

1. The women's movement, thank God, points both to an insane, antihuman hyper/hypotrophy (males society-assigned too much power-burden, females too little--so that males are expected to commit hubris on pain of not being "real men," and females are expected to commit the reverse, on pain of not being "ladies") and to a deeper malaise, viz. the hyper/hypo-trophy of over-"stroking" the individual who becomes a social-role "success" and under-"stroking," neglecting, indeed striking (punishing) the individual who, for reasons largely unexamined or, worse, politically perverted in interpretation, "just doesn't make it," becomes a "failure" in the society's eyes. Thus the women's movement points to the need for radical revalorization of "society" and "the individual," and it is this pointing that sets the terms for "doing theology" in relation to the movement and for the mission of the Church vis-a-vis the movement.

2. This rumination hit me when I reread this in YOUNG MAN LUTHER (Erikson): "A human being under observation has grown stage by stage into a social world; this world, always for worse and for better, has step by step prepared him for an outer reality made up of human traditions and institutions which utilize and thus nourish his developing capacities, attract and modulate his drives, respond to and delimit his fears and phantasies, and assign to him a position in life appropriate to his psychosocial powers"--so that "fragments of case histories" unconnected to this social grounding--assigning "flutter around...lost like bats in the daytime." What strikes me in this quote is the insensitive hypostasization of "a social world," a pseudo-consciousness that "assigns" positions to blacks and women and hispanics and men and children and everybody everywhere at all times. I have two accusations against any society we've ever known: (1) it OVERassigns roles (the hubris of tyranny, including automatic sex-role assignments), and (2) it UNDERassigns positions (the hubris of anarchy, uncaring about what happens to individuals who do not become visible, or become awkwardly visible, to "the powers"). And another (3): it MISassigns both roles and positions, and individuals suffer as misfits in a thus sick society that tries to convince these individuals, by projection, that it is they, not the society, that is sick. Here the social critique goes deep, and the women's movement's consciousness-raising is a powerful new instrument in the critiquing.

3. And maybe this gets into why so many Elliott Thinksheets on sexism! From earliest childhood I radically rejected The WASP male sterotype. My father held my hand to watch parades, and I thought them daft. In school "pep rallies," I blushed, considering them artificial insanity--with enough of the real kind around. My testosterone was at least adequate to all the powers and privileges pertaining thereto, but I had no taste for leadership (though, because of abilities, time and again pressed into leadership positions), control of the outer world, "power"--an untaste that was my power-conscious WASP father's despair, centering (in conversations with him) on sports, which he (in good English fashion) saw as preparation for "real life" and I saw as (1) uninteresting (except 1:1), (2) brutalizing ("Kill 'em!"), (3) a stupid waste of time (spectator sports, academic or commercial)...All of which hit me again, a few hours before rereading the Erikson above, when I saw the result of a self-administered non-verbal psychometric on my values: among American males vis-a-vis leadership-control-power, I'm at the 7%ile! There it is, folks: I'm not a "real man," and never have been. So what am I? A kind of woman. Some kind of woman. Or a kind of man the American society has not known what to do with: a misfit, with eyes-heart for other misfits--which, psychohistorically, is why, I think, Jesus hit me so hard in my pubescence, and has ever since.

4. Hinduism's first classic, the Mahabharata, puts women--considered attractive in appearance and character not in exceptional cases but simply as women--in high position. The men struggle for power. When they become throne-winners, they quit and go off into the Himalayas as holymen, forsaking power. Any connection, in this longest poem in history, between this high view of women and this low view of power?