

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Muhammed: The Man and His Faith*, translated by Theophil Menzel (1936; reprint, New York, 1956), is the only one of Andrae's books currently available in English. A translation of his studies on early Sufism, *I myrträdgården*, is a desideratum. Among German translations are *Mohammed: Sein Leben und sein Glaube* (Göttingen, 1932); *Die letzten Dinge* (Leipzig, 1940), a translation of *Det osynligas värld* by Hans Heinrich Schaeder, with a good biographical sketch; *Islamische Mystiker* (Stuttgart, 1960), a translation of *I myrträdgården* by Helmhart Kanus-Credé; and Andrae's biography of Söderblom, translated by E. Groening and A. Volkein (Berlin, 1938). A full account of Andrae's life and work has been given by Geo Widengren in *Tor Andrae* (Uppsala, 1947).

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL (1987)

**ANDROCENTRISM** refers to cultural perspectives where the male is generically taken to be the norm of humanness. Androcentrism originates from a male monopoly on cultural leadership and the shaping and transmission of culture. In religion this means that males monopolize priestly and teaching roles of religion and exclude women both from the exercise of these roles and from the education that such roles require. Thus women are prevented from bringing their own experience and point of view to the shaping of the official public culture of religion, however much they may participate in the religion as consumers of the public cult or in auxiliary cults restricted to women. The official public definition of the religion in terms of law, cult, and symbol is defined both without female participation and in such a way as to justify their exclusion.

Women's exclusion from the learning and shaping of the cult and symbol system also means that they do not participate in the processes by which a religion remembers and transmits its traditions. As a result, religions or religious practices that do not exclude women are forgotten or are remembered in a way that makes this participation appear deviant. Androcentric religious culture makes woman the "other"; woman's silence and absence are normative. Consequently, her presence is remarked upon only to reinforce her otherness, either by definitions of "woman's place" or by remonstrances against women who are deemed to have "gotten out of their place."

Androcentric culture also translates the dialectics of human existence—superiority/inferiority, right/left, light/darkness, active/passive, life/death, reason/feeling, and so forth—into androcentric gender symbolism. In this gender symbolism the female is always the "other": inferior in relation to superior, weaker in relation to stronger, negative in relation to positive. Even when the qualities assigned to women are positive, such as love or altruism, these are defined in such a way as to be supplemental or auxiliary to a male-centered definition of the self. The female becomes the unconscious that completes the conscious, the affectivity that

completes rationality. Thus, despite the appearance of balance in such gender complementarity, the female is always relative and complementary to the male, rather than herself the one who is complemented or completed in her own right.

Androcentrism must be seen as a pervasive influence on all religious cultures, having shaped either those religious cultures themselves or the way they have developed or the way they have been reported upon and studied, or in many cases all three. The fact that this influence has remained largely unnoticed is itself an expression of its pervasiveness. It has been so pervasive and normative that it itself has not even been noticeable, since one cannot notice a given point of view unless another point of view is also possible.

Androcentrism pervades all aspects of the religious culture—its view of human nature, its definitions of good and evil, its creation stories, its images of the divine, its laws, rituals, polity, and practices of worship. One could illustrate this from many religions, but in this essay the illustrations will be drawn from the Judeo-Christian tradition. In this tradition, although the two creation stories in the *Book of Genesis*, chapters 1 and 2, offer alternative possibilities, religious anthropology has in fact been drawn from the second. Here the male is the norm, the one created first; woman is created second and taken by God from man's rib. This is a very peculiar story, since it reverses the actual experience of human birth, in which both males and females are born from the female. By making a male God the midwife of the birth of the female from the side of the male, it defines woman's place as auxiliary and secondary to the male. So normative is this assumption that few Christians even notice the oddness of the story, its reversal of actual human birth.

This place of woman as secondary and auxiliary to the male has been evident in all classical Christian anthropology. Christian anthropology operates within a dualistic framework that sets the good human self, created in the "image of God," in tension with an evil self that has lost or diminished its originally good human nature and positive relation to God. Although the *Genesis* 1 story defines both male and female equally as possessing the image of God, all classical Christian anthropology has regarded the male as the normative image of God in such a way as to make woman the image of either the lower or the fallen part of the self. While it is never denied that women possess some relationship to the image of God, they are seen as related to that image only under and through their relationship to the male, rather than in their own right. In themselves, women are said to image the body that is to be ruled over by the mind, or else the simple part of the self that causes sin and the Fall.

This androcentric definition of humanity is evident in Augustine's treatise on the Trinity (*De Trinitate* 7.7.10):

How then did the apostle tell us that man is the image of God and therefore he is forbidden to cover his head, but that the woman is not so and therefore she is commanded to cover hers? Unless forsooth according to that which I have said already when I was treating of

the nature of the human mind, that the woman, together with her own husband, is the image of God, so that the whole substance may be one image, but when she is referred to separately in her quality as a helpmeet, which regards the woman alone, then she is not the image of God, but as regards the male alone, he is the image of God as fully and completely as when the woman too is joined to him in one.

Deeply embedded in this Christian definition of female subordinate and auxiliary existence is the story of female primacy in sin. Although the story of Eve's role in the expulsion from Paradise is by no means a normative story for the Old Testament or even for the Christian Gospels, through the Pauline tradition it assumed normative status for defining the human predicament in such a way that not only all Christian theology but the Bible itself is read with this presupposition. Female primacy in sin is the underside of woman's subordination in the divinely ordained nature of things: things got out of hand for humanity and its relationship to God in the beginning because woman got out of hand. Woman acting on her own initiative caused sin to come into the world and Adam to be expelled from Paradise. He is punished by the alienation of his work, but she is punished by the alienation of her humanity. She must now bring forth children in sorrow and be under the subjugation of her husband.

This story operates to justify female subordination in society and religion. This status of subordination had now been redoubled and reinforced as divine punishment for an original sin of acting on her own. Any efforts of women to act on their own, rather than as auxiliaries in a male-defined social order, can then be seen as new evidence of sinful female propensities—propensities that are to be repressed by reference to this original sin that caused everything to go awry. Woman acting on her own initiative can only do evil and cause chaos. She can never do good by herself, but only when she restricts herself to obedient response to male commands.

The androcentric presuppositions of the Christian view of creation and sin are maintained also in the definitions of salvation. The redeemer, the Messiah, the manifestation of God in the flesh, appears in male form. This maleness of the Christian redeemer could be regarded as a historical or cultural accident, similar to the fact that he is Jewish and appears in a particular time and place. These particularities in no way limit his ability to represent universal humanity. Yet Christian theology has in fact typically treated Jesus' maleness differently from his Jewishness, so as to make that maleness ontologically necessary to his ability to represent God. For Thomas Aquinas, the maleness of Jesus flows directly from the fact that the male is the normative or "perfect" expression of the human species, while woman is non-normative and defective. Thus to represent the fullness of human nature, it is necessary that Jesus be male. Here we see clearly the androcentric presupposition whereby the male possesses a generic humanity that is both complete in itself and capable of encompassing the representation of woman

as well, while the woman cannot even represent herself, much less the male, as a human being.

This androcentric definition of Christology or the necessary maleness of the incarnation points in two directions. On the one side, it reveals the presumed maleness of God. On the other side, it excludes women from the priesthood and from representation of Christ's and God's divine authority in church leadership. Although Christian theology does not claim that God is in a literal sense male, there is an overwhelming bias in Christian theology, itself derived from its parent religion Judaism, to image God in male form. Male roles are seen as representing authority and rule, initiation and power. Since God is by definition the absolute expression of these roles of initiation, power, and sovereignty, only male metaphors are appropriate for him. Female metaphors can be used only for what is ruled over, created by, or acted upon by God; they cannot signify what acts, rules, or has autonomous power.

This gender dualism of God and creation as male and female is evident in biblical as well as Christian symbolism. Although female theological metaphors are not absent from the Bible and Christian cult and theology, these primarily either symbolize creaturely subordination to God or else point to evil or negative traits that separate the human from God. Christian symbolism of the female thus splits into two forms, the good feminine and the bad female. The good feminine represents creaturely existence totally submissive to divine initiative, self-abnegating of any pride or activity of its own. Typically, this is also expressed as "purity" or suppression of sexuality. The Virgin Mary represents the apogee of this ideal. The feminine is also used in both Judaism and Christianity to image the elect people in relationship to God. The covenant relationship to God is imaged along the lines of a patriarchal marriage, with Israel or the church as bride in relation to the bridegroom.

Influenced by ascetic spirituality, Christianity emphasizes the virginal character of the church not only in her espousal to her Lord, but also in her birthing of the people of God. Christian baptism is imaged as a new birth that transforms and negates the sinfulness of birth through the female. Actual birth destroys virginity and brings forth sinful offspring, while through baptism the church remains virginal and brings forth virginal offspring. This baptism symbolism illustrates another typical trait of androcentric patriarchal religion: the extent to which its symbols and rituals duplicate female biological and social roles—conception, birth, suckling, feeding—but in such a way as to negate these roles in their female form, while elevating them to a higher spiritual plane through the male cultic monopoly on these activities.

Female symbolism in Christianity also symbolizes the soul and its passive reception of divine initiative, as well as creation itself or the earth as the object of God's creative work. In *Proverbs* and the wisdom tradition feminine roles are in the same way ascribed to God. This continues in Judaism in concepts such as the divine Shekhinah, or divine pres-

ence. Some minority traditions in Christianity have also imaged the Holy Spirit as female or revived the wisdom tradition to speak of God as having a feminine side. But in all versions of this notion of divine androgyny, the feminine roles or aspects of God are thought of as secondary and auxiliary to a male-centered divine fatherhood. Wisdom is seen as a secondary and dependent principle that comes forth from the divine father to mediate his laws and actions to creation. Thus she is often pictured as resembling the family mother who mediates the commands of the father to the children. Thus even these minor instances of feminine imagery for God do not fundamentally break out of the androcentric patriarchal symbolism that allows the “good feminine” to image only that which is secondary and auxiliary to a male-centered ultimacy.

Female participation in Christian redemption has also been biased by androcentric anthropology. In the ascetic traditions of Christian spirituality, the holy woman is defined as transcending not only her bodily temptations but also her female nature: she is said to have become “virile” and “manly.” This peculiar formulation is found in gnosticism (see logion 114 of the *Gospel of Thomas*), but also in orthodox Christian asceticism (see Leander of Seville’s preface to his *Institutes on Virginité*). It derives from an assumed analogy between maleness and spirituality (or rationality), and between femaleness and corporeality or the passions. Asceticism restores the male in his spiritual manliness, but is possible for woman only by transcending her “female weakness.” This notion suggested to many early Christian women that asceticism might be the route to female emancipation. But the church tradition, as defined by male leadership, hastened to add that the true spirituality of woman is expressed only through the most total submission to male authority, especially ecclesiastical authority.

In the Protestant tradition, where spirituality is reincorporated into a familial context, woman’s piety is seen as expressible only through submission to her husband, as well as to church and civil authority (as long as these public authorities are of the correct Christian sect). Thus, Christian redemption does not set woman free, but rather forgives her for her original sin of insubordination by displaying her as voluntarily submissive to male authority.

Nevertheless, Christian androcentrism remains deeply suspicious that all women, even holy women, conceal tendencies to insubordination. When these tendencies come out in the open and are asserted unrepentantly, woman becomes witch or handmaid of the devil. When she is crushed or suppressed, as she should be, woman—even if holy—remains Eve, the punished woman put back in her place. Thus Mary, image of the ideal woman as totally submissive and purged of any sexual or willful traits, in effect remains an unattainable ideal for real women, an ideal by which all women are judged and found lacking.

All the androcentric presuppositions discussed come together in the exclusion of woman from ecclesiastical leader-

ship as priest, teacher, or minister. The identification of male authority and divine authority excludes women from being able to represent God or speak as the voice of God. As a person who cannot act autonomously or as an authority in her own right, she cannot exercise such authority in human society generally, much less in the church, the restored human society. As one deficient in moral self-control and rationality, she is incapable of teaching and of spiritual government.

Despite these pervasive androcentric assumptions of Christian theology, Christianity, as practiced, has been much more ambivalent. Androcentrism has partially shaped the practice of biblical and Christian religion, in the sense of actual exclusion of women from leadership and the indoctrination of an androcentric piety accepted as normative by women as well as men. But there have also been many instances of female religious power that are by no means contained by these definitions: prophetesses in both Old and New Testaments; female teachers, apostles, and local leaders in the New Testament; and holy women, healers, charismatics, and mystics who were by no means as submissive to male authority as these theories demand. Learned Christian women have studied scripture, founded religious orders and movements that they led in their own name, and written religious treatises of all kinds to express their religious experience and teachings. Yet, the evidence for this alternative history has only begun to be discovered in recent times, as the presuppositions of androcentrism itself are challenged by female religious scholars.

The final expression of androcentrism lies in its command of the transmission of tradition. Tradition is continually rewritten to conform to androcentric presuppositions. Alternative realities are erased from memory, or they are preserved in such a way as to deny them public authority. Religiously powerful women are defined in the tradition in such a way as to make them conform to male definitions of submission or else to be remembered in pejorative ways that allow this memory to function only as a caveat against female religious leadership. Thus, in the *Revelation to John*, a female prophet who is the leader of a community rivaling those of the prophet John is termed “Jezebel,” the name by which Old Testament androcentrism rejected a queen who worshiped other gods. As long as it is impossible to imagine that Jezebel’s gods might have been expressions of the divine as authentic as those of Elijah (or that the Jezebel of the *Revelation to John* was as authentic a prophet as John), androcentric readings of the Judeo-Christian tradition remain intact.

**SEE ALSO** God, article on God in Postbiblical Christianity; Women’s Studies.

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**ANDROGYNES.** The androgyne (from the Greek *andros*, “man,” and *gune*, “woman”) is a creature that is half male and half female. In mythology, such a creature is usually a god and is sometimes called a hermaphrodite, after Hermaphroditus, son of Hermes and Aphrodite, who is said to have grown together with the nymph Salmacis (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.347–388). In religious parlance, androgyny is a much more comprehensive and abstract concept than is implied by the literal image of a creature simultaneously male and female in physical form. To say that God is androgynous is very different from saying that God is an androgyne. But if we limit ourselves to the relatively narrow interpretation of the bisexual god, usually a creator, we are still dealing with a very broad and important religious concept.

It is often said that androgynes are universal, or even archetypal. This is not true. It has been demonstrated that the androgyne is confined in its distribution either to areas formerly of the early “high civilizations” or to areas affected by influences from these centers. Nevertheless, this distribution does extend over a very wide area indeed, testifying to the great appeal of the image. The myth of the splitting apart of a bisexual creator is implicit in the Hebrew myth told in *Genesis* and is explicit in related texts from ancient Mesopotamia; it appears throughout the ancient Indo-European world and in the myths of Australian Aborigines, African tribes, North American and South American Indians, and Pacific islanders; and it is an important theme in medieval and Romantic European literature. Yet many religions, particularly “primitive religions,” have managed to survive without it, and it has very different meanings for many of the cultures in which it does appear. (See Baumann, 1955, p. 9; Kluckhohn, 1960, p. 52; Campbell, 1983, map on p. 142.)

One might attempt to construct a taxonomy of androgynes in various ways. Beginning with the visual image,

androgynes may be horizontal (with breasts above and a phallus below) or, more often, vertical (with one side, usually the left, bearing a breast and half of a vagina and the other side bearing half of a phallus). One may also distinguish “good” and “bad” androgynes in two different senses: morally acceptable and symbolically successful. In the first sense, it must be noted that although androgynes are popularly supposed to stand for a kind of equality and balance between the sexes, since they are technically half male and half female, they more often represent a desirable or undesirable distortion of the male-female relationship or a tension based on an unequal distribution of power. Thus in some societies, divine or ritual androgynes play positive social roles, affirming culturally acceptable values, while others are despised as symbols of an undesirable blurring of categories.

In the second sense, androgynes may be regarded as “good,” in the sense of symbolically successful, when the image presents a convincing fusion of the two polarities and as “bad” when the graft fails to “take” visually or philosophically—that is, when it is a mere juxtaposition of opposites rather than a true fusion. “Bad” androgynes often turn out, on closer inspection, to be not true androgynes but pseudo-androgynes, creatures with some sort of equivocal or ambiguous sexuality that disqualifies them from inclusion in the ranks of the straightforwardly male or female. These liminal figures include the eunuch, the transvestite (or sexual masquerader), the figure who undergoes a sex change or exchanges his sex with that of a person of the opposite sex, the pregnant male, the alternating androgyne (queen for a day, king for a day), and male-female twins.

Perhaps the most important way in which androgynes may be split into two groups, as it were, is in terms of their way of coming into existence. Some are the result of the fusing of separates, male and female; others are born in a fused form and subsequently split into a male and a female. In orthodox mythologies of creation, chaos is negative, something that must be transcended before life can begin; distinctions must therefore be made—male distinguished from female, one social class from another. This corresponds to the Freudian belief that the desire to return to undifferentiated chaos, to return to the womb or the oceanic feeling, is a wish for death, for Thanatos (though it has been demonstrated that this is a facile and incorrect interpretation of the wish to return to chaos; see Eliade, 1965, p. 119). In the mythology of mysticism, however, chaos is positive; the desire to merge back into chaos is the goal of human existence, the supreme integration toward which one strives. In many rituals, too, androgyny is “a symbolic restoration of ‘Chaos,’ of the undifferentiated unity that preceded the Creation, and this return to the homogeneous takes the form of a supreme regeneration, a prodigious increase of power” (ibid., pp. 114, 199, 122). The mystic striving toward positive chaos is a clear parallel to the Jungian integration of the individual, for it celebrates the merging of two apparently separate entities (the self and God) that are in fact one. Thus, fusing androgynes