But Christian and Jewish feminist theologians, Western feminist converts to Buddhism, and many others make a different judgment—that their critical loyalty to their tradition is not a waste of time but will bear fruit in the long run, proving to be worth the pain.

A second major difference, perhaps related to the first one, separates the reformists and the revolutionaries. Some revolutionaries eagerly mine nonbiblical traditions for useful myths and symbols. Though there are exceptions, Christian and Jewish reformers generally do not, remaining much more narrowly within the orbit of biblical symbolism and the Western theological tradition. Rarely do they study deeply and let themselves be inspired by ancient goddess mythology or by non-Western religions.[85] This aspect of their loyalty to their faith is, in my view, the greatest weakness of much Jewish and Christian feminist theology, for the language and the symbolism of "God-she" is more easily inspired through wide acquaintance with the myriad goddesses of world religions. But I also fault the revolutionaries on this score, for though they love goddesses, they rarely know much about goddesses other than those of Western prebiblical antiquity.

Despite these differences between the major schools of feminist theology, we should recall what they have in common, for these will become the watchwords for the postpatriarchal future of religion. First, feminist theologies agree that human experience is the source of and authority for authentic religious expression. And second, adequate religious expressions, expressions worthy of surviving for centuries and millennia, must promote the full humanity of women, as they have always promoted the full humanity of men.

Has It Always Been That Way? Rereading the Past

OUR SURVEY thus far has focused on feminist analysis of the *present* forms of religion and the status of *current* religious studies scholarship. These concerns lead inevitably to questions of origins and history, to questions about the *past*. Has it always been that way? Have men always dominated women? Was there a time when things were different, and women and men were more equal? How did male dominance come to be so common? Is the historical record on these issues accurate? And can history be a useful resource for feminist reconstructions of our own tradition? To return to the questions and categories suggested in chapter three, can we find a past that is both *accurate* and *useful*? What would such a past look like?

In recent years, both scholarly and popular feminist histories have raised the radical possibility that patriarchy is a recent invention and that even the familiar religions that now seem so patriarchal did not begin that way. Feminist investigations have completely challenged the notions of religious history that were commonplace a generation ago. In the 1950s, scholars were certain that history began in the urban cultures of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, in societies that were already male dominated. Religious histories were primarily concerned with the development of monotheism, but not monotheism's fostering of patriarchal attitudes and social structures. A second major area of study was the

development of the early church, but women's prominent role in the earliest church was ignored. This was certainly the religious history that I was taught as a graduate student in the history of religions at the University of Chicago.

Today feminist historical scholarship has changed this story significantly. We must now consider the possibility that "it has *not* always been that way," that men have not always dominated women or taken sole leadership in crucial and formative moments in history. Feminist scholars also propose that history began well before Sumer, with women in much more dignified and positive positions in society than they subsequently occupied; that monotheism affected women's social and religious lives profoundly, though the nature of that effect is intensely debated; and that the growing patriarchalization of the early Christian church, beginning late in its first century, was the most significant development in the early church.

Feminist scholarship has had a particularly dramatic effect on *Western* culture's understanding of its historical development. Because of the unique *religious* significance of history in the theology of Western religions, claims that "it hasn't always been that way" are powerful and must be discussed at some length. In this chapter, I will survey some of the more important questions that feminist history raises, taking us from human religious beginnings to the patriarchalization of Christianity. I focus on these stories, despite their Eurocentric bias, because they have such religious significance for most people in Western societies. Many people are not aware of the profound effect these stories, in their androcentric tellings, have had on our consciousness, or how much changes when they are told differently. This focus will, however, prevent me from discussing feminist contributions to postbiblical Christian history, including the discovery of the church's large-scale persecution of women as witches[1] and from surveying historical issues in other traditions.

Although the work of feminist historians may make the historical record more accurate and may empower women who want to claim their place in history, it can also be quite threatening, having a revolutionary effect on how one understands the world and one's place in it. This is another way in which descriptive and constructive issues intertwine in religious studies.

The Prepatriarchal Hypothesis: An Introduction and Assessment

The prepatriarchal hypothesis is both a sacred history for many women—the sacred history of the feminist spirituality movement[2]—and a scholarly hypothesis, which argues that "the creation of patriarchy"[3] occurred in the relatively recent past because of certain causes and conditions. The hypothesis is often accompanied by speculation about religion and society in the prepatriarchal world, with many portraying it as a "feminist utopia."

Drawn from work in several disciplines, including prehistory, archeology, anthropology, mythology, history, and the comparative study of religions, the prepatriarchal hypothesis has generated a great deal of controversy both inside and outside the feminist community. Because the scholarship on which this hypothesis is based is quite technical and difficult, and because of the passion with which feminists argue for and against this hypothesis, critically examining this issue can feel like walking through a minefield.

What is at stake in the validity of this hypothesis? Why does it raise so much passion and controversy? Insofar as communities constitute themselves on the basis of their remembered past, contemporary social change is more likely if memories are extended further into the past. Determining that patriarchy is a relatively recent historical development means that patriarchy is not inevitable and that male dominance is not somehow written into our genes. It is no accident that new forms of biological determinism, such as sociobiology, became popular soon after the current wave of feminist thinking became established. Nor is it accidental that extreme

claims for an evolutionary and genetic basis for male dominance, such as Lionel Tiger's *Men in Groups*,[4] as well as diatribes about the biological dangers of egalitarian social arrangements, such as George Gilder's *Sexual Suicide*,[5] became popular at the same time. Arguments based on biology or nature often seem stronger than claims based on history and culture. Therefore, both feminists and antifeminists have a great deal at stake in arguments about the nature of the first human societies.

Sorting through the polemics of advocates and critics of the prepatriarchal hypothesis is not simple, but I will use the following guidelines. First, I will emphasize the conclusions of prehistorians, archeologists, anthropologists, and historians who are both informed by feminist values and conversant with relevant scholarly literature. The most vehement advocates and attackers of the prepatriarchal hypothesis often treat this material lightly in their writings. Second, I will base my critique on scholarly, rather than popular, versions of the prepatriarchal hypothesis. Obviously the cogency of the prepatriarchal hypothesis should not be tested on the basis of literature produced by those who lack expertise in the relevant subjects. Finally, and most important, I will assume that casting doubt on a single aspect of the hypothesis does not invalidate the entire hypothesis. Therefore, I will evaluate the various components of the prepatriarchal hypothesis separately, rather than try to reject or justify the whole complex. The three parts I will analyze are as follows. First, is it reasonable to conclude that patriarchy arose relatively recently in human history? Second, does the thesis of a prepatriarchal "golden age" for women hold up? Third, what are the best explanations for the emergence of patriarchy in human history?

Good ?s

Is Patriarchy the Original Form of Society?

To best understand the prepatriarchal hypothesis, one should place equal emphasis on both words in the term. The word *hypothesis* in-

dicates that this account of early society is a probable reconstruction from limited information, rather than an incontrovertible fact. Like all hypotheses, it is subject to continual revision and possible replacement if a better explanation is developed. The modest term *prepatriarchal* simply indicates that it is extremely unlikely that patriarchy prevailed in the earliest human societies. Patriarchy requires the kind of social stratification and social complexity that develop with high population density and urbanization—not the conditions of early human societies. What the term *prepatriarchy* does *not* attempt to describe is what the earliest forms of human society were like. Specifically, the prepatriarchal hypothesis, at least in its scholarly form, does not assert or assume a prior *matriarchy*. As futurist Riane Eisler notes, people stuck in dualistic, either-or thinking often assume that "if it isn't patriarchy, it must be matriarchy,"[6] an assumption made by Bachofen as well as by many recent popular writers.

By far the most skeptical critics of any version of the prepatriarchal hypothesis are those trained in the history of religions and the study of classical civilizations. Because the societies studied by these scholars have been patriarchal for so long and because these societies have become so dominant over so much of the globe, classicists and historians of religion often find the hypothesis of nonpatriarchal social organization unbelievable. For example, the historian of religions David Kinsley rejects the prepatriarchal hypothesis because of "the few examples we have of cultures in which men do not dominate women. The tendency toward male dominance is strong in both historical cultures and in nonliterate cultures."[7]

By contrast, anthropologists and archeologists trying to reconstruct the earliest foraging and horticultural societies simply do not agree with the conclusion of universal male dominance any longer. As anthropologist Peggy Reeves Sanday says in her major study of the origins of male dominance, "Male dominance is not

an inherent quality of human sex-role plans. In fact, the argument suggests that male dominance is a response to pressures that are most likely to have been present relatively late in human history."[8]

In my view, if one thinks about the requirements for human survival from an androgynous, rather than an androcentric, point of view, it is difficult to imagine that humanity could have survived if early humans had insisted on wasting female productivity and intelligence in the way that patriarchal societies have always done. Anthropologists no longer believe that the earliest human societies could have depended solely on men for their food supply, or that men alone were responsible for the refinement of tools, the development of language, or other crucial advances made by early humans.[9] All convincing reconstructions of early foraging life posit an interdependence and complementarity between women and men, rather than male dominance and patriarchy. Nothing in the material conditions of early human life would suggest that male dominance would have been adaptive or likely. Furthermore, even though sex roles are often relatively well-defined in contemporary foraging societies, male dominance is rare. The sexes are seen as complementary and of equal importance.[10] Although everyone recognizes that the ethnographic present cannot establish an archeological past, and that reconstructions of prehistory will probably always remain hypothetical, the notion of a strongly male-dominant, patriarchal foraging past seems to be an especially unlikely hypothesis.

Regarding early Neolithic horticultural (hoe-using) societies, a similar moderate reconstruction is sensible. Because women usually specialize in gathering plant foods in a foraging economy, most anthropologists and archeologists think that women probably discovered how to cultivate seeds. Therefore, their contributions to the survival of a community that depended on horticulture were immense. In fact, the period of Neolithic horticulture is probably the time least likely to have been male dominated. Even many non-

feminist scholars have suggested that during Neolithic times women enjoyed higher status and more autonomy than they typically did later. Even nonfeminist scholars also recognize that goddesses were central to Neolithic religion. As with earlier foraging Paleolithic societies, there is nothing to suggest that male dominance would have been practical or adaptive for Neolithic horticulturalists. And, as with contemporary foraging societies, contemporary or recent horticultural societies do not usually exhibit strong male dominance and patriarchy, though some do. But some of the more recent societies that have been deemed noteworthy or curious because in them women have considerable autonomy and power, such as the Iroquois and the West African kingdoms,[11] are horticultural.

Therefore, without making any claims about the nature of prepatriarchal society, it is reasonable to conclude that an accurately reconstructed early history of humanity is empowering and useful for women, simply because claims for eternal male dominance make no sense and are not supported by contemporary anthropology and archeology. "It hasn't always been that way." Foraging and early horticultural societies were probably not patriarchal. As we shall see, we may not be able to establish any adequate models for the postpatriarchal future in the prepatriarchal past. Nevertheless, it alters our perceptions and assumptions greatly to realize that it makes no sense to claim that male dominance stretches as far back into the past as we can see. At the conclusion of her book *Women in Prehistory*, which no one could fault for lack of caution in its interpretations, Margaret Ehrenberg states the case well:

> *Although the social status of women has long been inferior to that of men, it must also be remembered that the foraging societies of the Paleolithic and Mesolithic spanned an immense period, many hundred times longer than the mere 12,000 years or so from the Neolithic to the present, and that many of the world's people continued to be foragers long after farming had been discovered in the Near East. So, through-*

out human history, the great majority of women who have ever lived had far more status than recently, and probably had equality with men.[12]

Interpreting Prepatriarchal Evidence

That patriarchy arose in history because of certain causes and conditions seems to me to be as certain as any historical hypothesis ever can be. Nevertheless, there is no easy passage, and probably no passage at all, between establishing that patriarchy is a late development to establishing the kind of prepatriarchal feminist utopia claimed by the most ardent advocates of the prepatriarchal hypothesis. Their attempted reconstruction of prepatriarchal religion and society is, in my view, the weak link in many versions of the prepatriarchal hypothesis.

As I have previously stated, many advocates of the prepatriarchal hypothesis believe that the prepatriarchal period was a "golden age" for women. Paleolithic foraging societies, Chatal Huyuk (a town in Anatolia), Old Europe, ancient megalithic cultures, and especially Crete are the cultures most commonly discussed by advocates of this position, particularly because they worshipped numerous and powerful goddesses. Advocates of this golden age posit an era of peace, prosperity, stability, and egalitarian social arrangements that prevailed far and wide for a long period of time before being destroyed violently and relatively quickly by patriarchal and pastoral nomads, including the precursors of both the Indo-Aryans and the Semites. In this prepatriarchal world, women enjoyed autonomy, power, and respect under the aegis of the goddess, who was universally revered by all members of society and was the embodiment and source of life, death, and renewal. Gradually, as societies became more male dominant, both women and the goddess lost their power, autonomy, and dignity; this process culminated in the eclipse of the goddess by the Hebrew Bible and the thinking of classical Greece.

Such a hypothesis has always enjoyed some currency, going back at least to the nineteenth-century theories of J. J. Bachofen, discussed in chapter two. Early in the twentieth-century women's movement, the thesis was again popularized by feminist writers such as Elizabeth Gould Davis and Merlin Stone.[13] Since then, scholarship on the topic has flourished. Historian Anne Barstow examined Chatal Huyuk, one of the most famous Neolithic sites cited in contemporary discussions, in an influential and extremely balanced article.[14] The well-established archeologist Marija Gimbutas, whose interpretations of the culture of Old Europe pioneered a new chapter in prehistory, took up this reconstruction with passion and conviction.[15] Students of mythology, such as Elinor Gadon[16] and the team of Anne Baring and Jules Cashford,[17] have written engaging and complete histories of the various ancient goddesses, from Paleolithic examples to medieval veneration of the Virgin Mary. Relying on the archeological work done by Gimbutas and others, Carol P. Christ has made the prepatriarchal hypothesis central to her goddess thea-logy.[18]

The most visionary and poetic reconstruction, which sees the prepatriarchal past as part of an unfinished, but absolutely essential evolutionary transformation still awaiting completion, is Riane Eisler's *The Chalice and the Blade.*[19] Pulling together a great deal of information from prehistory, classical biblical and Greek materials, and contemporary ecological issues, Eisler contrasts the values of the chalice with those of the blade. The chalice represents a "gylanic" (that is, peaceful and egalitarian value) system prevalent in the prepatriarchal world, whereas the blade represents the androcratic values of the "dominator" societies that overthrew and partially, but never completely, destroyed the gylanic values held by prepatriarchal societies of empowered women, peaceful men, and strong goddesses. Clearly, "remembering" such a past could be empowering and useful in today's world.

Why then am I, like other *feminists,* as well as antifeminists,

skeptical of this component of the prepatriarchal hypothesis? The answer is twofold. Some feminists object that such "spiritual" issues are largely irrelevant to contemporary women. They note that goddesses frequently coexist with male dominance and that the presence of goddesses does not ensure high status or autonomy for women. Many such feminists feel that economic, political, and social issues are of far higher priority and that antiquity holds few models in this regard. They may also believe that goddess worship in the *present* does little to alleviate women's real problems.

Other feminists are not especially opposed to goddess worship for contemporary women and agree that the ancient world included many powerful and impressive goddesses. But these feminists are skeptical of the scholarship that has reconstructed a *utopian* or a *female-dominated past*, based on the existence of these goddesses. Many argue that extreme caution is required when interpreting material artifacts and that one cannot easily deduce ideology or social structure from them. The ease with which Gimbutas, Gadon, or Baring and Cashford, for example, infer extremely detailed myths and rituals from limited and opaque material artifacts is a major defect, in my view, because such reconstructions are easily subject to projection and wishful thinking.

Such disclaimers about the prepatriarchal hypothesis are especially numerous among academically trained scholars of religion who are otherwise interested in or sympathetic to feminism, such as David Kinsley,[20] Katherine K. Young,[21] and Joan Townsend.[22] All three of them have published sharply worded critiques of these reconstructions of the prepatriarchal period. Young and Townsend both express the opinion that the feminist reconstruction of the prepatriarchal past, in Townsend's words, "puts forth as *historical fact* the myth of a golden age of the past to give ego reinforcement, to weld a bond among women in order to create a unified force, and to provide women with historical precedent for their aspirations."[23] In other words, this particular remembered past, however *useful* it might be, is not *accurate* and is therefore unacceptable.

Rosemary Ruether has also been a longtime critic of the vision of a feminist utopian past. As she states in her 1992 book *Gaia and God*, she finds the claims for the innocence or goodness of prepatriarchal societies untenable because such claims link failure and greed with patriarchy and men, instead of with human beings, both female and male.[24]

Why do some scholars embrace a feminist utopian past, whereas others do not find it credible? What is the evidence supporting this view of the past? That many depictions of the female body have been found by archeologists is uncontested. It is equally certain that early mythological literature tells of many important and powerful goddesses. However, these facts do not prove that men and women were equal in the modern sense of the term, or that women lived lives with which modern women could be satisfied, or that the numerous female figures that have been discovered can easily be interpreted as mother goddesses. When interpreting these numerous female figures, it is much safer to note their presence and to hypothesize that they may well indicate appreciation of female sacredness (though even that is not certain), rather than to speculate in great detail about their theology or to try to determine if they are goddesses or priestesses. The certainty with which Eisler and Gimbutas sometimes retell the myths and restage the rituals of prepatriarchal societies does not seem justified.

Though it may never be possible to demonstrate what prepatriarchal societies were like in detail, or to interpret their symbol and myth systems with certainty, it does seem reasonable to me to conclude both that women were less dominated than in latter societies and that female sacredness was more commonly venerated. Because patriarchy had not yet evolved, it seems quite likely that women's relationships with men were more satisfactory, by femi-

nist standards of assessment, than they later became. And it seems even more likely that female sacredness, whether human or divine, was a commonplace of religious ideology for both women and men, simply because portrayals of women engaged in religious rituals are so common and female figures are so abundantly found in settings that seem to be sacred places. These modest and, to my mind, relatively certain conclusions are both accurate and useful, while avoiding the extremes of both those who reconstruct details of a prepatriarchal feminist utopia without sufficient information and those who reject the prepatriarchal hypothesis entirely.

Three other theses central to many standard feminist reconstructions of prepatriarchal societies and religions deserve comment. Feminists often claim that these prepatriarchal societies were both egalitarian and peaceful. They also postulate that the respect accorded to women and the perception that females, whether divine or human, are sacred, both contributed to this desirable state of affairs.

Critics have questioned these conclusions about the nature of prepatriarchal societies. Joan Townsend argues that many bodies buried in supposedly peaceful Chatal Huyuk showed evidence of severe blows to the head,[25] and Katherine K. Young argues that private property, which undercuts egalitarianism, could have begun in the Neolithic age.[26] But the descriptions of the town plans, the houses themselves, and the art of Neolithic Europe, which occur in source after source, support the conclusion that Neolithic European societies were relatively peaceful and egalitarian, *especially when compared with later societies.* To say that these societies were peaceful is to say that they did not expend major resources, human or material, on organized, large-scale warfare—not that individual conflicts, resulting in severe head wounds, never occurred. It is important to recognize that feuding and private fights, which seem impossible to avoid in human society, are completely different

militarism unnecessary

from diverting major resources and human energy into defensive or offensive warfare. This is a critical distinction, since it is naive to attribute the human tendency to aggressive behavior to patriarchal social arrangements. Patriarchy may encourage such tendencies, but it does not create them.

On the other hand, the nonmilitary prepatriarchal societies give evidence to a critically important conclusion. *Human beings can live together and deal with their aggressions without resorting to large-scale, organized warfare as a major preoccupation and use of resources.* Even a nonfeminist historian, Thorkild Jacobsen, locates the beginning of warfare as a major threat to human life in the third millennium B.C.E.,[27] but not earlier, when, in his view, famine was a much more severe threat. And early private property was not sufficient to result in the great inequities of wealth or poverty characteristic of later societies, as is clear from descriptions of town plans and houses.

However, it may not be possible to establish that this peaceful, egalitarian lifestyle was *caused* by the relatively high status of women and the veneration of female sacredness, as is so often claimed. On the one hand, the archeological evidence supports the likelihood of relative peace and egalitarianism and argues against large-scale warfare and significant hierarchy in early foraging and horticultural societies. It also supports the view that women had relatively higher status in these societies than in later patriarchal societies.

But, on the other hand, *once large-scale warfare and significant social hierarchies became part of human society, both women and goddesses readily supported both.* This embarrassing fact argues against the conclusion that earlier societies were relatively peaceful *because* women insisted upon peace. Women's preferences for or against hierarchy or warfare do not seem to be the driving causal link in human development. It seems to me, rather, that certain

technological capabilities, once unleashed, are hard to restrain from bringing hierarchy and violence in their wake. It is to this topic that we now turn our attention.

The Creation of Patriarchy

With the transition from horticulture to intensive agriculture, which began somewhere in the fertile crescent of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia after 5000 B.C.E., male dominance first becomes clear-cut and obvious. Again this conclusion of archeologists is supported by anthropological evidence; contemporary agricultural societies are almost always male dominated, whereas foraging and horticultural societies are not.

How did this transition come about? Advocates of the most extreme forms of the prepatriarchal hypothesis claim that men from groups that were already patriarchal and violent invaded and conquered the peaceful Neolithic societies, using their superior physical strength and weapons to initiate a reign of terror and dominance.[28] Although the invasions of Indo-European and Semitic nomadic warriors are one factor in the decline of some prepatriarchal societies, this broad explanation raises obvious questions. *Where did these men come from? And why did they turn to warfare, violence, and domination when more peaceful ways of living were available?*

These questions are difficult to answer if one explains the creation of patriarchy as being due to invasions by already patriarchal outsiders. Lurking in the background of this explanation as an unstated assumption is an essentialist understanding of male and female natures. Women prefer peace; men are more prone to violence. Therefore, matrifocal societies are peaceful and egalitarian because, in them, women have more power; patriarchal societies are violent and authoritarian because men are dominant. Biological determinism is as central to this feminist hypothesis as it is to

many androcentric justifications of patriarchy. And as already argued, biological explanations for male dominance, if accurate, would suggest that efforts to eradicate patriarchy are futile.

If, on the other hand, patriarchy is the result of specific conditions that came into being at some point in cultural evolution, then, when those conditions change, patriarchy can die a natural death. An explanation for the creation of patriarchy that looks into changing technologies rather than moral differences, rooted in biology, between men and women, is certainly more useful for feminists; in my view, it is also more accurate because varying cultural and historical circumstances account for so much in human life, and so few universals can be found. Therefore, I suggest looking beyond the immediate cause of the decline of many prepatriarchal societies—conquest by patriarchal outsiders—to the more basic causes that led to the development of warrior, male-dominated societies in the first place.

Patriarchy emerged because the *material conditions* of life promoted male dominance for the first time. Newer technologies—the plow, use of draft animals, complex irrigation systems—and a new emphasis on labor-intensive grain crops favored men as the primary producers, and women were reduced to the role of processing agricultural products. Labor-intensive agriculture increased the demand on women to bear children at the same time that an increased food supply permitted higher rates of fertility. Women began to have more babies, and populations increased greatly. Specialization and social stratification became possible. As the population grew, resources became scarcer, and competition for them increased, making organized, communal violence (warfare) attractive and seemingly advantageous. Specialization also made possible an increase in private property, which heightened competition for now-scarcer resources, and made warfare more attractive. All of these factors were essential in the transition from a kin-

based society to the process of early state formation. And, to some extent at least, these processes seem to have occurred in many societies throughout the world.

Thus a complex web of technological, social, and material changes, rather than moral changes (such as women's decreasing public power) or religious changes (such as the decline of goddess worship), made dominance and hierarchy, including male dominance over women, possible for the first time relatively late in human history. Contrary to some feminist claims, the decline of women's public power and of goddess worship are undoubtedly *effects* rather than *causes* of patriarchy. Historian Gerda Lerner arrives at this conclusion, as do many anthropologists and archeologists.[29] Thus, we have established the first claim about patriarchy again, but on different grounds. The part of the prepatriarchal hypothesis claiming that patriarchy, as we have experienced patriarchy in most or all societies since the Bronze Age, is the product of changing cultural and historical circumstances, rather than a timeless human condition or the result of male moral depravity, seems as certain as any historical hypothesis can be.

When discussing the creation of patriarchy, it is also important to explore the role of warfare and invasion in the demise of prepatriarchal societies. Although evidence seems quite clear that Old Europe and the Mediterranean regions were, in fact, overrun by patriarchal outsiders who violently and quickly destroyed peaceful, matrifocal Neolithic villages,[30] it seems equally clear that in the ancient Near East, in Mesopotamia, among other places, *internal* developments leading toward social hierarchy, including male dominance, preceded large-scale warfare as a major threat and preoccupation.[31] Thus, ultimately, even warfare may be an *effect* of changing technologies, rather than the *cause* of the end of prepatriarchal societies. Increased population pressures and competition for scarce resources were more likely the *causes* that made warfare

an attractive option in the first place—a lesson that is certainly important in contemporary times as well.

Finally, we can return to the link between symbols of sacred females and the emerging patriarchal order. It seems quite unlikely that the new emphases on warfare and male dominance occurred because patriarchal symbols and beliefs replaced woman-honoring ones. If anything, the reverse occurred. When technological changes increased male domination, religion changed to accommodate it. As we know from the cross-cultural and historical studies of religion, material or technological changes and changes in symbolism or religious and social ideology are always closely bound together. But in this particular case, it does not seem cogent to give religious symbols the role of causal agent because male dominance more likely resulted from changing technology than from new beliefs.

However, given that religious symbols and social norms always reflect and reinforce each other, advocates of the prepatriarchal hypothesis are also right when they claim that the patriarchal ideologies, symbol systems, and social systems that now predominate on this planet could never produce a return to peace and egalitarianism. Peace and egalitarianism will require postpatriarchal symbols and ideologies as well as postpatriarchal technologies. And, in my view, postpatriarchal symbols and ideologies will resemble prepatriarchal symbols of female sacredness and egalitarian gender relationships more than they will resemble patriarchal symbols and gender relationships.

Some Concluding Comments on the Prepatriarchal Hypothesis

I have not yet discussed two weaknesses endemic to the prepatriarchal hypothesis as usually presented in feminist literature. One is its obvious Eurocentric bias, and the other is its unilinear model of

cultural evolution. The prepatriarchal hypothesis explains *Western* patriarchy, not other forms of male dominance. And it seems to assume that patriarchy emerged *once*, in Western antiquity. Both of these omissions need to be addressed.

Very little research has been done concerning the cultural and religious development from prepatriarchy into patriarchy in other parts of the world. Though the case has not been made very thoroughly, existing archeological and historical data could warrant extending the hypothesis to include India, because India also was invaded by Indo-Aryans. However, even though the waves of cultural contact that explain Western patriarchy could serve for India as well, they could not do so for East Asia, which has a different history. East Asian patriarchy has not been explained to any great extent. In a noteworthy exception, Robert Ellwood has argued that the mythological narratives of early Japan (late third to early fourth centuries C.E.) seem to indicate that Japan was then experiencing a change from matrifocal to patriarchal societies.[32]

Nevertheless, though the Eurocentric bias is regrettable, its consequences are not as serious as one might at first suspect. It is difficult to imagine that foraging and horticultural societies were vastly different in other parts of the world than they were in Europe and the Middle East. Therefore, bias does not necessarily invalidate the hypothesis.

The unilinear model of evolution into patriarchy is a more serious problem, for it assumes that all societies proceed, lockstep, through the same historical processes. As discussed in chapter two, this hypothesis was popular in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century anthropology, but it has not been taken seriously for many years. The work of Peggy Reeves Sanday in *Female Power and Male Dominance*, introduced in chapter three, offers an important corrective concerning theories of the origins of male dominance. Rather than isolating single, or even multiple, chains of cause and effect leading to male dominance, she locates cultural patterns that

tend to be associated with male dominance and, alternatively, with female power. Chief among her findings is that it is possible to talk of female power and male-female equality when women have economic and political decision-making powers, which they do in about 32 percent of past and contemporary societies she studied. Only 28 percent of the societies in her large sample are clearly male dominated. The remaining 40 percent are neither clearly egalitarian nor male dominated, but fall between those poles.[33]

Sanday studies many factors that affect the level of male dominance in a society. If the physical environment and climate are beneficent, then women and men tend to work together, men spend time with young children, and individuals develop what Sanday calls an "inner orientation," including a symbol system that features female creative beings. Such societies are not usually male dominant. By contrast, if the physical environment is harsher, so that providing basic necessities produces stress, or if people's livelihood centers around husbandry of large animals or migration, individuals develop an "outer orientation," in which the creative powers are viewed as male. Male dominance is likely in these societies, in part because men and women do not work together and men spend little time with children.

But these lines of explanation are not neat and unilinear. Though, in some cases, one can "establish a causal relationship between depleting resources, cultural disruption, migration, and the oppression of women," male domination of women, when it occurs, "is a complex question, for which no one answer suffices."[34] In the long run, Sanday's less than neat, nonlinear discussion of female power and male dominance is more satisfying than even the refinements of the prepatriarchal hypothesis that do no more than explain the emergence of patriarchy in Western antiquity. Her findings are useful not only to historians who want to explain the rise of patriarchy, but also to ethicists and theologians seeking to envision the postpatriarchal future of religion.

Finally, we must return to the question of whether prepatriarchal religion and society could form an accurate and usable past. As we have established, it is accurate to speak of prepatriarchal pasts. But can they be useful to contemporary people? I suggest that prepatriarchal pasts provide proof of the possibility of a postpatriarchal future, but are not a model for it. We need to recognize, with Barstow,[35] that modern women should find the forms and symbols of ancient religion only of limited utility in constructing postpatriarchal religion. Why is that? Most interpreters of ancient female forms and symbols see them as representations of fertility and maternity. But, although motherhood is an important part of many women's religious experience, it is by no means sufficient in scope to provide complete meaning for female sacredness in today's religious universe. Considering that increasing reproductive demands on women, which resulted in increased population density and competition for scarce resources, is probably one of the causes of patriarchy, feminists should be loath to enshrine physical reproduction as the primary symbol of female sacredness. Furthermore, human population growth is a grave threat to the environment, and since environmental stress is one of the root causes of male domination, feminism needs to sanctify alternative models of female impact on the world that reverse and undercut excessive physiological reproduction. Such models are in short supply in the prepatriarchal world, at least as interpreted by many of its advocates.

Another useful lesson can be learned by studying some of the less accurate versions of the prepatriarchal hypothesis that speak of utopian conditions destroyed by patriarchy. It is futile to look for the birth of human aggression, or whatever else we may see as the genesis of human misery, in the birth of patriarchy. Patriarchy adds its own special and unnecessary dimensions to human misery, to its grasping nature and the resultant suffering, but it is naive and unhelpful to locate the origins of grasping and aggression, tendencies basic to being human, in the origins of patriarchy. They will continue to challenge us even in postpatriarchal religion and society. To regard "the fall" as a historical, preventable event rather than an ahistorical mythic event, which happens when the origins of patriarchy are equated with the origin of evil and suffering, is an uncritical appropriation of one of patriarchal religions' most destructive beliefs.

From the Creation of Patriarchy to the Triumph of Male Monotheism

Between the creation of patriarchy and the eventual triumph of male monotheism as the dominant religious symbol system lie several millennia[36] during which goddesses were an integral part of all religions. Exclusively masculine God-talk, taken for granted as normal by most people in Western societies for so long, was an even later development in cultural evolution than the creation of patriarchy. In fact, most of the literary evidence and much of the iconographic material about the various and numerous goddesses of the ancient world come from this period. Furthermore, though we may presume that prepatriarchal religions and societies must have existed in the non-Western world and that they too experienced the creation of patriarchy, their goddesses and female images of the divine did not disappear as quickly or as thoroughly. Western monotheism is unique in its fear and denial of images of female divinity.

The Goddesses of Ancient Patriarchy

The long story of the goddesses' decline has often been told, especially in recent years.[37] Though it is not possible to summarize that story in these few pages, I will highlight a few important themes. First, male-dominated societies outside ancient Israel had no qualms about the existence or presence of goddesses. Although the goddesses did gradually decline in importance and strength, no

nonmonotheistic religion ever tried to suppress veneration of goddesses or labeled it idolatry.

One story of the impact of patriarchy on the goddesses comes from ancient Mesopotamia, from the fourth through the second millennia B.C.E. Though the story is long and complex, records demonstrate an obvious decline in the power and importance of the regions' goddesses, especially Inanna, an utterly provocative and unconventional Sumerian goddess.[38] In early literature, Inanna is a powerful and impetuous deity whose sexuality is lyrically celebrated in some of the world's most beautiful erotic poetry. She rules heaven and earth and confers fertility to the land and authority to the king in the sacred marriage ritual. The tale of her descent to the underworld is told in many versions, but all of them affirm her central importance; unless she is brought back from the underworld, life will end. However, in later literature, such as the second millennium B.C.E. *Epic of Gilgamesh*, she is rejected as a lover by the human hero Gilgamesh and generally plays a minor, unimportant role in human and divine affairs.

But nothing so completely reflects the gradual decline of once powerful goddesses as the Babylonian creation epic, the *Enumah Elish*. The hero of the epic is the young warrior god Marduk. His struggle with the older generation of deities culminates in his hand-to-hand combat with the primordial mother goddess Tiamat. He wins the combat and makes the earth on which we live out of her mutilated carcass.

> *The lord rested, examining her dead body,*
> *To divide the abortion (and) to create ingenious things,*
> *He split her open like a mussel into two parts;*
> *Half of her he set in place and formed the sky (therewith) as a roof.*[39]

Continuing from another translation,

> *Below, he heaped a mountain over Tiamat's head, pierced her eyes to form the sources of the Euphrates and the Tigris . . . and heaped similar mountains over her dugs, which he pierced to make the rivers from the eastern mountains that flow into the Tigris. Her tail he bent up into the sky to make the Milky Way, and her crotch he used to support the sky.*[40]

Though the genders of the hero and the victim were ignored in my graduate school studies of this text, it is impossible not to read this text as a celebration of the triumph of patriarchy when it is read against the background of the prepatriarchal hypothesis. Read in any feminist context, the hostility and violence displayed toward the primal mother Tiamat are frightening.

The revisions of goddess mythology and symbolism just discussed were carried on by Semitic people, one of the two ethnic groups often cited as central in the triumph of patriarchy. The other, the Indo-Aryans, also left their mark on goddess imagery and mythology, this time on the mythology of classical Greece.

Feminist studies of various Greek goddesses have shown that many of the goddesses were also worshipped in prepatriarchal Crete and that they are present in classical Greek mythology only in a diminished form.[41] No Greek goddess really manifests wholeness, and no Greek goddess is a female equivalent of or equal to Zeus, the male head of the pantheon. Instead, each goddess represents a limited range of options and possibilities rather than a full, well-rounded lifestyle. For example, the most powerful and independent goddesses, such as Athena and Artemis, are also virgins without sexual lives. The primordial married goddess, Hera, is very unhappy and frustrated in her marriage. Nor is Aphrodite, the most erotic of the Greek goddesses, well married. Furthermore, most Greek goddesses in the Homeric pantheon are not mothers themselves, though some of them help human mothers.

Contrasting with the Homeric goddesses who live on Mount Olympus is Demeter, goddess of the harvest and of the earth's fertility, who most successfully among the Greek goddesses retained her prepatriarchal meanings. She is very popular with feminists because she does not conform to the limitations imposed on most

other Greek goddesses. Motherhood is central to her mythology, and the story of her relationship with her daughter Persephone is frequently retold and interpreted in feminist literature. Even more important, Demeter was the patron deity of the Eleusinian Mysteries, one of the most important religions of salvation in the pre-Christian world. It was still alive and important when the triumph of Christianity led to the demise of goddess religions in the ancient world.

The Struggle over Male Monotheism

As we have seen, the Babylonians and the Greeks did not attempt to rid religion of goddesses. Instead, their myths reflected a growing male dominance as once powerful and independent goddesses became the consorts of more recent, more powerful male gods. The story of ancient Israel is different. Historically, monotheism has been unwilling to tolerate alternative conceptions and symbols of deity. Although monotheism targeted all foreign deities, not just goddesses, in its battle to secure exclusive loyalty to its deity, the net effect is that monotheism ended goddess worship. The single most potent factor in the eventual loss of female symbolism of the divine was the eventual triumph of monotheism, whose single deity most definitely was not female.

This struggle, as it occurred in biblical times, is now being reconstructed by contemporary feminist theologians and historians. Two stories have come to the fore. One is that goddess religions coexisted with male monotheism for centuries and prospered until well into the Christian era. In addition to the Eleusinian Mysteries, dedicated to Demeter and Persephone, goddess religions were alive and well in the form of devotion to Isis at the beginning of the Christian era. When Christianity triumphed over "paganism," goddess religions ended in the Western world.[42] This fact alone, concealed by conventional accounts of Christian origins, is sobering. When we add to this story the history of the decline of nonpatriarchal forms of early Christianity, to be discussed in the next section of this chapter, it is even clearer that conventional accounts of the history of monotheism and Christianity have omitted basic information.

The second important story about the struggle between monotheism and goddesses is that male monotheism did not easily win over people's imaginations, even in ancient Israel. Furthermore, the primordial goddesses remain, even within the scope of biblical thought.[43] In Judaism, both biblical and postbiblical, the pull to feminine imagery continued after the triumph of male monotheism. Several female personifications of God's attributes gained growing popularity in later Israelite history, particularly during the period of the second temple. The most important is Lady Wisdom, who appears in the Book of Proverbs; she later evolved into Sophia, who has become quite important in some recent feminist theological reconstructions.[44] Postbiblical Judaism also continued to experience this pull, most noticeably in the mystical Jewish tradition, the Kabbalah, once a dominant form of Judaism, which clearly envisioned a deity who is both male and female.[45] Going even further, many who claim that a divine feminine is inevitable and unsuppressible cite the widespread popular veneration of the Virgin Mary in Christianity;[46] the less-known tradition of the "motherly Jesus" in medieval Christian piety also evidences this tendency.[47]

Even *during* the transition to male monotheism in ancient Israel, the appeal of goddesses was widespread, as Raphael Patai demonstrates in his book *The Hebrew Goddess*.[48] The Bible itself conveys the impression that the acceptance of male monotheism was smooth and clear in ancient Israel; only deviant people are shown objecting to this religious ideal or being attracted by "foreign" religions, including those with goddesses. However, Patai suggests that for many centuries following the initial disclosure of male monotheism to Israelites, "this religion, idealized in retrospect, remained a demand rather than a fact."[49] The world of the

Hebrew Bible and Israelite religion itself gives evidence of ongoing attraction to female counterparts of Yahweh, such as Asherah.[50] Furthermore, rather than being foreign, Patai claims that

> *there can be no doubt that the goddess to whom the Hebrews clung with such tenacity down to the days of Josiah, and to whom they returned with such remorse following the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, was, whatever prophets had to say about her, no foreign seductress, but a Hebrew goddess, the best divine mother the people had had to that time.*[51]

Most people growing up in the West have been taught that the advent of monotheism represented an immeasurable advance in the quality of human life. Usually it has also been assumed that women too benefited from this change. However, feminist study of religion has challenged this assumption, creating one of the more intense debates within feminist religious studies. I will conclude this section of this chapter by summarizing and evaluating two scholarly works that offer opposite points of view on this question.

Ancient Near Eastern specialist Judith Ochshorn's book *The Female Experience and the Nature of the Divine*[52] compares gender and concepts of the divine, the relationship between gender and power, and the relationship between gender and participation in religious practice in polytheistic and monotheistic religions. She challenges the "underlying belief that the advent of monotheism represented for women and men alike a seminal moral and spiritual advance over polytheism."[53] She finds that women are *not* better off in societies that have done away with polytheistic religious systems that include images of the divine feminine.

As a result of these comparisons, Ochshorn concludes that polytheistic religions gave at least some classes of women a significant role in public religious practice, unlike early Israelite religion. She also states that polytheistic religions did not consider the exercise of divine power to belong exclusively to either sex, since female

and male divinities both engaged in the broad range of activities indispensable to the human community, and that, therefore, neither sex was deemed inferior to the other. Ochshorn also claims that in the polytheistic religions, expressions of fear of female biology and reproduction were "conspicuously absent." "In time, this androgynous outlook gave way to the radically new vision of monotheism, which encompassed an association of power and powerlessness with gender in a manner quite foreign to the polytheistic mentality."[54] She compares "the more androgynous attitudes prevalent in ancient Near Eastern polytheistic religions" to the monotheistic biblical views:

> *It may be, then, that among the most radically new ideas advanced by the biblical vision of divine-human relationships was the concept of worth, autonomy, and power as inextricably linked to gender, and the polarization of feminine and masculine in apprehensions of the divine and prescriptions for the organization of the human community.*[55]

In my view, Ochshorn has clearly located a significant and real change in the continuing shift of consciousness that must have accompanied the long transition from prepatriarchal religion and society to male monotheism. She has also shown a *correlation* between monotheism and male dominance on the one hand, and between polytheism and more egalitarian forms on the other. However, it is not clear that there is a *causal* relationship between the two correlations. As we have already seen, male dominance was affecting even polytheistic societies at that time, as male deities usurped goddesses' functions.[56] In my view, full-fledged patriarchy would probably have eventually emerged in any case, with or without monotheism. Though contemporary male monotheism is a major contributing cause to the *survival* of contemporary patriarchy, I do not think one can *attribute* ancient patriarchy to the development of male monotheism. In fact, I believe the causal rela-

tionship should be reversed. Male monotheism is one of the last, but most pervasive and powerful *results* of an emerging patriarchy and one of its most potent tools for sustaining its power.

The critical question that Ochshorn's work raises is whether monotheism can support social systems and ways of symbolizing deity that are androgynous and egalitarian, as Jewish and Christian feminist theologians claim. If it can, why was it historically so strongly linked with patriarchy? Why did monotheism play such a crucial role in the eclipse and demise of the goddesses, who were among the deities seen and hunted down as "idols" and "pagan" in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament? Perhaps these questions will never be answered completely satisfactorily. But research in nonbiblical religion is essential to the search.

Near Eastern and biblical scholar Tikva Frymer-Kensky surveys the same territory that Ochshorn does—though without reference to her work—in *In the Wake of the Goddess*, and her conclusions about monotheism's effect on women are much more sympathetic to the Hebrew Bible and to claims often made for it. She finds that the "essentially masculine God of Israel" could easily absorb all relevant functions and attributes of polytheistic male gods, but not of the female goddesses. This caused "major changes in the way the Bible—compared with ancient texts—looks at humanity, culture, nature, and society."[57] Specifically, in the Hebrew Bible, "gender had disappeared from the divine, and there are no more 'male' and 'female' functions."[58]

Also counter to Ochshorn and to other feminist assessments of the Hebrew Bible is Frymer-Kensky's argument that in the Hebrew Bible, apart from the social subordination of women, there is no essential difference in the images of men and women. She claims that "there is nothing distinctively 'female' about the way that women are portrayed in the Bible, nothing particularly feminine about either their goals or their strategies."[59] Furthermore, "this

biblical idea that the desires and actions of men and women are similar is tantamount to a radically new concept of gender."[60]

> *The differences between male and female are only a question of genitalia rather than of character. This view of the essential sameness of men and women is most appropriate to monotheism. There are no goddesses to represent "womanhood" or a female principle in the cosmos; there is no conscious sense that there even exists a "feminine."*[61]

Nevertheless, Frymer-Kensky does recognize that life in ancient Israel was not at all free of gender. "The Bible's gender-free concept of humanity contrasted sharply with Israelite reality."[62] A standard repertoire of male- and female-gendered tasks is found in Israelite society, but only because of long-standing tradition, she contends, not because of gender ideology.

The monotheistic deity, the "one god of Israel YHVH . . . is a predominantly male god referred to by the masculine pronoun (never by the feminine) and often conceived of in such quintessentially masculine qualities as warrior and king."[63] Nevertheless, "the monotheistic god is not sexually a male. He is not at all phallic and does not represent male virility." She explains the fact that in the Bible, "God is not imagined below the waist,"[64] is probably due to another monotheistic innovation. "To the Bible, the sexual and the divine realms have nothing to do with each other. Indeed, the Bible is concerned to maintain their separation, to demarcate the sexual and sacred experiences and to interpose space and time between them."[65]

In the concluding chapters of the book, Frymer-Kensky argues that issues of sex and gender are the unfinished agenda for the biblical worldview, which the modern world must resolve. In particular, she concedes that the lack of any biblical vocabulary for discussing sexual and erotic experience (as opposed to behavior, which the Bible legislates) created a serious vacuum. And that vacuum "was ultimately filled (in Hellenistic times) by the complex of

antiwomen and anticarnal ideas that had such a large impact on the development of Western religion and civilization."[66]

As to how to complete the unfinished agenda of biblical thought, Frymer-Kensky ends by affirming that monotheism provides something religiously profound and useful. To her, monotheism cannot be improved upon and is ultimately true because it provides "the sense that ultimate reality is a unity, neither a multiplicity of counterbalancing forces that compete for our attention and allegiance, nor a complementarity of 'male' and 'female,' yin and yang."[67]

I find some aspects of this work problematic. Certainly Frymer-Kensky's claim that monotheism involved major changes in the ways that humanity, culture, nature, and society were conceptualized is correct, but it is less clear that these changes benefited women or were completely unrelated to "antiwomen and anticarnal ideas" that she herself finds detrimental.

What of the claim that in the Bible there is no essential difference in the image of men and women? Even if this is the case, I would argue that this lack of differentiation occurs not because women are truly men's equals, but because the worldview of the Hebrew Bible is quite androcentric. The loss of distinctive feminine traits could merely indicate that women have been absorbed into male standards and have become invisible.

Frymer-Kensky's distinction between a deity who is male in terms of gender but not in terms of sex is also difficult. Can we really separate gender from sex that completely, and why is it necessary to do so? It is true that the Hebrew Bible never discusses God's male sex, but that does not mean that ancient Israelites were able to ignore it successfully or completely. As Howard Eilberg-Schwartz's intriguing book *God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism*[68] argues, the maleness of God is just that—maleness—and a deity who is male but not female creates problems for men as well as for women.

Frymer-Kensky does point out the most significant change that monotheism caused: the separation between sexuality and the sacred. But it is difficult to find ways in which this change might have benefited women. This is perhaps the strongest point of contrast with polytheistic religions of the ancient world and elsewhere, in which divine and human sexuality are celebrated. To me, it seems inevitable that if sexuality and the sacred are widely separated, then, at least in a male-dominated society, women will be treated as inferiors and phobias about their sexuality will develop, as eventually did happen in biblical thought. This development calls into question Frymer-Kensky's claims about gender blindness in the biblical concept of humanity and strengthens Ochshorn's argument that polytheism was less afraid of women's sexuality than monotheism. Most feminists regard fear of embodiment, including denigration of sexuality, as one of the hallmarks of patriarchy, an aspect reinforced by the biblical insistence on separating sexuality and the sacred.

Works such as Frymer-Kensky's and Ochshorn's, which reread history from the earliest societies through to the period represented by the end of the Hebrew Bible, have brought to light much information about religious symbolism and philosophy that was largely unknown before feminist scholarship. This knowledge has forever changed our understanding of the triumph of male monotheism as the orthodox and normative theology of the West. Whatever one's conclusions about the prepatriarchal hypothesis or the value of polytheistic religions, one must concede that the religious concepts that accompany patriarchal societies are latecomers to the history of humanity.

At the end of this historical consideration of male monotheism, it is important to remember that these discussions are *historical*. They are about what happened in the ancient world, *not* about what the Bible means today to those who regard it with faith as a charter for their lives. Rather, as we saw in chapter four, contempo-

rary readings of the Bible are a matter of *interpretation*, and the crucial question is whether the interpreter reads the text with the humanity of women in mind. These historical debates are interesting but in a certain sense irrelevant to contemporary uses of the Bible to promote or oppose feminism.

Patriarchy and Early Christianity

To many Christian feminists, the story of the origins of Christianity is even more important than the story of the triumph of monotheism. Clearly, for those to whom the Christian vision of life remains meaningful and fulfilling, it would be very useful to demonstrate that earliest Christianity was not male dominated. This is especially the case because Christianity has always regarded the life, times, and manners of Jesus and his immediate followers to be models for our time. Christianity holds to historical models quite seriously.

Feminist Christian history builds on the thesis, discussed in the last chapter, that Jesus was a feminist, and from that beginning point describes the gradual evolution of the orthodox patriarchal church. Significantly, feminist scholars have shown that Christianity began as a radically diverse group with many competing sects, some of which were much more sexually egalitarian than the one that eventually became dominant. They have also sought to discover how the original primitive "discipleship of equals,"[69] in the words of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, became the patriarchal entity that historically survived.

For many people, no information learned in the study of feminism and religion is more revealing or more shocking; few Christians are aware that Christianity was originally more diverse than it is today, nor do they know that some versions of early Christianity worshipped a deity with feminine names and permitted women priests. Like most "winners" throughout history,

when the newly patriarchal orthodox sect became dominant, it sought to suppress all knowledge and memory of these alternative forms of Christianity; its modern heirs continue that questionable practice.

Gnostic Christianity

Among the diverse versions of early Christianity, none is more fascinating to a feminist than gnostic Christianity, now able to speak for itself since the discovery of a cache of texts in Egypt in 1945. These texts were Coptic translations of gnostic texts that had been destroyed by the orthodox church and lost for centuries. The gnostics were among the most controversial of Christian sects, and until these texts were translated and interpreted, they had been known primarily through what their detractors had said about them. Obviously, such biased information is never completely trustworthy.

The gnostic movement was not limited to Christianity, for Jewish and nonmonotheistic versions of gnostic spirituality also flourished in the Greco-Roman world. This spirituality literally stressed *gnosis*, or knowledge. But the kind of knowledge and the effects of that knowledge are especially significant. *Gnosis* is insight, intuitive knowledge of ultimate reality. Such gnosis is secret because it is the fruition of deep introspection and inner transformation, which is regarded as basic to spiritual fulfillment. In gnostic spirituality, to know oneself thoroughly and completely is to know ultimate reality, human nature, and human destiny. Therefore, complete self-knowledge brings knowledge of deity.

This proposition is clearly at odds with the version of Christianity that became dominant, which insists "that a chasm separates humanity from its creator: God is wholly other."[70] One of the earliest and perhaps most popular Christian "heresies," gnosticism had lost out to orthodoxy by 200 C.E. But before that time, many gnostic texts circulated, which, according to Elaine Pagels, a noted au-

thority on the subject, "use Christian terminology, unmistakably related to a Jewish heritage. Many claim to offer traditions about Jesus that are secret, hidden from 'the many.'"[71]

Among the most important secret traditions hidden from "the many" are several that honor women. One gnostic text, *The Gospel of Mary*, positions Mary Magdalen as one of Jesus' spiritual heirs. In this text, the disciples, frightened and discouraged after the crucifixion, ask Mary to share the secret teachings that Jesus had given to her alone. She agrees, but Peter objects, furious that Jesus could have given teachings to Mary that he had not given to the male disciples. The others rebuke Peter, saying, "'If the Savior made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Lord knew her very well. That is why he loved her more than us.'"[72] After hearing her, the other disciples are encouraged and go out to preach. In another gnostic text, Jesus himself rebukes Peter for trying to silence Mary and later tells Mary that anyone whom the Spirit inspires to speak is ordained to do so, whether male or female.[73]

Many gnostic traditions speak of the deity as both feminine and masculine. According to Pagels, these traditions are quite diverse, though she finds three major motifs in gnostic discussions of the divine feminine. First, the divine Mother is sometimes imagined as part of an original couple that is a metaphor for the essential indescribable deity. In other gnostic writings, the trinity consists of Father, Mother, and Son, so that the Holy Spirit is the Mother. Supporting this notion, gnostic writers have Jesus claim the Spirit as his divine Mother; Jesus then goes on to contrast his earthly mother Mary with the Holy Spirit and his divine Father with his earthly father, Joseph, in that earthly parents give death but the true heavenly parents give life.[74]

Finally, continuing the tradition of biblical wisdom literature, gnostics described the divine feminine as Wisdom. This feminine Wisdom was sometimes seen as the first creator who brought forth all things; in other contexts, she is also described as that which enlightens people and makes them wise. Many of these gnostic teachings about the divine feminine claim to come from Jesus himself; others are based on commentaries on the Hebrew Bible. For example, in the first creation story (Gen. 1), the deity proposed creating humanity "in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26); since humanity was created "male and female" (Gen. 1:27), most likely the deity itself is also both masculine and feminine.[75]

These views of deity had practical implications for both theories of human nature and the social roles of women and men in gnostic religious institutions. Continuing to interpret the first creation story, some gnostics concluded that the first creation was an androgynous being who included both genders. Pagels quotes one gnostic author as saying that "'the male and female elements together constitute the finest production of Mother Wisdom.'"[76] Acting upon these views of both deity and humanity, the gnostic Christians continued to allow women to teach and to perform the sacraments after their orthodox counterparts had discontinued these practices.

Other contemporary Christians were aware of these practices, and some orthodox writers criticized them. Tertullian, a second-century orthodox church father is often quoted: "These heretical women—how audacious they are! They have no modesty; they are bold enough to teach, to engage in argument, to enact exorcisms, to undertake curses, and it may be, even to baptize!"[77] Another orthodox church father, Irenaeus, was at a loss to explain why women seemed to be unduly attracted to gnostic forms of Christianity. He could explain defections from his own congregation to the gnostic teacher Marcus only by claiming that his rival was a "diabolically clever seducer" who concocted aphrodisiacs.[78]

According to Pagels, from the year 200 C.E. onward, there is no evidence that women took prophetic, priestly, or episcopal roles in orthodox churches. She goes on to comment: "This is an extraordinary development, considering that in its earliest years the Chris-

tian movement showed a remarkable openness toward women. Jesus himself violated Jewish convention by talking openly with women and he included them among his companions."[79] Additionally, in many societies within the Greco-Roman world, women had relative autonomy and participated widely and equally in culture and religion. Nevertheless, writes Pagels, "despite the previous public activity of Christian women, the majority of Christian churches in the second century went with the majority of the middle class in opposing the move toward equality, which found its support primarily in rich . . . circles."[80]

Earliest "Orthodox" Christianity

In the period before 200 C.E., women played a significant role in the emerging Christian community, including those versions of the community that later evolved into patriarchal orthodoxy, according to the most authoritative feminist retellings of this story.

In a complex and important book, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza undertakes that task. She takes her title from a quotation in the Gospel of Mark. In Mark's passion narrative, there are three major characters, two well-known men, Judas and Peter, and the nameless, who anoints Jesus. Of her, Jesus says, "And truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be retold in memory of her" (Mark 14:9). Schüssler Fiorenza comments ironically, "The name of the betrayer is remembered, but the name of the faithful disciple is forgotten because she was a woman."[81] This vignette faithfully captures the thesis of her book:

> *The inconsistencies in our New Testament sources indicate that the early Christian traditioning and redactional processes followed certain androcentric interests and perspectives. Therefore the androcentric selection and transmission of early Christian traditions have manufactured the historical marginality of women, but they are not a reflection of the historical reality of women's leadership and participation in the early Christian movement.*[82]

In Memory of Her discusses how an original discipleship of equals became the patriarchal church. Like many others', Schüssler Fiorenza's reconstruction of the Jesus movement stresses the inclusivity of his message and community and the central role women played in founding and spreading the Jesus movement in Palestine. In addition, she makes several suggestions about Jesus' thinking. First, she suggests that Jesus understood God, at least in part, as Sophia, or Lady Wisdom. Since, as we saw earlier in this chapter, Sophia was a popular figure in Jewish religious imagery of that day, Schüssler Fiorenza claims that the parable of the lost coin, in which Jesus "images God as a woman searching for one of her ten coins"[83] is not at all surprising. She suggests, given the importance of Sophia, that "Jesus probably understood himself as the prophet and child of Sophia" and reminds us that "the earliest Palestinian theological remembrances and interpretations of Jesus' life and death understand him as Sophia's messenger and later as Sophia herself."[84]

Second, she establishes that "liberation from patriarchal structures" was, in fact, a major theme in and for the Jesus movement, not simply a derivative or less central concern. Though her arguments are complex, her central evidence is an exegesis of Matthew 23:9: "Call no one father among you on earth for you have one heavenly father." She points out that the father name of God is not used by Jesus to justify patriarchal structures and relationships in the community, but precisely to reject such claims. She concludes that "liberation from patriarchal structures is not only explicitly articulated by Jesus but is in fact at the heart of the proclamation of the *basileia* (realm) of God."[85]

Schüssler Fiorenza's feminist reconstruction of Christian

origins then discusses the early pre-Pauline Christian missionary movement (30–60 C.E.), which, like the Palestinian Jesus movement, continued to be a "discipleship of equals." In the early decades of the Christian movement, traveling missionaries and house churches (worshipping in private homes rather than in public buildings) were critical to the spread of the new movement. Women, she claims, were leaders in both areas, traveling as missionaries and opening their homes to the new movement. Since most Christian communities then met in someone's home, women converts who welcomed early Christian communities into their homes were particularly important.[86]

Theologically, these early missionary churches identified the risen Lord not only with the Spirit of God, but also with God as Sophia, Lady Wisdom, thus continuing the tradition of Jesus and Judaism. Schüssler Fiorenza concludes her discussion of this pre-Pauline missionary movement by pointing out that the earliest churches, like other Greco-Roman associations, shared table fellowship, "the major integrative moment in a socially diversified Christian house community,"[87] as their major ritual and that a female image of the divine was a central part of that ritual. At their table fellowships, "Christ-Sophia" was the Spirit in which they all shared equally and without exception: "Jews, pagans, women, men, slaves, free poor, rich, those with high status and those who are 'nothing' in the eyes of the world."[88]

The final chapter before the transition from "discipleship of equals" to "a community of patriarchal submission"[89] concerns the ambiguous legacy of Paul, not the earliest Christian missionary by any means, but the one whose works survived and disproportionately influenced what came after him. Schüssler Fiorenza sees Paul's impact on women's leadership in the Christian movement as "double-edged." Paul did affirm Christian equality and freedom, and he also opened up the new option that women could remain free of the bond of marriage, living an independent Christian life

instead. But, on the other hand, he subordinated *married* women to their husbands and women's behavior "in the worship assembly to the interests of Christian mission," which restricted their rights not only as "pneumatics" (those filled with the Spirit) but as "women." The legacy of these teachings was devastating:

> *The post-Pauline and pseudo-Pauline tradition will draw out these restrictions in order to change the equality in Christ between women and men, slaves and free, into a relationship of subordination in the household which, on the one hand, eliminates women from the leadership of worship and, on the other, restricts their ministry to women.*[90]

After this point, the story of Christian origins turns to tracing out the adoption of the post-Pauline patriarchal household codes found in Colossians, 1 Peter, and Ephesians by the newly established churches. Then this story intersects with the other story told about early Christianity in this chapter, as the newly patriarchal "orthodox" church sought to root out gnosticism and other more egalitarian forms of Christianity. Eventually, as already pointed out, this story also intersects with the story of goddess religions, as the newly empowered orthodox church closed the last pagan temples in the Roman Empire, including those dedicated to goddesses.

"What If . . . ?" A Speculative Comparison of the Histories of Western and Hindu Patriarchy

Many advocates of the prepatriarchal hypothesis emphasize the role of patriarchal Indo-Aryan conquerors in the development of patriarchy in the West. As already indicated, they are especially important in the history of Crete and Greece and in the development of a male-dominated polytheistic pantheon in Homeric and later Greek mythology and religion. As we have seen, their strategy was not to fight against the worship of goddesses to ensure the worship of their male gods; instead, in Homeric mythology, the prepatriarchal goddesses were married or mated with the Aryan male gods—

in male-dominant marriages to be sure—or they became their daughters. Although dominated by gods, goddesses did not disappear entirely. As we have just seen, only when "paganism" lost out to Christianity did the goddesses disappear (though many would contend that a covert goddess reappeared in Christianity as the Virgin Mary).

The case of India provides an intriguing comparison and contrast. Like Greece, India was invaded by Indo-Aryans who worshipped male gods. But today Hinduism, India's major religion, is the only major theistic religion in which female names and forms of deity are at least as legitimate, popular, and important as male ones, though Hinduism's social and ritual forms are decidedly patriarchal. What accounts for the difference?

The Indo-Aryan invasions into northwestern India began in approximately 1500 B.C.E. Indo-Aryan religion is well documented in texts called the Vedas, and their pantheon was decidedly male dominant. In most discussions of Vedic deities, the goddesses take up a mere paragraph, if they are even mentioned. But Hinduism, a complex, multifaceted religion that includes many distinct and diverse cultural and religious streams, includes powerful and popular goddesses from at least the so-called medieval period (600–1800 C.E.), if not earlier. As already discussed in chapter three, though Western scholarship on Hinduism was slow to acknowledge these goddesses, often presenting them as a collective poor third in relationship to the male gods Vishnu and Shiva, these perceptions were simply a result of androcentrism and did not reflect Hindu theism. Goddesses in popular Hinduism are at least as frequently worshipped and at least as important to many people as are the gods. Their icons are omnipresent in restaurants, in fruit stalls, on the dashboards of scooter rickshaws, and on people's home shrines. It is interesting for a feminist to experience a religious culture in which both women and men talk quite matter-of-

factly and naturally about goddesses because they are taken for granted in their religious universe.

What appears to have happened is that as the god-worshipping Indo-Aryans lived among and married the goddess-worshipping indigenous people of India, goddesses slowly and imperceptibly became mainstreamed. Most Indologists believe that some of the many Hindu gods came from the indigenous rather than the Indo-Aryan streams of Indian culture, and goddesses are probably among them. By contrast, in Greece after the Indo-Aryan conquest, *both* Indo-Aryan and indigenous Greek religion, as well as the hybrids that were developing, were wiped out by monotheism. I have often wondered what Western religions might look like today if Greek and other Mediterranean mythologies, rather than Hebrew mythologies, had been the dominant force driving the religious imagination in the West.

Of course, one could claim that the difference doesn't matter, since Hindu social and ritual forms are also patriarchal, even though their religious imagery is not. That brings up a question that cannot be answered empirically and about which opinions will vary widely. Given a patriarchal situation, are women in patriarchal religions better off with goddesses or without them? Some claim that subservient goddesses, such as the Hindu Sita (or the Christian Mary for that matter), sanctify and valorize patriarchal social norms, making them that much harder to question. But, on the other hand, deities *never* simply mirror human society, especially in polytheistic mythologies. Some goddesses in virtually every pantheon defy and reverse patriarchal stereotypes, as does Kali in the Hindu pantheon.

What is the impact of such goddesses on women? Though the evidence is just beginning to be collected, it does seem that Kali functions as a positive role model for some Hindu feminists.[91] The most intriguing question, about which little research has been

done, concerns the psychological comfort provided by divine feminine role models, even subservient ones like Sita or Mary. In my view, the claim of some feminists that goddesses don't help women because they don't provide legal, political, or economic autonomy and equality is somewhat shallow. Such goddesses may still provide a great deal of psychological and spiritual comfort, which should not be overlooked. Furthermore, since male monotheism has never been completely successful in removing female imagery, it seems clear that both men and women feel better when their images of the divine include female beings. How else could we explain the immense popularity of Mary in much of the Christian world, the success of the medieval Jewish Kabbalah, and Muslim women's devotion to female saints? The major difference between Hinduism and Western religions on this point is that Hinduism offers a divine feminine that is considered legitimate and normative, not controversial or the object of repeated unsuccessful purges.

What If History Isn't Normative? Feminist History and Buddhism

Because history is a uniquely important facet of religion in the West, a disproportionate portion of this chapter has been devoted to the feminist retellings of the Western story. But all religious traditions have histories that need to be investigated from a feminist methodological stance in order for scholars to have an accurate history of those traditions. Because feminist scholarship is not as well developed in the study of non-Western religions, this scholarly effort lags behind.

Would such history be *useful* to religions that do not take history so seriously—that is, to most of the other major religions of the world? In the brief space still available in this chapter, I will sketch a few of the results of the study of Buddhist history from a feminist perspective.[92]

Buddhism is part of an Indian religious tradition that regards

historical events as illusory and irrelevant, mere ephemeral repetitions of cosmic patterns. Thus the Indian religions are as strongly antihistorical as the Western traditions are historical. This difference generates some interesting dissimilarities regarding the uses of history. Since, according to Buddhism, everything is impermanent, historical events cannot be normative precedents but only fluctuations in the endless process of change. What has been is not an eternal precedent but simply a transient event. Furthermore, given this impermanence, nothing on earth lasts, not even patriarchy. Logically, instead of espousing eternally valid truths about sex and gender, as it sometimes has, Buddhism should regard patriarchy as feminism does: nothing more than the result of certain causes and conditions at a certain point in human development. The Buddhist tradition has not quite seen this point, to say the least, but the claim follows logically from the most fundamental Buddhist understandings of how things work.

To illustrate this point concretely, I offer a story that has become a mainstream treasure of Western Buddhism. One of the first women in generations to seek full ordination as a Tibetan nun, an American, was discussing her situation with an important Tibetan male hierarch. When she noted the depressing history of the nuns' order in Buddhism, he replied, "That's history. Now it's up to you."[93]

So, according to Buddhism, historical precedent is not so important. Such a possibility represents an exceedingly important alternative to the typical Western fixation on historical precedent as model, which has been religiously underscored in Western thought for centuries. This lack of reliance on history helps explain why the story of women in Buddhism may differ from that of other religions. Many new religious traditions eagerly seek women's participation and leadership in their first generations, but then decline into patriarchy. In some cases, specifically that of the powerful early nuns' order, this is also true of Buddhism. But, in other ways,

Buddhism may be the only religion in which the position of women grew stronger, not weaker, in premodern times. Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism, the last form of Buddhism to develop historically, includes both a very strong tradition of female sacred beings who are essential to the practice of the religion, and an injunction against denigrating women. Neither of these were found in the earliest Buddhist traditions. In addition, according to historian Miranda Shaw, women were among the important leaders and teachers who first developed Vajrayana Buddhism.[94]

Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism's formal injunction against maligning women is something unique in the major world religions, to my knowledge. This injunction is one of the vows or obligations specific to the practice of Vajrayana Buddhism and is required of anyone who wishes to do advanced meditation practices. The vow states:

> *If one disparages women who are the nature of wisdom, that is the fourteenth root downfall. This is to say, women are the symbol of wisdom and Sunyata, showing both. It is therefore a root downfall to dispraise women in every possible way, saying that women are without spiritual merit and made of unclean things, not considering their good qualities.*[95]

Two things are especially noteworthy about this injunction. The first is that its very existence indicates that people were, in fact, disparaging women. No one makes rules prohibiting what no one is doing, and Buddhist tradition records its share of misogyny. But the weight of authority is thrown *against*, rather than with, these sentiments. These obligations, called *samaya*, "vows," are taken with utmost seriousness by all Vajrayana practitioners and are widely known and disseminated.

Second, the justification for the obligation is extremely interesting. It states that women are not to be denigrated because of women's true nature—"the nature of wisdom," and "the symbol of wisdom and Sunyata, showing both." As in other religions, there is

an old tradition in Buddhism of personifying wisdom as feminine, and that appears here. But this declaration goes further in stating that *physical human women* actually incarnate or embody that wisdom, as well as *shunyata*, the complex key concept in Mahayana Buddhism usually translated as "emptiness."[96] Therefore, women themselves cannot, legitimately, be scorned. The implications of such an injunction for a feminist reconstruction of Buddhism are, obviously, profound. For one thing, it becomes far easier to understand the dismissal of historical precedent with the comment, "That's history. Now it's up to you!" What normative power could historical precedent have in the face of such commands?

If historical precedents are not considered binding, does that mean the past is simply dismissed? Are there no stories from the past that people lovingly tell and retell? Such a possibility does not seem very likely, given how religions usually work. Instead, I find that *sacred biography* plays the same role in Buddhist religious life that *sacred history* plays in the Western religions, including the feminist spirituality movement. The stories that are told and retold, elaborated and embellished, are the biographies of those men, women, and children who have modeled the way by attaining enlightenment. What they did, how they practiced meditation, how they attained enlightenment, are all of intense interest to the generations that follow them.

From among the many sacred biographies of Buddhism, I will discuss two: the life stories of the historical Buddha (the best-known Buddhist biography) and some stories about female role models in Buddhism. The life story of the historical Buddha, which has been retold many times,[97] is not very positive for women, at least as commonly interpreted. The stories that stand out are the Buddha's initial refusal to permit women to renounce the world in order to lead the lifestyle that early Buddhism saw as helpful to spiritual maturity, that of homeless wandering. Persuaded by a male disciple to relent, the Buddha immediately allowed women to

join the monastic community, but only if they accepted eight special rules that effectively subordinated all nuns to all monks. Seniority, otherwise so important, played no part in interactions between nuns and monks; all nuns were automatically junior to even the youngest, most recently ordained monk. In addition, the stories go on to report that the Buddha then prophesied that because women had been allowed to join his monastic community, the life of the religion would be cut in half—from a thousand years to five hundred years.[98] On the surface, one could see how some contemporary male Buddhist leaders, not interested in restoring the ordination of nuns, justify their position. As they see it, the Buddha didn't want to institute the nuns' order anyway.

This reasoning, however, is far more appropriate to Western attitudes toward history than Indian ones. Furthermore, Western scholars have concluded that, historically, these events did not occur but were later interpolated into the record by conservative monk-successors to the Buddha. Using the standards of Western historical scholarship, these conclusions make sense, but this conclusion is relatively meaningless in Buddhist terms, since the Buddhist world has never read its texts driven by concern for accurate historical reconstruction.

In my own discussion of these stories, I argued that we need to look at the stories in terms of a usable past, which fits more with a guideline of "That's history. Now it's up to you." We have to decide which part of the text to take seriously, since the text is self-contradictory in that the supposedly omniscient Buddha made an inaccurate historical prediction. (According to this story, Buddhism should have disappeared two thousand years ago.) Thus, first one needs to critically reassess the authority of the pronouncements attributed to the Buddha. I wrote in *Buddhism after Patriarchy* that "the omniscience of a Buddha, whatever it may mean, does not include eternally accurate scientific or historical statements, nor eternally valid institutional forms and rules."[99] In other words,

even if the Buddha was anti-women, that doesn't mean his followers should be, a point made explicit by those who formulated the injunction not to denigrate women.

But how much, and to what extent, is this story in fact negative toward women? Traditional commentators have always focused on the Buddha's initial reluctance to allow women into the monastic community and his unfulfilled prediction about how short-lived the religion would be as a result. In so doing, they have overlooked another important element in the story.

> *The Buddha, persuaded by the logic of the argument that women, who have the same spiritual capabilities and needs as men, would benefit equally with men from the pursuit of the most helpful and appropriate religious disciplines,* changed his mind. . . . *This is, in fact, the most useful model we could have. . . . Would that the male hierarchs who hold almost every position of importance in the Buddhist world today would focus on this theme of the story and take it to heart!*[100]

As feminists in other traditions have asserted, who gets the training and the permission to interpret texts makes a critical difference in the interpretations put forth.

Because Buddhism does not include belief in gods or goddesses per se, the historical Buddha has never played as central a role in Buddhism as has Jesus in Christianity. In many ways, he became much less central in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, the later forms of Buddhism, than he had been in the early period of Buddhist history. As others, including women, duplicated his enlightenment, their stories also became inspirational and important. Collections of biographies from two different periods in Buddhist history have been especially inspiring and are being studied seriously in the contemporary Buddhist feminist movement.

Early Indian Buddhism, interestingly, not only produced the story of a Buddha reluctant to admit women to the monastic order; it also produced a collection of texts about the women who became

theris, female elders or enlightened disciples of the Buddha.[101] My own assessment of these stories is that the *Therigatha*, as their collected enlightenment poems are called, is the most underutilized resource in Buddhism and should be cited every time someone appeals to the stories about the Buddha and women. This source would balance the record.[102]

Biographical literature, used for inspiration and role modeling, is especially important in the Vajrayana tradition, both late North Indian and Tibetan. Therefore, it should be no surprise that Buddhist women who combine a religious practice of Vajrayana Buddhism with feminist values have sought to collect and comment upon these stories. The earliest and most extensive such collection is Tsultrim Allione's *Women of Wisdom*, a widely used, accessibly written account.[103] Allione does not tell the story of Tibet's most famous and perhaps best-loved female guru or spiritual teacher—Yeshe Tsogyel, consort of the great teacher Padmasambhava and, with him, cofounder of Tibetan Buddhism. In my own feminist reworking of the Buddhist tradition, I have relied heavily on her example, finding her story inspiring and useful.[104]

Conclusions

Throughout this chapter on rereading history, we have focused on the theme of finding a past that is both useful and accurate from a feminist perspective. As we have seen, feminist scholars have begun to establish a past that is both significantly more accurate than the androcentric story of history and at least somewhat useful to feminists. The perception that men have always dominated women in the ways that they do under patriarchy proves to be not very accurate history, which is extremely useful information for feminists working toward a postpatriarchal future for their religions.

But as we look toward the postpatriarchal future of religion, we also need to remember that the past offers no wholly adequate models. We cannot return to a Neolithic paradise of a mother goddess, first, because that world probably never existed in the utopian form claimed by certain feminists, and second, because maternity is by no means a sufficient symbol and life purpose for contemporary women. We cannot return to gnostic Christianity or the early "Jesus movement" because we live in a vastly different world socially, culturally, politically, and economically. And certainly there are no moments in Buddhist history in which Buddhism fully manifested its gender-free ideology. But, in commenting on living in a world without models, both Mary Daly and Rosemary Ruether have suggested that it is, in fact, a patriarchal method to enshrine some ideal figure from the past and then try to imitate that figure.[105] Therefore, living in a world without adequate models is not more than a feminist can bear.