

1. The male sculptor [lower right], in a powerful tree-of-life image, has squeezed woman between man and child and given her a strong, mildly bemused, joyless dignity. How I'd love to sit for three hours with any group around this art and be dogmatic and listen and laugh at my (and others') dogmatism! How much and how little we feel, know, care! I write this on a morning when a woman stopped by at our house and told Loree and me she was on her way to comfort a rape victim--and I said "How deep a man's ignorance of that experience!"--and my wife, who's been counseling in prisons, said "Not for young men raped, or in terror of being raped, in prison"--and I stood corrected and meditated on hypo/hyper, the human tendency to say that empathy, communication, are impossible/easy.

2. The over/under-tones of "oppression" need sorting out. In the sculpture, woman is literally, physically, (op)pressed, pressed between upper and nether millstones: it's her "natural," "normal" condition, and generally she enjoys what the lumpen flesh above and below her does to her biology. PROBLEM: Human existence is not, as human existence, either "natural" or "normal" [though other primate existence is both]--a point superbly well made in Charles M. Fair's classic, THE DYING SELF (Anchor/70).... Because a woman is more spectacularly physical (hormonal change + gestation + parturition), it is (is it?) more unnatural and abnormal for her to become "human," unless "human" incorporates depths of suffering and heights of ecstasy--both in physical terms--unavailable to man, who feels he deserves some compensation for his deprivation.

3. Nothing can be done about the fact that man is two places away from child and woman only one: the sculpture is biologically/emotionally correct. Desexizing household/childcare chores helps the doomed father/child relationship--doomed to given intimacy-inferiority in comparison with the mother/child relationship.

4. The sculpture gives dominance to both the female (who's above the male) and the male (who's the family's base). The idea of "equality" in the relationship is nonsense: both are intended to be dominant. And submissive?

5. In the uncut version of the film (1974) "Scenes from a Marriage," the two couples go to see Ibsen's "A Doll's House," whose Nora, as unskilled-outside-the-home, is more trapped than Bergman's Marianne, a lawyer. Bergman himself did the cut: too flat a reference to an earlier women's movement. SUGGESTION: Use my #559 as an interpretive model on "Scenes": Did Johann and/or Marianne want to be persons, individuals, selves, just human beings? And how does the God-factor function in each case?

6. If God had made woman first, it might not have been necessary to make man: the single woman is far more viable than the single man, who tends to turn criminal [male single being a far more weighty crime datum than poverty or race], get sick, and die young. (So, Geo. Gilder, NAKED NOMADS [Quadrangle/75].) I agree, and arrive at some TRIAL CONCLUSIONS: (1) Men are inferior socially as well as biologically; and (2) We ought not to have as much sympathy for single women as a group as for single men as a group. NB: "As a group" is a sense/nonsense phrase in this context.

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