

This is a funeral oration-meditation on the death of choreographer Geo. Ballanchine, who died yesterday (30Apr83), and whom I remember for saying "Hear the dance, see the music"--but also for (1) serial marriages to four dancers and (2) a couple of quotes on women: (a) "Dance is woman," and (b) "Everything a man does he does for his ideal woman. You must believe in something, and I believe in that."

*NOTE TO WOMEN READERS:* Where this thinksheet reads "woman," please read "man." Because of the mystery of "God made them male and female," the metathesis is only approximate.

1. Since so-called realists think idealists are talking nonsense (indeed, if they are linguistic-analysis realists, "non-sense"), I hasten to assure my readers that by "idealizations" I do not mean figmentations: neither God nor women are figments of my imagination, though all my 65 years (except the first few?) my imagination has been overstimulated by both. And, far from cooling off on either, I am now, for both, the most passionate I've ever been. As I consider myself typical, I generalize that this is the normal condition of the male in early old age.

2. None of the above should be read as indicating that I am a fatuous romantic. Nothing of the kind! The fatuous romantic messes up his religious life and his sex life with the illusion that the ideal woman exists (so he'd better keep looking instead of settling for less, i.e., instead of settling down permanently with any actual woman)--and with the parallel illusion that the ideal deity exists (so he'd better keep looking instead of settling for any one religious commitment). At age 17 I settled for an imperfect deity (the biblical God), and at age 27 I settled down for life with an imperfect (though wonderful, and far better than I deserve!) woman. Actually, I don't think there's a better woman; and I think I've got the best God. (But cosmic and filial piety prompts me to pronounce the balancing truth: they have me.)

3. Ontological note: My God never ceases creating order out of chaos, including me. Accordingly, my peace and joy derive from my yielding my clay to the Potter. My making of sense is only tentative, floating atop the sense that is being made of me. Those who know this know how to hear me and read me... Epistemological note: The hendiadys that we are made in God's "image and likeness" includes all our powers and potentials, so that, for one thing, we can imagine nothing not in God's mind "from before the foundation of the earth." Accordingly, every thought brought "captive to Christ" is a recycling; and "pray without ceasing" means, among other things, return to the Source, with gratitude, one's whole consciousness; with gratitude, and also with penitence for the deformities we have wrought upon the gifts of life and grace.

4. As analytic tool, all the above warns against invalid, illicit, disastrous inferences. One is to confuse, then identify, idealization and worship--in the case of deity, leading to atheism; of woman, leading to inability of whole-being intimacy (e.g., Eliz.Janeway's goddess/slut and Betty Ford's goddess/prostitute)... As monotheist & mongamist, I monitor the flights of my anima and its alightings as a spirit-dove on particular women and remaining there sometimes for long and painful periods. The flights are not in my power to control, but this is: each flight is meant to, and does, deepen my love for my woman and for my God.

5. Feminine cultures image the divine as masculine. Judaism and Christianity are feminine (Canaanite), so God is "He." That is why it's ludicrous, as well as sad, for women to attack the Bible's "God," "Father," "Lord," "King." The opposite reading is also a divine gift.