

# **Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church**

*Edited by Wendy Mayer, Pauline Allen  
and Lawrence Cross*

**Volume 4  
The Spiritual Life**



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### Aspects of the Spiritual Struggle in ps-Macarius' Homilies

The so-called Macarian writings, including the famous *Fifty Spiritual Homilies* and what is known as the *Great Letter* (*Epistola magna*), had great influence not only among Byzantine monasticism, but also in the much wider Christian world, in eastern and in western Christendom alike. A good example is that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was fond of reading them and published English *excerpts*.<sup>1</sup> The Macarian homilies have been esteemed for their rich spirituality and their evocative and colourful imagery.

Concerning the authorship of these homilies, however, there are many controversies and there has not yet been a decisive conclusion that has been accepted by all patristic scholars. Furthermore, this complicated debate concerning "ps-Macarius", i.e., someone who has wrongly been called by the name of "Macarius" but is different from St Macarius of Egypt (c. 300-c. 390), during the past ninety years or so has been unavoidably linked with the worrying problems of its relationships with Messalianism, a radical ascetic movement, and with the Cappadocians, above all Gregory of Nyssa. To put it plainly, these problems are: "Who is ps-Macarius?", "Was ps-Macarius a Messalian?", and "Did Macarian writings, i.e., the *Great Letter*, depend upon a Gregorian corresponding text or was the reverse true?"

In this paper, I would like to illustrate three main stages of the human spiritual struggle or progress in ps-Macarius' homilies, in view of the questions mentioned above. Firstly, the spiritual progress towards perfection envisaged by ps-Macarius will be compared with the Messalian one reconstructed on the basis of anti-Messalian documents, and thus ps-Macarius should be cleared of suspicion of being Messalian. Secondly, or rather supplementarily, the distinctive ps-Macarian usage of the spiritual vocabulary *πληροφωρία* (assurance/fulfilment) will be examined in the light of the corresponding Gregorian text.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Wesley, *A Christian Library* I (Bristol 1749). We can read its online version scanned from the 1819 edition at [http://wesley.nnu.edu/john\\_wesley/christian\\_library/vol1/CL1Part2.htm](http://wesley.nnu.edu/john_wesley/christian_library/vol1/CL1Part2.htm).

## Who is ps-Macarius?

The first question I would like to ask concerns the authenticity of the author of the *Fifty Spiritual Homilies* which entitle their author to a prominent position in the history of early Christian spirituality. Traditionally these homilies had been attributed to St Macarius the Great of Egypt. This Macarius, the Coptic monk, priest and spiritual father in the desert of Scetis, was renowned for his great gifts of spiritual instruction of hermits, sermons, healing, and prophecy. However, this ascription was challenged, because, from internal evidence of the homilies, the background presupposed by them turned out to be not Egyptian but Syrian. Indeed the works in question were written in Greek, but their characteristic vocabulary and imagery are Syrian.<sup>2</sup> It is clear that the author of the Macarian writings has no connection with Macarius the Egyptian. Even so, thanks to the protection of his great name, these precious homilies have been preserved.

However, the problem has yet to be solved. Who was the true author of these writings, that is, ps-Macarius? What occasioned quite another turn concerning this question was an article by Dom L. Villecourt in 1920.<sup>3</sup> He was the first to discover in them traces of Messalianism, an ascetic movement that originated in Syria in the late fourth century, which was condemned as heretical by synods held at Antioch and Side, and finally in 431 by the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus.

The name "Messalians" is derived from the Syriac, *Msalyane*, meaning "those who pray" (εὐχόμενοι or εὐχῆται in Greek), which was transliterated into Greek as μασσαλιανοί or μεσσαλιανοί. As the name suggests, the Messalians attached the utmost importance to prayer and believed that all one could do was pray for the descent of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, they underestimated the sacraments and priestly ministry, and exaggerated visions and dreams.

What we know about Messalianism is mostly obtained from the propositions taken from the ascetic writings of the Messalians for condemnation by a series of synods. Especially, it is from the *Ascetic Book* or the *Asketikon* condemned at Ephesus that John of Damascus took a lot of propositions. In these propositions preserved by John, the parallels with the Macarian homilies were discovered by Villecourt. The apparent

dependence of the Messalian *Asketikon* on the ps-Macarian homilies caused a fierce debate over the question of whether ps-Macarius was Messalian.

In his seminal books on the Macarian writings, H. Dörries insisted that the last of the Messalian leaders enumerated in Theodoret's anti-Messalian document, his *Church History*, that is Symeon of Mesopotamia, was the real author of them.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, he regarded Symeon as a reformist Messalian or, if anything, anti-Messalian, although there are apparent similarities between the ps-Macarian homilies and the Messalian writings. In fact, whether or not he is one of the leading Messalians, the author of the homilies is often critical of the heretical teachings characteristic of extreme Messalianism. According to the most recent and authoritative study of this question,

Die Messalianer sind also eine Gruppe, die aus dem asketischen Umfeld des Ps.-Makarios erwuchs, seine Anschauungen teilte und radikalisierte und sich aus seinem Schrifttum und der mündlichen Überlieferung bediente. Ps.-Makarios ist kein messalianischer Häresiarch, auch kein Messalianertheologe, sondern der unfreiwillige Stichwortgeber der Bewegung.<sup>5</sup>

At this point in time there seems to be nothing more to add to its conclusion.<sup>6</sup>

## Three Stages of the Spiritual Struggle or Progress

I will now set aside the problems regarding the author of the ps-Macarian writings and turn to the task of clarifying those writings themselves, so that ps-Macarius may be cleared of suspicion of being Messalian. In his homilies and letters ps-Macarius, whose true identity remains an open question, consistently warns us that our spiritual journey to the goal of Christian life is a struggle or a combat which continues up to the end of our

<sup>4</sup> H. Dörries, *Symeon von Mesopotamien: Die Überlieferung der Messalianischen "Makarios"-Schriften* (Leipzig 1941) 7; id., *Die Theologie des Makarios / Symeon* (Göttingen 1978) 11.

<sup>5</sup> K. Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimesalianismus: Ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Ketzergeschichte*, *Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte* 71 (Göttingen 1998) 218.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. Louth, *St John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford 2002) 71-76.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. C. Stewart, *'Working the Earth of the Heart': The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431* (Oxford 1991).

<sup>3</sup> L. Villecourt, "La date et l'origine des 'Homélies spirituelles' attribuées à Macaire", *Comptes rendus des sessions de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (Paris 1920) 250-258.

life. The basic spiritual progression envisaged by him falls into three main stages:

- (1) a soul possessed by evil (because of Adam's disobedience),
- (2) a soul indwelt by both evil and grace, and
- (3) a soul from which evil has been expelled by the co-operative victory of human will and the divine Spirit.

If ps-Macarian vocabulary and images were used and his ideas were shared by Messalians, then his vision of the spiritual progression should also apply to their own. Accordingly, what should be undertaken here is to reconstruct both their visions from their own sources respectively and to clarify the difference between the two.

The lists of Messalian doctrines which are referred to in this paper are, in chronological order, a list of the fifth-century theologian and church historian Theodoret (noted as Th.),<sup>7</sup> a list preserved by Timothy of Constantinople in the late sixth century (noted as Ti.),<sup>8</sup> and a list gathered together by John of Damascus in the early eighth century (noted as J.),<sup>9</sup> most likely drawing directly on the *Asketikon* itself. On the basis of those lists, the spiritual vision of the Messalians will be laid out below. After that, similarly, the vision of ps-Macarius will be drawn up, referring to the most famous collection of Greek ps-Macarian texts, the *Fifty Spiritual Homilies*,<sup>10</sup> and the *Great Letter*.<sup>11</sup>

#### *The spiritual vision of the Messalians*<sup>12</sup>

[i] "A demon immediately falls upon each person being born, and this incites towards unseemly deeds." (Th. 429C3-5); "the indwelling (ἐνοικος) demon (in the soul)" (Th. 429C8) / "A demon is substantially (οὐσιωδῶς) joined immediately to each who is born, this having befallen from the condemnation of Adam." (Ti. 48B2-6) / "Satan co-dwells (συνοικεῖ) like a

<sup>7</sup> *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*; PG 83, 429-432.

<sup>8</sup> *De iis qui ad ecclesiam ab haereticis accedunt* (= *De receptione haereticorum*); PG 86, 45-52.

<sup>9</sup> *De haeresibus* 80; PG 94, 728-736.

<sup>10</sup> Edition cited is the critical one of the so-called Collection II: H. Dörries, E. Klostermann, M. Kroeger (eds), *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*, PTS 4 (Berlin 1964), henceforth cited as II. I owe the following English translation of II to G.A. Maloney (tr.), *Pseudo-Macarius, The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* (New York 1992).

<sup>11</sup> Edition cited is R. Staats (ed.), *Makarios-Symeon, Epistola Magna* (Göttingen 1984), henceforth cited as EM.

<sup>12</sup> The following English translation is that by Stewart, *The Messalian Controversy*.

person (ἐνυποστάτως) with a human being and rules him in every way." (J. 729A7-8); "Satan and demons possess the mind of people, and human nature is in union with the spirits of evil." (J. 729A9-11)

[iia] "Satan and the Holy Spirit co-dwell in a person" (J. 729A12-13); "The spiritual ones see sin and grace within and without, worked upon and working." (J. 732A4-6)

[iib] "Continuous prayer both pulls up the root of sin, root and branch, and drives out from the soul the evil demon inhering from the beginning." (Th. 429B16-C3); "Neither baptism nor anything else can free the soul, but only the energy of prayer." (Th. 429C5-7) / "...holy baptism contributes nothing to the driving out of this demon." (Ti. 48B7-11); "Intense prayer alone can drive out this demon, ... when this (driving out) happens, then the coming of the Holy Spirit occurs to the one praying." (Ti. B12-C4) / "Not even baptism perfects a person, nor does the reception of the divine mysteries cleanse the soul, but only the zealous prayer among them." (J. 729A15-B2)

[iii] "They [claim] to receive the sensation of the occurrence of the visitation of the Spirit." (Th. 429D4-432A1) / "the Holy Spirit visiting and appearing perceptibly" (Ti. 48C3-4); "The soul feels such communion occur to it with the heavenly Bridegroom." (Ti. 48C5-8) / "It is necessary to receive *apatheia* (ἀπάθεια), and that participation in the Holy Spirit be in all sensation and assurance (ἐν αἰσθήσει πάσῃ καὶ πληροφορίᾳ)." (J. 729B9 - 11); "It is necessary that the soul feels such communion with the heavenly Bridegroom." (J. 732A1-3)

#### *The spiritual vision of ps-Macarius*

[1] It is "evil" (II 16.6) / "sin" (II 2.3; 2.4; 14.1; 15.24; 19.2, 6; 43.5; 45.2) / "the spirit of darkness" (II 42.3) / "the serpent" (II 45.2) / "the evil wind" (II 2.3) that dwells in our soul.

[2] "There are some persons in whom grace is operative and working in peace. Within, however, evil is also present in a hidden way, and the two ways of existing, namely, according to the principles of light and darkness, vie for dominance within the same heart." (II 17.4); "It does happen that grace befalls someone whose heart, nevertheless, is not yet purified." (II 26.25); "The greatest part of the soul is held under the power of sin and only one part is touched by grace." (II 50.4)

[3] It is "Christ the King" (II 15.33) / "the Lord" (II 14.2) / "Christ the Master" (II 28.2) / "God" (II 49.4) / "the Holy Spirit" (II 5.7; EM 9, 11, 15, 17) / "the heavenly power" (II 50.1) / "the divine grace" (II 50.3) that dwells in our soul.

(This list is not intended to be exhaustive.)

## The Role of Human Will in the Spiritual Struggle

I will now examine the spiritual vision of ps-Macarius compared with the Messalian one more closely. Both the visions are certainly quite similar in that they emphasise the dwelling of evil and sin in each human soul, the co-existence of evil and grace, and the coming or dwelling of the Holy Spirit in one's soul. Above all, the experiential reality of sin is the key element of ps-Macarius' teachings on the spiritual struggle. He does not insist on the substantial reality of sin from an ontological point of view, but from the perspective of those engaged in the ascetical struggle. He also describes the final liberation from sin and passions as ἀπάθεια<sup>13</sup>, and uses the phrase "in all sensation and assurance (ἐν αἰσθήσει πάσῃ καὶ πληροφορίᾳ)" as one of the key terms in his spiritual teaching. In addition, concerning an emphasis on prayer in [iib], its occurrence in ps-Macarian writings is too numerous to enumerate.

However, he does not claim the inefficacy of baptism, manual labour, and ecclesiastical communion for casting out evil as Messalians do, but affirms them positively. In his writings, there is not any tendency of excessive emphasis on the priority of experience or perception and crude materialism. Above all, he emphasises the significance of human will and cooperation between the Holy Spirit and human person in the spiritual combat against evil, which Messalians utterly lacks. He says in his *Great Letter*:

One receives salvation by grace and divine gift. But one advances towards the final stage of spiritual maturity through faith, love, and the spiritual struggle waged by human free will (αὐτεξούσιος προαίρεσις)... One cannot continuously grow up and advance towards the spiritual goal through divine power and grace alone, without any cooperation (συνεργία) from the human person and his effort; but neither on the other hand does one arrive at the perfection of freedom and purity through one's own power, effort, and strength alone, without any cooperation and assistance from the Holy Spirit. (EM 3.1)<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Its occurrence in II and EM : II 17.11-12, 4.25, 10.3, 10.5, 29.7; EM 3.14, 13.3, 13.8.

<sup>14</sup> EM II.5-13 (J 238, 8-18): χάριτι μὲν καὶ δωρεᾷ θείᾳ τὴν σωτηρίαν κομιζόμενος, πίστει δὲ καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἀγῶνι αὐτεξουσίου προαιρέσεως τὴν προκοπὴν καὶ αὐξήσιν ἐπὶ τὸ τέλειον μέτρον τῆς πνευματικῆς ἡλικίας δεχόμενος...οὔτε τὸ ὅλον διὰ τῆς θείας δυνάμεως καὶ χάριτος ἀνευ τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου συνεργίας καὶ σπουδῆς τὴν αὐξήσιν τῆς προκοπῆς λαμβάνων, οὔτε τὸ ὅλον διὰ τῆς ἰδίας δυνάμεως καὶ σπουδῆς καὶ ἰσχύος ἀνευ τῆς συνεργίας καὶ βοηθείας τοῦ ἁγίου

What has to be noticed is the problem of the evil's reality for God. God does not wage a battle with evil on an equal footing. "For God no evil exists as a separated substance, since he is in no way affected by it" (II 16.5-6). For us, however, evil is real and stubborn, since it has become a kind of second nature to human beings. Evil cannot be overcome without God's graceful help. "A man may have the will to be pure, to be without blame and spotless, to be always without evil and in communion with God, yet he does not truly have the power" (II 2.3).

From what has been examined above, it seems reasonable to conclude that ps-Macarius was not a Messalian.

## The Significance of the Spiritual Vocabulary "πληροφορία"

Finally, even if only briefly, it would be helpful to point out the significance of the spiritual vocabulary πληροφορία in the ps-Macarian writings.<sup>15</sup> The Greek word πληροφορία, lacking any detectable classical lineage, occurs only four times in the New Testament.<sup>16</sup> Struggling to define this word adequately, many translators and commentators have been puzzled by the tension between two ways to translate it, that is "assurance (of faith)" and "fulfilment" or "perfection". After the New Testament, early Greek Christian writers made little use of πληροφορία before the late fourth century. Accordingly, the biblical source underlay later Christian usage of this word. It was ps-Macarius, then, who used that biblical word most frequently and made the usage (along with αἰσθησις and πείρα) distinctly his own. He must have deeply contemplated its usage in the New Testament.<sup>17</sup> But the controversial aspect of his innovative usage was revealed by the appearance of πληροφορία in John of Damascus' list of

πνεύματος εἰς τὸ τέλειον τοῦ θεοῦ θέλημα καὶ τὸ τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ καθαρότητος μέτρον φθάσαι δυνάμενος. cf. Eph 4:13.

<sup>15</sup> On the concept of πληροφορία, cf. V. Desprez, "Plérôphoria", DSp 12, 1813-1821; id., "Plérôphoria chez le Pseudo-Macaire: plénitude et certitude...en pays grec", *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 46 (1984) 89-111.

<sup>16</sup> Heb 6:11; "the full assurance/fulfilment (πληροφορία) of hope", 10:22; "in full assurance (πληροφορία) of faith", 1 Thess 1:5; "with full conviction/perfection (πληροφορία)", Col. 2:2; "the assurance (πληροφορία) of understanding".

<sup>17</sup> E.g. III 25.6.3 for Heb 6:11 (III is: V. Desprez [ed.], *Pseudo-Macaire: Œuvres Spirituelles, I: Homélie propre à la Collection III*, SC 275 [Paris, 1980]); III 28.2.2 for Heb 10:22; EM 2.1 (J 235, 14-21) for 1 Thess 1:5.



Messalian doctrines, as mentioned above, which were condemned as being heretical.

Now, compared with Basil's and Gregory of Nyssa's usage of πληροφορία, ps-Macarius' usage will be accounted for to the point. Firstly, Basil used this word relatively often, regarding its meaning as "firm conviction" of the divine presence or faith. He did not, however, allow the application of it to experienced "perfection".<sup>18</sup> Secondly, Gregory of Nyssa seemed to feel anxiety and awkwardness about ps-Macarius' use of πληροφορία in his *Epistola magna*. That is why Gregory deliberately avoided πληροφορία in the parallel passages of his *De instituto christiano*, except when it is a direct quotation from scripture.<sup>19</sup> In sum, the two Cappadocians tended to keep πληροφορία in its meaning of "assurance" or "conviction" before the end of the spiritual progress.

But on the other hand, ps-Macarius went beyond the tradition by stretching the limits of key terms about the spiritual life and by eventually shifting the core meaning of πληροφορία into the sphere of perfect "fulfilment". At least, he tolerated the possibility that in the real life one can arrive at πληροφορία (= achieved perfection) through the ascetical advance towards perfection. While πληροφορία certainly meant "assurance (of faith)" for the Christian ascetics being still on the way to spiritual perfection, it could also even describe final "fulfilment" for ps-Macarius.

For instance, "ἐν πληροφορίᾳ of faith you have a heart which was made pure from evil conscience" (III 28.2.2). Here the man who possesses "πληροφορία of faith" has reached the spiritual goal. The heart ἐν πληροφορίᾳ is no longer simply the prerequisite for spiritual perfection, but a sign of having achieved perfection. "The association of πληροφορία with the full indwelling of God in the human heart or soul is the typical ps-Macarian use of this term."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Cf. V. Desprez, "Les Relations entre le Pseudo-Macaire et Saint Basile", in J. Gribomont (ed.), *Commandements du Seigneur et libération évangélique* (Rome 1970); R. Staats, "Die Basilianische Verherrlichung des Heiligen Geistes auf dem Konzil zu Konstantinopel 381, Ein Beitrag zum Ursprung der Formel 'Kerygma und Dogma'", *Kerygma und Dogma* 25 (1979) 232-253.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., EM/*De instituto*: 1.4 (J 234)/J 43; 2.2 (J 235)/J 44; 3.2 (J 239)/J 48; 3.12 (J 249)/J 59; 9.12 (J 275)/J 84; 9.17 (J 278)/J 86. On the relation of *Epistola magna* and *De instituto christiano*, cf. W. Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius* (Leiden 1954/5); R. Staats, *Gregor von Nyssa und die Messalianer – Die Frage der Priorität zweier altkirchlicher Schriften*, PTS 8 (Berlin 1968); id., *Epistola Magna*.

<sup>20</sup> Stewart, *The Messalian Controversy*, 108.

In his homilies the spiritual goal is full of light and glory:

The soul that is counted worthy to participate in the light of the Holy Spirit by becoming his throne and habitation, and is covered with the ineffable glory of the Spirit, becomes all light, all face, all eye. There is no part of the soul that is not full of the spiritual eyes of light. (II 1.2)<sup>21</sup>

Naturally some of his contemporaries reacted strongly against such excessive, extraordinary, and even paradoxical claims, and finally condemned an ascetic movement generated from the ps-Macarian doctrines for its doctrinal and behavioural deviations from orthodox norms. However, what the true ascetic life was and how important it was for the realisation of the final goal of Christianity were actual questions in the Christian world, especially in the eastern church, at that time. Hence it is not so surprising that ps-Macarian writings and his teachings were pervasive and influential in the history of early Christian asceticism.

## Conclusion

According to ps-Macarius, "the rest (κατάπαυσις) of true Christians is the redemption from the passions of sin and the fullest and energizing indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a pure heart" (EM 13.15). Thus the true Christian must enter constantly into the spiritual struggle and conflict against sin and the evil powers with help from unceasing prayer, which produces among those who are worthy of it a certain mystical communion of holiness with God, thanks to the action of the Spirit. "And after a long race and struggle, he carries off the victory and becomes a Christian" (II 27.20). Divinised by the loving grace of God's Spirit, he might "already live the eternal life" (II 1.12) and "be a perfect man" (II 32.6).

On the other hand, ps-Macarius also says, "Who, indeed, has ever arrived at perfection and tested and directly experienced that world? I have not yet seen any perfect Christian or one perfectly free" (II 8.5). It seems like a contradictory view *prima facie*. But the fact is that "the inexperienced person, being comforted by grace, thinks that grace has come to all the parts

<sup>21</sup> ψυχὴ γὰρ ἡ καταξιοθεῖσα κοινωνῆσαι τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ φωτὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ καταλαμφθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ κάλλους τῆς ἀρρήτου δόξης αὐτοῦ, ἐτοιμάσαστος αὐτὴν ἑαυτῷ εἰς καθέδραν καὶ οἰκῆτηριον, ὅλη φῶς γίνεται καὶ ὅλη πρόσωπον καὶ ὅλη ὀφθαλμός· καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτῆς μέρος μὴ γέμον τῶν πνευματικῶν ὀφθαλμῶν τοῦ φωτός...



of the soul" and that sin has been uprooted, although actually "the greatest part of the soul is held under the power of sin and only one part is touched by grace" (II 50.4). Our thoughts (λογισμοί) could not really discern our own real perfection. So our constant spiritual struggle can never be finished, so long as the co-habitation in the same person of sin and grace exists in our earthly life. But the end of our spiritual salvation is not its fulfilment, but spiritual transfiguration itself brought about in our souls, which are perpetually stretching out themselves toward the goal of our spiritual struggle.

Damien Casey  
Australian Catholic University, Brisbane

### Maximus and Irigaray: Metaphysics and Difference

One's theology is substantially shaped by the metaphysical presuppositions that one brings to the task. So when a particular metaphysics is no longer tenable, this will have implications for the theologies built upon such foundations. It is with regards to this question that I found myself drawn to compare the work of Maximus the Confessor with that of the contemporary French philosopher Luce Irigaray. Both thinkers have sought to overcome the excesses of the philosophical system that they have nonetheless attempted to salvage for their own particular projects. For Irigaray, the system in question was Hegel's dialectics, which she finds to be an invaluable resource for the constitution of a genuinely dialogical culture. For Maximus, the system was Christian Neoplatonism.

Hegel ascribes otherness to the very essence of subjectivity to the extent that alterity is itself constitutive of the freedom of the subject. Self-consciousness is for Hegel essentially a return from out of otherness. The only way to genuinely avoid solipsism is to find a way of truly recognising the other. The question mark over Hegel's thought concerns not the role of the other so much as the appropriation of the other to the same. Does the other remain other or is it ultimately a victim of the march of history on the road to Absolute Spirit? Irigaray is also intrigued by Hegel as "the only Western philosopher to have approached the question of love as labour".<sup>1</sup>

One of the problems with Hegel is that he begins with the idea of the family as an undifferentiated and natural unit. And so Irigaray rehabilitates Hegel through the idea of sexual difference. "Sexual difference", Irigaray argues, "is probably the issue of our time which could be our 'salvation' if we thought it through".<sup>2</sup> Sexual difference is important for establishing a

<sup>1</sup> L. Irigaray, *I Love to You. Sketch for a Felicity Within History*, Eng. trans. A. Martin (New York-London 1996) 19.

<sup>2</sup> L. Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Eng. trans. C. Burke and G. Gill (Ithaca, NY 1993) 5.