We do not need money to undertake research in 'Catholic studies' because such work is already woven into the warp and woof of our activity.

And so to 'price tags'. Dr Flanagan tells us that 'The evaluation of ideas is increasingly ... subjected to monetary value and this has an unfortunate effect of confusing the significant with the insignificant'. How true.

He has been invited to take part in a seminar at Duke University in June 1997. He supposes this to be because Duke is 'puzzled' by the 'absence of Catholic studies within the secular academy in the U.S.A'. I think not. Duke has recently been offered a very considerable benefaction to establish a post or posts in 'Roman Catholic Studies' in their Department of Religion. As someone who has been engaged in conversation with them about this for well over a year, and who recently visited the university to discuss the matter, I can assure Dr Flanagan that the convening of this seminar is simply evidence of the care and prudence with which the Department of Religion at Duke are making the decision as to how best to spend the money. It is, I fear, 'price tags' which will take Dr Flanagan to North Carolina in June.

Yours sincerely,

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Reviews

DEADLY INNOCENCE: FEMINISM AND THE MYTHOLOGY OF SIN, by Angela West, *Mowbray*, 1995, 218 pp.

Essentially this book is an attack on the radical feminists. But it differs from other critiques in its biographical nature: the story of one woman's experience from *within* the feminist community, of their struggles against nuclear weapons at Greenham Common in the 1980s, and the effect this process had on her own understanding of feminism.

The radical feminists have argued that a grave miscarriage of justice has taken place against women. In the person of Eve, they claim that women have taken the blame for our fallen condition. Men have framed them. Women are the perfect scapegoat. And of course the men knew they could take it. The radical feminist analyses of Mary Daly and Daphne Hampson set forth their alternative: it was men and not women who are the archetypal sinners. *They* violated the purity of relations by introducing

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1997.tb02750.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

sexual violence. Sin lies on the side of the oppressors. Redemption is then about saving oneself from the oppressor. So there is little room for a saviour - and especially a male one. Salvation finds its locus in solidarity with the oppressor(ie. in "sisterhood"). Innocent victims of patriarchal oppression can save others by their gender, by virtue of what they have suffered on behalf of womankind.

So, with this new status of innocence there were two options: that they should be allowed access to ordained ministry in the Church *or* they should admit that Christianity is irredeemably patriarchal and leave. But is walking out in protest *really* all that radical? West argues that it's not, suggesting that it is in fact the language of the adolescent, walking out in temper. In reality this plays into hands of men who, let's face it, are glad to get rid of troublemakers. So the essence of West's argument is that the radical feminists aren't that radical after all.

What, then, happened at Greenham to bring about this change in her own position? Greenham was a place for women only. Regardless of their politics they were united in a common experience, namely fear of male violence, lack of power in relation to male establishment, fear of aggressive male sexuality. Women were not like men, she thought, they were peaceable. So in this brand of feminism equality was not the issue but women's higher values.

However, this "sisterly bond" was, she would realise, an ideal. Women could be competitive, women could abuse power, women could be oppressors. Internal dissension at Greenham created exactly the same conditions that women were trying to escape from. Moreover, it reinforced the realisation that female experience was not limited to that of the white middleclass educated writers of the feminist narrative. It was much more diverse than that.

Turning to history (predictably termed "herstory") in which, according to the radical feminist narrative (and, one might add, in the male myth) women were merely victims, West argues that women are not so innocent. Passive *does* mean responsible, at least to some degree. Take Nazi Germany, for example. All this seemed to be suggesting that the radical feminists had got it all wrong. Women were *not* always innocent.

Sin must be accounted for. We need to be redeemed from its bondage. West sees that the radical feminist account of sin and redemption is unsatisfactory for several reasons. A slave doesn't have the power to redeem a fellow slave, for they are both in chains. And whether a male saviour can save women is a non question. Can a Jewish saviour save Gentiles? Whilst remaining a feminist, West argues that they in fact fail to understand what the story of Eden is all about. It is not in Eve's innocence that we have a common bond but in her disobedience. Eve has the *freedom* to choose either obedience or disobedience. This is not about obedience to some man made patriarchal law but a freedom to choose or reject God. Moreover, this shows that women's freedom (and, we might add, men's too) is firmly established at the beginning of the tradition. In this reading, patriarchal rule is not God's will but a consequence of human sin.

Where then does Mary, the new Eve, fit in this picture? Is she the "good girl" who "found favour with the patriarchs"(p.211)? No, says West,

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1997.tb02750.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

our idealisations about the nature of perfection have meant that Mary too has been misunderstood. She argues that Mary's role as the Mother of God has been taken by the Church as an ideal of motherhood (under patriarchal law, of course). West suggests that we have imposed our understandings of perfection on Mary. Young, female, virgin, mother. No woman could imitate these circumstances even if she wanted to! The problem as West sees it is that men idealise Mary in women. If, however, our focus is on Mary as an icon of the Church we can be liberated from such idealisations. The primary issue is not that we are called to be virgins and mothers but that we, men and women, are called like Mary to be bearers of the Word. And, like Mary at the foot of the Cross, we are called to places of crucifixion, to places of innocent suffering.

My main criticism in an otherwise important and challenging book is this: that West wants to play down the feminism of Greenham in the 70s and 80s rather than see it as a necessary part of the feminist process. She is, I think, unnecessarily dismissive of the achievements of feminism—of which she was a part. Moreover, she is somewhat harsh on the radical feminists. Could it not be that for some women it is a question of *integrity* to leave the Church—not so much an adolescent outburst as a mature and no doubt painful decision? Whilst agreeing that protest theology is not *necessarily* radical, her choice of Daly and Hampson as examples does not really convince us of this. Arguing from within the tradition, Daly's talk of "rape by the Holy Spirit" as an account of Mary's consent to be the Mother of God sounds pretty radical to me.

CLODAGH M BRETT

ARISTOTLE'S ECONOMIC THOUGHT by Scott Meikle. *Clarendon Press,* **Oxford 1995, Pp. viii + 216, £25.00**

It has always seemed to me that one of the greatest strengths of *New Blackfriars* has been its consistent ability to reveal that thinkers and philosophers that have been dismissed as hopelessly conservative and old fashioned by the general culture, including that of much of the Church, turn out on closer inspection to have urgent things to say to us. Scott Meikle's book on Aristotle's economic thought, a careful, sober and scholarly treatment, is written very much in this spirit.

Perhaps to most readers of this journal Aristotle is a figure of importance because they associate his work with the philosophical underpinnings of Catholic theology and most especially, in recent years, with the philosophy of ethics thanks to the revival of virtue ethics by such figures as Alasdair MacIntyre. But as Scott Meikle points out the influence of Aristotle's economic writings down the centuries has been enormous. Not only was it central to medieval and scholastic thought about commercial relationships (see Meikle's fascinating article 'Adam Smith and the Spanish Inquisition', in *New Blackfriars*, February 1995) but also continues to inform some elements of current Catholic social teaching and also influences Islamic thought on the economy. Many schools of modern economic thought continue to regard Aristotle as having provided the first

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1997.tb02750.x Published online by Cambridge University Press