WOMEN AND THE REFORMATION

I. TRADITIONAL ATTITUDES TO WOMEN
   Misogyny = fear and/or hatred of women
   1. fear of sex and marriage: classical theme; clerical Christian celibacy
   2. idea of woman as inferior
      physiologically: woman as incomplete male, Adam’s rib
      theological argument: “Not made in God’s image.”
      philosophical argument: ontologically (as type of being)
      "Male is to female as spirit is to matter."
      social argument: women below men in social hierarchy

   Romanticization or Idealization of Women
   Cult of Virgin Mary: (hyperdulia = special reverence)
      Virgin Birth & Immaculate Conception
   Courtly Love Tradition (France)

   Result: split image of woman (Melanie Klein) – good mother versus bad mother
   Women as "above" and "below" reason: but never “normal” (= male trait)
   Eve: subjugation as punishment for her temptation of Adam with apple
   Witches = old, sterile crones, hostile to life: inversion of young, nurturing mother

II. REFORMATION: attitudes to women remain same, attitude to marriage changes.
   Rejection of celibacy: seen as almost impossible, virgins die young
      urge universal marriage, as young as possible
   Objections to Catholic policies: marriage as spiritual sacrament, clandestine marriage
      Impediments to marriage in Canon law: expansion of incest to 7 degrees of kinship
      including “spiritual kinship” with god parents after Baptism
      Hypocrisy of Catholic celibacy: actually leads to concubines, priest as public sinners
      Eberlin von Bunzburg, Franciscan convert to Lutheranism, pamphleer on marriage

   Validation of marriage: marriage of Martin Luther & Katerina von Bora 1525
   Wittenberg: emptying of convents, monasteries; “liberation of women from cloister”
   Luther’s writings: see comments on women & marriage (over)
      Marriage as natural institution, ordained of God but not sacrament

   1522 On the Estate of Marriage: rejects negative view of marriage in popular culture
      Catholic celibacy seen as laziness, avoid hard work of marriage, family, children
      Marriage as penitential institution: wife gets pain of childbirth, husband labor, worry
      Sexual corruption of priests: mistresses, concubines, “solicitation in confession”

   1523 Why Nuns May Leave Cloisters with God’s Blessing
      Convents seen as “brothels” of lustful nuns, forced into celibacy by family
      1520’s smuggling nuns out of convents:
      Leonard Koppe, herring merchant “liberates” daughter, Katerina von Bora

   Sources: for suppression of Geneva convents: selection in Xerox packet, Kingdom article
      Jeanne de Jussie (nun’s diary), Le levain du calvinisme (The germs/yeast of Calvinism)