

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Feminism

Some Food for Thought

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A study of the development of feminism would probably lead us to the conclusion that the emancipation of women has taken place mainly in Protestant countries and cultures. In Roman Catholic cultures, for example, emancipation movements such as feminism have evolved much more slowly. In Islamic cultures, feminism has developed only recently. In this paper I will argue that it is the ethic of Protestantism which led to the “spirit of feminism”.

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Introduction

A study of the development of feminism would probably lead us to the conclusion that the emancipation of women has taken place mainly in Protestant countries and cultures. In Roman Catholic cultures, for example, emancipation movements such as feminism have evolved much more slowly. In Islamic cultures, feminism has developed only recently. In this paper I will argue that it is the ethic of Protestantism which led to the “spirit of feminism”.¹

Protestant culture – the cradle of the women’s emancipation movement

It is remarkable that the women’s emancipation movement has developed primarily in countries which are predominantly Protestant, such as Germany, the United States and England – that is, if one accepts England as being a Protestant country. The only exception is France. An attempt to discover any kind of a similar development in countries like Spain, Portugal, Poland or even Italy, would be in vain; at least if one looks at the same historical

period as that in which feminism made its appearance in Protestant countries.

This interesting phenomenon cannot be simply explained in terms of cause and effect. In any case, it means that social change in Protestant countries is different from that in Catholic countries (since Max Weber this is an almost trivial observation). The feminist movement is no exception. It is a well-known fact that modern capitalism developed earlier in Protestant countries than in Catholic countries. The rise of the feminist movement which demanded equal rights for women can thus be viewed as an aspect of the development of capitalism in Protestant Western Europe. The Dutch feminist Anja Meulenbelt confirms this view when she says “a great deal of women’s oppression has to do with capitalism” (Meulenbelt 1976:23). She argues that together with capitalism’s penetration of the whole of Western Europe women’s emancipation was disseminated on an international scale. This movement is no longer a specific cultural item in the possession of a number of Protestant cultures. However, this does not mean that feminism is the same everywhere. Within the movement all sorts of variations exist. In different coun-

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tries there are differing aims. Despite this fact, feminism can be nominally defined as an ideology which strives for women's rights. Since social circumstances differ from one society to the other, the rights demanded by women will also vary. As a result, the feminist movement in various countries will differ too. Nevertheless, when we compare Protestant and Catholic countries, the significance of women's emancipation in Catholic countries lags far behind that in Protestant countries. The amount of important political positions that have been assumed by women can be taken as an indication of the importance of women's emancipation in that country. In fact, we find this relationship in Protestant countries such as Scandinavia and The Netherlands as against such typical Catholic countries as Spain and Portugal. It is evident from this that Protestantism and feminism are linked to each other without excluding a correlation with other social phenomena. In other words, do Protestant values and attitudes lead to an earlier development of feminism than other values and attitudes?

Goode has made a suggestion in keeping with this line of argument. He argues that the Protestant ideas about the rights and responsibilities of the individual in an earlier historical epoch led to the undermining of traditional ideas about the position of women (Goode 1970:56). Protestantism did not only stimulate individualism but it caused typical Protestant values and attitudes including the Protestant view of man to become part and parcel of Western culture. As we shall explain, it is precisely this idea of man which is an integral part of modern feminism.

The Gerritsen-Collection

Long before the feminist movement existed, women as a separate group received much more attention in Protestant cultures than in other cultures. This is evident from the catalogue of the *Gerritsen Collection of Women's History*, which has reprinted the books and magazines published especially for women in the period 1543–1945. The number of pages reprinted is not completely clear. Assuming

that the price of the total reprinting per country must be based approximately on the number of publications as well as their size we can obtain an impression about the quantity published in every country during that period.

The complete English language reprinting costs \$19,500. The German edition costs \$7,900 and the French \$6,900. The price of the Dutch reprinting is \$2,000. This is a comparatively large amount of money for such a small linguistic area. Publication in other languages, especially in Arabic stands in stark contrast to the above.

The Italian reprinting costs \$575 and the Spanish and Portuguese \$220. This latter figure seems to represent the feminine interests of the huge population of Latin America. In general, it would appear that women in Protestant countries had much more literature at their disposal than their sisters in other countries.

I think that these figures speak for themselves. Not every country with a large number of publications is Protestant, but what concerns us here are the countries – with the exception of France – where the population is *predominantly* Protestant.² It might thus be argued that there is every reason to look for a relationship between a concern for women and Protestantism.

The traditional Protestant family

The basis of Protestant culture has long been the nuclear family. The traditional Protestant family was at the same time the main cultural unit in which the Protestant woman functioned. It is, in fact, impossible to speak of a "traditional" Protestant family. There were not only all sorts of regional variations, with considerable differences between each other, there were also big differences between the Protestant family in the various social classes. What can be stated is that the urban upper middle-class family was culturally dominant. That was true for the United States as well as for Europe. In this social class the Protestant woman at the turn of the century – the period which is most important for us – played a supportive and caring role in the family. Her posi-

tion was considered formally as subordinate to that of her husband – a picture which Parsons has adequately portrayed as far as the American woman is concerned (Parsons, 1954). Another writer who has penetratingly described the American as well as the German woman in her psycho-social context is Erikson (1965). Parsons and Erikson became acquainted with both German and American family life.

Parsons describes the American woman shortly after the turn of the century. The picture he paints is, in many ways, the exact opposite of Erikson's portrait. According to Parsons she was "docile" and "kind" (Parsons 1954:90). Erikson, in contrast, portrays another kind of woman completely, one who did not possess any of this docile kindness. Moreover, she was the descendant of many generations of Protestant pioneer women who lived on the borders of Western civilization. She was completely moulded by the responsibilities that she had to bear. She carried the whole family on her shoulders. She was the pivot on which everything hinged – the absence of her husband often gave her no choice in the matter (Erikson 1965:279 ff.). Erikson's *Mom* is not at all "docile" and "kind", but, on the contrary, highhanded and independent. However, according to Parsons, only "pseudo"-professional pursuits remained for the mother. The family's status was determined by the father's occupation (Parsons 1954:95).

However conflicting these two descriptions appear to be, they do not necessarily exclude each other. It is quite possible that Parson's docile American woman shows only one side of her psycho-social self, whereas Erikson's ideal-typical sketch of the robust *Mom* shows the other side:

"Mom' is the unquestioned authority in matters of *mores* and morals in her home, and (through clubs) in the community; yet she permits herself to remain in her own way, vain in her appearance, egotistical in her demands, and infantile in her emotions (Erikson 1965:282). The American woman in frontier communities was the object of intense rivalries on the part of tough and often desperate men. At the same time, she had to become the cul-

tural censor, the religious conscience, the aesthetic arbiter, and the teacher (1965:283). As America became the proverbial melting-pot, it was the Anglo-Saxon woman's determination which assured that of all the ingredients mixed, puritanism – such as it then was – would be the most pervasive streak" (1965:286).

I would like to summarize the above with what I would call the "moral status" of the Protestant woman. This status seems to be one of the most universal characteristics of the Protestant woman. Parson's emphasis on the "kindness" of the American woman and Erikson's description of her responsibilities both indicate in essence her importance as the conscience of society. This is also apparent from Zaretsky. According to him, Christianity, through its emphasis on conscience, contributed greatly to the rise of self-consciousness. In Europe and America for most of the nineteenth century conscience remained "the most important kind of subjective experience" (translated from Zaretsky 1977:34).

Unlike women, men could allow their conscience to be confined to their profession. For women this professionalization of conscience extended much further. All of her household duties and the whole of her life as mother and spouse were considered as her "calling". She was the psychological and emotional focal point of the family (Zaretsky 1977:25–26,35). Her task was to sacrifice herself for the family. It was sufficient for her to know that due to her self-sacrifice others prospered (Shorter 1975: 81). In her biography of Max Weber, his wife Marianne gives an illustration of the above. She describes the Baumgarten family. Weber's aunt, Ida Baumgarten, emerges as the realization of the ideal-type of the Protestant married woman in the urban German upper middle-class:

"In the cultural atmosphere of her household she sought to live the gospel, and often she suffered greatly because it was unrealizable. Was it really impossible to fashion an undivided world in accordance with the teachings of the Sermon of the Mount? The ever-vigilant,

acute sense of social responsibility impelled her to make expenditures for needy persons that her husband often found most disquieting. However, he loved Ida dearly and cherished her so much that she usually was free to follow the voice of her conscience. In other ways, too, she often undertook tasks which, in the opinion of others, overtaxed her and her family. She lost a dearly beloved daughter because she took into her house the sister of a child who was ill with scarlet fever. For years she gave a home to an orphaned relative, although the child's problem personality was a great burden on her and her own children. Her strong soul, confined to a delicate body, was engaged in a lonely struggle with the demons of an unfathomable depression. But she did not make others suffer because of this; to them she always appeared cheerful and composed. "Self-conquest" was her daily watchword. Later in life Ida realized that her husband lived by a law that differed from her own. She withdrew into herself and carried on her inner struggles alone. She shared her religious and social interests with her son and younger friends" (Weber 1975:83).

It is scarcely astonishing that Max Weber was not uncritical of this feat of moral gymnastics, because of which his aunt was constantly in a state of great tension. Nevertheless he had become accustomed to this state of affairs especially in connection with his mother and other members of his family. Men were more flexible in matters of morality and religion, as is evident from what Marianne Weber wrote about her husband:

"He shared his father's view that it was "eccentric" to judge every action by a moral law and try to measure it by absolute standards. He rejected the rigorism that left no room for smiling tolerance of one's own weaknesses... He regarded this "overtension" as inimical to any form of unconstrained happiness..." (Weber 1975:83).

It is possible that this description of the Weber family conveys a somewhat exaggerated picture of the average Protestant upper middle-

class family of the time. Nevertheless, there are a number of fairly general characteristics which can be distinguished. The mother is the upholder of humanitarian ideals, morality and religion. She is the embodiment of the spiritual, while the father embodies the material. Erikson describes the German father as an exceptionally authoritarian personality:

"When the father comes home from work, even the walls seem to pull themselves together ("nehmen sich zusammen"). The mother – although often the unofficial master of the house – behaves differently enough to make a baby aware of it. She hurries to fulfill the father's whims and to avoid angering him" (Erikson 1965:322).

He is not to be compared to the loving mother-figure. He is much more comparable to an official inspecting his subordinates than to a tender father or an endearing husband. Although he does assume both these roles from time to time, nevertheless he appears mostly in his first role, which he also plays when he is at his work. There he is the entrepreneur, the politician or the bureaucrat. More generally, he is the breadwinner who is primarily responsible for the material status of the family (cf. Weber 1975:33 ff. for the Weber family).

The features described here belonged principally to a certain type of family, but they were not limited to it. What is striking in this period around the turn of the century is both the rebellion against the authority of the father as well as the more general anti-authoritarian tendencies as be seen from a great many of the German theatre-plays of the time (Green 1974:72). It is the period of the Freudian revolution against the dominant moral and religious ideas and at the same time the period of rebellion against parental authority. Without a doubt, this was a reaction against the family relationships which existed in a dominant social class.

In this social class the Protestant woman was formally subordinate to her husband. Nevertheless, she played a completely independent role as the interpreter and as the representative of the spiritual. This could easily lead to

conflicts between husband and wife. In Max Weber's parental home deep tension arose between both parents which eventually led to Max being forced to take his mother's side. Max regretted the estrangement which ensued between father and son for the whole of his life (Gerth and Mills 1966:11). It would appear from the account of the Weber family that the Protestant woman's role cannot be strictly defined as a subordinate one as illustrated by the description of her moral and emotional qualities. It is important to examine what share Protestantism had in this picture. In order to gain some insight into the above, I would like to make a comparison between the Protestant woman and the woman in Mediterranean society.

Men and women in the Mediterranean area

John Davis has highlighted the contrast between men and women in the Northern, mainly Roman Catholic region and the Southern, mainly Islamic region of the Mediterranean area (Davis, 1984). In the South the man is the upholder of religion. Women do not have active religious functions. In the North, the situation is completely different. There it is the women who go regularly to church and who play an active part in religious life. Men's interest in religion is minimal. They consider the church as something for their wives and daughters. Strangely enough, however, it is the women in both cultures who play the principal role in what could be called unorthodox and deviant religious practices (Davis 1984:18 ff.).

Although Davis presents this picture with all the necessary nuances and exceptions, this division of religious labor remains true. This stands in marked contrast to the division of labor in economics and politics. On both sides of the Mediterranean it is the men who are the breadwinners and who are involved in politics. If this was not the case, there would be an obvious explanation. For example: if women in

Catholic cultures were always involved in agriculture, and in Islamic cultures the men, one would be inclined to seek a connection between the economic and the religious division of labor. However, there is not a hint of such a relationship (Davis 1984:23). For this reason, Davis wonders whether there are doctrinal differences between Islam and Roman Catholicism concerning the spiritual status of women. Here too, he comes to the conclusion, that in Catholicism even more than in Islam women have a lower status than men (Davis 1984:25). Since the woman plays an extremely important role in the day-to-day religious practice of Roman Catholicism, one would have expected otherwise.

An important difference between Islam and Roman Catholicism is the worship of Mary. Thanks to Mary, the woman plays a key role in Christian symbolism. Historically, Mary cults have had a positive effect on the position of the Roman Catholic woman. In spite of this, feminist Christians have criticized this aspect of Catholicism (Davis 1984:26). A similar worship does not exist in Islam. Subsequently, Davis wonders why the prominent position which women have in Roman Catholicism dates much further back than the second half of the eighteenth century. In that case the explanation must be sought in the changing social conditions during the last two centuries. In a footnote he mentions an argument brought by Christian. The latter considers the religious participation of Catholic women to be caused by the extra stimulus which Catholicism gives to women and which has induced their exceptional religious achievements. This stimulus results from a reaction to her deprived religious status which is based on ideas about female impurity. She was the cause of Adam's sin. Her religious activity is a result of her continuous attempt to elude this status. Davis correctly observes that this argument as well as that of the worship of Mary in no way explains the less active religious role of the Muslim woman (Davis 1984:47).

However, a much more important question remains unanswered. Why does the worship of Mary occupy such a prominent position in Ca-

tholicism? Can this positive attitude towards women be understood by examining the changing social conditions in these regions over the last two centuries? And were there never any comparable developments in Muslim societies?³

It seems to me that we can find the answers to these questions in Max Weber's sociology of religion. An important theme in his work is, that every religion was originally transmitted by a definite social stratum. The lifestyle and economic ethic of this stratum determined the character of that religion. Whether that character was retained or not depended on the changing social conditions.

In order to compare Roman Catholicism with Islam it is first of all necessary to ascertain if such historical features are linked to the difference between both religions. According to Weber, Islam was originally a religion of world-conquering warriors. Christianity began its course as a doctrine of itinerant artisan journeymen (Gerth & Mills 1966:268–269).

If the assumption that Islam has its origin in military social strata is correct, then it is highly probable that its most important values and ideas would be more male than female focused. Even if we accept that no religious system remains unchanged, it is still highly unlikely that the most fundamental "ideological" aspects of a religion are completely lost. This could explain the masculine emphasis in Islam and also the fact that, at least in the official version of Islam, the woman is assigned to a secondary role. It would seem that in the "deviant" forms of Islam – and these are usually remnants of older local forms of worship which continued to exist after the arrival of Islam – it is, in fact, the women who are at the forefront. The autochthonous people's religion was not inherited by the invading military groups who were bent on the conquest of land. In contrast, Christianity came into existence under completely different circumstances and originated with social strata of a completely different character than Islam.

The first Christian community developed during the Roman occupation of Judaea. This community was perhaps one of those religious groups which isolated themselves from the

world of war and violence in order to devote themselves to an other-worldly life of asceticism. Another well-known example of such a group were the Essenes. They lived in isolated communities in places far from human habitation, propagating a monastic way of life. It is not improbable that the first Christians were influenced by Essenian ideas of renunciation of the world. In contrast to the Roman conquerors, they preached an ideology of non-violence (Epstein 1964:111). This anti-militaristic message, reappearing as it did in the views of the early Christians, was an expression of their protest against the established order. It was only in a later period that this protest turned into a compromise with the state and with the status quo (cf. Leach, 1972).

The bearers of early Christianity were not only craftsmen who desired to renounce the world, but also ordinary people who had to live and work in that very same world. For this reason, celibacy and other forms of asceticism, although they were recognised as praiseworthy, could not be imposed on all members of the community. Nevertheless, both tendencies remained within Christianity. They reappear in Catholicism with its contrast between the other-worldly oriented clergy, and the more this-worldly oriented laity. The compromise between church and state, on the one hand, and the radical renunciation of the world on the other, is still apparent in the contrast between the hierarchically stratified diocesan clergy, and the egalitarian, monastic clergy. The other-worldly ideal of the latter was accorded the highest spiritual status, and the striving to renounce the world was considered the most suitable way to achieve perfection. This is also evident in Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. Although the marital state was condoned, at the same time preference was given to celibacy (cf. Kooy 1970:33). Much later, at the Council of Trent (1545–1563), came further confirmation that abstinence was superior to marriage (Kooy 1970:46).

Many other Christian values, such as the high ideals about loving one's fellow, martyrdom, humility and self-humiliation, mortification of the flesh and the glorification of poverty, can be superimposed on this basic struc-

ture. These ideals leave no room for doubt that Christianity as a way of life was, and is, difficult to bring into practice for a man with a normal daily occupation. It is easier for women to conform to such a value system, especially as regards non-violence, than men. Although this may not be true for every value, it does apply to this way of life as a whole. For this reason, it is very possible that from its very beginnings, women have played a much more prominent role in the Christian religion than is realised. This would also explain why feminine symbolism is so central to Christianity.

It is possible that the other-worldly element is further intensified by ideas about the transcendence of the supernatural. In Protestantism especially, these ideas predominated. The natural and the supernatural were detached from each other to such an extent that the natural world became identical with the profane, and the unattainable and unknowable supernatural became identical with the sacred. In Calvinism, these ideas led to the doctrine of predestination. Man had to prove himself in this world. There was no way of knowing for a believer whether he was chosen or eternally damned. Pastors recommended hard work in an occupation as a means of overcoming this often paralysing doubt (Weber 1958: 112). The fact that there were no infallible criteria of election led to the search for a *sign* that the believer was chosen. Being successful in this world came to be considered such a sign, as it would be highly unlikely that a person rewarded in this world would have to suffer in the afterlife. This resulted in the Calvinistic work-ethic in which the believer had to be in the world without being involved in it. His election could be deduced from every aspect of his daily life including his professional conduct (Weber 1958:110–115; Hill 1973:121). In this way an ethic came into existence of work as a “calling”.

An inner-worldly ethic such as this did not have to be proclaimed in Roman Catholicism, because other-worldly asceticism was considered as the highest path to salvation. Whoever wished to follow this path could do so by entering a monastery. Whoever considered himself unsuitable for this ascetic way of life could

remain a layman, nonetheless loyal to his religion.⁴

The devotional character of Catholicism continued to be determined by other-worldliness. In Mediterranean societies, where celibacy is considered as conflicting with the masculine ideal, religion has only a moderate appeal for men. The only exception is Malta where men do participate in religion. This fact could be explained by the special nature of the Maltese political situation (cf. Davis 1984:22).

Back to feminism in Protestant countries

In the Protestant countries of Northern-Europe, an inner-worldly asceticism developed which had its origin, however, in *other-worldly ideals*. This monastic asceticism finally came to permeate the whole of daily life (Weber 1958:181). The monks of yesterday entered the world and their ethic appeared in its inner-worldly guise as common property for everyone.⁵ Now, possessing a religious legitimation for their work, men as well as women could practise asceticism within the world. As a consequence, men turned their occupation into a calling and women did the same by supporting their husbands and by seeking and finding a calling in the sphere of morals. A woman was supposed to be “kind”. She had to bear children for her husband, and to take care of them in order that her husband could follow his occupation unhindered by any worries. The supportive role of women was thus given a religious basis. In this way, a woman could also find a sign that she belonged to the elect. In particular, economic success could be explained as a favourable token: the bestowal of prosperity was seen as a gift from heaven. It was also man’s task to perfect the world by being actively involved in it. Success in every field, especially in the scientific and technical, where advances are more observable, acquired its own intrinsic value. In Protestant countries this new work-ethic acquired a strong religious connotation (Weber 1958:79).⁶

This latter is of great significance. Modern feminism possesses certain fundamental ideas

concerning human "fulfilment".⁷ An expression such as "a person should utilise all of his talents" coming as it does from a Christian context would not be at all out of place in feminist thought. In theory, human fulfilment is considered to be dependent on the freedom of opportunity for everyone to develop his or her talents. In practice this means the possibility that both men and women can exercise freedom of choice concerning their occupations.⁸

This view of man – and we are concerned here with a certain idea about the nature of a human being – is presented as if it were something self-evident. However, it is not so self-evident as we assume it to be. It is just not true to say that in every period and in every culture there exist ideas that man can attain perfection through developing and utilising his or her own personal talents. There are innumerable cultures where completely different aspects of life are considered self-fulfilling and can be seen as the basis for social status.⁹

However, this idea does exist in the Protestant view of the world and of man.¹⁰ Even now, when Western society has become by and large secularised, this view of man has remained because the work-ethic already existed in its own right. The Protestant man could quite happily throw his religion overboard because his most important values remained undamaged. He still maintained his occupational position in society. For the Protestant woman, however, it was very different. Religion lost its meaning, but the ideas about self-development did not disappear so easily. In spite of secularization, she remained the embodiment of morality. This moral hyper-sensitivity as a burden of the past, deeply internalised through ideas of transcendence and through the tendency to world-renunciation inherited from Christianity, has remained steadfast until today.¹¹

In the Roman Catholic countries of Southern Europe, where the work-ethic possessed a completely different function, the situation was different. In those countries with relatively little secularization, women could play an active role in religion. Where, the society became secularised, the woman did not remain saddled with a work-ethic that is difficult to put into practice as she did in the North. Also, her role as child-

producer is not necessarily called into question. This is not only because of the absence of a Puritan work-ethic to compete with the mother-role, but also because child-bearing in these societies always had a high value.

In addition, there is a considerable difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant ideas about the supernatural. Roman Catholicism possesses ideas about the immanence of the supernatural as well as its transcendence. Intervention in the realm of the supernatural is possible through the performance of sacramental actions. Man can be freed from his guilt feelings through the ritual granting of forgiveness. As a result of the sacraments, conscience in Catholicism is far less stimulated than in Protestantism. Apparently, the road to the secularised earth from the Roman Catholic heaven is easier to tread than from the Protestant one! The possibility of leading a meaningful life in the South appears to be much less defined by religion than in the North. To summarize, it seems fairly clear that there exists an affinity between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of feminism.¹²

Finally, there remains another question: could not the cause of the new relationship between men and women be secularization, or is this new relationship completely unconnected with the ethical and religious past? There is no definitive answer to this question. Feminist ideas vary from society to society and the same applies to secularization. In Protestant countries secularization has a completely different meaning as in Roman Catholic countries. The differentiation between the religious and other spheres of life is in general less than in Protestant countries. Spain and Portugal are perfect illustrations of this phenomenon. In these countries, the church until recently exercised an almost unimaginable influence on almost every social sphere. This is in contrast to the Northern countries, where church and state, and the church and other sectors of society, were separated much earlier (cf. Hill 1973:228 ff. and Robertson 1972:68–69). For this reason, the effect of secularization cannot be disassociated from the specific religion which secularizes.

At the same time, it is difficult to accept that

all the originally religious, but now secularised ideas would suddenly disappear. The “spirit of capitalism”, which was at one time connected to the Protestant ethic, now exists on its own. In every society there are social forces through which particular values and norms, together with a particular view of man, are transmitted from one generation to the next. Apparently, this is the result of the long-term internalisation of a specific lifestyle. Whenever the meaning underlying this lifestyle disappears, its ethos tends to remain suspended in a vacuum as eternal truth. History offers many illustrations of this phenomenon.¹³

Notes

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2. There is much more information to be gleaned from the data supplied by the Gerritsen Collection Catalogue. 265 journals are mentioned with the place and date of publication. It is striking that only a small amount of these publications have anything to do with feminism. The majority are directed at women in a very general way, at least that is the conclusion one has to make after a superficial examination of the titles. In any case, this collection indicates a special concern for “women” and this is the subject of my article.

There would appear to be huge differences between France and Germany. Almost all the French journals give Paris as the place of publication. The only exceptions are the two journals published in Brussels, one in Geneva, one in Neuchâtel and one in Tübingen. The last three cities are overwhelmingly Protestant (although Tübingen less so). Paris, a city with its own special character, is the only place of publication given for France. The principle reason for this is undoubtedly that all the big publishers are concentrated in Paris. Approximately half of the German journals come from Berlin and about 1/5 from Leipzig, both cities possessing a predominantly Protestant population. The total area where the journals are disseminated extends over thirteen German cities. Of these, three are predominantly Roman Catholic and the rest are Protestant. There is only one Roman Catholic

city, Nuremberg, where more than one journal was published and there the figure is two. Switzerland confirms this picture. There appear six Swiss place-names in the catalogue, of which only Bellinzona is not Protestant (the *Schweizer Hauszeitung* – the “Swiss Home Journal” – is mentioned). In Austria the Catholic city of Vienna wins the prize with six titles and one publication elsewhere. Vienna is similar in this respect to Paris. The seven Dutch place-names which appear are all situated in the Protestant areas of Northern Holland. The United States is no exception. The majority are published in New York and Boston. This latter city is famous for its Puritan background. It is interesting that not a single Southern city is mentioned. In Canada only Ottawa and Toronto appear. Of these cities the latter is mainly Protestant. Data about the publications in England are also given. Since I am not too familiar with the religious situation in England and with the distribution of Catholics and Protestants in the cities, I did not analyse this data.

To counter the interjection that the quantity of English language production has little significance because of the fact that English is a more international language than the others, it remains true that a huge amount is published in German. Moreover, the Gerritsen catalogue covers a period of four centuries during which French was much more important than English as an international language.

3. What Lindskog writes is interesting. He also distinguishes between the different roles which women can assume within the family. He considers the Western mother to be “a caretaker and consoler, the emotional center of most families”. He also specifies the influence of the Roman Catholic Church: “In passing, the Catholic churches here have more adequate psychological weapons, with the Maria-cult, which can correlate deep “feminine” aspects of human life with religion” (Lindskog 1974:25). Although I agree with his conclusion, I have my doubts about the importance of the Maria-cult. This latter should be viewed as a result rather than as a cause of the “feminine aspects”.
4. In Roman Catholicism other-worldly asceticism has not only determined the way to salvation for the clergy but also the layman’s ethic: “Paul, from mystical motivations... esteemed absolute abstinence as the purely personal charisma of religious virtuosi. The lay ethic of Catholicism also followed this point of view. Further, this was also the attitude of Luther, who regarded sexual expression within marriage simply as a lesser evil enjoyed for the avoidance of whoredom. ... This notion, ...partly accounts for Luther’s relatively weak opposition to monasticism at first” (Weber 1965:241).
5. “Although the codes of living in Catholic monas-

tic orders are dominated by the same purposes and tasks, the Puritan form of asceticism is in one respect radically different from that of the monks: it was obligatory for every believer and was supposed to be brought into practice "in the world". The monk, however, as a member of a religious elite, escaped from the world as a result of his ascetic ideal" (translated from Tennekes 1969:36).

6. Weber points out that the German *Beruf* as well as the English *calling* both possess a religious connotation. More generally he writes: "That this moral justification of worldly activity was one of the most important results of the Reformation, especially of Luther's part in it is beyond doubt, and may even be considered a platitude" (1958:81). No further mention of Luther's influence on German Protestantism is necessary here.
7. I have chosen two feminist books more or less at random. These books (Melgert, 1975 and Rooselaar, 1975) consist of articles from a large amount of writers. I examined these books for the number of times the word self-fulfilment (ontplooiing in Dutch) was used in one way or another. In the first book I found this term 23 times in 116 pages. In the second book an article by Rooselaar from the *Radikaal Feministisch Maandblad* (1974, 3:10–11 and 16–18) is reprinted in which the following quotation appears "work is done in order to give a person an opportunity to fulfill himself completely" (translated from Rooselaar 1975:103). It seems to be not so well understood, that the vision of man and the vision of work which is stated here is not at all as self-evident as implied.
8. Tennekes' sketch of the Calvinist (in Dutch: gereformeerde) is very apt here: "man is called to develop the earth as he sees fit, his work becomes a part of the Divine plan. The Calvinist have in general not resisted vaccination, artificial manure or insurance and the striving to better themselves materially is an important religious obligation: man has a duty to utilise all his talents. The Calvinist should regard his occupation as a Divine calling. A roadbuilder can also fulfil his role in the Divine plan when he does his work well and with dedication" (translated from Tennekes 1969:380).
9. An observation of Paula Wassen-van Schaveren, President of the Commission for the emancipation of women in Holland, illustrates this point: "There are only a few women who manage to acquire the highly rated positions" (translated from Melgert 1975:26). Such a view would not win acceptance in a great many cultures. Cf. Meijers 1989:78, for orthodox Judaism's view.
10. To return once more to my earlier illustration of a Protestant family by looking at the Weber family, it is interesting to note that Marianne Weber was a prominent feminist of the period.

Her husband Max gave her his support (Green 1974:128).

11. In a secularised society, the moral significance of an occupation has not been diminished but rather increased. Economic values are the real values of modern capitalist society. Bringing children into the world is not considered a moral and religious achievement. Due to modern developments in medicine, it is not only possible to prevent pregnancy but it is implied that having children is not a "must" in any meaningful sense. With the mechanization of labour and the world's overpopulation, child bearing as a value no longer possesses a potential economic importance. At the same time, the delegation of all the traditional family functions to other institutions has further reduced the importance of the family for education and socialisation. As a result of the secularization process the traditional division between men and women has almost completely disappeared. The idea no longer exists that both sexes are necessary to bring the creation closer to its destiny. This all contributes to the fact that the place which the woman always occupied and which was legitimised by religion now became a subject of discussion. This appears in the uni-sex clothing for both men and women, which, nevertheless, resembles men's clothes more than women's. The original religiously-based ideas about the importance of one's occupation did not come under attack and indeed cannot, because of the necessity of earning a living. Women in Western society remained saddled with the idea of "occupation as a calling" whilst their previous "occupation", as a result of social change, lost its intrinsic value.
12. Rooselaar (1975), quotes a study of the Dutch woman which was done in 1974. From this study it appears that the opponents of emancipation in the family and in the social sphere are mostly Catholic. The women who support the integration of women into society but who oppose emancipation in the family are mostly Calvinist or Protestant. Those who support both kinds of emancipation are not too involved with any church (Rooselaar 1975:16).
13. Compare Weber (1958:181–182): "To-day the spirit of religious asceticism – whether finally who knows? – has escaped from the cage. But victorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations, needs its support no longer. The rosy blush of its laughing heir, the Enlightenment, seems also to be irretrievably fading, and the idea of duty in one's calling prowls about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs".

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