

## Introduction

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My co-editor, Arvind Sharma, once said that “power might have no gender but gender has power.” My thoughts on the topic of feminism and world religions began with these cryptic words. I quickly moved on to the topic of how the perspectives of female insiders within world religions are changing the way we all think about power, gender, and religion.

This introduction<sup>1</sup> consists of the following four sections: (1) preliminaries; (2) intellectual trends; (3) feminist borrowings and critiques; and (4) insiders and outsiders. In the postscript of this book, I will offer my own analysis of insiders and outsiders.

### Preliminaries

Before launching into the topic of feminism and world religions, some comments on the following are in order: (1) definitions; (2) the purpose of this book; and (3) the authors of this book.

#### *Definitions*

It is difficult to offer basic definitions for some well-known terms. The word feminism, for example, can refer to the women’s movement in general or any one theoretical position in particular. And the term *world religions* can include all religions of the world or only those that have had a major impact on the world. Like any discussion, therefore, this one must begin with some working definitions.

The basic aim of *feminism* is to identify the problems of women as a class and to promote their interests as a class. Terry Woo writes in this book that it provides “the impetus to critique and improve the disadvantaged status of women relative to men within a particular cultural situation.”<sup>2</sup>

Feminism originated in a nineteenth-century debate about whether women should be confined to the private realm of home and family or be welcomed into the public realm of business and politics. The term *feminism* itself was coined by Alexandre Dumas in 1872 to describe the emerging movement for women’s rights, especially the vote, and equality with men. Feminism, in other words, is all about power relations between the sexes. In addition, it is about female bonding to serve women’s political goals. According to Vasudha Narayanan, in this book, “the bondage of women was alchemized to the bonding between women which then led to their empowerment.” Over time, this renegotiation of power in the public realm was extended to all spheres—educational, social, political, economic, professional, and, of course, religious. Modern feminism has political roots. This fact is made obvious in two slogans of the women’s movement: “the personal is political” and “sisterhood is powerful.” Feminism is understood by some as a reform movement and by others as a revolutionary movement leading to the creation of a new world order—not unlike the “classless society” of Marxism.

With their entrance into the public realm, women have attacked fixed gender roles and the division of labor by sex. They have argued for full participation in the community through equal access (or parallel structures), legal changes (such as better divorce laws), and economic changes (more jobs, for example, and equal pay for equal work). In religious circles, feminists call for women’s inclusion in liturgical or theological language, education, leadership, ritual, and symbolism. Like other feminists, they argue that this has a therapeutic dimension for women: they become more balanced as individuals by defining their own goals, thinking positively about their own lives, and finding in their own experiences the resources for healing themselves, others, or even “the planet.”

But *women’s studies* is something quite different. Karen Laughlin and Eva Wong note in their chapter that this focus on women as a class is embedded not only in the feminist concept of “sisterhood” but also in the academic field “focused on women as a specific category of analysis, united by common experiences or perhaps just by the fact of having for so long been excluded from dominant culture.” Accordingly, women’s studies is about restoring women to both the historical record—whenever the necessary information is available—and current academic research. Feminism and women’s studies together constitute the “women’s movement.”

According to a conventional but by no means definitive list, the *world religions* include Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Purpose of This Book*

Feminism has had, and continues to have, an impact on the world religions, because it has criticized them for perpetuating male hegemony over women, or “patriarchy.” But it has found inspiration, too, in these religions—especially those with female, androgynous, or abstract descriptions of the supreme. This book examines the interaction of feminism and world religions.

### *The Authors of This Book*

All the authors of this book are women. All are insiders, moreover, in both the academic world and that of the religious communities they discuss. For some, this means that they have easy access to certain kinds of information. Moreover, it means that they know what kinds of interpretation are likely to be accepted by other insiders. This potentially enables them to come up with informed and nuanced discussions. In addition, of course, it allows them to set the historical record straight. For others, being insiders gives them credibility as political activists. They use their academic knowledge and academic methods to challenge tradition, demanding reform or revolution in the name of women.

Not surprisingly, the authors do not always agree with each other. Some write from the perspective of feminism; they want to change the nature of their religions. Others write from the perspective of women’s studies; they want to document the religious orientations of women in their traditions, whether historical or contemporary, and the influence of feminism on these traditions. Still others write from perspectives that are critical of Western feminism. It is worth noting that the essays in this book cannot be divided along lines of West versus East or white versus “color.”

*Vasudha Narayanan* discusses the renegotiation of power in Hinduism. She observes that equality and rights are unfamiliar concepts in a religion that has traditionally supported a hierarchical social system based on birth and occupation. Even so, some women have overcome the rules governing gender, class, and caste. They might become courtesans, for example, or find some other public role. Narayanan refers to female saints as well as musicians and dancers (reminding us that the arts are optional salvific paths according to the *Nāṭya Śāstra*). After describing the great female reformers who fought against discrimination, especially in connection with widows, she notes that modern women are inspired by these historic figures but do not imitate the extreme aspects of their lives. New developments in Hinduism include the right of women to study and chant the Vedas or to become gurus. Gender, class, and caste restrictions have all been removed from many descriptions of the path toward liberation (*mokṣa*). Most women no longer observe menstrual taboos, moreover, and the medium of one goddess in Tamil Nadu insists that all devotees—both

male and female—wear red at the shrine, because “the color of blood under the skin of all human beings is red.”

*Rita Gross* presents a feminist analysis of key Buddhist doctrines and a feminist reading of Buddhist history. She argues that there has been a deep contradiction between the theory and practice of Buddhism. For her, the “essence” of Buddhism—egolessness, emptiness, and Buddha nature—is beyond ascribed gender differences not to mention innate sexual ones. But Buddhism, like other religions, has “one long dismal record of misogyny and sexism” from the eight special rules<sup>4</sup> to the current domination by men of Buddhist institutions. She explains these as “accretions” (from Hinduism, for instance, or Confucianism) to the “essence” of Buddhism. Buddhism needs only to be reformed, she argues, in order to provide women with better religious education, full ordination and economic support for nuns, and more female teachers as role models. Gross calls for some changes, however, that would radically transform the very nature of Buddhism: (1) eliminating the eight special rules; (2) establishing a new, “post-patriarchal androgynous vision” relying heavily on the Vajrayāna view of the *yab-yum* image, which symbolizes the complementarity of male and female; (3) developing a spiritual path that integrates body, sexuality, and emotion; (4) providing better models for serious lay practice; (5) offering women more time for spiritual seeking by encouraging them to have fewer children and to choose slow-track careers; (6) placing less emphasis on solitary withdrawal; (7) adopting a more this-worldly orientation (cooking, gardening, and caring for children in a meditative manner within a spiritual discipline); and (8) extending the concept of community to promote wholeness, balance, and peace to create an egoless or enlightened androgynous being.

*Terry Woo* examines feminism in relation to Sinology and Confucianism. What troubles her is the stereotypical treatment of Confucianism by Western women—both colonial (missionary) and postcolonial (socialist). As an exegete and historian, she makes her own, more sympathetic, assessment of Confucianism. She discusses authors, philosophers, reformers, rulers, poets, farmers, and businessmen. Her aim is to discover their presuppositions or prejudices, their family relationships, their reactions to women in power, and so forth. In the process, she pays particular attention to the contexts in which they lived: unrest; relative peace; female rule and its aftermath; Taoist and Buddhist power; liberalism; and the Confucian revival. The result is a re-assessment of feminist stereotypes. Dismissing some feminist criticisms of Confucius, she notes that he was a pragmatist who had to cope with social and political chaos. (In addition, she tackles problems in Confucius’s own relations with women: his lack of female disciples; his endorsement, as a chief magistrate, of sexual segregation; and his maintenance of a rigid division of labor based on sex.) Woo notes many examples of support for women by Confucians throughout Chinese history: calls for reform, preservation of a sphere

of influence for women, and recognition of women as important power brokers. She concludes that Western feminist caricatures of the Confucian tradition have been extreme, not superficial.

*Karen Laughlin and Eva Wong* revise the history of China, in effect, by incorporating that of women in China. They cover several topics: the confinement of women to traditional roles; diversity among women despite this confinement; and the subversion of traditional Chinese gender roles by Taoism. They find inspiration not only in the inherent equality of Taoist goals but also in Taoism's recognition that early stages of the spiritual path must take into account both biological and cultural differences between men and women. Taoism makes accommodations not only for menstruation and osteoporosis, for instance, but also for the fact that women must break patterns of respect and hierarchy (whereas men must learn how to respect women and treat them as equals). Apart from these differences, the Taoist path is the same for men and women.

*Ellen Umansky* provides a description of the private-public demarcation in traditional Judaism. Women's "natural" religious function, she observes, is in the home and involves the following: maintaining dietary regulations (*kashrut*); following rabbinic laws on the scheduling of, and ritual purification for, sexual relations (*niddah*); preparing their homes for the Sabbath by cleaning, baking *challah* in the ritually prescribed way, cooking festive meals, lighting the candles; and performing all or most of these duties on holy days and festivals such as the New Year and Passover. By contrast, men study religious texts and participate more regularly in public worship. Umansky then surveys the changes that are being introduced by feminists. Orthodox Jews have gone only as far as allowing parallel structures such as women's prayer groups (and some Orthodox men, she writes, resent even these). Other denominations have encouraged more religious education for girls and women: teaching them Hebrew so that they can read from the Torah, for example, and Aramaic so that they can study the Talmud and other rabbinic works. They have included women in the *minyan* (the quorum of ten necessary to distinguish public from private worship) and given women the right to receive *aliyot* (opportunities for contact with the Torah: opening or closing the Holy Ark containing it, holding it up before the congregation, and chanting passages from it—or blessing it before and after someone else does the chanting). Women have been encouraged to wear *tallitot* (prayer shawls); *tefillin* (small boxes containing biblical texts and worn on the head and arm during weekday prayers); and *kip-pot* (small caps that, in modernizing congregations, are replacing hats). Under feminist influence, non-Orthodox communities have instituted a ceremony for the naming of female infants (to parallel the circumcision ceremony for boys, which welcomes them into the community) and a *bat mitzvah* (to parallel the *bar mitzvah* for boys, which welcomes them into the adult community); hired

women as cantors; and ordained women as rabbis. Finally, feminists have pressed for reforms to the *halakhah* (Jewish law) allowing women to become witnesses in religious courts, for example, or to initiate divorces. Umansky reports that some Jewish feminists are demanding even more radical changes, ones that would “bypass denominations altogether”: modifying the liturgy’s masculine imagery for God and abandoning the concepts of chosenness, male-female complementarity, and hierarchy. She notes that Jewish feminists criticize hierarchy based on race, ethnicity, class, or sexual orientation and ask everyone to work with God as a covenantal partner in healing the world (*tikkun olam*).

*Rosemary Ruether* challenges the notion that Christian feminism is a white, middle-class, North American movement of the 1960s. She identifies the roots of Christian feminism in the long history of Christianity itself, beginning with the New Testament and including reform movements in the late Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the modern period (including liberalism, socialism, French feminism, and American post-Christian and anti-Christian theology). A geographical survey makes it clear, moreover, that Christian feminism is by no means confined to North America. Describing herself as a “feminist liberation theologian,” Ruether draws parallels between Christian feminism and other liberation movements. She and others “see women’s liberation in the context of an interstructured system of oppression of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, both within nations and across the lines of an international system of neocolonialism.” Ruether refers often to the fact that Christian women in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America fight in addition for national liberation and political or economic justice. Unlike Woo, Ruether does not bemoan the influence of Western missionaries on Asia. On the contrary, she acknowledges beneficial influences such as Western education and Western political thought. Due to “contextualization,” Christian feminism is becoming more diverse, but an underlying unity remains for several reasons: the common religious heritage; similar experiences of patriarchy; and leaders drawn from the professional class.

*Riffat Hassan* writes that the Islamic tradition can become true to its scripture, the *Qur’ān*, only through reform. For her, everything apart from scripture has been corrupted by misogynistic and other accretions. Muslim women must develop the exegetical expertise needed to interpret Islam’s primary sources. Only after acquiring this can they mount an effective attack on misrepresentations that have been endorsed by men: “[U]nless, or until, the theological foundations of the misogynistic and androcentric tendencies which have become incorporated in Muslim countries are demolished, Muslim women continue to be brutalized and discriminated against despite improvement in statistics relating to women’s education, employment, social and political rights, and so on.” To illustrate the kind of approach required, Hassan attacks theological assumptions that give rise to sexual inequality—the as-

sumption that women should think of their husbands as god (called *majazi khuda*, god in earthly form), say, or the assumption of *ird* (the honor of women based on maintenance of chastity) and the related practice of female circumcision. She concludes that these assumptions have no basis whatever in the *Qur'ān*, which is egalitarian. Some, in fact, constitute *shirk* (the act of associating anyone with God, which is often associated with polytheism). They were imported from extra-Islamic sources: Jewish and Christian (especially accounts of creation and the Fall in Genesis), Hindu (thinking of husbands as divine), Arab (killing women who voluntarily or involuntarily lose their chastity), and other (such as female infanticide or sexual segregation).

## Intellectual Trends

“Every religious tradition,” observes N. Ross Reat, “by its very existence and regardless of its claims to universality, divides the world into two sets: insiders of the tradition and outsiders to the tradition.”<sup>5</sup> Because this book is written by insiders for outsiders, it is useful to consider the intellectual trends that have informed the transition to an insider perspective. The following will be discussed: (1) Romanticism; (2) phenomenology; (3) ecumenism; (4) Marxism; (5) the “Frankfurt school”; (6) hermeneutics; (7) deconstruction; (8) post-modern psychoanalysis; and (9) postcolonialism.

### *Romanticism*

It could be argued that Romanticism is not an “intellectual” trend at all, because it focuses on either the non-rational or the irrational. It glorifies feeling at the expense of thinking. Nevertheless, it was strongly promoted by those who thought of themselves as intellectuals. And the intellectual history of Europe—its art, poetry, philosophy, and so on—cannot be discussed without reference to this movement. Romanticism, observes Paul Nathanson,<sup>6</sup> is usually said to have originated in the late eighteenth century as a revolt against rationalism. Its ultimate origin, however, can be traced back to the late medieval period. This is clear from the history of art. Earlier, art was intended primarily to reinforce doctrine (although sometimes, especially at the turn of the millennium, art did so by evoking intense fear). But late medieval art, especially after the Black Death, focused very heavy attention on *emotional identification*; worshipers were expected to feel the intense pain of Jesus and—especially—the intense sorrow of Mary. Eventually, the whole notion of Christian love (*agape*) was transformed. (This had originally been understood as a self-sacrificial act of the will—which is why it could be commanded—and had little or nothing to do with emotion or sentiment.) It would be impossible to understand Romanticism apart from its roots in medieval emotionalism.

In any case, Romanticism has never disappeared; its struggle against the Enlightenment continues to this day. Not surprisingly, continues Nathanson, Romanticism has been a potent source of ideologies on both the right (nationalism, for example, or racism) and the left.<sup>7</sup> To some extent, ideologies on both the right and left have insisted on their foundation in science: “racial science,” “dialectical materialism,” and so on. Nevertheless, every secular ideology has appealed strongly and even primarily to the emotions associated with identity—whether based on class, race, nation, or sex. A focus on emotions, in turn, contributes to the transition to the “insider’s perspective.” Until recently, though, the political importance of emotion has seldom been explicit; more about that in due course. For a variety of reasons, at any rate, Romanticism is stronger now than ever before—and not only in popular culture but in academic culture as well.

### *Phenomenology*

The phenomenology of religion originated in the general philosophical movement called “phenomenology.” Phenomenologists extended Edmund Husserl’s dictum “to the things” (*zu den Sachen*).<sup>8</sup> They now included religious beliefs, myths, rituals, spiritual disciplines, and so forth. Mircea Eliade and others added *epoché* and empathy as ways of decreasing bias among researchers. The former has fostered self-awareness of presuppositions. The latter has fostered positive feelings toward insiders. Phenomenologists have long recognized that phenomena come into view only through the consciousness of observers. (The importance of consciousness shifts focus from what is out there to what appears “inside” the person.) They have long recognized in addition that perfect objectivity is impossible: new information becomes available, new methods uncover previously hidden dimensions, new analyses reveal mistakes in earlier ones, and so on. But they have always hoped that *epoché* and empathy—along with careful linguistic, textual and historical studies—can do justice to insider perspectives.

### *Ecumenism*

Though not always identified as an “intellectual” movement, ecumenism eventually became strongly associated with intellectual trends in religious studies. By the late nineteenth century, people were coming to believe that members of the world’s religious communities should have greater contact with each other. The aim, of course, was greater understanding. This was the purpose of a conference held in Chicago in 1893; at this World’s Parliament of Religions, representatives of the world’s religions met to explain their traditions to others. Gradually Christians began to hope that they could heal some of the rifts that still divided their own communities. This led, in some cases, to the merging of



two or more churches.<sup>9</sup> By the 1950s, Christian theologians were calling for religious tolerance and understanding. At first, ecumenism was confined to relations among the various Christian churches. (Later, it was extended to include other religions as well). One expression of this movement was the World Council of Churches. Even churches that did not join, however, were heavily influenced. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, made ecumenism a major topic of its second Vatican Council. The method used by ecumenists was called "dialogue." It was strongly supported by some academics, too. Among the most important was Wilfred Cantwell Smith. He wanted to shift the focus of religious studies from ideas to people (distinguishing between "tradition" and "faith" on that basis).<sup>10</sup> Just as the language of "seeing" has dominated phenomenology, the language of "hearing" has dominated dialogue. Although Smith did not use the word "voices," he might have heralded its ubiquitous use today: "[A]s it becomes more widely recognized that the comparative religionist speaks in the *hearing* of those he describes, this will inescapably have its effect at least on how things are put and perhaps also on the kind of thing said. The point is that an author must write not only more courteously but more responsibly."<sup>11</sup> Smith took an even more significant step by arguing that "no statement about a religion is valid unless it can be acknowledged by that religion's believers."<sup>12</sup> The effect of all this has been to augment the importance of insiders. The latter are more than informants; they are also interpreters and judges of scholarship in their own right. As a result, the focus of religious studies shifted from traditional canons to contemporary expressions.

### *Marxism*

Karl Marx and his disciples tried to show that capitalism was promoted by the ruling class in a conspiracy to perpetuate its power and wealth at the expense of the poor and powerless. This realization would motivate the latter to revolt, taking up arms if necessary, against the former. Inherent in this view<sup>13</sup> are (1) dualism ("oppressors" versus "oppressed," or the "bourgeoisie" versus the "proletariate"); (2) essentialism (the shared characteristics of a class); (3) collectivism (promoting class interests by subordinating the individual to the group); (4) utopianism (belief in the possibility of creating paradise, or the "classless society"); (5) revolutionary struggle to bring about the desired goal (defined as the classless society characterized by utopian equality<sup>14</sup>); and (6) using "fronts," including cooperation with religious groups, to infiltrate bourgeois institutions.

### *The "Frankfurt School"*

Like Marx himself, theorists of this school argued that knowledge was historically and socially determined by those in power, and that it was used

directly or indirectly as “false consciousness” to oppress people. Like Marx, moreover, they argued that the solution to social problems lay within history, not beyond it in some abstract or sacred realm. But Marxists emphasized agitation in the streets, and the critical theorists emphasized “education.” The purpose of education, they said, was to reveal the hidden conditions of oppression—embedded in institutions and whatever passed for common sense—in order to liberate oppressed groups and transform society as a whole. These critical theorists coined the term the “social construction of knowledge,” which has by now become so prevalent that few people actually think about its origin, much less question its accuracy or usefulness.

Although critical theory drew heavily from Marxism, it shifted Marx’s emphasis on economics to “right knowledge” and from activism in the workplace to activism in the universities. For Marx, the proletarians were outsiders to power. For the critical theorists, all marginal groups were outsiders to power. Marxists of both the old and new schools, though, saw their goal as destruction of an all-powerful, or “hegemonic,” class so that outsiders could gain the power of insiders. In connection with religion, like anything else, one worldview would be undermined to pave the way for another. The latter has usually been associated with postmodernism (a worldview acknowledging no absolutes, no objective truth, no intellectual unity), deconstruction (a method used to expose “textual” inconsistencies, especially those known as “phallogocentric” or “Eurocentric”), feminism (activism to improve the economic and social circumstances of women as a class), and new political alliances (women and minorities in the name of “diversity,” “pluralism,” or “multivocality”).

### *Hermeneutics*

Paul Ricoeur argues that modern people are incapable of believing in their canonical texts (scripture and all other sources of tradition). The decentered self, for Ricoeur, is the product of both human finitude (nature) and secularization (characteristic of this particular historical moment). The only hope is for a “decentered” self to rediscover the “sacred” in literature and the other arts. Understanding the variety of “texts,” he says, is like “play.”<sup>15</sup> He claims that entering the many “worlds” of literary or other “texts” is the best way of destroying the idea that anyone can live at the centre of the universe. Ricoeur argues that “texts” can either reflect “structures of domination”—which are revealed by what he calls the “hermeneutics of suspicion”—or respond to the “voice” of the other. In this way, he shifts attention to the insiders of other religions and the arts.

### *Deconstruction*

No “text,” claims Jacques Derrida, is ever completely explicit; each retains “traces” (gaps, conflicts, ruptures) that betray its “complicity” with meta-

physics. Like Ricoeur, his teacher, Derrida uses the word *play* to describe how words interact with each other so that meaning is never fixed. Like Ricoeur, he argues that each has a “surplus” of meaning. And like Ricoeur, who coined the term “hermeneutics of suspicion,” Derrida argues that “texts” should always be read with the aim of destroying “logocentrism:” the assumption that its words and ideas point to an external reality. All of history is thus reduced to a series of ephemeral, but politically useful, “discourses.” Applying this to “texts” of the Western canon—from those of the pre-Socratics to those of Heidegger—and inverting their Eurocentric meanings, Derrida tries to undermine the foundation of Western philosophy. After its “deconstruction,” he believes, other religions and cultures will be considered more relevant by Westerners. By adding to or changing the canon, greater value and authority can be ascribed to those who had formerly been outsiders.

### *Postmodern Psychoanalysis*

Michel Foucault, the founder of postmodern psychoanalysis, tried to deconstruct heterosexuality in the interest of sexual minorities. In *The History of Sexuality*,<sup>16</sup> he attacked Freud’s theory of repression for diminishing the importance of power. For Foucault, the origin of sexuality lay in ruling ideologies. Until the mid-eighteenth century in the West, according to him, this was found in legal and moral discussions that defined sexuality in terms of licit or illicit behavior. Later on—in medical, psychological, and educational discussions—sexual desire was discussed in terms of normal or abnormal desires. Homosexuality was no longer an illicit form of behavior, for example, but a psychological disposition. This shift, observes Foucault, paralleled a more general one from central (heterosexual) to peripheral (lesbian, gay, or bisexual) orientations. This has given rise to an interest in the latter: the ways in which they are presented, the perceptions of the body that they imply, and the kinds of conduct they condone.

### *Postcolonialism*

Applied to nationalism by Edward Said, deconstruction takes the form of postcolonialism. In *Orientalism*,<sup>17</sup> he discusses the West’s creation of the “Orient.” As its antithesis, the latter is part of both the West’s self-definition and its misunderstanding of foreign cultures. This way of thinking, argues Said, is used to legitimate the West’s political domination of the East. It gives rise, in turn, to notions of superiority and inferiority. Unlike the West, for example, the East is said to be static and incapable of development. Orientalism gives rise, in addition, to the projection of a collective identity onto what would otherwise be seen as many individual cultures. Said reserves his harshest criticism for colonialism. A Palestinian himself, he is especially hostile to “Zionist” rule over the Palestinians. It is at least partly due to his influence that immigrants to Western

countries have come to think of themselves not merely as outsiders but as insiders as well in the sense of being allies of feminists. Of greatest importance here, though, is that Said rejects the deconstructive belief that only “texts” or “discourses” are worth thinking about. Proclaiming that “‘solidarity before criticism’ means the end of criticism,”<sup>18</sup> Said argues that criticism produces not only knowledge but also a foundation for intellectual and social change. In this sense, he wants to combine deconstruction and critical theory.

## Feminist Borrowings and Critiques

Feminism has been influenced by all of these intellectual trends. In more ways than one, it is the product of its historical context. But it has made one major contribution. Feminism has detected in the work of many male thinkers a lack of attention to gender. Even Derrida, who has been useful to so many feminists, has not fared well. With this in mind, I now revisit the following topics: (1) Romanticism; (2) phenomenology; (3) ecumenism; (4) Marxism; (5) the “Frankfurt school”; (6) hermeneutics; (7) deconstruction; (8) postmodern psychoanalysis; and (9) postcolonialism.

### *Romanticism*

Like the early Romantics, some feminists explicitly glorify emotion (which they associate with femaleness) at the expense of reason (which they associate with maleness).<sup>19</sup> They seldom expose its logical conclusion, of course: that women are unequal to men when it comes to intelligence. They focus instead on the idea that men and women are unequal when it comes to *emotion*; women, they claim, have some unique affinity for “nurturing” (giving emotional care). Moreover, they promote the common belief that merely expressing emotion—including rage—is cathartic and thus therapeutic. This is a revival of the Romantic rebellion against reason—one that is dressed up, ironically, in academic language supposedly based on reason.

### *Phenomenology*

Feminists and phenomenologists are interested in many of the same things. Among the most important is resisting the superimposition of “values” (for feminists, these would be patriarchal ones) onto “things.” Instead they let these things reveal themselves. Both philosophical phenomenologists and feminists refer to the “social construction” of knowledge. Both scrutinize the conditions for their knowledge of the world. Similarly, both are interested in the experience of the body, the “gaze,” intuition, perspective, and engagement.<sup>20</sup> Despite the overlap, few feminists derive their thinking on these matters di-

rectly from phenomenology; some of it comes indirectly through the existential phenomenology of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. A more direct line of continuity can be traced, however, from the phenomenologists of religion to female historians of religions.<sup>21</sup> They use *epoché* and empathy to affirm the importance of the insider perspectives in the study of religion. They then extend these methods to the understanding of female believers and to all women.

### *Ecumenism*

Smith's notion of dialogue has been taken a step further by some feminists. To the extent that they consider feminism a worldview analogous to religion, they call for dialogue between the two. In this book, Laughlin and Wong explicitly call one section of their chapter "the Dialogue of Taoism and Feminism." After restoring the history of women to that of Taoism, they argue that dialogue between Taoism and feminism must begin with the fact that the former's spiritual goal is available to both men and women. For dialogue to take place, moreover, both parties must be self-critical, meet on common ground, and be open to change as a way of overcoming problems. The latter might include attachment to notions of power or lack of power, for instance, or to alienation from radical feminist wrath experienced by both men and by housewives "who could not reconcile their own position as wives and mothers with what they saw as extreme feminist rhetoric."

Woo tries to facilitate dialogue between feminists and Confucians. She begins by recognizing the great gulf between them. "Feminism is concerned with autonomy, freedom, equality, and social revolution. Confucius, on the other hand, regards the sexes together and is concerned with order, harmony, peace, and stability. The paradox is this: feminism also wants peace and stability; and Confucius too was asking for a complete social revolution from the greed, disloyalty, licentiousness, and violence of his times. But from Confucius's point of view, freedom cannot bring a peaceful society. Instead, freedom, with its complementary idea of rights, forms the antithesis of the Confucian sense of duty. In this way, Confucianism and feminism speak past each other, conveying parallel ways." Woo tries to prepare for dialogue, however, by creating a level playing field. To do this, she deconstructs Western stereotypes of China. At one point, she projects a currently popular Chinese stereotype onto Western feminists; that way, the latter can experience what the Chinese have experienced. Woo suggests that the failure of feminism can be measured in terms of either family instability or lack of care for the young, the old, and the poor. But she admits that these criticisms can be taken too far; they sometimes assume a particular kind of family as the standard, value harmony above all else, and attribute social problems solely to feminism. In point of fact, she observes, many additional economic and political factors have contributed to

these problems. By claiming that both feminists and Confucians inherit prejudices, and by acknowledging that criticisms on both sides have at least some truth, Woo hopes to bridge the cultural gulf between Western feminists and Confucians. If Confucians were to take their own tradition seriously—equality, learning, sincerity, loyalty, reciprocity—but also reject traditional patrilineality and authoritarianism, they would come closer to feminist thinking. That would still leave a profound gulf between the modern West (which emphasizes individual autonomy) and Confucianism (which emphasizes not only the family but the complementarity of men and women). This makes Woo gravitate toward those Western feminists who emphasize “relationality” and complementarity, presumably because they are analogous to the Chinese family tradition.

### *Marxism*

Most forms of feminism have been heavily influenced by Marxism, directly or indirectly. Only the names have been changed. Feminists tend to think of men as the class of “oppressors” and of women as the “oppressed.” Like Marxists, feminists have adopted the technique of “consciousness raising” to reveal the true nature of “oppression” (that is, “the patriarchy”): a “superstructure” of lies perpetuated by those in power (men). Despite the popularity of “diversity,” most feminists find it hard to let go of the idea that all women have at least some characteristics in common. For some feminists, these are the givens of biology; for others, they are byproducts of “male-dominated” culture. Like Marxism, moreover, feminism often has a collectivist orientation. The term “women’s collective,” in fact, is common in feminist circles. More important is the feminist appropriation of the legal school known as “communitarianism.” Its focus on group rights and powers has been used effectively in the campaign for women’s rights and powers. Unlike Marxists, few feminists actually use the word *revolution*. Nevertheless, there is often much more to their use of the word *reform* than meets the eye. Like Marxists, in fact, they really do hope to bring in a new world order, a new age, a new paradise (often under the aegis of a great goddess). Their language is not always explicitly eschatological. Like that of Marxists, though, it is always implicitly eschatological.

Betty Friedan was not influenced by Marxism. If she was influenced by any movement at all, it was the Civil Rights movement. It did not take long, however, for the latter to be transformed by the Black Power movement. And, at the same time, feminism began to reconsider its liberal and middle-class origins. What followed was heavily influenced by the radical student movements, especially those involved in protest against the Vietnam War. And *these* movements really were heavily influenced by Marxism—not the crude Marxism of earlier generations, of course, but the sophisticated Marxism that had by then been filtered through the Frankfurt school of critical theory. Among their leaders were women who later became academics.

Other countries have been heavily influenced by Western socialism with its Marxist roots. These socialist movements working for social change have fostered alliances among various marginalized groups. Narayanan draws attention to a long-standing alliance in the modern period in India between male and female activists dedicated to women's rights and those dedicated to the elimination of caste and poverty. The manifesto of Mahila Samta Sainik Dal, a militant feminist organization of college students in the state of Maharashtra, points out that "we . . . along with Dalits and Adivasis . . . make up 70-80 percent of the people. . . . We are battling for equality with the men in the war for human liberation." Dalit women (once called "outcastes"), who are at the lower end of the economic ladder, themselves say that they have had to fight on three fronts: sex, caste, and poverty.

### *The "Frankfurt School"*

By the 1960s, Herbert Marcuse, in the tradition of the "Frankfurt School," argued that socialist feminists would be the vanguard of this new order through their fight for equality and the transformation of the deeply dualistic "structures" of society itself. But some of these feminists have trouble with male critical theorists such as Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, and Marcuse. Marsha Hewitt,<sup>22</sup> for example, thinks that Marcuse was content to see the feminine as nothing but a form of Hegel's antithesis. The revolutionary potential of Marcuse was lost, she argues, because he associated the traditional qualities of women with biology; he romanticized and reified "gender difference into hypostatized categories in which no historical woman could possibly recognize herself, nor find political solutions adequate to address her situation."<sup>23</sup> In any case, the Frankfurt school has had an influence on virtually all forms of feminism (as it has on many other intellectual movements).

### *Hermeneutics*

Many feminists in religious circles are attracted to the hermeneutics of Ricoeur. They like his suggestion of weaving together the fragments of identity into a narrative of integration and wholeness—that is, positive self-images. And they have certainly made use of his emphasis on metaphor (although Jewish and Christian exegetes have been referring to metaphors and allegories since the very early Middle Ages) to deconstruct the literal meanings of scripture in order to make way for change.

### *Deconstruction*

That brings me to deconstruction itself. Feminists often find Derrida very useful indeed (although they seldom follow his logic to its conclusion, which would deconstruct their own work) because he can be used to legitimate their

attempts to undermine and displace “patriarchy.” Almost all “texts” in the Western canon were written by men, after all, and presumably reflect only their interests. Once all that is out of the way, women can move toward the center (even though Derrida denies, at least in theory, that there is a center), which gives them access to power.

Derrida has influenced other trends in feminism. Drawing from both his work and those of psychoanalysts, French feminists—such as Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva—have questioned the language and symbolism in which female experience is described. They attack the dualism that they believe is embedded in Western thought. This is a prelude, of course, to their larger project of dismantling philosophical, social, and political hierarchies. Heavily influenced by Derrida, moreover, some minority scholars and feminists have teamed up to create “subaltern studies.” The goal of this alliance is to examine problems common to all marginal groups (those who have been outsiders in terms of intellectual and political power).

Derrida has contributed to the feminist discussion of “diversity,”<sup>24</sup> too. This is partly due to his attack on Eurocentrism. It is partly due as well to his claim in *Spurs* that “there is no such thing as the essence of woman because woman averts, she is averted of herself. Out of the depths, endless and unfathomable, she engulfs and distorts all vestige of essentiality, of identity, of property.”<sup>25</sup> For some feminists this should destroy any naive belief in the category of “woman” and encourage a shift of focus to the multiple realities of women. Morny Joy writes that many feminists are attracted to postmodernism because they find in its focus on diversity and marginality “a sympathetic affiliation with their own revolt against the monolithic impositions of male-dominated systems of knowledge and power. Just as deconstruction displaces traditional ideas of truth, identity and subjectivity, so, such feminists argue, do contemporary feminists strive to formulate a new way of ordering their descriptions of the self and of the world in ways that are multiple, interconnected and non-oppositional.”<sup>26</sup> All of this provides support for a major tenet of feminism: that women must “name” reality for themselves and proclaim their own “voices.”<sup>27</sup> It was not until the late 1980s, however, that diverging tendencies among feminists themselves became obvious to everyone.

Some feminists, for instance, insist that women are equal to men, and others insist that women are superior to men. Karen Laughlin and Eva Wong mention several “waves” of feminism to indicate historical developments, the many outlooks and methods, and the recognition of racial, cultural, and class differences that influence theory and practice. Woo, like many other feminists, prefer to use the word *feminisms* instead of *feminism*.

It is worth noting that these diverging tendencies have caused both tensions and alliances. As for tensions, it is almost as if the feminist notion of “naming your own reality” has made feminism itself a contested idea. Who be-



longs within feminism? What does it stand for? And what are its roots? For some Western women, the word *feminism* conveys a white, middle-class orientation. African-American women, notes Ruether, have historically been the slaves or servants of white women. They have had to struggle side by side with African-American men against racism, although sexism has by no means been confined to the white community. To make this clear, they have chosen to call themselves “womanists” (a term coined by Alice Walker) and “women of color,” not feminists.

The tensions and divisions created by postmodernism have threatened to erode the “solidarity of sisterhood.” Nevertheless, different opinions are often not lamented as illustrations of conflict. On the contrary, they are praised as illustrations of “diversity,” “pluralism,” or “multivocality.” When some feminist idea is attacked and no counterattack seems possible, the problem is often acknowledged only in connection with this or that brand of feminism (that is, someone else’s).

#### *Postmodern Psychoanalysis*

Foucault’s school of thought has encouraged many feminists to move away from the assumption that heterosexuality should be the norm. This has laid the foundation for a political alliance between many feminists (heterosexuals and lesbians) and gay men. Umansky, for instance, writes that feminism will replace the “normative male voice” with “divergent voices.” It will form a new community cutting across the boundaries of race, ethnic group, class, and sexual orientation, a community in which “difference is honored and . . . [all] are accorded equal dignity and sense of worth.”

#### *Postcolonialism*

Said’s influence on feminism has been to foster an extension of the attack on male hegemony to include colonial hegemony. Minority feminists in both the West and the East have found his analysis useful in their demand for greater recognition as insiders. Other minority women often follow the lead of African-American women. Woo, for instance, prefers the term “woman of color” to “feminist.” Narayanan prefers the term “womanist;” she observes that, from the perspective of Indian women, the Western feminist orientation toward “autonomy” is less desirable than their own orientation toward socialism. Because feminism was founded in the West, it carries a specifically Western flavor. “Many Hindu women consider the term feminism . . . inadequate,” she observes, and worse, “misleading in the Hindu and Indian contexts.” Western feminists judge early and medieval India by the standards of eighteenth-century America, for example, in connection with the ideal of universal access to education. (Of course, feminist anachronisms can be found in the West as well).

## Insiders and Outsiders

Arvind Sharma has explored the interaction between insiders and outsiders.<sup>28</sup> For him, the word *insider* means simply a member of a religious tradition as distinguished from one who is not. He suggests that there are four combinations. These are not merely logical categories, moreover, but chronological developments. In this section, I will explore the emergence of women as full insiders in the sense of speaking publicly about their religions and leading debates and dialogues about the past, present, and future of their religions. This will be done by examining Sharma's four categories: (1) insider to insider; (2) outsider to outsider; (3) outsider to insider; and (4) insider to outsider. To these categories, however, I will add (5) insider to both outsiders and insiders. I will show also how female scholars, including those in this book, have understood all five categories.

### *Insider to Insider*

Most religious exchanges in the premodern period were between insiders within particular religious communities (although there were also debates between sects and occasionally between religions as well). These exchanges were about scripture, doctrine, law, and so forth. The authors of this book point out, however, that women have in some ways not been insiders within their own religions; on the contrary, they have often been ignored.

Hassan, for instance, writes that "through the centuries of Muslim history, these sources [*Qur'ān* and the *Hadīth*] have been interpreted only by Muslim men who have arrogated to themselves the task of defining the ontological, theological, sociological, and eschatological status of Muslim women . . . While it is encouraging to know that women such as Khadījah and Ā'ishah (wives of the prophet Muhammad) and Rābi'ah al-Basrī (the outstanding woman Sūfī) figure significantly in early Islam, the fact remains that until the present time, traditional Islamic cultures remain overwhelmingly patriarchal, inhibiting the growth of scholarship among women particularly in the realm of religious thought." She argues that this has contributed in no small measure to the fact that Muslim women are virtually unaware of their religious rights and have been subject to physical, mental, and emotional confinement (although they are told repeatedly by men that they have more rights in Islam than women have in other religions).

Similarly, Gross observes that the Buddhist record *as selected and interpreted* by insiders (and outsiders) has more information about men than about women and ascribes more honor to male heroes than to female ones. Tibetan teachers typically argue that men and women are equal in Buddhism but that women have special responsibilities as mothers. They explain existing dis-

crepancies by saying that these are due either to foreign influences or to women's lack of practice.

### *Outsider to Outsider*

During the colonial period, Westerners began to write about non-Western religions in the countries under their rule. Their expositions were intended for other Westerners back home. This approach continued even after the colonial period, because of the institutes they had established for cultural, linguistic, and religious studies.

Laughlin and Wong note that early Western scholarship on Taoism focused on male leaders or deities, overlooking mythological or historical references to women. In this context, they mention a recent book. According to its author, there are only a few female Taoist immortals (although in point of fact there are many). Gross observes that Western scholars of Buddhism have studied and written mainly about Buddhist men, who describe their own situations.

Anthropological theories have been flawed for the same reason. Much of the fieldwork has been done by men—partly because they were given no access to women—and has focused on their academic interests. On this inadequate basis, scholars have based their theories of human nature, culture, prehistory, hunters, gatherers, horticulturalists and so on. Because of the androcentric bias of early scholarship, it is often argued that only women can write adequately about women; only women, presumably, can know a woman's experience.

### *Outsider to Insider*

The establishment of outsider-to outsider scholarship in Western universities meant that a growing number of foreign and immigrant students were introduced to their own religions through Western scholarship. Salman Rushdie's education in Islam at Oxford is a celebrated case. He studied history and wrote about the prophet Muhammad in one of his major papers. Unlike other Muslims, Rushdie had no formal religious education. Nor did he grow up in the heart of a community of Muslims. "In so far as he delved into the tradition, then, it was via orientalism. Having been raised in a fairly secular atmosphere, deciding that he could not truly believe in God, and then studying Islam from the perspective of Western scholars: this would obviously result in a non-traditional attitude towards religion."<sup>29</sup> When outsiders learn about their own religion through Western eyes, they face the danger of perpetuating colonial biases or other errors resulting from ignorance of local languages, oral traditions, customs, and conventional understandings. Because Western scholarship dominated academic discussions, however, foreign students and immigrants were not the only ones to receive a potentially biased view of non-Western

traditions. So did the citizens of former colonies. They read foreign publications by Westerners, which continued to flood the market after independence. But Western *women*, too, have participated in this outsider-to-insider orientation. That is why female minority scholars in the field of religious studies often attack Western feminist criticisms of their religions. Many of the colonial missionaries, after all, were women—that is *outsiders*.

Gross writes that the study of women in Buddhism “has almost always focused on questions *about* women in Buddhism, assuming that the questioner is an outsider analyzing information about a closed system in which she does not participate and which will not be affected by her analysis.” Similarly, Woo analyzes the “orientalist” approach by Western women (missionaries and socialists), which has led to stereotypes of Chinese culture in general and of Chinese women (and men) in particular. She charges that Protestant missionaries were pioneer feminists in China. They attributed the problems of Chinese women such as foot binding and female infanticide to Confucius. They perpetuated stories of women being sold into slavery or suffering bad marriages under the tyrannical rule of mothers-in-law. Woo attributes these stereotypes to the belief in Western progress and democracy, which was seen in contrast to China’s traditionalism and despotism. “And so it was that the plight of Chinese women, with the help of Christian feminist critique, became an outstanding standard for Chinese inferiority.” Woo acknowledges that some of the really gross generalizations gradually gave way to more sympathetic accounts based on comparisons of the Confucian Analects and Christian Gospels and the goal of modernization in China. Nevertheless, socialists inherited and perpetuated the old stereotypes. In fact, these stereotypes have continued in Western feminist literature, which has ignored the testimony of Chinese women themselves.

### *Insider to Outsider*

Despite the fact that women were once not participants in the public realm of religion, they were still insiders. Now that they have become scholars of religions as well, they speak with new authority about the insider’s view. Woo says that her own role as an insider, as both a woman and as a Chinese, is to use her scholarly skills to set the record straight. She writes that “after a hundred and fifty years of a relatively one-sided affair, and at this time when the issue of race or charge of racism is threatening the integrity of feminism, an appreciation of *jen* and a better understanding of the history of Confucianism might offer a sense of cultural recovery for Chinese feminists and a better understanding and inspiration for non-Chinese feminists. This essay and the several mentioned here mark, I hope, the beginning of this new stage of development toward a less racist feminism or feminisms.”

*Insider to both Outsiders and Insiders*

Women use Western scholarship when they speak not only to outsiders, especially in the West, but also to insiders—sometimes women, sometimes men—of their own religions. One form that this takes is criticism of their own religions. This has necessitated a new category.

Hassan writes as an insider (a Muslim woman) to outsiders (whoever reads this book, which is published in the West), but she notes that her analysis should be read by insiders as well. Unlike Woo, she says nothing about “women of color” or racism, although she might on other occasions. Her immediate aim is not to address outsiders. It is to address other Muslim women. That is due to the plight of women in Islamic countries that have passed “anti-woman laws.” Because emancipated women threaten traditional society, according to Hassan, they are associated with promiscuity, family disintegration, drug addiction, and every other perceived evil of Western societies. Attributing evil to educated and working women is a way of keeping them at home; denying women opportunities in the public realm keeps them subordinate to men. Because of perceived retrogressive trends, Hassan makes grand criticisms of Islamic society (and, unlike Woo, does not worry about complexities and ambiguities). She thinks that the plight of most Muslim women is extremely grave, and she is not embarrassed to say so. In fact, she admits quite bluntly that Muslim women need to develop a feminist theology like those created by Christian and Jewish women in the West. Though inspired by Western feminism, both in its radical critique of society and in its approach to problem-solving, Hassan uses her knowledge of Islam to separate the true faith from its corrupt accretions.

Gross, too, criticizes Buddhism from a feminist perspective. And she, too, worries about conservative reactions to the women’s movement. In Thailand, she observes, the Buddhist establishment has not welcomed the restoration of full ordination for nuns (because that is based on the Mahāyāna tradition, which is alien to the Theravāda Buddhism of Thailand). These fully ordained nuns are not allowed, therefore, to wear brown monastic robes; instead, they wear white garments of women whose status is between that of lay people and monastics. Because women have usually been outsiders to the public world of political power, feminists not only criticize this state of affairs but also develop ways of changing it.

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The perspectives of insiders, whether those of women or other minority groups, are finally being recognized at the end of the millennium. This transition has been a long time in the making and has drawn on the great intellectual movements of the past few centuries—from the first extensive contact with remote

cultures under the aegis of colonialism to the homogenization of cultures in the “global village.” Shifts of power on the microcosmic level are related to those of the macrocosmic. One result has been the intertwining of two great themes—power and diversity—at individual, group, national, and international levels. This book on feminism and world religions explores both. In this sense, it is different from the first one in this series, *Women and World Religions*,<sup>30</sup> which was written over a decade ago.

## Notes

1. I have quoted freely from the manuscripts of my colleagues working on this book. Because I was working with drafts, I have not furnished footnotes.

2. Terry Woo quoting Karen Offen, 1988, 132.

3. This list follows that of Huston Smith in *The Religions of Man* (New York: Harper, 1958). For an analysis of the term “world religions” in historical perspective, see Katherine K. Young, “World Religions: A Category in the Making?” in *Religion in History/La religion dans l’histoire*, ed. Michel Despland and Gerard Vallée (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992) 111–130. Although it has been used in a wide variety of ways, three adjectives since the 1950s have modified it: “living,” “major,” and “great.” I argue that better criteria would be: (1) origination after state formation and (2) continued existence. This list would include, but by no means exhaust, the religions found on Huston Smith’s list.

4. These require that nuns honor monks (and not admonish even those who are junior in status); that they be taught by monks (and not teach themselves); that they hold their formal ceremonies and their communal confessions in the presence of monks, and so forth.

5. N. Ross Reat, “Insiders and Outsiders in the Study of Religious Traditions,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 51.3 (1983): 459.

6. I thank my colleague Paul Nathanson for this discussion of Romanticism.

7. Romanticism itself, however, cannot be blamed entirely for the horrors of twentieth-century Europe. These ideologies have depended in addition on the Enlightenment belief that perfect knowledge can be discerned—albeit through reason rather than revelation. If so, then the perfect society can be built within history. From this, some people believe, it follows that those who refuse to cooperate in building utopia should be eliminated, persecuted, or at least marginalized. Those who inaugurated France’s Reign of Terror had learned this particular lesson from the Enlightenment. And they were merely the first of many.

8. H. Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, vol.1 (The Hague:Martinus Nijhoff, 1965).

9. The following is an example. The United Church of Canada was formed in 1925 after the merger of Canadian Methodists, Presbyterians, and (some) Congregationalists.

10. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Comparative Religion: Whither—and Why?" in *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology*, eds. Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959).

11. Smith 43 (emphasis added). I would add that there is no inherent reason why hearing is better suited to the interpretation of people than seeing.

12. Smith, 42.

13. For a detailed discussion of these six characteristics, see Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young, *Beyond the Fall of Man: From Feminist Ideology to Intersexual Dialogue* (forthcoming).

14. This new notion of equality was itself derived from the Judeo-Christian notion of the Messianic Age or the Kingdom of God.

15. Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 117.

16. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 3 vols. trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

17. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

18. Quoted by John Kucich, in *Modern American Critics Since 1955 in the Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 67 (Gale Research co., 1988) 67.

19. See Nathanson and Young (forthcoming).

20. Katherine K. Young, "Phenomenology of Religion" in *The Interface Between Women's Studies and Methodology in the Study of Religion*, Arvind Sharma (forthcoming).

21. Rita M. Gross, *Feminism and Religion: An Introduction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966) 10–16.

22. Marsha Hewitt, "'The Negative Power of the Feminine:' Herbert Marcuse, Mary Daly and Gynocentric Feminism" in *Gender, Genre and Religion: Feminist Reflections*, ed. Morny Joy and Eva K. Neumaier-Dargyay (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1955) 258.

23. Hewitt, 263.

24. Jacques Derrida, "Différance," *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

25. Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. B. Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 51.

26. Morny Joy, "And What If Truth Were a Woman?" in *Gender, Genre and Religion: Feminist Reflections*, ed. Morny Joy and Eva K Neumaier-Dargyay (Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1995) 278.

27. See Denise Riley, "Am I That Name?": *Feminism and the Category of "Woman"* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

28. Arvind Sharma. "The Insider and the Outsider in the Study of Religion," *Eastern Anthropologist* 38 (1985): 331–33.