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Towards Wholeness: Reweaving the Tapestry of Life with Sophia

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Abstract: This paper takes the experience of fragmentation that results from the dualistic notions of masculinity and femininity as the starting point of the discussion. The rational/emotional binary in its association with maleness and femaleness leads to the degeneration of the social fabric of man-woman relationships, production of knowledge, the way faith is understood and expressed, and the manner in which humans relate to the earth. Reweaving the tapestry of life with Sophia-Wisdom is the challenge of our times as Wisdom understands complexity and seeks integrity in relationships. This entails opening to the dynamic interplay of yin and yang modes of consciousness in the human person in its integrative and self-assertive tendencies. Openness to Wisdom is mystical as it leads to the re-discovery of the inter-connectedness of the web of life. Feminist theological insights into Wisdom point to the awareness of the Divine in the affairs of humanity and creation. In this integral and inclusive vision of faith which seeks to tear down the walls and patterns that dehumanize and divide humans from creation and from each other is the key for the integration of faith, knowledge and life.

Keywords: feminism, fragmentation, integration, Fritjof Capra, Raimon Panikkar, wisdom theology

Introduction

The concept note of this seminar points to the fragmentation that continues to do much violence to humankind and to the evolutionary journey of the universe. Often people live fragmented lives without being aware of the harm it can cause to themselves, to their relationships, and to life at large. Awareness of this problem can be rightly termed the beginning of wisdom and so it is commendable that this seminar focuses on the mutuality between faith, reason and wisdom from an integral perspective.

I want to take the experience of fragmentation that is at the core of being human as a woman or man, as the starting point of our discussion. The notions about who a man is or what a woman ought to be, has strong implications not merely on man-woman relationships, but also on the production of knowledge, the way faith is understood and expressed, and the manner in which we humans relate to the earth. However, this fragmentation is so deep rooted, pervasive and normalized, that we tend to overlook its subtle manifestations in our everyday dealings. I shall illustrate this point taking the very program of this seminar as an example.

This program has a woman speaker only for giving a feminine perspective to the discourse on '*Faith, Reason and Wisdom*,' while all the other perspectives are given by men. I imagine, for the organizers, the reason behind this arrangement could just be the convenient availability of scholarship, or it could be that women themselves keep away from serious intellectual engagements for different motives. Whatever the cause may be, women's exclusion from the mainstream production of knowledge has serious implications on the way we understand reason and associate it with different concerns in life.

Looking at the issue from another angle, it would appear logical that if a feminine perspective given by a woman is deemed important, a paper on a masculine perspective given by a man would have balanced the program better. May be it is considered that a masculine point of view comes through all the other perspectives whether it is the scriptural, theological, philosophical, or the perspective of science, folklore, human resources and the like. Such an arrangement is all the more problematic as it betrays the binaries that underlie our thinking patterns in the association of the feminine only with femaleness and of the masculine with maleness and with the dominant production of knowledge. Perhaps the very alienation between faith, reason and life as mentioned in the write-up of the seminar results from such gendered associations.

My paper is entitled '*Towards Wholeness: Reweaving the Tapestry of Life with Sophia*'. I imagine the term 'feminine' is used in the program as a synonym for 'woman/women'. However, I am

not comfortable taking a ‘feminine’ perspective as it generally signifies the patriarchal notion of what a woman ought to be. Instead, I would like to take a feminist point of view, which takes women as fully human beings with faculties of the mind, emotions and the spirit besides their bodies. This affirmation of women’s human dignity as persons in their own right, with their biological differences with men, is important for positioning them on an equal footing and partnership with men. Overcoming the dichotomy between the sexes is imperative for addressing the alienation of rationality from the heart and spirit, and this will enable us to learn the art of ‘weaving’ the tapestry of life. Reweaving implies going beyond a mere ‘welding’ of faith and knowledge. It is a trans-rational position which entails openness to the mystical dimension, and this is fundamental to being on the path towards wholeness.

The Anatomy of Fragmentation

We shall first take a critical look at the question of fragmentation and then see how feminist insights on wisdom can help bring about a better understanding into the discourse on wholeness. In order to analyze the problem of fragmentation when reason is alienated from wisdom, I take the reactions expressed in the aftermath of the Delhi gang rape by some people holding important leadership positions in society.

Many well-meaning politicians and religious leaders advised girls and women to dress soberly and not to venture out at night. For the hard core defenders of Indian tradition, “this is happening in India...but such things do not happen in Bharat.” The women protesters were termed “dented and painted”, but worse still was the ‘faith verdict’ of an illusory guru who blamed the victim, and reasoned that she could have stopped the attack if she had chanted God’s name and fallen at the feet of the attackers. The fraudulence of his reasoning was unveiled only later, when he himself was accused of rape and arrested. According to some women in political leadership, ‘rape cases are on the rise because men and women are interacting more frequently’.¹

These opinions in reaction to the rape epidemic that plagues Indian society are indicative of a reason strongly conditioned by uncritically assimilated patriarchal notions of gender -both of women and men. Rape is not just about sex. It points to the aggressive self-assertion of masculinity using sex as a weapon of extortion, objectifying women's bodies and sexuality. It is a sign of the unrest resulting from a host of many unaddressed issues, and is symptomatic of the acute fragmentation of the human in what constitutes man or woman. Alienation of rationality from feelings of the heart and spirit obviously leads to violence, but it also shows how people become dogmatic about what they think to be right. Only reason informed by wisdom can help perceive the matter in its complexity and facilitate a process of much needed integration within the person and in the relationship between the sexes, in the different socio-cultural contexts.

Setting the Premise Right

When the degeneration of the social fabric or the disease of the societal body is strongly felt -as in the unrestrained occurrence of rape, it is indicative that change is imperative in order to prevent further societal decay. It is a time that calls for deep socio-cultural transformations. As physicist and systems theorist Fritjof Capra opines, what we need as preparation for this transition is 'a deep re-examination of the main premises and values of our culture, a rejection of those conceptual models that have outlived our usefulness and a new recognition of some of the values in previous periods of our cultural history.'²

One of the crucial aspects that needs re-examining in our culture is the dualistic setting of man/ woman identity and the consequent distortion of human nature of both man and woman. Dualism, as feminist theorists observe, is more than a relation of dichotomy and difference; it implies a hierarchical relationship. In a dualistic construction, the values and the areas of life associated with the dualised other are systematically and pervasively constructed and depicted as inferior. Dualism then, is an intense, established, and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship,

constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable.³

The key elements of dualistic structuring in western thought include culture/nature, reason/emotion, mind/body, spirit/flesh, male/female, public/private, subject/object/ and self/other.⁴ In the male/female dualism, culture, reason, mind, public, spirit, the subject positions etc., are appropriated by the male and defined as foundational to masculinity and credited a superior status whereas nature, body, emotion, flesh, private, and the object positions are identified with female, classified as feminine and ascribed as inferior. Male/ female dualism is most strikingly marked by the rational/emotional binary. Woman's rationality is taken as inferior as she is considered to be more emotional and impulsive than man. This leads to contradictions and ambiguities in the understanding and practice of both reason and faith.

For feminist theorists, the issue at stake here is the question of identity. What is operative in gender categorization is a logic of identity which separates reason from emotion, desire, affectivity, passion and imagination for the sake of impartiality and objectivity. Instead, feminists advocate the logic of democracy which requires passionate involvement, respect and recognition of the other, desire for justice, recognition of needs, zest for life, and the vision of a different community of equals. Whereas the logic of identity creates dichotomy and oppositions, the logic of democracy seeks to integrate inside and outside, public and private, politics and religion, reason and imagination".⁵

Certainly, with women increasingly accessing public space through education and employment opportunities, there have been some changes in the understanding of women's identity at a superficial level. However, biology continues to be a defining factor in the Indian understanding of masculinity and femininity, and hierarchical dualism continues to inscribe gender roles. The persistent association of knowledge production, leadership and other public roles with men, and the identification of care- related roles with women result in polarization of the sexes and the stunting of growth both in women and men. The destructive effects of gendering is all the more palpable

in the realm of spirituality and theology. as men are positioned primarily as the mediators of faith and women as loyal practitioners of religion, sustain the system while being at the receiving end.

Overcoming gender dualism is crucial in view of integrating the faculties of the mind, emotions and spirit within the person. Noted feminist journalist Kalpana Sharma, in one of her recent columns, expresses concern that even as much is written and talked about the women's question, there is little discussion on what it means to be a man in today's India. And she raises some very pertinent questions: Has the understanding of being "masculine" changed even as women have begun to think of themselves differently from their mothers? Or are boys and men, barring a handful of exceptions, no different from their fathers and grandfathers? Has their view of women changed? Or do they continue to believe that women, whether they are mothers and sisters, or wives, are basically there to serve them?⁶ Without a critical re-thinking on masculinity and femininity, any discourse on mutuality and wholeness remain baseless, and this has strong implications on the way we look at economy, politics, development, environment, culture, family, religion or any other aspect of life.

Reweaving the Tapestry of Life with Sophia

Even though the human mind generally detests times of crisis for very many reasons, the wise always find it a graced time which holds tremendous potential for the emergence of the new. Philosophers, scientists, mystics- all speak of humanity having reached a crucial moment in its unfolding history - a time of degeneration that beckons for a new integration. The current times, though chaotic with its intrinsic contradictions and rampant fragmentation, is undoubtedly a point in time, which calls for a rediscovery of the interrelatedness and interdependence of all phenomena—a time for a new synthesis in the Hegelian sense.

System theorists look at the world in terms of living organisms, societies and ecosystems all being part of an integrated whole. The wise testify to this - as expressed by the noted naturalist and writer, John Muir in what he wrote shortly before his death: 'When we try

to pick out anything by itself,' we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.'⁷ It is in these decisive moments of the universe story when the dialectic tension between fragmentation and integration is strongly felt, that the search for Wisdom becomes a vital concern.

Feminists point to wisdom as intelligence shaped by experience and sharpened by critical analysis. It is the ability to make sound choices and incisive decisions. It is a perception of wholeness that does not lose sight of particularity, relativity and the intricacies of relationships. Wisdom understands complexity and seeks integrity in relationships. It is usually seen as integrating the left and right brain in a union of logic and poetry, as bringing together of self-awareness and self-esteem with the awareness and appreciation of the world and the other.⁸ In its application to faith, devoid of Wisdom, faith becomes a barren ritual or a rigid dogma which serves only to legitimize oppression, division and alienation of humans from each other and from the rest of creation.

This feminist notion of integration being effected through the agency of wisdom is reflected in what the sages have said in the earlier traditions and modern times. The Chinese *I Ching* -considered one of humanity's oldest books of wisdom- introduced the polar opposites *Yin* and *Yang* as the two archetypal poles underlying the fundamental rhythm of the universe. As per this Chinese wisdom, yin is associated with the feminine and yang with the masculine, but sees the personality of each man and each woman as a dynamic phenomenon resulting from the interplay between feminine and masculine elements. The intuitive and rational modes of consciousness though associated with yin and yang respectively, they are recognized as complementary modes of the functioning of the human mind.⁹

This view is in sharp contrast with the patriarchal association of the masculine with men and feminine with women, putting the yin and yang qualities in opposition with each other. Yet, wisdom allows one to see beyond abstract reason as 'it is practical knowledge gained through experience and daily living'¹⁰ and this has direct implications on the deconstruction of gender stereotypes. The illustrious speech

of Sojourner Truth, a freed New Yorker slave, titled “Ain’t I a Woman?” illustrates this by challenging the racist and classist notion of the feminine. In her own words:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches... Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud puddles, or give me any best place. And ain’t I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arms! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me. And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well. And ain’t I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold off to slavery and when I cried out with my mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain’t I a woman?”

She adds:

“Then they talk about this thing in the head; what’s this they call it? [a member of audience whispers, “intellect”] That’s it, honey. What’s that got to do with women’s rights or negroes’ rights? If my cup won’t hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn’t you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?”¹¹

This celebrated speech of Sojourner Truth reflects the conflict between the rational and the intuitive, which are complementary modes of functioning of the human mind. Rational thinking is linear, focused and analytic. It belongs to the realm of the intellect whose function is to discriminate, measure and categorize. Thus rational knowledge tends to be fragmented. Intuitive knowledge on the other hand, is based on a direct, non-intellectual experience of reality arising in an expanded state of awareness. It tends to be synthesizing, holistic and non-linear.¹²

The integration of the rational and intuitive modes of consciousness becomes possible when we are able to see the personality of each man and each woman not as a static entity but a dynamic phenomenon resulting from the interplay between feminine and masculine elements. A culture informed by patriarchy has consistently favored the yang over the yin, rational knowledge over intuitive wisdom, science over religion, competition over

cooperation, exploitation of natural resources over conservation and so on. This results in the cultural imbalance which lies at the root of our current crisis, which is an imbalance in our thoughts and feelings, our values and attitudes, and our social and political structures. The dynamic interplay of yin and yang in its integrative and self-assertive tendencies are necessary for personal, social and ecological health.¹³

Wisdom as the perception of wholeness in gender relations comes through also in the writings of integral theorist Ken Wilber. He points to the Agency-Communion and Eros-Agape drives in the human consciousness which are generally polarized in its association with male and female. To this he adds two movements—the path of ascent which is Wisdom and the path of descent which is Compassion. Wilber envisions the integration of the two paths as a great circle which captures a holistic vision big enough to include everything. Ascent as Eros, aspire to union or oneness at levels of ever greater complexity, and Descent as Agape, the love that celebrates diversity of phenomena, embrace their distinct identities and wholeness. Eros and Agape together constitute the evolutionary process that unfolds through phenomena, even as it enfolds them at every level of complexity, in all spheres of the Kosmos.¹⁴

The need for overcoming the head/heart binary as a pre-condition for understanding wisdom is illustrated by the renowned Philosopher and Visionary Raimon Panikkar by taking himself as a case of reference during his preparations for the prestigious Gifford lectures. He says:

My subtlest temptation was to prepare these lectures instead of preparing myself. To search for something to say, instead of aspiring for something to be. The danger was to engage myself gathering “materials” (even “ideas”) instead of gathering myself, my Self; to experiment with abstractions, instead of experiencing my-self, and observing reality. The destiny of the universe passes in and through us—once the us, of course, has been purified of all that is “our” private property. We are not isolated beings. Man [sic] bears the burden, the responsibility, but also the joy and the beauty of the universe. This is wisdom.¹⁵

Feminist epistemology has consistently challenged the persistent mind/body, culture/ nature dichotomy resulting from Cartesian dualistic thought and called for a greater integration within the person. A concrete expression of women rising above the body/mind; body/spirit dualism is in claiming the erotic as power. Feminist writer Audre Lorde names erotic as the power which rises from women's deepest and non-rational knowledge.¹⁶ She finds that patriarchy has associated the erotic only with sex and often used against women and so women have confused it with its opposite, the pornographic.

Lorde defines the erotic as a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. It is an internal sense of satisfaction to which, once we have experienced it, we know we can aspire. For having experienced the fullness of this depth of feeling and recognizing its power, in honor and self-respect we can require no less of ourselves. Going to the word's Greek roots- the word *eros* signifying the personification of love in all its aspects, born of Chaos and personifying creative power and harmony- Lorde names the erotic as an assertion of the life-force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which women are now reclaiming in their language, their history, their dancing, their loving, their work, their lives.¹⁷

Overcoming the body-spirit dualism has strong implications also on human-earth relationships. In investigating the roots of our current environmental dilemma and its connections with science, technology and the economy, historian of science Carolyn Merchant calls for re-examining and re-conceptualizing that worldview of science which conceives reality as a machine rather than a living organism, the worldview that sanctioned the domination of both nature and women. In her opinion, this entails re-evaluating the contributions of the founding 'fathers' of modern science such as Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Newton and Harvey.¹⁸ Only when we re-discover the inter-connectedness and interrelatedness of the web of life can we experience a sense of communion with all forms of life. Mystics express faith in these terms, rising above the creedal boundaries set by religions and discovering new paths of union with the divine within and beyond visible expressions of life.

Feminist Theological Insights into Wisdom

Feminist theological insights into Wisdom, conceptualized as ‘wisdom theology’ also addresses the fragmentation of knowledge/faith/life and signals to the path that facilitates the move towards wholeness. Wisdom is most fascinating to feminists as a representation of the Divine in female “Gestalt” or form. In the bible, “Spirit (Ruah)”, “Presence (Shekhinah)”, “Wisdom (Chokmah)” are all expressed in grammatically feminine terms. Sophia, Wisdom *in* Greek is a female figure of power and might, who mothers the world into birth.¹⁹

Feminist theological engagements with the submerged traditions of Divine Wisdom over the past three decades have led to a fascinating rediscovery of the creativity of wisdom/ Wisdom. They make a distinction between ‘wisdom’ as capability which is a state of the human mind and spirit characterized by deep understanding and profound insight, and ‘Wisdom’ as a female personification of the Divine. Nelle Morton, one of the first feminist theologians and teachers of Wisdom speaks of her search “to hear Wisdom into speech.”²⁰ Feminist theologians highlight the experience of Wisdom as ‘the mistress of discretion, the inventor of the lucidity of thought’ (Pr 8:12), and delight in Her being ‘a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle...a breath of the power of God’, who ‘passes into holy souls in each generation, making them friends of God and prophets’ (cf. Wis. 7:22 -30). They point out that different female figurations of the Spirit in the Hebrew Bible express God’s saving presence in the world and signify that aspect of the Divine which is involved in the affairs of humanity and creation.²¹

In this discussion on wisdom theology, I take mainly the contributions of two renowned feminist theologians Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Elizabeth Johnson who have done pioneering work in this field.

Elizabeth Johnson states in her much acclaimed work *She Who Is*, that her aim in writing the book is ‘to give classical theology, a hearing, listening for wisdom’.²² Her wisdom Christology, in its conceptualization of ‘Jesus Sophia’, serves as a corrective to the

theological problematic posed by the emphasis on the maleness of Jesus Christ as an essential feature of incarnation.

Johnson's argument is that within the worldview of traditional Christology, the historical Jesus, who was indisputably a male human being, is interpreted as the incarnation of the Logos, an ontological symbol connected with rationality and thus, according to Greek philosophy, with maleness. The 'Word made flesh' is then related to human beings defined according to an androcentric anthropology that sees men as normative and women as derivative. What results is a Christology that functions as a theological justification for the superiority of men over women, relegating women to a marginal role both in theory and practice.²³

Liberating Christological language from the monopoly of male images and concepts is imperative for bringing about change in the Church's consciousness and social order, observes Elizabeth Johnson.²⁴ She uses the biblically founded personified Wisdom texts to speak about Jesus-Sophia as the Christ, thus facilitating an inclusive rather than exclusive interpretation of the incarnation. Wisdom Christology is presented by her as the right theological base for maintaining egalitarian relations between men and women, in accordance with the Genesis tradition.²⁵

Elisabeth Fiorenza finds that the biblical discourses on Divine Wisdom significant not merely for it being a rich resource of female language for God but more importantly because they provide a framework for developing a feminist ecological theology of creation and a biblical spirituality of nourishment and struggle. Moreover, they embody a religious ethos that is not exclusive of other religious visions but can be understood as a part of them, since Wisdom is celebrated in all of them.

As Fiorenza opines, the goal of Wisdom teaching is to enable one to cope with life and to impose a kind of order on the myriad experiences that determine a person. Wisdom teaching is an orientation to proper action, engaging in value judgments that urge a certain course of action. It is a search for justice and order in the world that can be discerned by experience. Wisdom teaching does not keep faith and knowledge apart; it does not divide the world into

religious and secular, but provides a model for living a “mysticism of everyday things.”²⁶

Fiorenza finds a *radical*, that is *grassroots* (from Latin *radix=roots*), democratic wisdom/ Wisdom space carved out today by social movements for change. Wo/men’s grassroots movements around the globe have initiated processes of democratization that allow wo/men to determine their lives, participate in decision making and contribute to the creation of a just civil society and religious community.²⁷ Such interactions in the “open house” of Wisdom seek to tear down the walls and patterns that dehumanize and divide humans from creation and from each other. The ability of subordinated and oppressed people to imagine a complete overthrow of relations of domination and situations of injustice depends on the articulation, circulation, radicalization and institutionalization of radical egalitarian democratic wisdom/Wisdom discourses. A feminist wisdom/Wisdom spirituality of justice challenges us to create and participate in a movement of Wisdom’s friends, and asks that we get involved in such Wisdom movements for change and transformation.²⁸

Conclusion

Reweaving is an evolutionary task which we humans need to engage in consciously. Feminists speak of spinning cosmic tapestries. Though the word spinster is generally used as a deprecating term - meaning ‘old maid’, unmarried woman- feminists have discovered its rich meaning as a cosmic verb.²⁹ Spinsters spin and weave, mending and creating unity of consciousness. In doing so, they spin through and beyond the realm of multiply split consciousness. Spinsters span the dichotomies of false consciousness and break its mind-binding combinations.³⁰

I find this expression, spinning-reweaving, echoing a wisdom which is very pertinent to our times, a wisdom that has something to say not just to individuals, but to those who hold power and control the destinies of others through politics, religion, the corporate sector, those committed to technological advancements and those engaged in service industries. This wisdom speaks of the ethics of

care that should inform the political economy of development, the care of the earth and the care of the deprived masses. It calls for rising above the divisive, fundamentalistic assertions which lead to much violence and death in today's world. It offers the key for discovering the power and beauty of human becoming, the key for integrating theory and action. The grave fragmentation of our times demands that we engage in this spinning-reweaving with a certain prophetic impatience as expressed by feminist poet Adrienne Rich, when she says:

*This is what I am: watching the spider
rebuild- "patiently" they say,
but I recognize in her
impatience -my own-
the passion to make and make again
where such unmaking reigns.³¹*

Notes

1. Frank Jack Daniel and Satarupa Bhattacharjya, Asaram Bapu's view on Delhi rape raises anger, but shared by many in <http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/01/09/india-delhi-gang-rape-asaram-bapu-views-idINDEE90809L20130109> accessed 16 August, 2013.
2. Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point*, London: Flamingo 1983, p. 15.
3. In a dualistic thinking pattern, as feminist theorist Valentine Plumwood points out, once the process of domination forms culture and constructs identity, the inferiorised group (unless it can marshal cultural resources of resistance) must internalize this inferiorization in its identity and collude in this low valuation, honouring the values of the centre, which form the dominant values. See Plumwood V., *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, London: Routledge, 1993 p.47.
4. Ibid., p. 43.
5. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation*, Beacon Press, 1992, p.157.
6. Kalpana Sharma, "Let's talk about men", *The Hindu*, 15 Sept 2013.

- 7 As cited by Raimon Panikkar, in *The Rhythm of Being: The Theol/Anthropo/Cosmic Trinity*, GIFFORD LECTURES, University of Edinburgh, 1989, p.118. This reflects the Buddhist notion of “Pratityasamutpada” meaning “interdependent co-arising”, the concatenation of everything in the universe.
8. Fiorenza, “Towards a Feminist Wisdom Spirituality of Justice and Well-Being”, p.4.
9. Capra, *The Turning Point*, p.19.
10. Fiorenza, Fiorenza. Towards a Feminist Wisdom Spirituality of Justice and Well-Being”, p.4.
11. Sojourner Truth (1797-1883): Ain’t I A Woman?, Speech delivered in 1851 at Women’s Convention, Akron, Ohio See Suzanne Pullon Fitch and Roseann Mandziuk, *Sojourner Truth as Orator: Wit, Story, and Song* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1997).
12. Capra, *The Turning Point*, p. 21.
13. Ibid., p.18-22.
14. See Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution*, Boston: Shambhala(Kosmos-trilogy, Vol.I)1995.
15. Raimon Panikkar, *The Rhythm Of Being*, The Gifford Lectures, Orbis Books Maryknoll, New York 2010, p.35.
16. Audre Lorde, Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde*, CA: The Crossing Press, 1978, p.53.
17. Ibid., p.55.
18. Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, New York: Harper and Row 1980, p.xvii.
19. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Towards a Feminist Wisdom Spirituality of Justice and Well-Being, p.4.
20. Nelle Morton, *The Journey is Home*. Boston: Beacon, 1985, 255p. See also *Fiorenza Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2001.
21. Traditional theology has focused on the Spirit, who is in Latin grammatically masculine Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, “Towards a Femi-

nist Wisdom Spirituality of Justice and Well-Being”, Nhanduti Editora 2009, p.3.

22. Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is*, Crossroad Publishing Company 1992, p.8-9.
23. Elizabeth A. Johnson, “Redeeming the Name of Christ,” in *Freeing Theology* (ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna, San Francisco: Harper-San Francisco, 1993), p. 118.
24. Elizabeth A. Johnson, “Wisdom Was Made Flesh and Pitched Her Tent Among Us,” in *Reconstructing the Christ Symbol* (ed. Maryanne Stevens; New York: Paulist, 1993), p. 109.
25. Harold G. Wells, “Trinitarian Feminism: Elizabeth Johnson’s Wisdom Christology”, *Theology Today*, October 1995.
26. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Towards a Feminist Wisdom Spirituality of Justice and Well-Being, p.11.
27. Fiorenza writes wo/men as an inclusive term to express women and men.
28. Ibid. Fiorenza has elaborated such a discourse on wisdom in terms of biblical hermeneutics. It’s seven steps are a hermeneutics of experience, of domination, of suspicion, of evaluation, of remembering or historical re-construction, of imagination and of transformation. See her *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation*, Maryknoll-New York: Orbis Books 2001.
29. The word spin is connected In its origin to the Latin term *sponte*, meaning “of one’s free will, voluntarily.” Thus spinning implies spontaneous movement, the free creativity that springs from integrity of being. See Mary Daly, *Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical feminism*, Great Britain: The Women Press Unlimited, 1979, p. 389.
30. Ibid., p.386.
31. Adrienne Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language*, as cited by Mary Daly in *Gyn/Ecology*, p.385.