

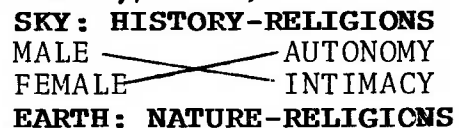
#1823 questions efforts to desexize Christianity by language revisionism pushed so far as to desexize the past, clean up the Bible portions read in worship. #1824 shows Christianity "a reaction, not a religion"--and essentially sex-unconscious, as revolts are interested in "warm bodies" of both sexes: basic Communism, and basic Christianity, believe in the equality of the sexes for the same negative reason. #1825 describes the shift from dominance/submission to partnership in two relationships, each contexting the other: female/male and nature/humanity. #1826 asks how we can be faithful both to biblical religion and to feminism, decries making forensic use of prehistory in the interest of sexism or feminism, and, presenting a taxonomy of deities, states the biblical God as type #8 ("montheistically masculine ...including feminine qualities"). #1827 puts sexism/feminism in the context of psychology of religion: human beings want sexual polarity in their deity/deities; explains why the boys are scareder of the girls than vice versa; describes the dynamics of male/female intimacy/autonomy needs and strivings; and suggests what the Church can do in the present confusion/opportunity....This thinksheet further develops "the feminine (in) God" and fulfils the promise of #1827 to use certain reff.

1. "Nurture, not nature" combines paradoxically with "nature, not nurture" in the prochange preacher's toolbox--as in removing a bolt impossible to remove without a tool pressuring in one direction and another tool at the other end pressuring in the other direction. The unsolvable herédity/environment problem yields at least rhetorically, at least for true believers, to the two-tool approach. In the sexist/feminist debate, the former argue against change on the basis of nature ("That's just the way women/men are!"), the latter argue for change on the basis of nurture ("It's culture, not nature: bring up girls and boys the same, androgynously, and almost all of the differences now ratifying women's oppression will disappear"). To defend their positions, each side has some tall explaining to do--and by the time the explaining reaches the screeching level, everything on both sides has become weirdly distorted: nature, culture, history, men, women, marriage, religion, psychology, even science. But we are not without resources for getting some transcendence over this bootless debate.

2. One resource is history of religions. One slice through religions, one way of displaying their agreements/differences, is to ask the question *How does this religion relate root/sky, heaven/earth (sea/land, darkness/light, et al)?* Almost without exception, the religions use, for understanding those polarities, the polarity that most grips human beings even before the hormones start squirting around inside one's skinbag: S-E-X. Religions that have developed complex philosophies (the "advanced" or "developed" religions) interillumine among all the polarities, with (to use the solar system + "stars" as metaphor) life/death as sun, female/male as moon, and all the "smaller" heavenly bodies as the other polarities....Can we learn anything about the "natural" roles of male/female by studying these interilluminations? I think so (NB: I didn't say "know"! ). Here's one thing: Most religions and so cultures (a religion being the beating heart of a culture) assign female to earth and male to sky: Sky-Father (Skr. *Dyaus-Pitra*--same roots as Gk. *(D)Zeus-Pater* and Lat. *Ju-piter*) & Earth-Mother (*Ge, Gaia, Gaea, De-meter*). That's Indo-European: this is Sinic--*ti* (sky, male) is both balanced by, and receives the obedience of, *li* (earth, female); and so with *yang/yin*. Why? Nature's intimate processes are female: earth gestates food, "man" (male and female) sprouts forth from woman, breast produces first-food; and sky, though autonomous, inseminates ("rain" thought of as sky-semen) earth as man, though autonomous (!), inseminates woman by taking the initiative (whether or not as sky-above, the unfairly termed "missionary position").

3. The eco-crisis that is upon us demands nature/history tradeoffs (a third dyad, in addition to the changing roles of male/female and humanity/nature). Here is a discussion model:

The diagonal lines represent the dual assignments. Over/under do NOT imply superior/inferior!



AUTONOMY  
INTIMACY  
OVER

"God graciously expresses Himself in whatever aspects are necessary to enable us to apprehend Him, through all our ages of cultural change. There is an element of paradox here, but no contradiction."

4. As we have known since giving up the flat earth, sky is not *really* above earth (astronomically), though it is above earth (experientially, as no human being can be at more than one point at a time on earth's surface). This very out-there yes/no is a model for male/female modesty and mutuality (being "help-meets" to each other in the present painful-necessary process of liberating persons from every culture's traditional sexual social-role assignments). *Who does society say I am?* must be brought under the control of *What, now, is God asking me to do as a human being with my genetic, cultural, and experiential givens?*

5. #1827.4 describes the male/female, autonomy/intimacy gift-exchange. This should be applied also to religions. Earth-Mother religions ("nature religions") corrupt the sky, seducing males to the woman thing: Sky-Father religions ("history religions") rape the earth, oppressing the earth-human, viz., woman. Barabara Tuchman's brilliant THE MARCH OF FOLLY (Knopf/84) shows what happens when history is turned over to sky-humans, viz., men (males), who are romantic-ideological-inflexible: woodenheaded, dogged continuation of flawed and failed policies and programs; deafenedness to opposition and even to uncomfortable reports from one's own side; disregard for the deleterious effects of one's actions on powerless humanity (women, children, the poor) and on the biosphere (though this last she doesn't get into, and her thing in the book is descriptive rather than prescriptive or interpretive--so she doesn't use male/female as a foil)...NB: Grain to be milled at another time is the fact that all significant economic, political, technological, military power on earth today is not only male but, directly or indirectly, white male. E.g., China's ideology, Japan's industrialism, India's political structure, Africa's mess (from white-power overlays) and force ("native" governmental styles having, in some cases, gone underground and, in other cases, transmogrified themselves into white-male power), & EurAmerica. We white males are earth's monarch--which is increasingly bad news for everybody.

6. Paradox: Sun Moon's teaching makes women more the equals of men than does the Bible, but his church treats women as even more inferior than they are treated in Judaism and Christianity. His teaching is Sinic balance-equality: yin and yang are in each other (as in this emblem of Taoism), as in Jungianism anima is in males and animus is in females.



6. Jesus was androgynous, and his life models primary wholeness in spite of his not being secondarily whole (i.e., in a full male/female relationship). (Contrast this with Buddha, who abandoned his wife, and Mohammed, a polygamist.) A married Christian is at one remove from Jesus as model: a single Christian is at no distance. It was wrong for the Church of yesterday to use this fact to thumb its nose at nature (sex); it's wrong of the "family church" to thumb its nose at singleness. So here's a fourth dyadic assignment: singles/marrieds. What an opening for Christian theology and ministry! And how sadly the churches are missing it!

7. A fifth dyadic assignment is right(female)/left(male)-brain. Neurology now pictures it as more complex than we used to think, but the primary hypotheses have not changed. IBM, wisest and most humane of the international corporations, now trains its execs in "whole-brained" thinking (Ned Hermann's "multi-dominant" switching from intuitive-creative to analytic-applicative, and back): women and men are expected to think both like oneselves and like each other! Why not? IBM, and marriage, don't work well without it. Neither does politics. Or art. Or religion.

8. A trope, here, on J.B. Phillips' phrase YOUR GOD IS TOO SMALL: what I've to say of almost all feminist literature I've see is *Your context is too small, so your conclusions are crabbed and your proposals distorted*. I can't help it that this will, to some, sound arrogant. I would have to put "disappointing" in my review of almost every feminist book. (See beginning of #1827 for key to the literature I refer to here.) LS is almost an exception. Its 350 items are fact-packed, and tendentious only in the selection of topics. RCW is somewhat strident and given to exaggeration--such as (p.3) "Women had no models in theology or in Bible study other than Eve and Mary." JEB is sprightly and honest (p.7): "We really have no knowledge at all, and never will, about *earliest* man's religious views." P.40: "We have ample justification...to speak of God as a woman as well as a man." EHL is balanced. P.32: