

world. In the frenzied insecurity of his fear of women, man has remade society after his own pattern of confusion and strife and has created a world in which woman is the outsider. He has rewritten history with the conscious purpose of ignoring, belittling, and ridiculing the great women of the past, just as modern historians and journalists seek to ignore, belittle, and ridicule the achievements of modern women. He has devalued woman to an object of his basest physical desires and has remade God in his own image—"a God that does not love women." Worst of all, he has attempted to transform woman herself into a brainless simulacrum, a robot who has come to acquiesce meekly in the belief in her own inferiority.⁷

The Middle World is our primary concern. The stigmatisation and inferiorisation of women is the time-bomb laid by history and usage at the foundations of the American structure of power. The two evils are inseparable complements. By making women congenital outsiders in their own society, the twin evils force the women either to reject the values of the society which attacks and punishes them for being the particular children of their parents or lack the total commitment to these values which would release all the creative forces locked in the female personality and give them constructive purpose. Giving constructive purpose to these forces is one of a society's or a civilisation's guarantees of stability.

The stigmatisation and inferiorisation have transformed the American democracy into a prison of the mind in which the genius and human potential of the women are distorted in ways which give her an abiding sense of grievance. This frustration of life's purpose for her ultimately gives her a vested interest in the destruction of the values which are given one meaning on the male side and another on the female.

The woman is placed in an impossible position here. On one plane she is expected to produce children and to teach them, during their most formative years, that the values which define American nationhood are the finest that the United States could have been built upon. Her children grow up seeing how this nationhood punishes her for being a woman. If this damages her credibility, it gives the children a cynical view of the American system of values.

The stigmatisation and inferiorisation of women complicate America's race problem. The two evils have their roots in the ideal of fulfillment which Graeco-Romano-Hebraic civilisation translates into action. God, whom Christianity regards as the creator of all things, is a male; so is his son, Jesus Christ, who is said to be the saviour of the human race. In the Roman Catholic Church the Pope and the hierarchy are all men.

In the Christian tradition maleness is associated with virtue, strength and innocence while woman is regarded as the fount and incarnation of all vice, all weakness and all cunning.

In *Canon Law and the Battle of the Sexes*,⁸ Rosemary R. Ruether has the following to say about the position of the woman as defined by Canon Law:

The law of the Church is designed to elevate one group at the expense of another: women are sacrificed as human beings to elevate priests to the status of sanctified beings. The law was written over the centuries by men for men, and by men who regarded sex (which is still today very hard to come by without women) as quite undesirable. In that men wrote for men, and then for celibates, women were written out of the organization of the Church and out of the sanctuary. As far as the spirit of canon law is concerned, the Church seems to assume that it can do very well without women.

The inferiorisation of woman has been justified by Church Fathers and other scholars down the centuries. Writing in the collection of essays to which reference has been made above, Bernard P. Prusak quotes Clement of Alexandria as making these comments on the beard as evidence of supremacy (p. 103):

His beard, then, is the badge of a man and shows him unmistakably to be a man. It is older than Eve and is the symbol of the stronger nature. By God's decree, hairiness is one of man's conspicuous qualities, and, at that, hairiness distributed over his whole body. Whatever smoothness or softness there was in him God took from him when he fashioned the delicate Eve from his side to be the receptacle of his seed, his helpmate both in procreation and in the management of the home.

When Clement recognised the beard as evidence of supremacy, he was defining categories to justify male supremacy. Christian civilisation has been built on this type of supremacy. Largely as a result, the woman continues to be punished, in the Land of the Free, for being the particular child of her parents, even though White. On the Black side of the colour line, the person of colour is punished for being the child of his or her particular parents.

In either case the bias for categorisation punishes the "outsider" for having qualities which he or she cannot change. At this level, race ceases to be the determinant of behaviour; attitudes to the person come to the fore as translations into action of a particular view of the human being—of a given evaluation of the person.

This evaluation is so closely bound to Christianity that many American women rebel only silently against their inferiorisation. They have to be silent in order to survive. The silent rebellion is one of those factors which