

ATF Biblical Series Number—1

Ethology to the ancients was the study of character; to the moderns it is the study of human beings through the behavioural patterns of animals. These studies in fact have a common genealogy with classical writers convinced that the dimorphism of gender was naturally ordered—with all its consequent inequalities in strength, virtue and above all in the location of reason. In the encounter between Jesus and the Syrophoenician women in the gospel of Mark this ethology dominates the story. Women are described as dogs. This highly original work utilizes the common emphases of ancient and modern ethology to unlock new dimensions of the story. It demonstrates that in the Syrophoenician critique of Jesus, delivered by a woman and her daughter, exalted reason must yield its monopoly to the equally privileged life of the body.

“This is methodologically a very sophisticated work, with the main purpose of overturning a long tradition in the interpretation of Mark 7:24-30 (Jesus’ encounter with the Syrophoenician woman) from a concentration upon *word*, to a concentration upon *body*. In doing so, it brings into focus hitherto overlooked elements in the story: especially the *child* and the use of the *dog* to characterize the *woman*. It moves the interpretation of this passage significantly into new directions.”

Halvor Moxnes, University of Oslo

“The work shows significant independence of thought on the part of the researcher together with a very comprehensive knowledge of the literature and ability to engage with it critically. It was a pleasure to read with its very careful attention to nuanced scholarship, its clarity of expression and its very thorough exploration of a gospel pericope. It provides insights which will be the subject of dialogue for a long time to come in Markan and feminist scholarship.”

Elaine Wainwright, University of Auckland

Alan Cadwallader lectures New Testament studies in the School of Theology, Flinders University.

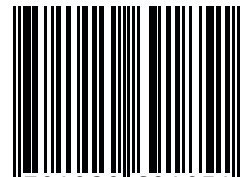
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Part One

The Primacy of the Word: and its Ethological Reinforcement

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Abbreviations

The abbreviations for classical writers and their works and for inscriptions, papyri and ostraca are based on those used by HG Liddell, R Scott and HS Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, ninth edition (1940), with supplement, 1968), CT Lewis and C Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), GW Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), *Année Épigraphique*, *Journal of Biblical Literature* and JF Oates, RS Bagnall, WH Willis and KA Worp, *Checklist of Editions of Greek and Latin Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, fourth edition 1992). The following additional abbreviations are used:

<i>ABD</i>	Anchor Bible Dictionary
<i>ABR</i>	Australian Biblical Review
<i>AE</i>	Année épigraphique
<i>AER</i>	American Ecclesiastical Review
<i>AHB</i>	Ancient History Bulletin
<i>AJA</i>	American Journal of Archeology
<i>AJAH</i>	American Journal of Ancient History
<i>AJP</i>	American Journal of Philology
<i>AncSoc</i>	Ancient Society
<i>AntCl</i>	L'Antiquité classique
<i>ANRW</i>	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
<i>AP</i>	Palatine Anthology
<i>AQ</i>	Anthropology Quarterly
<i>Archiv für lat. Lexikogr.</i>	Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie und Grammatik
<i>AW</i>	Ancient World
<i>b</i>	Babylonian Talmud

<i>BA</i>	Biblical Archeologist
<i>BAGD</i>	W Bauer, WF Arndt, FW Gingrich and FW Danker (eds) <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i> (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, second edition, 1979)
<i>BDF</i>	F Blass, A Debrunner and RW Funk <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, ninth to tenth editions, 1961).
<i>BGU</i>	Berliner Griechische Urkunden
<i>BibInt</i>	Biblical Interpretation
<i>BibRes</i>	Biblical Research
<i>BJRL</i>	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
<i>BS</i>	Beth She'arim Greek Inscriptions
<i>BTB</i>	Biblical Theology Bulletin
<i>BZ</i>	Biblische Zeitschrift
<i>CA</i>	Classical Antiquity
<i>CBQ</i>	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
<i>CIG</i>	Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum
<i>CIJ</i>	Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum
<i>CIL</i>	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
<i>COP</i>	Corpus des ordonnances des Ptolémées
<i>CQ</i>	Classical Quarterly
<i>ET</i>	Expository Times
<i>Ethol</i>	Ethology
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>FemStuds</i>	Feminist Studies

<i>FGH</i>	F Jacoby <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (Berlin)
<i>GT</i>	Gospel of Thomas
<i>HSCP</i>	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
<i>HTR</i>	Harvard Theological Review
<i>I.Eph.</i>	Die Inschriften von Ephesos
<i>ICUR</i>	Inscriptiones Christinae Urbis, Romae
<i>IEJ</i>	Israel Exploration Journal
<i>IF</i>	Indogermansiche Forschungen
<i>IG</i>	Inscriptiones Graecae
<i>IGNTP</i>	International Greek New Testament Project
<i>ILS</i>	Inscriptiones latinae selectae
<i>Int</i>	Interpretation
<i>JAAR</i>	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
<i>JAOS</i>	Journal of the American Oriental Society
<i>JBL</i>	Journal of Biblical Literature
<i>JCS</i>	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
<i>JETS</i>	Journal of Evangelical Theological Society
<i>JECS</i>	Journal of Early Christian Studies
<i>JFR</i>	Journal of Folklore Research
<i>JHS</i>	Journal of Hellenic Studies
<i>JQR</i>	Jewish Quarterly Review
<i>JRA</i>	Journal of Roman Archeology
<i>JRH</i>	Journal of Religious History
<i>JRS</i>	Journal of Roman Studies
<i>JSNT</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
<i>JTB</i>	Journal of Theoretical Behaviour

<i>JTS</i>	Journal of Theological Studies
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell, Scott, Jones <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i>
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>m</i>	Mishnah
<i>NDIEC</i>	New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity
<i>NLH</i>	New Literary History
<i>NovT</i>	Novum Testamentum
<i>NTS</i>	New Testament Studies
<i>OGIS</i>	Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae
<i>O.Mich.</i>	Ostraca Michigan
<i>Oud Stud</i>	Oudtestamentische Studiën
<i>PCG</i>	Poetae Comici Graeci
<i>PDM</i>	Papyri Demoticae Magicae
<i>PG</i>	Patrologia Graeca
<i>PGM</i>	Papyri Graecae Magicae
<i>PL</i>	Patrologia Latina
<i>P. XV. Congr.</i>	Papyrologica Bruxellensia du XV ^e Congrès
<i>P. Cair.</i>	Papyrus in the Musée du Caire
<i>P. Col. Zen.</i>	The Columbia Zenon Papyri
<i>P. Duk.</i>	The Papyri at Duke University
<i>P. Ent.</i>	The Enteuxeis Papyri
<i>P. Fay.</i>	The Papyri of the Fayûm Towns
<i>P. Hamb.</i>	Griechische Papyrusurkunden der Hamburger Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek
<i>P. Hib.</i>	The Hibeh Papyri
<i>P. Lond.</i>	Greek Papyri in the British Museum (Kenyon)
<i>P.L. Bat.</i>	Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava
<i>P. Lon. Hay</i>	Papyri of the London Hay Collection

<i>P. Oxy.</i>	The Oxyrhynchus Papyri
<i>P. Par.</i>	Greek Papyri in the Musée du Louvre
<i>P. Strasb.</i>	Papyri of the University of Strasbourg
<i>P. Tebt.</i>	The Tebtunis Papyri
<i>P. Wisc.</i>	The Wisconsin Papyri
<i>P. Zen.</i>	The Zenon Papyri
<i>PSI</i>	Papiri della Società Italiana
<i>PUG</i>	Papiri dell'Università di Genova
<i>QRB</i>	Quarterly Review of Biology
<i>RB</i>	Revue biblique
<i>RE</i>	Pauly-Wissowa <i>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
<i>RHPR</i>	Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses
<i>RSR</i>	Religious Studies Review
<i>RTL</i>	<i>Revue théologique de Louvain</i>
<i>SBLSP</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
<i>SciExp</i>	<i>Science et Éspirit</i>
<i>SIG</i>	Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecum
<i>SO</i>	Symbolae Osloenses
<i>T</i>	Testament
<i>TAPA</i>	Transactions of the American Philological Association
<i>TDNT</i>	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
<i>TGF</i>	Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta
<i>ThQ</i>	<i>Theological Quarterly</i>
Tischendorf ⁸	C. Tischendorf 8 th Edition of the Greek New Testament
<i>TLG</i>	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae

<i>TZ</i>	Theologische Zeitschrift
<i>U.P.Z.</i>	Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit
<i>VC</i>	Vigiliae Christianae
<i>VGT</i>	Vocabulary of the Greek Testament
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>ZPE</i>	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik



Introduction

On Women, Word and Woofers

She has gained acclaim in Jewish and Gentile expressions of early Christianity. She names, under the guise of the ‘Canaanitess’, a Sunday in the liturgical year of the Orthodox Church. She was given twenty-seven sermons in one collection that ran through successive editions for over a hundred years.¹ She is a constant recipient of feminist re-conceptualisations of the early Jesus movement. She is the character in Mark’s gospel (Mk 7:24–30) called ‘the Syrophenician woman’.

The prayer of humble access

The Syrophenician woman has also provided inspiration for the most distinctive supplication of the foundational Anglican prayer-book. It is called ‘The Prayer of Humble Access’ and, 450 years after it was penned, many in the world-wide Anglican Communion still repeat it. The prayer comes at the critical transition from ‘The Prayer of Thanksgiving’ to ‘The Prayer of Consecration’ in ‘The Order for the Administration of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion’:

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his

1. S Rutherford, *The Trial and Triumph of Faith* (The Free Church of Scotland, 1845).

body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.²

The rubric of instruction for its use required the priest to say the prayer in the name of all, whilst kneeling, though community practice has swung the prayer into corporate repetition.

Several accents attach to the prayer: kneeling is the requisite posture to voice the petition, the body is sinful³ (whereas the soul is without attribute) and no claims can be made upon God, even for crumbs under the table. Commentators on the prayer were quite clear that the allusion of the prayer was to the words of the Syrophoenician/Canaanite woman.⁴ One of the founders of the Oxford Movement, John Keble, held ‘We adopt her language in the deepest prayer of our Eucharistic Service.’⁵ Hence, admission of wretchedness, expressed by a sinful body in a grovelling position, was set by intertextual relationship to a woman who was recalled as one under the table, a dog. The collapse of the man is portrayed as a

-
2. This synaxis belongs to *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662), though from its origin in 1548, the prayer appears to have occupied different positions in the liturgy: see WE Scudamore, *Notitia Eucharistica* (London, Oxford & Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1872), 479.
 3. ‘Sinful body’ may owe a connection to the dubious translation (found in early English translations through to the RSV) of Rom 6:6.
 4. See, for example, E Daniel, *The Prayer Book: Its History, Language and Contents* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co, fifteenth edition, nd), 322, A Barry, *The Teacher’s Prayer Book* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, sixteenth edition, nd), 144a. The comparison to ‘Prayers of Inclination’ in ancient liturgies (for example, the Liturgy of St Basil) only reinforces the point—these ancient prayers lack any allusion to the story of the Syrophoenician woman.
 5. See *Sermons for the Christian Year*, volume 4, sermon 14, quoted by MF Sadler, *The Gospel according to St Mark* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1892), 150.

descent into the feminine, or indeed, through the feminine to the bestial. The hallmark of unworthiness, of sin, and of dependency on a higher mercy, was the woman. In order to accentuate the destitution of the state, Jesus' own prior words to the woman are subtly restored: the denial of crumbs is accepted, even as it is blended with the woman's words confirming a position 'under the table'.

The perspective inculcated by the prayer was that redemption (ritually enacted by the movement through the Consecration Prayer to the reception of bread) consisted in moving up and away from being the animal—woman—indeed, from the bodily being of woman. God's mercy was pictured as securing an elevation from a bestial state. To receive bread was therefore to become a son not a daughter. Children and women were elided from express mention, seemingly collated with the animal recalled in the prayer's gospel reference, but never directly named—allusion being one of the most subtly powerful and self-protective forms of linguistic control.

The subtle liturgical socialisation was no novel development; it simply reiterated ancient constructions of woman, the body and the animal, and preserved male identity and control against the threat of womanly degeneracy. And with the self-indulgent and self-authenticating remarks that ascribe to the prayer a 'singular fervour and beauty ... in its confession of unworthiness and humility ...',⁶ such attitudes were now deemed the acceptable worship of the christian god.

Toward a liberating reading of the Syrophenician women's story

Accordingly, the story of the Syrophenician woman must be the place where any potential for restoration and critique begins. But another and greater necessity accompanies a new reading of the story. The grave danger in the return to the story is that the use of the woman to delineate male salvation would continue. That is, whilst the prayer might use the image of the woman as the representation of the

6. Barry, 144a.

depths to which man can sink, a new reading must avoid constructing the woman as the means by which man can achieve salvation, via a revisioned posture towards God/Jesus. The paradigm would not have changed, merely the arrangement of the constituent elements. If the Syrophenician's story has another reading which can withstand the 'Prayer of Humble Access', then it must be a reading that attends to the gender dynamics of the story rather than one that merely provides a woman's example (differently read) for the sake of a male in search of liberation. The missiological interpretation of the story that has accompanied western missionary expansion in the modern era—that the story represents the breaking into Gentile adherence of an originally Jewish-contained Jesus movement—is only partially redirected by an emphasis on women as 'determinative for the extension'.⁷ Even more critically, the unabated emphasis on the words of the exchange between Jesus and the woman, which has shifted from privileging those of Jesus (in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) to those of the woman (in the last four decades) has done little to unsettle the logocentric presumptions that undergird both. In other words, missiological and logocentric interpretations leave the basic arena of male-controlled foundations largely unshaken.

An attempt must be made to attend to the gendered dynamics of the story. This will, of necessity, commence with the text itself, but will not be separated from the sociopolitical influences of its own time and the heightened awareness of gender issues in our own. Historical questions relating to the origins and authenticity of the story in Mark's gospel remain dormant throughout the body of the work, surfacing only as a postulate in the conclusion. At the same time, a consciousness of performance issues and the cultural materialism within which the text had its early life, provides an opportunity to move beyond a mere literary analysis of character. The resistance to the erasure of the woman

7. E Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (NY: Crossroad, 1983), 138.

from a story within which she figures so prominently is a small step towards according a subjectivity to the woman, at least at the level of performance and appropriation of the story, given that historical reconstruction may be too fragile a venture. Indeed, historical fixation may do a disservice to the groups that held, shaped and improvised the telling of the story of the Syrophoenician woman and sought to lead the story into the flesh of their own time.⁸ Accordingly, both an essentialising of woman erected on the edifice of Markan literary dynamics and a thorough-going fictionalising that sacrifices somatic actualisation on the altar of the aesthetics of language are to be eschewed.

Moreover, the female adult and female child are not to be given a voice and a place as if by some beneficent male largesse. Rather, my hope, even as a male interpreter, is to recognise within and beyond the story 'her' self-authorised decision to occupy communication and space. It opens the possibility for this male writer to do likewise without demanding the presence or absence of the female (adult or child) in terms of gender dominance or dependence, utilisation or reification. The potential sought in a new reading is for women, children and men to cooperate in humanist transformation, or even to assert their own authorial subjectivity in resistance to any *demand* for cooperation that may lurk in such an aspiration.

The motivation for this writing is to purge the story of interpretations that require the expending of a woman and (female) child for male interests, whether of man's sin or redemption, of extolling/excusing a (male) saviour, or of maintaining a male privilege in identity constructs and rational discourse. This book is therefore about a woman and her daughter's destabilisation of 'the powers of representation as powers of the Father',⁹ of a male-constructed universe that has been naturalised by reference to the animal world.

8. J Dewey, 'From Storytelling to Written Text: The Loss of Early Christian Women's Voices', in *BTB* 26 (1996): 71–78.

9. J Rancière, *The Flesh of Words: The Politics of Writing*, translated by C Mandell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 159.

The contemporary basis for the approach

Up until relatively recently, Mark's story has been overwhelmed by its dependent off-spring born(e) in a didactic, diasporan matrix (Mt 15:21–28).¹⁰ The faith of a humble, gentile woman has characterised the reading of both pericopes. Such a (mis-) reading of Mark has a remarkable tenacity—Gerd Lüdemann, for example, has claimed that, although the woman's faith is not mentioned explicitly, 'as a phenomenon it is present in the story'.¹¹

The retrieval of the blatant affirmation of the word of a woman (Mk 7:29) has brought considerable reassessment of the significance of the story. This 'word of a woman' has become prized in a socio-political climate of the recovery of distinctive and critical women's voices in contemporary church and society (especially in the West). However, even as this 'word of a woman' is still yielding a rich fecundity for the life of church and of those exploring other communal expressions of faith, I name three concerns (at least) for further reflection:

- i) the problematisation of the accent upon word by the rehabilitation of corporeality as a positive, contributing presence.
- ii) the significance of the application of animal epithets in an encounter *involving a woman*.
- iii) the neglect of the daughter's role in/for the story.

The first concern arises from an awareness of the cost that may accompany a privileging of the woman's word. The corporeality, even carnality, of woman has been impaled with the long historical quill of demeaning de-, in- and pre-scription. The gaining of the word of a woman

10. Markan priority is assumed herein but does not affect the main arguments.

11. *Jesus After 2000 Years: What He Really Said and Did*, translated by J Bowden (London: SCM, 2000), 50.

might simply become the final epitaph on/for her bodily subjectivity.

Contemporary feminist theory, complemented by explorations in literary theory, have re-aligned attention from word to body.¹² The importance of the body has been reasserted not as a poor counterpoint to the primacy of the word, nor as a capitulation to ancient denigration of a woman's somatic 'troubling', but as a determinative subject in its own right. The challenge to the word, to the hegemony of this 'logocentricity', does not seek the establishment of a rival for the throne of the word. It looks for a new way of understanding both word and body and the relationship(s) exchanged between them, removed from a competitive striving for supremacy. Body in this understanding is not an ink-injected project of the word, but a gendered, materialist actor and performer engaging both world and word.

The second concern arises from a more rigorous assessment of the sociopolitical and sociocultural background for the story of the Syrophenician woman, one that acknowledges an influence stretching from the ancient world into the present. The animal world that is called upon in the key metaphor of the story (the dog) bears manifold disruptive attributes. The most fundamental description of the animal was and remains that it is irrational. Rationality stands as the singular mark of distinction of the human from the animal. Here scientific axiom and cultural distinctive are glued by the appeal to nature. By extrapolation, the animal was also the mark of anarchic potential and unmastered bodily instincts. Antiquity's stock dualisms extended the characterisation to woman. The upholding of the word of the Syrophenician woman in the Markan story is compelled to confront the anomaly of Jesus' description of the woman and her daughter as dogs. The primary spur to exploration here is the question:

12. See the work of the Australian writers: Elizabeth Grosz, *space, time and perversion: The Politics of Bodies* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1995), especially chapter 2, and Sara Ahmed, *Differences That Matter: Feminist Theory and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), especially chapter 3.

how can one who is collated with the dumb beasts yet be declared to have uttered *logos*, the mark of rationality?

The third concern confronts the centuries of neglect of the child in the story. For all that the miracle story hinges on the disturbance to the life of the child, little attention has been given to the Syrophoenician daughter's significance for the story, nor to the relationship and exchange with her mother. Even when the expansive power of the word of the woman is appreciated, the absence of any accompanying revaluation of the child may result in a denial of the very achievement of the woman's word, namely, the release of the daughter. The child remains as bound and marginalised as in the opening of the story.

There is no intention in exploring these concerns to resuscitate a biological determinism for the life of women, nor to reify their positions as mothers or dependent daughters. The history of interpretation of the story of the Syrophoenician woman testifies too plainly to a backlash against the power of the word of a woman and to a reinstatement of boundaries upon and around a woman's body.¹³ Moving beyond the word of a woman must not be a retrogression. The careful analysis that follows therefore seeks to meet with these questions raised of the word of a woman in the hope that attention to issues of corporeality, rationality and generational succession will yield not only a strengthening of the woman's connection with the word she speaks, but also an alternative to the absorption of her word into an unchallenged logocentric framework. It will require constant reminder of the gendered dynamics replete in the story.

13. Nineteenth century commentators turned the Syrophoenician story into a repudiation of women's agitation for access to universities and electoral franchise. See my 'Dog-throttling: Nineteenth Century dogmatic/cultural constructions of the Syrophoenician Woman', in *Hermeneutics and the Authority of Scripture*, edited by V Balabanski and AH Cadwallader (Adelaide: ATF Press), forthcoming.

The structure of the argument

The argument presented here unfolds in three sections. The first two chapters seek to establish the *prima facie* case for a new investigation of the story, one which takes seriously the tension between logocentric accent and bestial metonymy such that a new methodology is required so as to guide the analysis.

The metaphor of the dog that dominates the contest of proverbs¹⁴ in the Markan dialogue of Jesus and the Syrophenician woman will be explored in the context of the larger schema of the scientific assessment and rhetorical deployment of animals in the ancient world. More particularly, the commitment to the gendered dynamics of the story will require an investigation of the use and purpose of ‘dog’ as a term of abuse by men against women, rather than replay the standard interpretation that alleges a common Jewish label for Gentiles, even as it subtly removes women from consideration.

The recognition of the problems raised by the complexities of the conjunction of women, dogs and reason in the ancient world generates the need for an adequate methodology. The modern discipline of ethology provides a useful beginning because of its accent upon the conclusions for human behaviour that can be derived from the animal world. It also bears the marks of ancient forebears that similarly constructed conclusions about human beings from animals, most especially a fundamental accent on the unequal dimorphic division between male and female. Feminist critiques of ethology enable a specific accountability for the limitations and socio-biological interests of the discipline.¹⁵

14. It will become clear in chapter 3 that of the three contenders for the form of Jesus’ saying in Mark, that is *chreia*, *tobspruch* and proverb, that the last is the foundation for his first response.

15. I have briefly explored the potential of ethology, critically handled, for the analysis of this gospel story in ‘When a Woman is a Dog: Ancient and Modern Ethology meet the Syrophenician Women’, in *BCT* 1.4 (2005): 1–35.

The second section applies to the Markan text four insights distilled from a feminist-critical appraisal of ethology. These are:

- i) the conjunction of scientific/philosophical axioms with cultural values reinforced through long-standing literary expression,
- ii) the moral implications which attach to the inferior partner categorised in any hierarchical exchange,
- iii) the territorial boundaries which afford spatial protection for dominant and submissive entities, and
- iv) the socio-political conclusions which assert a foundation in the natural order.

In chapters three to five, the saying of Jesus and the reply of the woman in particular will be screened through the grid of these emphases. This grid aids the recognition of the power within the whole story of a mutually reinforcing connection between ethological investigation and ancient literary characterisation. Further, the critical application of a feminist challenged ethology awakens an awareness of literary and popular values operating in the ancient world, of the literary techniques and interests of the text, and of a reliance upon both the performance of the story (the 'performance act') and the reception of the story (the 'performance event').

The third section diverts attention from the exchange of words towards the relationship between the two Syrophenician women in the story. The problems of the dominance of a logocentric approach to the Syrophenician's story will be named most clearly in chapter six, especially as it threatens both the achievement of the woman affirmed in the story and any attempt to recover the importance of the role of the daughter. In chapter seven, the final verse of the pericope receives concerted attention, not least because it constructs a situation that is *not* centred upon Jesus and his benchmark of approval (v 29), but on the encounter between two women, an encounter that displaces an exchange of words in favour of somatic performance.

Problematizing the word of this work and its writer

There are significant dangers in this overall discourse, precisely because the prime avenue of communication is linguistic. A number of factors preclude the inclusion of reproductions of material artefacts even though they would provide at least a symbolic gesture of interrupting a written scholarly enterprise.¹⁶ However, it is hoped that the re-evaluation of the body and the bodies of two women in a story from late antiquity will confront the colonialist tendency of writing as an inherited cultural disposition and activity of (at least) Western male history.¹⁷

By educational opportunities, canonical and manufacturing control over transmission of literature, and myriad reinforcements in the scientific-political nexus, privilege in writing has been granted to men.¹⁸ In the ancient Mediterranean world, this privilege was one expression of the supremacy of *logos*, of word as both reason and literary words. Speech, at least as defined as credible, public and authorised, was the other key aspect. In a sense, both are combined in the story in Mark's Gospel—speech, and the writing thereof, appear to be privileged, although I will argue that both are problematised.

These recognitions demand a (self-)reflection beyond the admission of my own socio-political location. Such disclosure can never deliver a complete guarantee of

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16. The demand for a materialist approach to biblical studies haunts the literary approach. Stephen Moore has produced a succession of essays reflecting this concern: 'Illuminating the Gospels without the benefit of colour: a plea for concrete criticism', in *JAAR* 60 (1992): 257–279, *God's Gym: Divine Male Bodies of the Bible* (New York/London: Routledge, 1996), *God's Beauty Parlor: and Other Queer Spaces In and Around the Bible* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 90–172.
 17. See B Ashcroft, G Griffiths and H Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London/New York: Routledge, 1989), 1–12.
 18. S Johnson, 'Theorizing Language and Masculinity: A Feminist Perspective', in *Language and Masculinity*, edited by S Johnson and UH Meinhof (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 16.

the direction of theoretical argumentation nor adequate evidence for any allegation or excuse.¹⁹ However, the methodological and analytical insights that unfold in argument cannot (dare not) be monolithic. Any self-protective metastructure would defy the very suggestions that are presented herein. The refraction of political potential in the arguments inextricably touches upon my own gender expression and the wanted and unwanted historical inheritance highlighted by the feminist-critical insights I employ.²⁰

The dependence on feminist critiques of contemporary ethology is a means of compelling a critical analysis of ancient modes of (re)presentation of women and patterns of being. Satisfaction with mere description of the ancient evidence participates in the same mystifying of socio-political structures that ancient writers frequently manipulated through their writing prescription as innocuous description. Even without that regulatory intent, contemporary scholarship becomes complicit in the inscription, when it questions neither the extant sources nor the community/history of interpretation.

Eva Stehle and Amy Day have argued, 'Sexual representations engage any viewer according to his or her social identity and place in the sex-gender system and elicit readings that are at least in part based on bodily identification . . .'.²¹ For some men, albeit trained in feminist discourse and even aligned with its political

19. Note the comments of Kwok Pui-lan: ' . . . should a person's race and gender be decisive in discussing the myths of origin?' ('Response to the *Semeia* volume on Postcolonial Criticism', in *Semeia* 75 (1996): 216).

20. Compare Joseph Boone, 'Of Me(n) and Feminism: Who(se) is the Sex that Writes?', in *Gender & Theory*, edited by L Kaufmann (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 158–180.

21. E Stehle and A Day, 'Women Looking at Women: Women's Ritual and Temple Sculpture', in *Sexuality in Ancient Art*, edited by NB Kampen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 101.

programmes, this compromises participation, even when it may be acknowledged that it is an imperative.²² Paul Smith lamented:

There is always the probability of being incriminated, the continual likelihood of appearing provocative, offensive, and troublesome to the very people who have taught me to ask the questions, even at the very moment when I begin to grapple with the only theoretical language available. These feelings, these fears, are in a large part the result of having to engage with a discourse whose laws I can never quite obey.²³

As expressed, this might stray into the familiar male cry for (maternal) sympathy and/or yet again, provide evidence of the legacy of logocentricity where one constantly (though unsuccessfully) strives to rise above the complex entanglements in the very materiality it seeks to explicate and order.²⁴ The desire to be 'outside' is, in this sense, nothing other than nostalgia for the symbolic public position which ancient (free) man was granted and expected to occupy, with woman constrained to the 'inside'.

Analysis of the patriarchal, hierarchical structure of the ancient Mediterranean world and contemporary philosophical discussion of masculine and feminine

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22. AJ Frantzen, 'When Women Aren't Enough', in *Speculum* 68 (1993): 445.
 23. P Smith, 'Men in Feminism: Men and Feminist Theory', in *Men in Feminism*, edited by A Jardine and P Smith (New York: Methuen, 1987), 38; compare P Rabinow, 'Representations are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology', in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, edited by J Clifford and GE Marcus (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 257–259.
 24. EF Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New York and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 22.

identities demonstrate that a range of subjectivities is available.²⁵ Men can themselves be oppressed by patriarchy and its legitimating, constricting ideologies—this is the reason for Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s preference for the term ‘kyriarchy’.²⁶ There is no universal ‘female or male voice’ nor a reflexive implication that relations between the sexes predetermine theoretical discourse and political stances. This is part of my own rejection of sociobiology. Adopting ways of thinking and commitment can be both personally transformative and socially reconstructive.²⁷ At the same time, there can be no fantasy about or attempt at an invulnerability of argument or person.

Finally, the arguments presented prepare the way for transformational thinking and acting with respect to the animal world. Whilst this falls outside my purpose here, there is more than a human and feminist liberation to be gained from the critique of ethological and sociobiological determinism in both its ancient and modern forms. This liberation does not assert a triumphalist human uniqueness apart from creation (particularly the animal world). Rather it invites complementary, respectful engagements that allow, indeed celebrate, commonalities and differences without re-imposing hierarchies of relationship.²⁸

25. RW Connell, *Gender and Power* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 110, Johnson, ‘Theorizing Language’, 19–21.

26. E Schüssler Fiorenza *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 114–120.

27. E Schüssler Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals* (London: SCM, 1993), 369; cf AS Kahn and WP Gaeddert, ‘From Theories of Equity to Theories of Justice: The Liberating Consequences of Studying Women’, in *Women, Gender and Social Psychology*, edited by VE O’Leary, RK Unger and BS Wallston (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1985), 129–145.

28. See *Readings from the Perspective of the Earth*, edited by N Habel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 38–53.