

Incarnation & the Rupture of Everything in All Time?

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Abstract

This paper engages particularly with Noelle Vahanian's gospel which investigates the use of words but specifically with old words meaning new things and the subversion of categories that can and should ensue. Discourse he claims impacts matter since matter is already discursive. My contribution to an insurrectionist manifesto is to claim that a new enfleshed understanding of Christian incarnationalism focussed to date on THE abstract Word brings about a relational entanglement of all that is within the created order which leads to the abandonment of dualistic metaphysics and the full embrace of discursive flesh.

Key words

Incarnation; entanglement; embodiment; dunamis; queer theory

An insurrectionist manifesto—a verbal declaration of a challenge, a new way. Here is a paradox to begin with—what place has a verbal challenge in an embodied, enfleshed universe? The WORD became flesh is the mistake of Christianity, it has imprisoned flesh in abstractions and metaphysics ever since. Yes, we humans need words and don't we make the most of them, they infiltrate our minds from everywhere, creating in most cases the babble that disorients us and makes us fodder for the sound bite, that ingenious tool of capitalism, religion and modern politicians. We need words because for centuries we have moved further and further away from embodied knowing- I am not making a case for some primal utopia in which touchy feely was all that was needed for perfect harmony and abundant living. I am simply saying that the West has suffered from the systems that have been influenced by and sprung from the priority of the WORD. How this has influenced the development and spread of genocidal capitalism has been demonstrated in many works over the years, from Weber (1985) to Grau (2004), and so will not be the main focus of this paper.

All four gospels in this *Insurrectionist Manifesto* were fascinating to me but, as the reader can possibly guess, Noëlle Vahanian's gospel spoke most loudly to me. Here we see that there is an engagement with the use of words, more specifically an old word meaning a new thing—a subversion of the categories once contained within that word. Vahanian says that after Derrida writing is a new scheme of a new epoch, writing makes immanence not transcendence but remains a transforming act. It is no longer inert or statically within (Vahanian 2016). This is briefly applied to the issue of women's liberation with the notion that women are doomed if they attempt to reject all that has oppressed them; rather they need to transform and take back the concept of femininity and breathe new life into it. This is not regaining of an essence but rather the immanence of womankind does not

condemn them to oppression. A theology of insurrection, Vahanian claims, can reclaim ontology and dispense with bad metaphysics (145). Further, if it is to be meaningful it cannot make a word flesh by stamping it on a body: the flesh has to have the ability to differ within itself. Discourse impacts matter and shapes it because matter is already discursive. This is radical materialism which due to its discursive nature spells a future that we set through our actions, limited or otherwise, in the present. Vahanian moves through the chapter engaging with philosophers for the most part and the questions of racism, colonialism and the violence that accompany these mind-sets. The chapter is concluded by stating that a theology of insurrection sees the earth, sky, mortals and divinities bound by fate within a reality of limited resources where death is assured. Where we only live once. This chapter is fascinating and highlights for me the similarity yet differences found through theo/philosophical approaches to the word made flesh and feminist theological approaches which also struggle with words and their meanings, traditions, creeds and metaphysics but approach them in a slightly different way.

My contribution to an insurrectionist manifesto and radical politics is a radical incarnational flow that does not hide in dualistic metaphysics or long for transcendence and salvation. These words and concepts have held us in chains for so long and need to be abandoned as trying to resurrect them even with liberation motives is fraught with danger. Our neural pathways expect certain meanings and trains of thought to follow and moving these is a long and difficult road. So there is a lot in a word, a whole world actually. So I wonder, if the writer of John's gospel had not masculinized the companion of God into Logos from Sophia would our world be a different place? We would certainly have a more enfleshed idea of this power of the divine—Sophia Wisdom being the aspect of the divine that rolls up her sleeves in the market place and gets on with it—gets on with making the current reality more just and habitable. Sophia does not wish to remove us from the world but rather to work hard with us in her female enfleshment to make the reality in which we find ourselves a more inclusive one. This is no abstract concept, the invisible Word commanding, as traditional readings of Genesis had led us to believe. Believe, that is, until Catherine Keller offered a new and altogether more relational interpretation (2003). Keller introduces us to cosmic beginnings, to void and chaos, and we are asked to make our theology from that ground. To understand who we are and who we might be from *tohu vabohu*, the depth veiled in darkness. Keller's use of beginnings here is important because beginnings are always relative, contested and historical, whereas origins are absolute and power laden. Beginnings then give theologians the chance to decolonize the space of origins in creation and the inevitable creator who sits apart and to challenge, as Catherine Keller puts it, 'the great supernatural surge of father power, a world appearing zap out of the void and mankind ruling the world in our manly creator's image' (2003, 6). We are thrown back to giving agency to void and chaos and there can be no creation out of nothing as our power-laden dualistic origin. Creation ceases to be a unilateral act and the divine speech in the pages of Genesis is no longer understood as a command uttered by the Lord and warrior King who rules over creation, but as Keller tells us 'let there be' is a whisper of desire and what comes forth emanates from all there is rather than appearing from above and beyond. In this shift we also see the possibility for incarnation to be understood as the rule rather than exception of creation because the whisper desires enfleshment (2003, 56) in all there is. Importantly, all that is can be

understood as containing the goddesses of old who were understood as void and chaos which is a fortunate move for women attempting to release themselves from an all-male creation and a woman who ruined it. Keller does not pursue a goddess path but simply acknowledges that if we read the texts and engage with the words we find that quite rich and startling meanings emerge that throw our fixed understandings into disarray.

Traditional theology has it that the only enfleshment required to satisfy the whisper of desire came in the shape of Jesus. This brings us to the implications of the WORD dwelling amongst us, well again what about these words, if only we paid attention to the actual words—this ‘being’/WORD pitched its tent amongst us which allows for an entirely different meaning from a pre-formed almighty divinity coming amongst us and bombarding flesh as it inhabits it, or stamping itself on flesh, as Vahanian would suggest. A tent is not a fixed structure with immovable sides but rather a moveable structure which even blows and changes shape in the wind, it is moved and carried to different locations with ease. Divinity imagined in this way has multiple sites of becoming rather than a fixed being and location, the flesh thus carried and placed amongst different realities, is softened and appears more malleable rather than rigid, static and unyielding. It is expansive and embracing therefore Christians may not project the abject or consume difference but should rather be open to change through the adventure of expanding incarnation; an incarnation that is breaking out from the heavens and the narrowing dictatorial voice. It goes without saying then that politics is not an added extra for people of incarnate faith but rather radical, countercultural politics is the skin we put on as we spiral in incarnate living.

Althaus-Reid (2005) gives an example of this counter cultural politics as she reflects on, as we are told, the incarnation in the flesh who, in her eyes, became God in community/God in society/God in creation. Looking at the gospel accounts she concludes that we see Jesus becoming the Messiah through walking with, being affected by, marginalized communities and individuals which she understands to be a political act. Those the man Jesus engaged with were in many cases the outcasts not simply the marginalized and were unclean in some cases according to the laws of the day. I would like to add to Althaus-Reid’s insights by saying that even the genealogy of the man Jesus shows that his incarnation was entangled with many marginalized persons: prostitutes, foreigners and others not seen fit by the creeds and words of the day. Marcella Althaus-Reid believes, as do I, that the life of Jesus, one of the enfleshed divine, presents us with a communitarian reading of rupture, that is, it challenges us to move beyond a nostalgic dwelling place from where we remember pre-lapsarian utopias or promised kingdoms and perfect eschatons and propels us instead into an ongoing process of imagination and creative engagement with even those considered to be on the margins or even the unclean. It is not the task of theologians to heal the rupture that the divine incarnate makes, but rather it is our task to continue the discontinuity as we embrace our own incarnate flesh. This is a very different understanding to the one that traditional theologies have upheld as they seek to close down and control the divine energy that flows in our veins and pulsates in every fiber of our being.

Of course this talk of Jesus as simply one incarnation of the divine in flesh pushes against traditional understandings and opens the whole range of human

experience to positive theological exploration, no longer to be sidelined as fallen flesh and sinful humanity but to be seen as God bearing in its multiple forms and expressions. I have always understood the rupture that Althaus-Reid speaks about as that between heaven and earth, no longer separated by notions of absolute divinity and further the rupture in what is considered normal and acceptable religion and society as the outpouring of the human/divine engages with and unfolds the multiple possibilities that lie in each moment of existence pressing always for wider vistas and encompassing understandings. I may understand this but against the centuries of traditional hermeneutics there has to develop a way to see otherwise—to use words [THE WORD] but to disrupt all they have contained as Vahanian urges that we do.

Carter Heyward's original work (1982) was rooted in a close analysis of Mark's gospel and a rereading of the meaning of *exousia* and *dunamis* as used in that gospel. She concluded that this gospel shows Jesus resisting *exousia* or power over at every turn, even when brought before Pilate he rejects the power being asserted over him while not denying the outcome. Heyward also demonstrated that the power of *dunamis* which is understood as a raw, dynamic, innate energy is the transforming power that Jesus points us towards through his life and engagement with just such a passion. It is also she concludes the power that Jesus highlights as our birthright not just his. I would go one step further than Heyward did by suggesting that it is *dunamis*, this human/divine energy that makes us friends not servants and enables Jesus to include us with him in what is traditionally understood as Trinitarian words [Jn14:20] but with this approach we are part of a multi-dimensional divinity, the reality of the divine is not removed to another realm or outpouring from above, it is within and between us. Once again we have 'words' but if disentangled from creedal meaning and dualistic metaphysics they yield new understanding. Transcendence carries a new understanding and has no hint of the above and beyond within it. Rather it signals movement across and within just as the mobile tent of incarnation signalled in John's gospel, opening to new views and locations amongst different companions all engaged in this dance of embodied transcendence.

My approach to this has been to understand the flesh made word/s rather than the reverse. Once we acknowledge the innate indwelling of *dunamis* as our birthright then indeed our flesh and that of others does become the outpouring of incarnation possibilities. The flesh made word enables us to find a voice and to make our desires known. There are any number of examples of how this vision transforms the landscape of our lives, those who are starving present themselves as moral imperatives for the rest of us, those who are poisoned by toxic waste challenge the ethics of business and profit. When the flesh is word there can be no talk of reward in heaven, the bodies of those who suffer are calling for new ways now and embedding ourselves in our flesh, together in our communal birthright, enables Sophia to find creative alternatives. The flesh as word also demands that absolutes be placed to one side and listening take the place of unilateral dictation. Reality is constantly changing and what is required is the liberation of empowered speech and hearing not the misplaced confidence of eternal answers. The flesh has been silenced by metaphysics, hierarchy and once and for all incarnation. Incarnation speaks but not just from the head, through the whole body, and it is this voice that returns power to people. Just as Vahanian says matter is already

discursive and so we can also say that incarnation opens the conversation/discussion rather than being held captive to the booming Word that drowns out all others. Incarnational living translates the babble through engaging us in commitment to one another, this illuminates the landscape through the power of intimate connection. Of course, the fact that we hear and see does not guarantee that we will achieve the required outcome but it does commit us to the struggle. By taking the incarnate flesh seriously we open up a new landscape of possibilities through the power of incarnation.

Returning to Heyward, we see that her original grounding of passion and erotic power within the Christological arena opened the way for much creative and revolutionary sexual theology and with it rethinking of women's sexuality in general. If the central core of Christian belief, Christology, is indeed rooted in the erotic, which has some expression through the sexual, then Christian theologians will have to think again about their naïve division of these deeply human, deeply divine elements of humanity. Heyward stunned the theological world when a preface to her book noted that she could not write theology unless she was grounded in sensuous pleasures including making love to one of her women lovers who would bring her forth to herself and the world and in so doing to God. Strong words in so many ways for an Episcopalian priest. This feminist engagement with Christology and ways of interpreting actually gave female sexuality ways in which women could lift their bodies and sexuality out of the mire of male clerical dictate and once again declare the sacredness of their sexual lives. For Heyward and many following her work a significant move was made in this reimagining of the divine as erotic and indwelling, it opened the theological debate to those on the sexual margins which no longer needed to understand themselves as outside the WORD of God but rather as carriers of incarnational empowerment. This work has continued with not just gay and lesbian theologians speaking of the reality of their previously condemned lives but now we hear of trans lives, intersexed lives and many more as carriers of incarnate possibility.

The inclusion of the erotic in the work of theology enabled by Carter Heyward is actually not a new phenomenon. The work of Richard Rambuss (1998) highlights how throughout Christian history the iconised body of Christ is the desirable object, the body that is not there for reproduction but is nonetheless lusted after and penetrated. This body becomes fully eroticised through the desire that those worshipping it direct towards it and receive from it. What is interesting is that this iconised body of Christ is very changeable and does not in any way at all hold fast to or fix sex, gender or sexuality either in itself or in those who adore it. It is flesh with multiple possibilities held within it and calling forth from others many fleshy responses, all of which are understood as incarnate. Catherine of Sienna marries Christ who crosses genders and Catherine eventually becomes engaged passionately with, sinking into the flesh of, a female Christ. Catherine is but one example of many littered throughout Christian history who engaged with the body of Christ only to experience a crossing of gender either for Christ or for them. Many writings and artworks show the body of Christ as very fluid, at times even appearing as physically female and feeding people from her breasts or her wounded side. It is then not unusual to see gender destabilized in erotic devotional life and it is perhaps here that we can ask if we do indeed need to take back concepts such as the feminine or rather refuse them as we delight in the fluidity of

our multiple selves. I find myself torn as I reach this point, the queer theorist in me applauds such a stance and the feminist liberation theologian is appalled, asking what happens to embodied women, abused in so many ways both societally and religiously, if we do away with words that signify them? No one ever said incarnational living would be easy—indeed we see how risky it can be in the example given us by Jesus the man.

Of course it is not simply gender categories as contained arrangements that we see disrupted in the body of the man Jesus. Graham Ward (2004) argues that right from the start materiality itself is becoming metaphorical and this is expanded throughout the gospel accounts where the man walks on water, is transfigured, ascends bodily into heaven and is said to be present in the breaking of bread. In each of these scenarios the body of Jesus is displaced and, according to Ward, the sexed body becomes problematized and eroticized. Ward suggests that the body of Jesus is malleable and capable of transposition and that the gospels chart this course of increasing destabilization and many transformations. Each of these makes manifest more of the divine glory and the important point to notice, for Ward, is that it is not the gendered body that does this but the body that demonstrates how these boundaries can be pushed. Ward not only challenges gender but corporeality itself, noting that the gospels see no limits for it. Ward does not focus on incarnation as the point of examination and so does not move his debate into the realms of cosmic entanglement as we shall see others do.

Returning to Rambuss (1998), we see he reminds us that John Donne and the metaphysical poets were known for their engagement with the spiritual and the body. In his sonnets, Donne implores God to ravish him, to batter his heart, to take him, break him, imprison him. These may appear to be rape fantasies but one must also not forget they are homosexual rape fantasies. Rambuss wonders whether in the work of Donne we see that salvation is sodomised or that sodomy has a place in redemption. Either way this religious and pious outpouring moves us beyond the edges of conventional morality. It is perhaps an early reflection on sado-masochism and a precursor to the work being carried out on devotion and BDSM in the present day. The theme of divine rape is carried on in the work of Traherne who, in a poem entitled 'Love', imagines himself drenched in and impregnated by Christ's 'sweet stream'. He goes on to say that he offers himself to Christ as 'His Ganymede! His Life! His joy!' whereupon Christ comes down to get him and takes him up that he may be 'his boy' (Rambuss 1998, 54). In this work Traherne sees himself as a rent boy for the divine and at that his 'boy', that is the submissive partner in a BDSM scenario. The life of devotion is made strange once more and 'the sexual emerges as the jouissance of exploded limits' (Bersani in Rambuss 1998, 60), limits that are falsely placed and do not allow for the multiple possibilities that the radical gospel declares. Sexuality and the erotic are parts of our natures, fundamental parts, and it seems strange that we have ever conceived of boxing such power and divine grace into limited categories and restrictive rules. Rambuss insists that closet devotion 'is the technology by which the soul becomes a subject' (1998, 109), a space in which the sacred may touch the transgressive and even the profane. I would suggest it is where the sacred is the transgressive and the profane—and all is well.

So by making a different hermeneutical turn we open up many possibilities for understanding our lives and that of the man Jesus who as a forerunner did

indeed make a large hole in what we understand as reality and through the mutual sharing of *dunamis* showed that we too are able to make it bigger. Heyward did not simply enable the smashing of the sexual spiritual dualism she also asked questions of the human animal dualism in a startling way. Heyward has acknowledged that this power of *dunamis* infuses the whole of creation and as such invites us into mutually empowering and vulnerable relationships with all that exists. In “The Horse as Priest” (Heyward 2002) she was suggesting that a horse performed the same Eucharistic function as she did as an Episcopalian priest. For Heyward the argument was a logical one: if God is the wellspring of all, if the *dunamis* that enlivens us is the stuff of all life, then a horse can be the one who helps us in our godding and opens us to sacred energy. And horse riding like the Eucharist ‘can be an occasion of thanksgiving in which creatures and our divine life are united through mutual participation in the holiest of sacrifices—God’s giving up of control in order to be with us’ (2002, 93). She says that therapeutic riding demonstrates our capacity ‘to give ourselves over to one another and other creatures to go together in right more fully mutual relationship, in which we move together, more nearly as one, creatures united’ (2002, 94). Here is an understanding of incarnation that is not simply anthropocentric and power laden, it is a truly liberating narrative that opens us to life in its many forms.

Catherine Keller (2012) furthers the argument concerning the entanglement of all creatures as she moves from monotheism, which has traditionally excluded non-human creatures from its discourse except as lesser beings here for us and our use, through an investigation of the Deep which is the very ground of who we are but as we shall see it is no fixed identity relying on the ONE. It is a Deep situated in the cosmos itself that gives the lie to *creatio ex nihilo* and opens before us the God who is of intimate/infinite entanglements. The God who is the All in All of Corinthians, not beyond, not distant but entangled. Keller visits Paul’s writings in 1 Corinthians on the body of Christ and reminds us that in the Greek *energeia* is used in 12:4-6 when he tells us that there are differences but it is the same God who is in all. For Keller, this disables any theology of distance and separation: God is not above, nor is the divine simply androcentric but rather the very Bible itself declares God to be eco-centric, All in All. Energy then is not something we have but something we are (Keller 2012, 12) and it is the same energy that gives life to all, it is the stuff of entanglement. She writes, ‘feeling the pulsations of our bodies in our planet and the pulsations of the planet in its universe our earthly interactions are rendered simultaneously intimate and virtually infinite’ (15). This is the energy of eternal delight which comes from the free flow of these energies uninhibited by repression, exploitation and denial. One may add, and uninhibited by a desire to see distinctions between it and God. Just as Heyward before her accused theology of making us less than we are by dampening and denying desire within us, so Keller suggests that exploitation and denial of entanglement blocks energy which leads to depression and lack of meaning. Keller says, ‘God in heaven who we create without a body to do work for us and who in the name of religion represses the rhythms of the human body and pulsations of desire’ (15) leaves us adrift. At this point people ask what happens to all that Christian theology has placed in heaven? Well the answer is that heaven is the earth’s becoming with all energy being eternal and the human, non-human and divine acting reciprocally. This puts any notions of the other, even the divine other, in a very different light. This entanglement of God and all that lives does not form the unified ONE that

has been in my view so problematic for the planet and its inhabitants, but rather a kaleidoscope of boundless multiplicity (24) of difference and creativity. This incarnational approach requires a mindfulness from us that is both local, that is attending to our bodies and those around us, but also universal in that we are bodies within bodies, our interconnectedness is entangled in the divine entanglement, we all are, 'all in all'. This moves our conversation from it being about us, whether the 'us' marks the human race or a certain species, to it being about all of us, human, non-human, planetary, cosmic and divine alike.

Keller's work and my own in the area of radical incarnation, started some time ago¹, asks questions of the ONE God in a way that Heyward's does not have to do. Although Heyward declares *dunamis* to be the birth right of all and the very essence of the divine, she is content to leave a gap between all creation and the creator, a gap that does not influence the outpouring of radical sexual and animal theologising in any way. Keller situated the whisper that brought forth creation within all that already was, thus displacing the abstract almighty WORD, not simply remaking it. Her work and that of Heyward leaves room for multiplicity, for Heyward perhaps as in some way part of the ONE but not for Keller. Is this simply a modern challenge coming from materialistic theology/philosophy?

Schneider (2008, 170) argues that even in the gospel narratives themselves we begin to see what she calls 'monotheistic eschatologies that fantasize the end of all difference in the truth of God' are being challenged. For example, in the temptation stories we see that the incarnate Jesus refuses the Almighty power over things in favour of a life of experience and struggle with the people. She goes on to say his life and death were his own, which is the scandal for those who prefer to believe in a Big God, the ONE already there rather than the God who is occurring (Schneider 2008, 174). Bodies tend to disrupt the perfect logic of the ONE as they signal only too graphically the presence of, and engagement with, 'others' in this perfect picture. The Church Fathers too realised that bodies are untidy, even the incarnate body of Jesus, and so they turned him into the body of Christ, a body that could exactly reflect the ONE, the ideal type who could control and regulate all other bodies throughout history. The divine/human incarnation disappeared in the hands of the early theologians and instead became a bill of exchange, and in so doing Jesus was delivered into the systems he appeared to reject, the flesh and blood man living in incarnational relation was overlaid with a metaphysical concept and solidified for centuries. If we theologians are to take seriously incarnation then we have to lessen our grip on solidifying absolute monotheism and give space for chaotic multiple human and non-human bodies and lives to be narrative realities in our creation of theology, to be more uncertain about everything, to be more risky, than we have previously dared to be. Perhaps we can find courage in the words of Michael Warner who says 'religion makes available a language of ecstasy, a horizon of significance within which transgressions against the normal order of the world and the boundaries of self can be seen as good things' (cited in Rambuss 1998, 58).

Schneider reminds us that without incarnation there can be no Christianity, yet with the logic of the ONE there can be no incarnation (2008, 192). So again for her the choice is clear: do we settle for the world of categories and abstractions that

¹ See Lisa Isherwood 1999.

the ONE presents us with or do we embrace what she calls the multiplicity which is the diverse nature of embodiment. This embodiment refuses categories, as bodies do not tend to come as general, despite what fashion, medicine and the like try and tell us. Schneider points out that a fundamental gospel principle of love and peace cannot be satisfied under the regime of the ONE. In accordance with other feminist theologians, she suggests that love needs another, it cannot be without encounter and it cannot be ethical unless it recognises the presence of others as they are. Heyward spoke powerfully of this, saying that it was the desire to love and be loved that drew the divine from the heavens and into relation through incarnation.

For Schneider (2008, 207) incarnation that signals love is a willingness to show up and fully risk, nothing less will do. The ONE brings safety, as we have seen, but incarnation changes things. Schneider speaks plainly when she says, 'to follow God who became flesh is to make room for more than One it is a posture of openness to the world as it comes to us, of loving the discordant, plentipotential worlds more than the desire to overcome, to colonise or even to "same" them' (217). Thinking beyond the One makes room for difference, for the stranger and for strangeness. This requires that we face imaginatively the ONENESS erected in our own minds, cultures, religious systems and environments and overcome it through the power of our birthright of dunamis and intimate connection with the multiplicity of difference we see and experience all around us and within us.

Of course this is not what we have done and the consequences have been dire in many circumstances. Using the disembodied nature of the ONE God we have set in place the western masculinist symbolic, which stops the world, both physical and symbolic, at its own narrow vistas. Rivera (2007) of course is aware that falling into the untouchable, vertical transcendence that usually follows on from the ONE WORD is no place to go for those who sit beyond the vista of the western mind, those who have not been seen or acknowledged as inhabiting land and ways of life that fall beyond. It is precisely because of this that she sees the need for a form of transcendent theology that breaks down the western stranglehold. For her there is nothing abstract about transcendence, as in the hands of the powerful it even controls the creation of time and our spatial perceptions. Her argument is that western industrialism needed to move beyond the rhythms of natural time and impose a universal time in order to maximize the profits it wished to extract and to disconnect people from their land and their natural ways of being. This also separated the public and private sphere, with the private time being seen as feminized and trivial while public time was of the greatest importance, the masculinized time of uninhibited production and detached transcendence (Rivera 2007, 8). She argues that horizontal transcendence has divided space itself with what is north being understood as closer to God while the south is nearer the depths of stagnation and even depravity. She believes that such overarching systems of knowledge produce, rather than discover, all-encompassing foundations; they create the illusion of totality just as their origin, the Word, does. Rivera does not wish to go as far as the elimination of transcendence but rather to understand it as part of history since it is the possibilities lying in the living of history in the material body that allows for the great hope of humankind.

Incarnation tells us that our bodies are our homes, that is to say our divine/human dwelling places, therefore our journey is home, to the fullness of

our incarnation pitched as it is in diverse bodies both human and non-human. This is no individualistic ‘pitching’ but rather the multiple sites draw our attention as we need to engage with the ruptures that this multiplicity by its existence creates in what we otherwise have thought of as mono-reality or monotheism. Our attention is drawn, since this multiplicity is what we understand as the divine within and around us, to the places of our becoming. Heyward would suggest it is the innate power of *dunamis* that draws us outwards since it is a force that attracts us to others and the world. We are drawn into the conversation that is the way of our discursive matter, but we are drawn to listen intently not simply to speak and certainly not to hear dictation from beyond corporeality. This approach is easier for a theologian to argue than if I used Christology, since this has over the years gathered far more meaning than incarnation, indeed it for many makes suffering and sacrifice spring to mind more easily as central doctrines associated with the divine than the divine abandoning itself into flesh. Incarnation allows for the entanglement of all that exists in a more passionate and entwined way than phrases such as putting on Christ. Many theologians would argue that in putting on Christ, or suggesting that not I but Christ lives in me, we do indeed embody the divine but I wish to suggest that this is too much like the stamping of the divine on flesh. There is permanence, stability and encapsulated nature to this here that I have argued is not in the nature of incarnation. Incarnation allows for the questioning of who ‘I/we’ are, its free flowing desire makes it difficult to speak of edges and ultimate ‘me-ness’. We are entangled, as Keller suggests, ever drawn into passionate embrace with all. This does bring me to Vahanian’s point that we only live once, this free flow of entanglement challenges this view but of course does not suggest that a ‘me-ness’ is in a heaven or hell, rather that this *energeia* that is all in all is in everywhere in all time.

What does this approach call from us, well not a following of static doctrines, creeds and rules but rather an abandonment of ourselves into the risk of incarnation—with and in bodies, bodies, touching and listening to ourselves, each other, animate and inanimate, the cosmos itself. We dance in the glorious ever unfolding, flaring, spiralling outpouring of endless possibilities and entanglement, in those moments of touch and recognition that are incarnational.

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