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WHY GIRLS DON'T SHOOT UP SCHOOLS

OLD (biological) answer: Low testosterone
NEW (cultural) answer: It's a girl's world.

I warn you that if you're sick of hearing me on Christianity's pronouns for God, this Thinksheet is going to irritate you. But I promise you that here I'll put the issue in a fresh, nonparochial context, in hope that enlightenment will reduce your irritation.

1 I'm not giving up entirely on my old testosterone/aggression correlation: there's some truth in the old "biology is destiny." But we've been learning that cultural psychology (the way "things" are seen in a particular culture) is also destiny. As female sexual "liberation" began to drip down into early puberty (less than a score of years ago), junior-high females began to hit on (latterday for "make sexual advances toward") junior-high males, who (as in the earlier acts of the fe/male opera) continued to hit on them. Results? (1) A genital slamming together of pubescents; (2) A nervous, stupid official distribution of condoms in America's junior highschools; (3) Abstinence's return to respectability (mixed signal: just say no, but here's a condom if you can't).

2 The epistemology of science has learned the humble truth that the observer affects the observation: no such thing as a neutral observer. Human beings being sexual beings, none of us is capable of sex-transcendent observations on sex & gender. Further, the hormonal-spiritual-cultural factors are inextricably stranded together. CONCLUSION: My boldness on sex/gender should be tempered with humility, a virtue I hope you won't find missing in this Thinksheet.

3 When community hypertrophies, the individual is submerged; when autonomy hypertrophies (as now in America), the community is submerged. We name the former disease **tyranny**: shall we name the latter disease **freedom**? Yes if we see that in this polar context we mean *hypertrophied* (overdeveloped, cancerous) freedom --rights trumping responsibilities, with these among other results: (1) good marriages are few; (2) the % of two-parent families declines (it's now at ca.60%); (3) the % of people living alone increases, as does the pathology of loneliness (the consellation of egocentric feelings from excessive aloneness [contra Gn.2.18]); (4) the traditional positive/negative sexual role-identities dissolve in the acid of autonomous egalitarianism (justice=fairness=equality); (5) since the Enlightenment-generated egalitarian ideal violates both tradition & (I believe) human nature & the human condition ("life is unfair"), almost everybody feels abused, victimized. (On Charlie Rose today, Pete Hamill said of the Kennedys facing their latest tragedy, "They take the unfairness of life as a given. They do not do victimhood....The habit of confronting death builds strength.")

4 A brief literary **chronology** vis-a-vis §3(4):

1950, Ashley Montagu's THE NATURAL SUPERIORITY OF WOMEN

I recall conversing with him when the book came out, & had occasion to note in some clergy (in response to his lectures) puzzlement & consternation--one who vigorously argued that M. had given aid & comfort to sexism: if gender equality is a social good & women are superior, women must be more regulated (rule-controlled) than men. M.'s anthropological data were/are impressive....My view of the matter is cultural: women were inferior in premodern (muscle-powered, physical-action-oriented) societies, & are superior in modern (& postmodern?) society (motor-powered, communication-oriented, interpersonal: women are better at un/consciously seeing into [Lat., "in-tu"ition] people, human relations, situations [esp. the broad, wide-angle picture] --& of course, as actuaries have long shown, women's bodies are more efficient & last longer). (One more fact: women are more cleaver at langauge, a superiority tempting men to counter with a superiority of theirs, viz. muscle: most domestic violence is against women.)

1953, Hugh Misseldine's THE CHILD OF THE PAST WITHIN

I studied with him in continuing ed that year & was impressed with his having made, in the direction of gender equity, an advance on Freud--but couldn't have known that his book-title would become a buzzword in pop psychology/sociology.

1963, Betty Friedan's THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE

That year I made a voluminous index of what I rightly guessed would be a blockbuster book. Anthropologist Montagu & Psychiatrist Misseldine were moving toward a better shake for women; but here came a woman with an attitude, a frustrated housewife who supported her husband through to his PhD but who didn't finish hers (because he impregnated her, slowing her down). Unlike the Kennedys, she did victimhood (big time, too). Black liberation (for 12% of the U.S. pop) was succeeding, & she piggybacked on that toward women's liberation (for 51% of the U.S. pop). And, too, as we've learned to say, "That was the '60s"--Woodstock, the pill, sexual lib, "Don't trust anyone over 30," etc. F. lived to confess that what she started led to excesses of dubious value to women & society. I've a special concern about two transcendentalizations of these excesses: (1) the return of the Goddess (officially suppressed in the Bible [& thus in Judaism & Christianity]), & (2) the reduction, even in extremists the repression/suppression, of Judaism/Christianity's masculine language for God (whose titles & pronouns, in the Bible, are exclusively masculine).

1969, Sam Keen's TO A DANCING GOD

This I read the previous year in manuscript at Esalen & there conversed with him as to the long-range +/- effects of his shift from Apollo (the thinking deity, the idea side of the biblical God) to Dionysos (the feeling side--& a competing deity then & now).Soon the modern-day Maenads (radical-gender-feminist female Dionysiacs) took over, opening the cultural door to the Goddess & slamming the door shut in the face of the masculine-language biblical God. (Sam respected my criticisms & warnings & even got me his old job, prof. of the theology of culture, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. I had a signed contract, which was canceled because some in authority in that school considered me too much a social radical.)....Both causes, Friedan's & Keen's, were carried along on the wave of the '60s Dionysiac throwing off of traditional restraints & the institutions teaching/enforcing the restraints.

The DANCING theme correlates with feeling (expressing/promoting) over thinking, chaos over cosmos, autonomy over patriarchy. Undisciplined Zorba (in Kazantzakis' pop telling of his masterwork THE ODYSSEY: A SEQUEL) utterly fails at something requiring reason-learning-patience (viz., building a timber-slide) & at story's end throws off his clothes & dances into the ocean (after earlier teaching his stiff Eng. employer to dance). Ecstatic Maenads, female devotees of Dionysos (in Euripedes' "The Bacchae"), dance in a circle & tear apart a man approaching the circle (as sperm approaches egg [it now being learned, 1999, that the egg grabs the sperm]?). (Gender-feminist Maenads rip the masculine language [esp. the pronouns!] out of God (the biblical-Jewish-Christian deity). (Sadly, some liberal Jewish & Christian leaders have naively gone along with this ripping, arguing (without corroborating evidence) that this reductionism (1) is kinder to women, granting them equality before the heavenly Throne, & (2) strengthens God in apologetics/polemics (whereas the evidence seems the reverse for this act of kenosis (human beings emptying something out of the God of revelation [ironic reversal of Phil.2.7])....
NB: Revelation is in words & in flesh (e.g., Jn.1.14), the Word audible & the Word visible. The early Christian councils rightly perceived that to weaken the flesh (as only "seeming" to be real flesh) was to reduce revelation: we now have evidence that to weaken the words (esp. by refusing to use the God-pronouns) weakens God-as-publicly-perceived. How often have I heard/read the media, in jesting tone, use some such locution as "God--he, she, or whatever"! Revelation, & the God of revelation, a laughingstock! The personness of God treated as, in effect, questionable! I'm for fairness to women, but also for fairness to God, the God of words-&-flesh revelation. But here's another theological-cultural problem: church, world, men, women now need the Bible's masculine-language confrontational deity:

1999, Lionel Tiger, THE DECLINE OF MALES*

Says the author (in effect), the fe/male teeter-totter is now so heavy on the girl side that the boy is in the air dangling his feet & shooting up schools (the young male role in society, including public schools, having become societally undefined/unassigned). The culture has become so feminized that males are gasping for "some sense of dignity." Half of America's boys are "below average." Males are failing to mature, being confused about their role. I add that the feminized, pronounless deity of liberal religion is no challenge to young males, society's most dangerous sector. Another tragedy: women want men (not old boys), & can't find any.

*A date for the decline? Best, he says, is the (antipregnancy) Pill at the end of the '60s, increasing female freedom & decreasing male interest in marriage--in power, an increase for girls & decrease for boys. Females looser, males less sure of paternity. More fatherless "families," including 70% of Af.-Am. children.