rationale for the odd functional forms implied by their model. As a result, W&K's work provides little reason to question the original findings in Bollen (1983) and their results are consistent with a negative effect of noncore position on political democracy.

NOTES

1 I used a modified version of Snyder and Kick's (1979) measure which reclassifies six of their countries. See Bollen (1983: 473-476). The core countries serve as the omitted category for the dummy variables. Negative coefficients for the noncore dummy variables indicate lower degrees of democracy than the core.

2 The coefficients for the development status variables are -7.5 and -18.5 while for the world system status variables they are -13.4 and -26.0. W&K do not report the WLS final estimates from Bollen (1983: Table 2) which are even higher (-15.9 and 30.7, respectively). In fact, the development status coefficients are more than a standard error away from the WLS coefficients.

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Religio-Philosophical Roots of Feminist Discontent*

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to comprehend the reasons for the emergence of feminist discontent in contemporary societies. With the help of comparative philosophy and religion, the paper critically examines the concepts of equality and freedom, the position of the

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individual in cross cultural thought, and the status of the mother in kinship and non-kinship based societies. The paper concludes that feminist discontent is more likely to emerge in those societies where rational and determinate definitions of equality and freedom are emphasized; the isolated, independent, autonomous individual becomes the basic unit of society and maternal/nurturer role of women is given minimal recognition.

ONE IS INTRIGUED by the fact that literature of feminist discontent is more prolific in contemporary industrial societies rather than non-industrial societies, and that this literature became more prolific in the nineteen sixties and seventies when the existential reality of women’s life in Europe and North America was more comfortable than ever before. Now it is tempting to impute relative quiet amongst women in other ages and other parts of the world to false consciousness, and hope that once women become conscious of their predicaments, they will be up in arms. Such a hope is plausible, but it is a little presumptuous to believe that enlightenment eluded women for years and then struck all of a sudden in the industrial era. The persistent intrigue has led me to comparative philosophy and religion: 1. to a critical examination of the concepts of equality and freedom; 2. to an examination of the position of the individual in cross cultural thought; 3. to a comparison of the position of the mother in kinship based and non-kinship based societies.*

Equality

If we set aside the abstract rational conceptions of equality and examine the world existentially and experientially (existentially in the sense of what exists out there, and experientially in the sense of what is immediately apprehended by the senses, a situation specific experience) then all human beings are equal for they are born, they bleed, and they die. Beyond this existential and experiential level of equality, human existence is riddled with differences. We are born in different periods, some of us bleed sparingly, others bleed heavily, some of us die soon, others live long. We have different abilities and different personalities. Any of the innumerable differences can be arranged vertically, and any of the ends can call the other end inferior or superior. From such a perspective it is difficult to say unequivocally that men are superior and women inferior. For example, in the case of a six-months-old male infant and his mother, is the infant boy superior? The mother has the power to make or mar his life. Another example: the relationship between a stroke-stricken male patient and his female nurse. Who is superior? The male or the female? In the above examples we are not discussing the Cartesian-rational method of theorizing about women’s position or women’s freedom; we are emphasizing the situation specific, experiential, and exclusively particularistic reality. From this perspective the Cartesian exercise may not be valid because Descartes, being a male, might not be able to experience feminine reality. Therefore, if we suspend the rational-determinate bias of western philosophy, then there are situations where women feel strong and superior, and situations where men feel weak and inferior. The constant stress on equality ignores the existential/experiential reality of differences and inequalities.

Freedom

If we define freedom as the absence of constraint or coercion imposed by another person, or by circumstances beyond one’s control, then we face two pertinent questions: 1. Do human beings experience unlimited freedom? 2. What type of society