991), pp. 73-87.
- Pagden, Anthony, ed., *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987).
- Pagels, Elaine, *The Gnostic Gospels* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1982).
- Petroff, Elizabeth Avilda, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1986).
- Pocock, J. G. A., *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: a Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, a reissue with a retrospect (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987).
- Porterfield, Amanda, 'Women's attraction to Puritanism', CH, 60, No. 2 (1991), pp. 196-209.
- Preuss, J. Samuel, 'Spinoza, Vico and the imagination of Religion', JOHI, 50, No. 1 (1989), pp. 71-93.
- Prior, Mary, ed., *Women in English Society 1500-1800* (Methuen, 1985).
- Purkiss, Diane, 'Producing the voice, consuming the body: Women prophets of the seventeenth century', in *Women, Writing, History, 1640-1740*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (Batsford, 1992), pp. 139-159.
- Reardon, Bernard M. G., *Religious Thought in the Reformation* (Longman, 1981).
- Reay, Barry, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (Temple Smith, 1985).
- and John Macgregor, *Radical Religion in the English Civil War* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984).
- Richardson, R. M., and Ridden G. M., *Freedom and the English Revolution* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1986).
- Ritter Dailey, Barbara, 'The husbands of Margaret Fell: An essay on religious metaphor



- and social change', TSC, 2, No. 1 (1987), pp. 55-71.
- Roodenburg, Herman W., 'The Maternal Imagination. The fears of pregnant women in seventeenth-century Holland', JSH, 21 (1987-88), pp. 701-715.
- Roper, Lyndal, 'Stealing Manhood: Capitalism and Magic in Early Modern Germany', GAH, 3, No. 1 (1991), pp. 4-22.
- *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
- '"The common man", "the common good", "common women": gender and meaning in the German Reformation commune', SH, 12 (1987), pp. 1-21.
- Rose, Jacqueline, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (Verso, 1986).
- Rubin, Gayle, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex', in *Toward an Anthropology of Women* ed. Rayna R. Reiter (Monthly Review Press, 1975).
- Rudrum, Alan, 'Henry Vaughan, The liberation of the creatures, and seventeenth-century English Calvinism', TSC, 4, No 1 (spring 1989), pp. 33-54.
- Sawyer, Ronald C., '"Strangely handled in all her lyms": Witchcraft and healing in Jacobean England', JSH, 22 (1988-89), pp. 461-485.
- Schenk, W., *The Concern for Social Justice in the Puritan Revolution* (Longman, Harlow, 1948).
- Schochet, Gordon, 'Patriarchalism, Politics and Mass attitudes in Stuart England', *The Historical Journal*, 12, No. 3 (1969), pp. 413-441.
- *The Authoritarian Family and Political Attitudes in Seventeenth-Century England: Patriarchalism in Political Thought* (Transaction Books, 1988).
- Schofield, Mary Anne, '"Women's Speaking Justified": The Feminine Quaker Voice, 1662-1797', TSWL, 6, (1987), pp. 61-77.
- Schor, Naomi, 'Essentialism which is not one: Coming to grips with Irigaray', *Differences* 1, No. 2, (1989), pp. 38-57.
- Schwartz, Regina, *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary theory* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990).
- Sharp, Andrew, ed., *Political ideas of the English civil wars 1641-1649* (Longman, Harlow, 1983).
- Sellers, Susan, ed., *Writing Differences: Readings from the seminar of Helene Cixous* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1988).
- Sharpe, Kevin, *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England* (Pinter, 1989).
- ed., *Feminist Criticism: Theory and Practice* (Harvester, Sussex, 1991).
- Sheils, W. J., *The English Reformation 1530-1570* (Longman, Harlow, 1989).
- Shiach, Morag, *Helene Cixous: A Politics of Writing* (Routledge, 1991).
- Showalter, Elaine, ed., *Speaking of Gender* (Routledge, 1989).
- ed., *New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory* (Virago, 1986).
- Skinner, Quentin, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, vol 2: The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978).
- Smith, Nigel, *Perfection Proclaimed: language and Literature in English Radical Religion 1640-1660* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989).
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (Routledge, 1988).
- Spufford, Margaret, 'First steps in literacy: the reading and writing experiences of the

- humblest seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographers', SH, 4 (1979), pp. 407-435.
- Spurr, John, 'Rational Religion in Restoration England', JOHI, 49, No 4 (1988), pp. 563-584.
- Stallybrass, Peter, 'Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed', in *Rewriting the Renaissance*, ed. M. W. Ferguson, M. Quilligan and N. J. Vickers (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1986).
- Still, Judith, ed., *The Body and the Text: Helene Cixous, Reading and Teaching* (Harvester, Sussex, 1990).
- Stone, Lawrence, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, abridged edition (Peregrine, 1979).
- *The Causes of the English Revolution 1529-1642*, revised edition (Ark, 1986).
- Sommerville, J. P., *Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640* (Longman, Harlow, 1986).
- ed., *Patriarcha and other writings* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991).
- Thomas, Keith, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Peregrine, 1978, first published 1971).
- *Man and the Natural World: Changing attitudes in England 1500-1800* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1983).
- Thomas Neely, Carol, 'Constructing the subject: Feminist Practice and the New Renaissance Discourses', ELR, 18 (1988), pp. 5-18.
- Todd, Janet, *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers 1660-1800* (Methuen, 1987).
- *Feminist Literary History* (Polity, 1988).
- Todd, Margo, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987).
- Tolmie, Murray, *The Triumph of the Saints* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977).
- Travitsky, Betty, 'The Lady Doth Protest: Protest in the Popular Writings of Renaissance Englishwomen', ELR, 14, No. 3 (1984), pp. 255-283.
- and Haselkorn, Anne, eds., *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon* (University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1990).
- Trevor-Roper, Hugh, *Catholics, Anglicans, and Puritans* (Fontana, 1987).
- Tuck, Richard, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993).
- Tyacke, Nicholas, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590- 1640* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987).
- Underdown, David, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1985).
- Veeser, Harold, ed., *The New Historicism* (Routledge, 1989).
- Waddington, Raymond B., '"All in All": Shakespeare, Milton, Donne and the soul-in-body topos', ELR, 20, No. 1 (1990), pp. 40-68.
- Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (Zone Books, New York, 1991).
- *Holy Feast Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1987).
- Wallach Scott, Joan, *Gender and the Politics of History* (Columbia University Press,

- New York, 1988).
- Whitford, Margaret, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (Routledge, 1991).
- ed., *The Irigaray Reader* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1991).
- and Morwenna Griffiths eds., *Feminist Perspectives in Philosophy* (Macmillan, 1988).
- White, Graham, 'Luther's views on Language', *JLT*, 3, No. 2 (July, 1989), pp. 188-207.
- Wiesner, Merry E., 'Beyond Women and the Family: Towards a Gender Analysis of the Reformation', *SCJ*, 18, No. 3 (1987), pp. 311-321.
- Willen, Diane, 'Women in the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: The Case of the Urban Working Poor', *SCJ*, 19, No. 4 (1988), pp. 559-575.
- Wilson, Katherina M., ed., *Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation* (University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1987).
- Wiseman, Sue, 'Unsilent instruments and the devil's cushions: authority in seventeenth-century women's prophetic discourse', in *New Feminist Discourses*, ed. Isobel Armstrong (Routledge, 1992), pp. 176-197.
- Woodbridge, Linda, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind 1540-1620* (Harvester, Sussex, 1984).
- Woodhouse, A. S. P., *Puritanism and Liberty*, third edition (Everyman, 1986).
- Wootton, David, *Divine Right and Democracy: an Anthology of Political Writing in Stuart England* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1986).
- Wrightson, Keith, *English Society 1580-1680* (Hutchinson, 1982).
- Yates, Frances, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (Ark 1983, first published 1979).
- Zaret, David, *The Heavenly Contract: Ideology and Organisation in Pre-revolutionary Puritanism* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1985).
- Zemon Davis, Natalie, 'Women in the crafts in Sixteenth-Century Lyon', in *Women and Work in Preindustrial Europe*, ed., Barbara A. Hanawalt (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1986), pp. 167-189
- *Culture and Society in Early Modern France* (Duckworth, 1975).