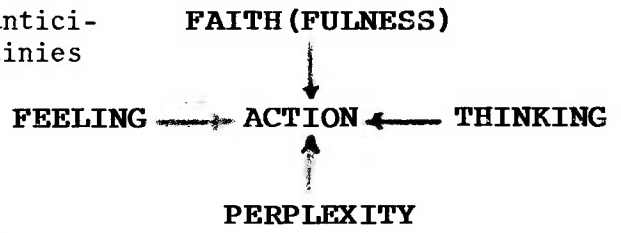


THREE DIVORCES AND "THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB" --- ELLIOTT #1787

This thinksheet grows out of my forum "Our Perplexities and our Faith," today's (15Jan84) session, in which the marriage/divorce analyog emerged and seemed helpful.

1. Rev.19 begins with a "Hallelujah!" worship antici-
pating, by sexual analogy, the contrasting destinies
of "the great prostitute" (and her Johns) and
"the marriage supper of the Lamb" (to his
faithful, the church as "she," bride of
Christ). Emphasize "anticipating": the whole
book of Revelation meets head-on the Christian
community's **perplexity** over the slower-coming-



than-expected Parousia. In the Revelator speeds up the film so Christians can come at this and other faith/life perplexities *from the future into the present*: from the perspective of past into present, they were having trouble making sense, in light of the Faith, of what was happening to them (viz., ostracism and sporadic persecution). (For the image in OT, of the joys of the Messianic Kingdom, see Is.25.6.) In mid-chapter, the white-horse rider named "Faithful and True" makes just war against the resisters; as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (an ancient Persian monarchic title), he (1) casts the Beast and the False Prophet into "the fiery lake of burning sulphur" and (2) feeds the resisters' corpses to vultures, who "gorge themselves." Not a pretty picture, but corresponding to the situation in which the addressed Christians had to live and make sense of their living. (The vulture episode is the chapter's third and final section.) So much for this painting, in swirling forms and primary colors, of the Anakephalaliosis (as the Greek church calls it; the verb in Ro.13.9 & Eph.1.10), the Restoration-at-a-higher-level, The Convergence on God-through-Lamb of history, the Integration of "all things" (Gk. for the cosmos) in their Source, the Gathering after sin's scattering and the In-Gathering of history's harvest.

2. The "three divorces" in this thinksheet's title are (1) the splitting of faith(fulness) and perplexity, (2) the splitting of feeling and thinking, and (3) the splitting of horizontal and vertical. Let's take them in that order:

FAITH (FULNESS) / PERPLEXITY -- By "faith(fulness)," I mean what both OT & NT mean, viz., the unity of passive and active trust in God (both Heb. and Gk. including, in add. to both "trust" persons and "believe" words-ideas, "obey"--but Heb., stronger; rabb. writings emphasize "obey," while Apocr. and Pseudepigr.--and Paul--emphasize that survival roots in the trust attitude toward God, "passive" only in this sense, not in the sense, often in Pure Land Buddhism and in early Christian antinomianism, that "that's all there is to it"). (Cf. "worth(iness).") The marriage of (i.e., the active engagement between) f. and perplexity changes both, as in true love woman and man change vis-a-vis each other--not, please, change each other! Increasingly I believe, without arrogance but with awe, that love between God and me enriches us both (as through the now-many years love between Loree and me has enriched us both). The f./p. divorce? When one lets p. overwhelm f., which always happens when f. is undernourished; or when one overnourishes f. into fantasy forbidding honesty in dealing with p. (which fantasy is a form of schizophrenia). My intellectual impulse to leave fundamentalism (about five years in it) was fundamentalism's inherent and operational dishonesty parading as "truth" (cf., in Islam, Iran's present government). (A great phrase for the double honesty of f. and p. is "honest to God," which Ms. Robinson thought up for her bp. husband's best-selling book. Sad fact: honest-to-both is rare because so difficult; so rare as to be, in any human being, a priori improbable. The central fact we're dealing with in the forum "Our Faith and Our Perplexities."

FEELING / THINKING -- The marriage of f. and t. lets each modify the other in the interest of (1) inner peace and joy, (2) efficiency in aiding the f./p. marriage, and thus the integration of horizontal and vertical, and, ultimately and intimately, (3) the glory of God. Divorces of f./t. are the stuff of sin, tragedy, anguish, history. The Enlightenment (with the exception of Goethe) divorced f. in favor of t. and is thus otherwise known as the Age of Reason; Freudianism reacted, explaining t. as epiphenomenal to f. and all feelings as derivative (as in Tantra) from lust-feeling.

HORIZONTAL / VERTICAL -- This divorce produces flatlanders and sky-pilots.*

* A devil's split between atheistic secularists and out-of-it, world-irrelevant religionists.