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### The Genesis of Male AUTHORity in the Order of Creation

#### A Deconstruction Toward Integrity in Justice Discourse

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#### Abstract

This essay presents a critical exploration of the genesis of authority as a male prerogative by examining biblical texts that comprise a sustained gender discourse spanning the length of biblical tradition. Focal texts include 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Genesis 1-3; 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36; and 1 Timothy 2:11-15. The discussion includes consideration of the legacy of biblical gender discourse in legal coverture and in the textual and discursive coverture of women in Catholic justice discourse.

Keywords: authority, male prerogative, gender construction, gender order, procreation, patriarchy, justice discourse, coverture

## Preliminaries

### *Rationale*

A volume on religion and justice rightly includes attention to Catholic social teaching, which has emphasized that the God revealed in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures intends justice, i.e., right relation, for all. Therefore, working for justice should not be considered a mere option for Catholics, a sort of “ethical sideshow of religious life” (Hobgood: 1). Rather, a life of faith necessarily does justice. Unfortunately, Catholic social teaching fails to attend to, identify, and critique the various forms of gender injustice in societies around the world.<sup>1</sup>

The story known as “the adulterous woman” (John 8:2-11) exemplifies the age-old problem generative of this project. Seated in the Temple precincts teaching the people who come to him, Jesus is interrupted when a group of religious AUTHORities enter, hauling a woman whom they make stand before all as they address him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery.<sup>2</sup> Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” (John 8:4-5).

In our modern context, the gender dynamics of the story, rarely commented upon in ecclesial settings, beg critical scrutiny in light of social scientific study of sex and gender and the feminist consciousness that attends to gender and power in social relations. The sole woman character has no name. Neither addressed nor given opportunity to speak, to AUTHOR a WORD of explanation of her actions, she is rather subjected to male AUTHORITY represented by the religious leaders who haul her to the fellow male who is the real focus of their concern (John 8:6).<sup>3</sup> Throughout the testy interaction between the men that

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<sup>1</sup> Critical examination of the content of Catholic social teaching reveals a striking absence of engagement with social scientific study of gender as a component of the social order. Comparison of two collections of Catholic documents expressive of social thought are telling in this regard. The subject “gender” is absent from the Subject Index of the 1977 edition of O’Brien and Shannon’s *Renewing the Earth*, which includes a single entry for the subject “women.” This 535-page volume contains a single paragraph on the role of women. In the most recently published collection, O’Brien and Shannon’s *Catholic Social Thought* (2016), the subject “gender” still does not appear in the Index, while the subject “women” has increased by four brief references.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this essay, particular words such as AUTHORITY, patriARCHY, WORD are printed in capital letters for reasons that emerge in the course of my exposition. In oral discourse about the matters discussed here, it is my practice to pronounce “authority” as AUTHOR-it-ee (with the accent on the “it”) in order to highlight the operative assumption in the concept, that is, to AUTHOR by the exercise of generative power.

<sup>3</sup> Here I consciously avoid reference to “the Pharisees and scribes,” instead using the phrase “religious leaders” or “religious AUTHORities” due to the persistent inclination to supercessionist thought on the part of Christians who all too often read such a text only to conclude that Jews were hyper-legalistic villains out to “get our guy,” the good guy Jesus. Instead we Christian readers would do well to see the religious leaders or AUTHORities in gospel texts as types, above all, types of religious professionals and or guardians of a tradition (such as ordained clergy and members of a religious hierARCHY), who can be inclined to conduct that is not always exemplary or above reproach, or who find themselves in tense relations, even conflict, with the prophetic figures of their believing communities. In my view, the interaction that occurs here between Jesus the Jew and other Jewish men is not a uniquely Jewish behavior. Rather, it is the kind of honor contest or challenge-riposte between men that is typical of ancient Mediterranean patriARCHal societies. In such interactions between men, a woman, as the sexual property of a man in ancient patriARCHies, can become a kind of pawn in the men’s honor “chess match,” as is the case here.

ensues (John 8:6-9), the woman stands silent, exposed to the public eye, utterly dependent on and at the mercy of others. All those who speak WORDS and conduct the proceedings that will AUTHORize this woman's fate are men. When they address Jesus, the legal experts cite as AUTHORITY yet another male: the long dead Moses in effect "speaks" the AUTHORITY that AUTHORizes their intent and actions, presumably the laws that prohibit adultery and prescribe the penalty for transgression (Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18; Leviticus 20:10-15; Deuteronomy 22:22-24). Significantly, the adultery law to which the men refer prescribes a death sentence for both participants in adultery, not simply the woman. In this proceeding, however, the male adulterer is conspicuously absent from the concern of the male AUTHORities, and so, nowhere to be seen. Their apparent inattention to the adulterer trains the attention of all, including generations of readers, upon the sexually sinful female, as does the title that tradition has AUTHORED for the scene: the adulterous woman.<sup>4</sup>

This gospel tradition exemplifies a two-fold problem with the justice discourse and practice of Christianity, and of Roman Catholicism in particular. First, Roman Catholic teaching, which neglects to engage social-scientific study of gender as a major component of the social order, remains blind to and/or silent about gender injustice in our world, including the various forms of violence suffered by women and girls at the hands of some men and boys (see Johnson 2014: 4-5). Secondly, the preoccupation on the part of male religious AUTHORities with personal sexual sin, particularly female sexual sin, amounts to a convenient dodge from the social or structural sins to which those religious AUTHORities are blind, with which they are complicit, or which they outright commit. In view of this two-fold problem, this project explores the Christian Scriptures in order to expose one of the roots of this troubling inattention to gender injustice in our midst, namely, the way in which AUTHORITY is gendered as a male prerogative in the biblical discourse that has shaped gender relations in the patriarchal West for centuries.

### *Approach*

The exploration proceeds by way of critical examination of biblical texts that comprise a sustained gender discourse spanning the length of biblical tradition from Genesis to Pauline and Deutero-Pauline texts. Due to constraints of space, the present discussion will be limited to a few select Pauline and Deutero-Pauline texts. The aim of the analysis is not exegetical, i.e., determination of authorial intention and/or the meaning of each text in its original historical-cultural-literary context, although previous exegetical work on these texts, including my own, will prove useful to this analysis. The objective is, rather, to explore the Bible as a space in which gender discourse constructs an understanding of AUTHORITY.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, despite the fact that the majority of the verses highlight Jesus' jousting with the religious AUTHORities (8:2-9) and only the last two of the ten verses focus on the woman (8:10-11), to this day the episode is known as "the adulterous woman," a title which, by its construction of female sexuality as sinful, hence in need of male supervision and control, serves the interests of patriARCHY.

<sup>5</sup> The approach by way of discourse is informed by, indeed indebted to, New Testament scholars Jorunn Økland and Dale Martin, whose work on Pauline texts confirm the value of such an approach, especially for those who, cognizant of the role of ideologies in underwriting social systems, are concerned about the power that is exercised in the conception and expression of ideas, including the theological.

Particular conversation partners have advanced this project by providing “lenses,” via critical theory, that sharpen the focus of my previous work on gender in Pauline texts. Gerda Lerner’s now classic *The Creation of Patriarchy* has contributed an especially valuable observation, namely, that the matter of generativity, i.e., “Who creates life?” is at the core of religions. After identification of the two aspects of generativity – creativity (ability to create something from nothing) and procreativity (capacity to produce offspring) – Lerner presents the explanations of generativity among peoples of the Ancient Near East, including Israel, and tracks the shifts in the pantheon of gods over time: from all-powerful Mother-Goddess to all powerful Male Storm God, whose female consort represents a domesticated version of the fertility goddess, to the single powerful male God who incorporates both aspects of generativity. As we will see below, it is the conception of that one omnipotent male God, considered source of all creation, that is foundational to the biblical discourses that CONCEIVE AUTHORITY as masculine.

Lerner’s insights intersect with those of anthropologist Carol Delaney (1987, 1991) whose study of Mediterranean culture affords a lens by which to identify in biblical traditions a link between monotheism – belief in one all-powerful Creator-God who is CONCEIVED as male – and a monogenetic theory of procreation, which CONCEIVES the human male as the one procreative source of the people of God.<sup>6</sup> According to this theory, the male role is to plant the “seed” that provides the whole fetus or child, while the female serves as the husband’s “field” in which he plants his “seed.” Although Delaney’s conclusions are based on study of modern Mediterranean villagers, this seed-soil metaphor for human procreation pervades ancient discourses, including biblical traditions, as we will see below (Calef 2009: 29-30).

Likewise, critical theorist Edward Said’s etymological study of the word “authority” also proves enlightening here. In English dictionaries the multiple meanings of “authority” combine the idea of power and the right and freedom to exercise it; hence, authority is “a power to influence action or inspire belief,” “a power to enforce obedience,” or “a person whose opinion is accepted.” Among this constellation of meanings, Said astutely observes “a connection . . . with AUTHOR – that is, a person who originates or gives existence to something, a begetter, beginner, father, or ancestor, a person who sets forth written statements.” He continues, “AUTHOR is tied to the past participle *auctus* or the verb *augere*; therefore, *auctor* . . . is literally an increaser and thus a founder. *Auctoritas* is production, invention, cause, in addition to meaning a right of possession. Finally, it means continuance, or a causing to continue.” Said then concludes, “Taken together these meanings are all grounded in the following notions: 1) that of the power of an individual to initiate, institute, establish – in short, to begin; 2) that this power and its product are an increase over what had

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<sup>6</sup> Delaney points out that in monotheistic religions, there is not a god and goddess whose sacred marriage brings forth the world. There is, rather, only one God, who is without divine partner; and that One God, Creator of all, is conceived of as male. In her study of Mediterranean village culture Delaney discerned a correlation between divine creation and human procreation, and so, too, between monotheism and monogenesis. The one God creates all that is, including the first man, who is both the source of woman and the one in whom the potency to procreate resides. Thus, creation and procreation, the first divine, the latter human, are both monogenetic, and both are gendered masculine (see Calef 2009: 26).

been previously; 3) that the individual wielding this power controls its issue and what is derived therefrom; 4) that authority maintains the continuity of its course” (83).<sup>7</sup>

*Preview*

Examination of gender discourse in the Bible through these critical lenses has produced the conclusion presented here: a series of New Testament traditions that draw upon the creation accounts in Genesis have gendered AUTHORITY as masculine, hence, as proper to men, not women. That CONCEPTION at the biblical foundation of Christianity has contributed to the phallogocentric ideology that underwrites and sustains the social system known as patriarchy (see Johnson 2014).<sup>8</sup> As an ideology, phallogocentrism is comprised of ideas that function to explain and seemingly legitimate or justify the privileges of males in patriARCHY.<sup>9</sup> Two of the roots of the word – *phallos* and *logos* – illumine the potent ideas that constitute this ideology. *Phallos* is the Greek term for the generative power of nature (Liddell

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<sup>7</sup> In his analysis of the word “authority” and its various meanings, Said further detects the imagery of succession, paternity, or hierarchy (162). For my interests, this brings to mind the Roman Catholic emphasis on the apostolic succession of “the Fathers” of the church, which, reflective of ancient patriARCHY, constitutes an ecclesial patrilineage.

<sup>8</sup> In modern discourse, patriARCHY as a social system is male dominated, male identified, male centered, and organized around control (see Johnson 2018: 5-6). Unfortunately, the word often evokes a defensive, even hostile reaction due to the false assumption that men or fathers are to blame for the grievances of women in patriarchy. Johnson helpfully clarifies: “Patriarchy is not a way of saying ‘men.’ Patriarchy is a kind of society, and a society is more than a collection of people. As such, ‘patriarchy’ refers not to me or any other man or collection of men but to a kind of society in which men *and* women participate” (2018: 5). In other words, today’s men did not create patriARCHY nor are they personally or collectively to blame for the injustices of the patriarchal system. It is once people of whatever sex or gender study and come to recognize how the system works that they are responsible for their own participation in the system, whether by way of complicity or resistance. Due to the defensiveness that the word patriARCHY provokes, often I prefer to use Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza’s alternative designation, kyriarchy, which shifts the focus from fathers to *kyrios*, that is, the lordship and overlordship that occurs in systems of domination. In other words, systems of domination are the problem, not men and fathers per se. However, because the present project seeks to illumine the historical roots of the system of male privilege, it is necessary to use the term patriARCHY, a designation that is in fact reflective of the generative assumptions operative at the ancient origin of the system.

<sup>9</sup> Feminist biblical scholarship frequently refers to biblical traditions as “androcentric.” In this study of biblical gender discourse, however, the word “phallogocentric” is appropriate, for, as we will see, the creation and patriarchal narratives in Genesis construct the male reproductive organ as *phallos* and the male human as possessing the power of Word/*logos*. In her enlightening study of 1 Corinthians, Økland asserts the need to “distinguish between an ideological position and the gendered situation that none of us can surpass (yet), corresponding to a distinction between ‘feminist’ and ‘woman.’ Women can promote phallogocentric ideology, just as men can be feminists. It is not because men have been speaking out from and for themselves (i.e. which is insinuated as the problem in the more common term androcentric), that gender asymmetry has occurred. In a European context, the problem has been that men and women have confused the male position with the human position, or a universal and objective position. This confusion has only been possible because the ideology that has governed our culture, and that men have profited from, has placed the man closer to the perfectly human, and considered the woman as an imperfect version of the same, ‘the weaker vessel’” (17), to which I would add “and placed the man closer to God based on Genesis 2.” In addition, my analysis of biblical texts suggests that the androcentric attention to males contributes to the phallogocentric ideology that the texts have served. Whatever the ancient peoples really believed about women’s contribution to procreation, her invisibility in the androcentric text constructs the impression of male agency as primary in human procreation, i.e., men procreate, women reproduce.

and Scott: 1914), while *logos* is a Greek term with multiple meanings, most importantly, “word,” “speech,” “utterance,” and “reason” (Liddell and Scott: 1057-59). A phallogocentric ideology identifies generative power (*phallos*) with the male reproductive organ and with word, speech, reason (*logos*), which is coded as masculine in biblical traditions.<sup>10</sup> Thus, both the natural power to procreate life and the cultural power to create and control rational discourse, in effect, to AUTHOR, are gendered masculine, hence, male prerogatives.

The link between phallogocentrism and patriARCHY is clarified by the word “patriarchy” itself, which is composed of two Greek roots: *pater*, meaning “father,” and *archē*, which bears two significant meanings, not only “rule,” as in familiar terms such as monarchy, oligarchy, hierarchy, but also “beginning,” as in the Gospel of John, which echoes Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning (*archē*) was the Word (*logos*)” which created all that is (John 1:1, 3). Thus, its linguistic roots suggest that biblical patriARCHY is “father-rule” and “father-beginning.” In essence, it is “father-rule” because, according to the Genesis creation narrative, the male father is the “beginning” in a two-fold sense: created FIRST by God in Genesis 2, hence, *temporal* beginning; and due to his generative power to produce offspring, the *procreative* beginning of the patrilineage that God both commands and promises (Genesis 17). Thus, the foundational narratives of biblical patriARCHY CONCEIVE the male father as first, beginning, and source, and so, as the one who has the freedom and right to rule by exercise of AUTHORITY.

### Biblical Cosmology of Gender: A Constellation of Greek Terms

In the course of this project, a set of Greek words that occur in the Bible’s gender discourse have emerged as constitutive of the gendered conception of AUTHORITY. Because these words feature prominently in the analysis that follows, a brief introduction to each will enable us to see what might otherwise be overlooked. The Greek noun for AUTHORITY, *exousia* (in Latin *auctoritate*) is related to the verb *exesti*, “it is permitted or allowed,” “it is possible,” which implies freedom and power to act (Liddell and Scott: 592; Foerster). The noun *exousia* denotes “the right to do something or the right over something,” e.g., the rights of parents in relation to children (Foerster: 562). Of particular significance for this project are the etymological roots of the noun. *Exousia* consists of the preposition *ek* (“from” or “out of”) and the noun *ousia*, from the verb *eimi*, “to be,” hence, its meanings “that which is one’s own, one’s substance, property,” “substance, essence,” “true nature,” “the primary real” (Liddell and Scott: 1274). The root *ek* implies relation to a source or beginning point, while *ousia* suggests a substance or essence from which something (or someone) else comes. In combination the two roots suggest “from/out of one’s substance”; thus, together they evoke both relationship and property, or more precisely, a proprietary relationship which, as we will see, is based on AUTHORITY.

In addition, two words in the discourse examined here have dual meanings that are similar. The first, *kephalē*, besides meaning the physical “head” of a human or animal, bears

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<sup>10</sup> Økland notes that *phallos* was not used as an alternate term for the male genitalia. Rather, it is a term that constructs the cultural meaning of this anatomical part, functioning above all as an apotropaic and cultic symbol in connection with Dionysiac rituals. In cultic as well as other symbolic and artistic representations “it took the shape of the erected penis, since only the male was thought to possess such powers.” Thus “the identification of the generative powers of nature, phallus, with penis is an *ideological* move” (16).

two additional meanings: “source” or “origin” as well as “head over” or “ruler” of a group (Liddell and Scott: 945; Schlier: 674-75, 680-81).<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the second word, *archē*, one root of “patriARCHY” as noted above, can mean “rule” as well as “beginning.” Thus, in both *kephalē* and *archē* may be detected a connection between the idea of “rule” and the idea of “beginning” or “source.” Finally, two additional words of significance in biblical gender discourse are *logos*, a Greek word of masculine gender, which, as noted above, bears multiple meanings, among them, “word,” “speech,” “reason”; and the Greek masculine word *prōtos*, meaning “first,” which occurs in various forms in biblical tradition, e.g., “first-born” (Colossians 1:15,18), “first formed” (Wisdom 7:1; 10:1), “first fruits” (Exodus 34:26).<sup>12</sup> These five Greek words – *exousia*, *kephalē*, *archē*, *logos*, and *prōtos* – are major constellations in the creation cosmology generative of the phallogocentric ideology that has rationalized and underwritten the social system known as patriARCHY.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is a useful place to begin an exploration of biblical gender discourse. There Paul uses the word “AUTHORity” (*exousia*) in the midst of his treatment of what modern readers consider a gender matter, namely, the different ways men and women are to treat their heads in the ritual assembly.<sup>13</sup> My previous exegetical work on this text sought to illumine the logic of Paul’s gendered creation cosmology by consideration of veiling practices in ancient Greece and Rome as well as the Mediterranean honor-shame complex that includes ancient assumptions about creation and procreation. For present purposes, I will simply draw upon those parts of my prior exegetical work that have been sharpened by attention to the words identified in the preceding and their interrelationship in biblical gender discourse.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> In secular usage, *kephalē* denotes that which is “first, supreme, extreme,” which is why it is commonly used for the physical head of a human or animal and also for “the top, the point, the end, and the point of departure” as well as meaning “prominent, outstanding, determinative.” Thus, a man’s head is not simply one body part among others; it is the first and chief member, which determines all the others (Schlier: 673-74). As Martin (30) observes in his discussion of Greco-Roman society’s hierarchical construction of the body, the head is the most divine part in Plato. In the Greek Old Testament (LXX), *kephalē* is used for the head over or ruler of a social group (e.g., Judges 10:18; 11:8-9; Isaiah 7:8-9; 9:14). For the link between “head” and “rule,” see esp. Daniel 2:31-38.

<sup>12</sup> Examination of a Greek concordance to the Septuagint confirms the frequency of various forms of *prōtos* / “first,” especially in the context of human lineage (e.g., Genesis 25:25; 38:28; 49:3) where inheritance and privilege are at stake. It is worth noting that even a first wife has priority over other wives in a husband’s provision of their needs (Exodus 21:10). The Pentateuch includes the affirmation that “firsts,” including the “first” to open the womb, belong to God and/or should be consecrated to God (e.g., Exodus 13:2,12; 34:19-20, 26). Notable for this study is Genesis 49:3, where Jacob describes his son Reuben as “first born” (*prōtotokos*) and “the beginning of my children” (*archē technon*).

<sup>13</sup> The term “gender” is a modern category, and so, use of it in this study represents an etic (or outsider’s), not an emic (or insider’s), perspective on the content of the text. However, even though the ancient writers of these texts did not have an equivalent term, they operated with a culturally constructed and shared understanding of the roles and proper conduct, even natures, of the male and female sexes. Gender is variously defined and conceptualized in social scientific discourse and critical theory. In this study I use it to mean the cultural construction or interpretation of the anatomical differences between the sexes; in other words, people observe the anatomical differences between human bodies, including the fact that children come out of women’s bodies, not men’s; then they construct what those differences mean for them.

<sup>14</sup> In its interface with Delaney’s work, my prior work sought to identify the cosmology that grounds Paul’s injunctions. Alternatively, one can approach Paul’s argument in terms of ideology, as does the enlightening study by Martin. In the present project, my continued attention to the cosmology that informs gender discourse in the

## 1 Corinthians 11:2-16: The Genesis of “Authority (*Exousia*) on Her Head (*Kephale*)”

### *Kephale: Engendering Headship*

The foundational building blocks of the creation cosmology that grounds the different practices here enjoined for the sexes are the two definitions of the man-woman relationship deployed in the discourse, both of which have their genesis in the creation narratives (Genesis 1-2). The first defines the man-woman relationship in terms of “headship”: “But I want you to know that of every man the head (*kephalē*) is Christ, the man head (*kephalē*) of woman, and God head (*kephalē*) of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:3). In this initial definition of headships, only God is not headed by another, whereas Christ, man, and woman all are: Christ, by God; man, by Christ; woman, by man. In addition, although both Christ and man are “headed” by another, each is also a “head”; only woman is not a “head” in relation to another. Thus this opening definition in effect codes “head” (*kephalē*) as male and divine while constructing woman as different from God, Christ, and man in that she herself is not a head (*kephalē*). This begs the question, why is woman not a *kephalē* (head)? In the absence of an explicit explanation for this differentiation, its logic must be sought in what else *kephalē*, here translated “head,” can mean, as this first three-fold occurrence of *kephalē* is clearly not the literal usage for physical heads that follows in subsequent verses (11:4-7, 10).

With respect to other meanings, commentators have been divided over whether “head” (*kephalē*) here connotes “ruler,” with its implication of hierARCHY, or “source,” which for some bears no suggestion of rank or hierARCHY. A survey of *kephalē* in authors of the eighth century BCE to the fourth century CE has established that the word was used with the sense “ruler” as well as the meaning “source” or “origin.”<sup>15</sup> That the connotation of *kephalē* in 1 Corinthians 11:3 is not either “ruler” or “source” but rather both is indicated by later parts of the discourse. Clearly, the assertion in 11:8, “For man is not from (*ek*) woman, but woman from (*ek*) man,” an obvious allusion to the creation of the first woman from the rib of ‘adam (Genesis 2:21-22), establishes man as “source” of woman. In light of 11:8, then, this first

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New Testament seeks to illumine the way in which this cosmology constitutes and/or contributes to the phallogocentric ideology that underwrites a patriarchal social system. In working with these Pauline texts, like Martin I neither assume nor claim that Paul or the Deutero-Pauline AUTHORS *consciously* construct a cosmology or the ideology that it served and/or continues to serve. The assumptions and beliefs that constitute a person’s or group’s cosmology and ideology are largely unconscious or submerged; hence, my reference to Paul’s or the culture’s logic.

<sup>15</sup> Grudem’s survey of 2,336 instances of *kephalē* in 36 authors from this period determined that while the vast majority of occurrences refer to the physical head of a man or animal, the sense of “ruler” or “person of superior authority or rank” occurs 49 times, which is 16.2 percent of the instances in which *kephalē* is used in a metaphorical sense; hence, his conclusion, “That makes it very difficult to accept anyone’s claim that *head* in Greek could not mean ‘ruler’ or ‘authority over’” (52). Moreover, examination of occurrences of *kephalē* in ancient Greek sources reveals a conceptuality similar to our modern usage, wherein the “head” of an organization or institution is the source of decisions and policies, in short, rule or governance. *Kephale* clearly connotes authority or rulership in some Septuagint texts (Fitzmyer 1989). Moreover, early church Fathers interpreted *kephalē* as connoting superior rank or pre-eminence (Tucker: 117). In addition, although *kephalē* as “source” is not amply-attested (Grudem contra Bedale), its meaning “source” is indeed attested. In the first century, for example, in Ps-Arist, *On the Cosmos*: “Zeus is the head (*kephalē*), Zeus the center; from Zeus comes all that is.” In addition, some Pauline occurrences have been shown to bear the connotation “source” (Colossians 1:18; 2:19; Ephesians 4:15). On headship and hierarchy in ancient Greco-Roman discourses, see Martin: 30-31; also Corrington: 225.

definition (11:3) may be construed as positing a series of analogous source-relationships – from Christ, man; from man, woman; from God, Christ. God, Christ, and man each is a *kephalē* (“head”) because each is a source or origin of another. Given that *kephalē* relations are about “sourcing” or “origin” and that children come from a mother’s womb, it is peculiar that the series fails to affirm that woman is *kephalē* (head as source) of children. The logic of this odd omission emerges from close reading of the remainder of this discourse, which illumines the construction of procreation in biblical gender discourse.

*Eikōn kai doxa: Man as “Image and Glory of God” and Woman as “Glory of Man”*

That this heady series of source-relationships represents a chain of being that constitutes a gender hierARCHY in which AUTHORITY is a male prerogative is confirmed by 1 Corinthians 11:7-12, which includes explicit reference to “authority” (11:10, *exousia*) and begins with the second definition of the man-woman relationship: “A man (*anēr*), on the other hand, is not obliged to cover his head, being (*hyparchōn*) the image and glory of God. But the woman (*hē gynē*) is (*estin*) the glory of man (*andros*)” (11:7).<sup>16</sup> This definition, like the first (11:3), asserts man’s and woman’s different being status: man as “the image and glory (or reflection) of God” whereas woman is the “glory of man” (11:7). The hierARCHIC conceptuality of this difference is detectable in the choice of verbs by which man’s and woman’s being is expressed. Rather than use the same verb – *eimi*, “to be” – to define who or what man is and who or what woman is, different verbs are used: the verb *eimi* for woman “being (*estin*) the glory of man,” whereas the verb expressive of man’s “being the image and glory of God” is *hyparchō*, which is composed of two roots: *hypo* prefixed to the root *archō*, which, as noted above, means both “to rule” and “to begin.” Thus, unlike the verb *eimi*, which simply means “to be” or “to exist” (Liddell and Scott: 488), *hyparchō* bears the meanings “to begin, to take the initiative, to be the beginning, to be already in existence, to exist really” (Liddell and Scott: 1853). These different verbs for the “being” of man and woman are hardly equivalent. Rather, they convey the operative understanding of the order of creation and procreation, involving primacy and potency: the man, as the one already in existence, “is the beginning” (*hyparchōn*), and thereafter, woman “is” or “exists.” In other words, man is the temporal and procreative “beginning” (*archē*) whose sequential primacy gives him the right and freedom, i.e., the AUTHORITY (*exousia*), to rule (*archō*), which is made explicit in 11:10 (see below).

The phrase “the image of God” is an obvious allusion to Genesis 1:27: “God created the human (*ton anthrōpon*), in the image of God (*eikona theou*) he created him (*auton*), male (*arsen*) and female (*thēlu*) he created them (*autous*).” Given what appears to be an affirmation that God created *both* male and female “in the image of God,” why is it that man but not woman is defined as “the image and glory of God” in 1 Corinthians 11:7? Linguistic ambiguities in the

<sup>16</sup> Fatum (72) recognizes, rightly in my view, that 11:3 claims far more than a chronological or linear sequence. That the headship or source-relationship of man and woman are set in relation to God and Christ establishes a theological basis for what amounts to a succession of creation that is equivalent to an order of hierARCHIC precedence. Schüssler Fiorenza (2007: 99-101) situates the content of 11:3 in the context of ontological philosophical discourse about the “chain of being,” drawing upon Paige du Bois’ treatment of ancient Greek difference-discourses.

first chapters of Genesis shed light on the discursive logic.<sup>17</sup> The peculiar shift from the singular, “in the image of God he created *him*,” to the plural, “male and female he created *them*,” permits the text to be read in more than one way. The latter plural “them” permits the deduction that woman also is created in the divine image. However, since the singular is used in the *first* phrase, with the inclusive “them” qualified by “male and female” occurring in *second* position, the two phrases read as a kind of preliminary summary, anticipatory of and preparing for the creation sequence in the more detailed account that follows in Genesis 2: God created the man (*'adam*) first (Genesis 2:7-8), who is the “him” created “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:27); then, since it was not good for the man to be alone or single (Genesis 2:18), “male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27) by the addition of the woman (Genesis 2:21-23).<sup>18</sup> That the phrase “male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27) implies woman is somehow contained *within* the “him” of the first phrase appears likely in light of the climactic assertion of the creation sequence: “That is why a man (*anthrōpos*) leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife (*tēn gynaika*), and they become one flesh (*sarka mian*)” (Genesis 2:24). In other words, woman’s “being” and identity are incorporated into and under that of the man/husband (Genesis 2:24), who, as 1 Corinthians 11:3 indicates, is the “head” (*kephalē*) of and over their “one flesh.”<sup>19</sup> Because head and body are dependent on each other, by coding “head” (*kephalē*) as male and divine, and “body,” that which is under a head, as female, Genesis in effect establishes the hierarchic interdependence of male and female. That hierARCHIC interdependence will be reaffirmed later in the argument (11:11-12), where we find both a reference to the man’s hierarchic AUTHORITY (*exousia*) over the woman (11:10) and an acknowledgement of the interdependence of man and woman in human procreation (11:12).

The logic of the explicit identification of *solely* the man as “image of God” (1 Corinthians 11:7) is clarified further by a two-fold explanation for the injunction that man ought not cover his head the way woman must (11:5-6). First, “for man (*anēr*) is not from (*ek*) woman (*gynaikeos*), but woman (*gynē*) from (*ek*) man” (11:8) alludes to God’s creation of woman out of the rib of *'adam* (Genesis 2:21-23), which makes the man her “source” (head/*kephalē*), as 11:3 affirms; and second, “nor was man (*anēr*) created on account of (*dia*) the woman (*tēn gynaika*), but woman (*gynē*) on account of (*dia*) the man (*ton andra*)” (11:9), another allusion to the creation

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<sup>17</sup> My reading largely concurs with and is indebted to Watson’s study (1992) of Paul’s exegetical practices, which illumines the Pauline reading of Genesis 1:27.

<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the ambiguity is compounded by the equally awkward (and confusing) use of the word *'adam* in Genesis 1-5. In the Hebrew text, the original human is designated *'adam* or *ha-'adam* prior to the sexual differentiation (1:26-27; 2:5; 2:7-8; 2:15-16); but even after the sexual differentiation (Genesis 2:21-22), the same word *'adam* is used as a proper name for the male character, for example, in 4:25 and in 5:3. That there is a being called *'adam/anthrōpon* before the arrival of woman, and then *later* in the narrative a being of the same name has intercourse with his wife, could incline the reader to construe the original human as male. In my view, it is these kinds of linguistic ambiguities that provide a textual basis for the Pauline assertion that the male human is the image and glory of God (1 Corinthians 11:7). See Watson (1992) for a fuller exposition.

<sup>19</sup> That a wife was conceived as under the headship and AUTHORITY of her husband is further evidenced by the Greek phrase *hē hypandros gynē* found in biblical texts; see Numbers 5:20, 29; Proverbs 6:24, 29; Sirach 9:9; 41:23; Romans 7:2. This biblical construction of the procreative marital relationship later becomes the basis for the legal doctrine of coverture.

narrative, according to which the woman is given to 'adam to be his "helper" or "assistant" (*'ezer*, Heb; *boethon*, Gk; Genesis 2:18, 20), or my preferred translation, "helpmate."<sup>20</sup>

The sequence of the narrative complex in Genesis clarifies the nature and purpose of woman's "helpmate" status as reproductive: the creation of the human male and female "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27) is immediately followed by God's command to "be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28); then, because "it is not good for man to be alone," God will make him a "helper" or "assistant" (Genesis 2:18); when animals prove unsatisfactory "helpers" or "assistants" because they are not "like to him" (*homoios autō*), i.e., of the same species for reproductive purposes (Genesis 2:20), God separates out of man's own flesh and gives to him "woman" (Genesis 2:21-22); and upon her creation, "therefore, a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24), a coupling that restores the oneness lost upon her separation out of man and insures the reproduction that will populate the earth as God intends. Two subsequent narrative elements confirm the woman's created status as reproductive "assistant" or "helpmate" (*boēthos*): the post-Fall punishment upon Eve focuses on her child-bearing (Genesis 3:16), and Adam re-names his wife "Eve because she was the mother of all the living" (Genesis 3:20). If this is the reading of Genesis 1-3 that informs the discourse in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, then woman's participation in "the image of God" is not explicitly denied in 11:7; it is, rather, rendered invisible, in effect, covered or "veiled" by a WORDing consistent with and reflective of marital gender relations in ancient patriARCHY: the woman/wife incorporated into and under the man/husband to whom she belongs as "helpmate" to his generation of progeny (see Watson 1992: 95). As 11:12 suggests (see below), she is a kind of instrumental cause necessary to his procreative agency as the original progenitor of the human race. Taken from man's own flesh, woman is "like to him" in the way that other animals are not, i.e., of the same species, and so, can assist the male Adam in the way other animals cannot: she will mate with him by becoming "one flesh."

The full significance of the Pauline affirmation of man but not woman "being (*hyparchon*) the image and reflection of God" (1 Corinthians 11:7) emerges upon consideration of the larger Primeval History (Genesis 1-11), where the representations of God and the first male Adam evidence a "like father, like son" pattern. In the opening chapters, God is both "IN the beginning" (*en archē*), as Genesis 1:1 affirms, and so, as the First and Only One Who Exists, enjoys the firstness or primacy of eternity; and God IS the beginning as the Creator and Ruler of all that he subsequently brings into existence. By seminal WORD ("Let there be . . .") that proves potently effective ("And so it happened"), God creates, including one "in his image" (*'adam*, Genesis 1:27), then God names that which God creates (e.g., "God called the light 'day,' and the darkness he called 'night,'" Genesis 1:5); and God exercises sovereignty over the created realm, ordering it according to his will, issuing commands to that which he has created,

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<sup>20</sup> Although the translation of *boethon* as "companion" is attractive to many modern readers, myself included, it is a misleading translation insofar as it masks the gender hierARCHY reflected and constructed in this text. Yee translates the Hebrew of Genesis 2:18 "a help corresponding to him," then rightly notes that the wording "does not imply equality between the genders . . . but rather a complementary entity of the same species." Yee further observes, "Within the ideology of the text, the 'help' that the woman supplies is her sexual ability to produce children . . . the priority of the male is indicated by the fact that the primal woman is formed from *his* substance, reversing the real state of affairs where women give birth to men. Just as he names the animals, evincing his primacy over them, the man names the woman . . . 'ishah' (2:23), expressing his authority over her" (182).

e.g., “Be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:22, 28), “from that tree you shall not eat” (Genesis 2:17), and meting out punishment for disobedience (Genesis 3:14-19, 23).

Similarly, the male Adam is the first and only one who exists for a time, and so, is IN the beginning, i.e., temporally prior to other humans, including woman; then he “IS the beginning” of the human race when God makes him the source of the woman-helpmate with whom he will “be fruitful and multiply.” Thus, the potent generativity of the Eternally One God, who *creates* from nothing, is replicated by the potent generativity of the One and First man, who *procreates* offspring by becoming “one flesh” with his woman/wife. The account of the generations enumerated in Genesis 2-11, especially Genesis 5:1-32, highlights Adam’s generative potency, while Eve is conspicuously invisible, with two exceptions (Genesis 3:20; 4:1).<sup>21</sup> In yet another parallel to the Divine Creator, Adam produces a son “in his image” (*kata ten eikona autou*, Genesis 5:3), Seth. Thus, consistent with and reflective of patriARCHY, it is the male agency in procreativity that is highlighted.<sup>22</sup>

Significantly, the original and originating commandment addressed to ‘adam, the “them” who is “him” (Genesis 1:27-28), and later to Noah and his sons (Genesis 9:1-2,7) is two-fold: first, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it,” then, “have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” Thus, in Genesis, God creates and has dominion over all; likewise, the male Adam procreates and has dominion. To be a source and to rule go hand in hand, or, in the words of 1 Corinthians 11:3, to be a head/*kephalē*. Although the commandment to Adam specifies rule over other creatures, not over other humans or each other, the post-fall punishments revise the scope of the first male Adam’s dominion when Eve is informed that her husband will rule over (*kuriousei*) her (Genesis 3:16).

In addition, just as the Sovereign God exercises generative power by WORD (*logos*), i.e., re-naming individuals (e.g., Abram, Genesis 17:5; Sarai, Genesis 17:15-16), so, too, Adam is given the right and freedom (i.e., the AUTHORITY) to do the same: he names other creatures, first the various birds and animals (Genesis 2:20), then his female helpmate (Genesis 2:23); and after eating the fruit, he renames the woman “Eve because she was the mother of all the

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<sup>21</sup> In Delaney words, “Adam, divinely created, has the power of human creation (procreation) within him. From Adam this spark is carried to his sons, by whom the tribes of mankind are established. From father to son, father to son, this ability is transferred. The procession of the generations is conceived as linear” (1991: 289).

<sup>22</sup> In the Septuagint, the same Greek word, *sperma*, is used for both the plant “seed” used in agriculture and for human offspring. Occurrences of *sperma* are most frequent in Genesis (sixty total), where the initial six occurrences in Genesis 1 all refer to agricultural seed, and it is God who creates and gives that seed. Thereafter in Genesis, the vast majority of occurrences of *sperma* refer first to the offspring of Adam (Gen 4:25) followed by Noah (Gen 9:9), then the various patriARCHS of Israel. That “seed” sequence, with God as the source of “seed” in Genesis 1, contributes to the monogenetic construction of procreation operative in patriARCHY. Unfortunately, major English translations mask or obscure this monogenetic construction of procreation by rendering the multiple occurrences of *sperma* in episodes dealing with human procreation as “children,” “offspring,” or “descendants” rather than “seed,” hence my preference for consistent translation of *sperma* as “seed” in biblical narratives. The patriARCHal construction of monogenetic procreation based on male “seed” extends into the New Testament; see 1 Corinthians 8:6, “one God the father (*ho patēr*) from whom (*ex hou*) are all things”; and 1 John 3:9-10 where “those who are out of/from God (*ek tou theou*) do not sin, because his (God’s) seed (*sperma autou*) abides in them.”

living” (Genesis 3:20). By exercise of his naming rights, Adam in effect defines woman’s identity in terms of reproductive services and motherhood.<sup>23</sup>

To summarize the operative logic of Pauline discourse in light of Genesis: for man to be “the image and glory (or reflection) of God” (1 Corinthians 11:7) is to be a sovereign progenitor or pro-creator, in short, an AUTHOR. To be “image” and “reflection” or “glory” of another requires visibility, and so, as “image” or “likeness” (*eikōn*) and “reflection” or “glory” (*doxa*) of the Creator-God, the man should not conceal his God-given primacy and potency by covering his head.<sup>24</sup> Rather, his head should be uncovered, for he is, like God (and Christ) a “head” (source and ruler), whose exercise of AUTHORITY reflects glory on his “head,” the Creator God, who is the original and originating *kephalē* in the series of “heads” identified in 11:3.<sup>25</sup>

Woman, on the other hand, lacking the primacy, the generative potency, and the sovereignty that are coded as divine and masculine in Genesis, is not herself a *kephalē* (head/source/ruler) of anyone (1 Corinthians 11:3). Rather, as derivative and secondary in the order of creation, she is the reproductive “helpmate” (*boēthos*) of the man with whom she becomes “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24), subsumed under his headship. Thus, in order not to dishonor the head/*kephalē* of their “one flesh,” she should not pray and prophesy in the assembly without her head covered (11:4-6). The further rationale for her obligation to cover follows in 11:7-9: in the order of creation, the woman is “from man” and was created “on account of man” (11:8), which makes him her visible “head” (*kephalē*, 11:3). Moreover, in

<sup>23</sup> In her critical attention to gender and class in Genesis 2-3, Yee observes, “The woman does not name herself. She is named by the man who defines her identity. His exercise of power categorizes the woman strictly in her reproductive capacities within a larger system of hierarchical relations, of which he himself as peasant is very much subordinate” (187).

<sup>24</sup> The significance of circumcision that enters the biblical narrative with Abraham, the first of the patriARCHS of the people Israel, reflects this cultural logic and the procreative agenda. In particular, two episodes about God’s covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:2-6; 17:1-14) confirm not only the centrality of procreation to covenant partnership but also the priority/agency of the male in it. In the first, Abram informs God that because he is “childless” he lacks an heir of his own, for “you have given me no offspring [or “seed”] (Genesis 15:2-3), to which God responds with a reassuring promise that “one who comes from out of you” (*exeleusetai ek sou*) will be heir, and that “your offspring” (*to sperma sou*) will be as numerous as the stars in the heavens” (Genesis 15:4-5). In the absence of any reference to his wife, use of the verb *exerchomai*, “to come out of,” has the effect of emphasizing Abraham as the sole generative source of the “offspring” or “seed.” The centrality of procreation to the covenant relationship between God and Abraham is confirmed in Genesis 17, where the link between covenant and God’s promise of many “offspring” (*sperma*) is repeated multiple times (Genesis 17:2, 4, 5, 6, 7). Immediately after declaring his will to covenant with Abraham and his “seed” and stating his promises to them (many offspring, nationhood status, a land), God then specifies their obligations as his covenant partners: “Every male (*arsenikon*) among you shall be circumcised. You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you” (Genesis 17:10-11). Consistent with the procreative gender order established in Genesis by the order of creation, the uncovered penis, by which the male sows his “seed/offspring/children” (*sperma*) in obedience to the divine command to be fruitful and multiply, is the sign of this procreative covenant partnership between God and the men of Israel.

<sup>25</sup> A remark by Quintilian sheds light on the ancients’ understanding of the relationship between glory, sources or origins, and that which they originate or “source”: “Children reflect glory on their parents, cities on their founders, laws on those who made them, arts on their inventors, and institutions on those that first introduced them” (3.7.18).

contrast to the man, who is defined as “image” or “likeness” (*eikon*) of God (11:7a), woman is not an image or likeness (*eikon*), not even of the man from whom her being was created or “outsourced” (Genesis 2:21-22); rather, she is defined as “the glory (*doxa*) of man” (11:7b).<sup>26</sup> The Greek noun *doxa* refers to the power and splendor that bring honor and renown and can also mean “reflection.” Its usage here means that the one who comes from the other is the *doxa*, a glorious reflection (rather than likeness or image), of the source. Thus, whereas man is the visible reflection of the power and splendor of the Creator-God in whose “image” the man is made (11:7a), woman, who comes from man and was created for man (11:8-9), can and should reflect honor upon man (her husband). The biblical gender discourse examined above suggests that she does so as a faithful “helpmate”/ *boēthon* under his headship.

*Exousia*: “AUTHORITY on her head”

1 Corinthians 11:10 then specifies how it is that woman reflects glory upon her “head”/ *kephalē* in the context of the Corinthian worship assembly: when praying or prophesying “the woman ought to have AUTHORITY (*exousia*) on her head.” Given the ancient Greco-Roman provenance of this text, one might well expect use of the word for veil (*kalluma*) here, rather than “AUTHORITY (*exousia*) on her head,” an exceedingly odd phrase that has puzzled New Testament scholars.<sup>27</sup> Numerous ancient interpreters understood *exousia* to refer to a covering or veil, as evidenced by the early substitution of *kalumma* (veil) for *exousia* in the manuscript tradition (Fitzmyer 1957-58: 52). That early commentators on 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, who were in temporal and cultural proximity to Paul, construed *exousia* in 11:10 as reference to a veil strongly suggests the likely association of veil with AUTHORITY in the ancient context. That association has been confirmed by studies of the role of the veil in the wedding ceremony in Greco-Roman antiquity (see Calef 2009: esp. 27-30).

Beliefs about procreation embedded in the biblical gender discourse analyzed above further clarify use of the word *exousia* for the woman’s head covering. In light of that discourse, the veil on a married woman’s physical head serves two purposes: it *conceals* her own female

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<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting that woman is not identified as the image or likeness of man (1 Corinthians 11:7), despite being in Adam’s words, “bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23). This suggests that the image or likeness CONCEIVED here is defined by maleness and masculinity and by cultural perceptions and constructions of male sexuality. This coheres with the gender construction and theory of procreativity evident in Genesis, which encode potent generativity or origination and dominion, hence, headship (*kephale*), as divine and masculine.

<sup>27</sup> Because *exousia* is power and the right and freedom to exercise it, commentators have debated whether the “*exousia* on her head” refers to a woman’s own authority or that of someone else. Fitzmyer identifies four possible interpretations of *exousia*: symbol of the power to which the woman is subjected; symbol of the power, honor, and dignity of the woman; a magical power that the veiled woman possesses to ward off the attacks of evil spirits; and the Greek equivalent of an Aramaic word meaning “veil” (1957-58: 50-53). In an intriguing alternative, Wire suggests that perhaps the Corinthian women prophets themselves were using the word “authority” (*exousia*), for example, claiming to possess “authority” as prophet and/or explicitly rejecting the authority of someone else, such as their husbands (117). In the absence of evidence for women’s voices and motivations in this text, I am not persuaded by this attractive proposal. We have ample evidence, however, for the meaning of ancient veiling practices (see Blundell; Llewellyn-Jones; Oakley and Sinos; Patterson; discussed in Calef: 27-29). In light of those practices and the beliefs about procreation embedded in biblical gender discourse discussed above, there is ample reason to conclude that *exousia* here refers to the woman’s veil as symbol of her husband’s AUTHORITY as their one head/ *kephalē*.

head, which in marriage is subsumed under her husband's head, while simultaneously *making visible* the male head of their "one flesh," the very head who has AUTHORITY, i.e., generative power and the right and freedom to exercise it, in relation to his wife who is his procreative "assistant." Thus, in public ritual space such as the Corinthian worship assembly, the veil functions as a visible sign of "AUTHORITY" by which the male "head" of the "one flesh" (the procreative couple) *actively* asserts his exclusive right to his "helpmate" before the eyes of men, and by which she actively assents to his AUTHORITY by wearing it, thereby reflecting glory (*doxa*) upon him. Moreover, the etymological roots of the word *exousia*, which suggest "out of a substance," cohere with the gender discourse of the Genesis creation narrative. By God's design, woman is out of (*ek*) the substance (*ousia*) of the man; the man is the substance (*ousia*) from which (*ek*) woman and future generations come. Indeed, that divinely orchestrated "outsourcing" constitutes man's AUTHORITY (*exousia*) in relation to his wife. The veil on a woman's head thus signals the AUTHORITY of the "head" (*kephalē*) of the "one flesh" that will be "fruitful and multiply," as God commanded the "them" that is "him" to do (Genesis 1:27).

*Ek and dia: "From" and "Through" in PatriARCHal Procreation Discourse*

Further evidence that AUTHORITY (*exousia*) is conceived as above all male generative power may be found in 1 Corinthians 11:11-12, where the argument from the order of creation closes with a kind of summary conclusion of the preceding train of thought. The initial "for neither woman without man nor man without woman in the Lord" (11:11) recalls once again, as in 11:8, the divinely wrought order of creation: the woman from the man (Genesis 2:21-22). Created by God to become "one flesh" as husband and wife, man and woman belong together; therefore, a woman ought not appear to be separate from or without her "head" by removing the veil that clarifies her status under his "AUTHORITY" (*exousia*).

An explicit reference to human procreation then follows: "For just as the woman [is] from the man, so the man [is] through the woman; but all things [are] from God" (1 Corinthians 11:12). Woman's necessary role in human procreation is acknowledged in "For just as woman from man, so man through woman," thereby affirming man's and woman's *interdependence* in the procreative work. That this interdependence does not, however, nullify the gendered hierARCHY of headship (11:3), i.e., of rulership based on origin/source and primacy, may be detected in the prepositions (*ek* and *dia*) used to express the man's and woman's roles. *In the order of creation*, woman is "from man" (*ek tou andros*), a point previously made (11:8) and here reaffirmed; *in the order of human procreation* that results, however, the man is not "from" (*ek*) woman, which would imply woman as source, and so, too, his "head" (*kephalē*), but "through the woman" (*dia tēs gynaikos*). Linguistically, this change in preposition, from *ek* to *dia*, serves to differentiate woman's role and status from that of man and preserves the monogenetic theory of procreation operative in biblical discourse. That this differentiation implies not equality but hierARCHY is confirmed by use of the preposition *ek* in the final affirmation of the argument, "all things are from God," which creates a correlation between man and God that replicates 11:3, where both man and God (and Christ), but not woman, are defined as "heads." In Greek, *ek* indicates immediate origin or agent regarded as source, while *dia* plus the genitive, as occurs here with reference to the woman, is used for that which is employed to bring about an intended result, that is, instrumental cause. Thus, procreative man, like creative God, is source or origin, "first cause," if you will, whereas woman is an instrumental

cause, not herself the origin or source in the way man (or God) is.<sup>28</sup> In closing with the words, “but all things are from God,” the argument from creation affirms that man and woman are not ultimate causes of each other (Watson 2000: 532), for God is the ultimate cause of each. More importantly, it asserts that the relationship of man and woman – with man as “head” (*kephalē*) and woman under his authority (*exousia*) for the purposes of procreation – has its origin, its source, in the Creator-God, the *kephalē* who made it so “in the beginning (*archē*).”

To summarize the gender discourse in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 in light of the Genesis creation cosmology upon which it draws: from the originating *kephalē*, the Creator God, comes an order of creation that establishes a procreative gender order, the boundaries of which are inscribed on the bodies of men and women. In the divine order of creation, the male is first and primary and the woman secondary and derivative; in human procreation the male is the agent who, by virtue of his potent generativity, is the “likeness” or “image and glory of God,” while the woman/female is the subordinate helpmate whose assistance in his generativity makes her, not a likeness (*eikōn*) of him, but a reflection that redounds to his glory and honor. Thus, the male, created by God first and out of whom woman is secondarily derived, is, like God, a *kephalē*, the “head/source/ruler” of the “one flesh” that is the couple. Moreover, as the headship series in 11:3 suggests and the argument from creation confirms (11:7-12), one who is *kephalē*/source of another stands in a relation of AUTHORITY to that other, and so, has the right to rule and to expect subordination. Thus, as the *kephalē* of the “one flesh,” it is the male who has been created by AUTHORITY and for AUTHORITY, i.e., by and for generative power and the right and freedom to exercise it in relation to his “helpmate” and his “seed” (*sperma*). In short, the male has the right to AUTHOR by *phallos* and by *logos*.

### 1 Corinthians 14:33-36: Learn in Silence and Submission

The implications of the gendered understanding of AUTHORITY expressed in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 are evident elsewhere in New Testament gender discourse, for example, in 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Due to space constraints, a few brief observations about each rather than a detailed analysis must suffice here. First, in 1 Corinthians 14 women are enjoined to be silent (*sigatōsan*) in all the churches (14:34). The reason immediately follows: “it is not permitted to them to speak (*lalein*), but they should be subordinate (*hypotassesthōsan*), as also the law (*ho nomos*) says (*legei*)” (14:34).<sup>29</sup> That these prohibitions on women’s speech reflect and are in accord with the gender order CONCEIVED in Genesis hardly requires argument. In the creation cosmology of Genesis, as noted above, the power of word and speech is the prerogative of the male Adam; and as we will see below, due to the conduct of the secondarily first woman in Genesis 3, women’s speech and initiative must be prohibited. Moreover, woman’s creation out of and for man,

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<sup>28</sup> In the larger study, I am tracking evidence of the notion that “all” or “the many” originate from the “one” and “first” who is male/father, not from two (male and female) (see e.g., Wisdom 7:1; 10:1; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Acts 17:26).

<sup>29</sup> The two references to speaking in this verse use different verbs: *laleō* for women’s speaking; *lego* for the speaking of “the law” (*ho nomos*), a Greek masculine noun. The use of different verbs to express the “being” of man (*hyparchōn*) and of woman (*eimi*) in 1 Corinthians 11:7 served to express a gender hierARCHY. Here in 1 Corinthians 14:34 the use of different verbs for speaking rather than the same verb subtly reinforces the gender differentiation constructed in biblical discourse.

becoming “one flesh” under his headship, in effect constructs the relationship of subordination (*hypotassesthōsan*) enjoined upon women here. The subsequent injunction, “If they want to learn anything, let them ask their husbands (*tous idiōus andras*) at home, for it is shameful for a woman to speak (*lalein*) in church” (14:34) reflects the gender hierARCHY of the ancient patriARCHAL household, with man/husband as the *kephalē*, the head of the household who has the AUTHORity to instruct his wife by WORD and speech (*logos*).

The text ends with two questions addressed to the women, both of which reflect the gender order identified above. The first – “or did the WORD of God originate with you?” – combines reference to the AUTHORitative “WORD of God” with use of a verb that conveys origination (*exēlthēn*). According to the biblical gender discourse discussed above, women are not an origin or source (*kephalē*), an originator from whom (*ek*) another or something comes, the way God, Christ, and men are. Given that that is the case, the first question reads as an expression of dismay that women could presume to speak a Word of God. The follow-up question, here translated “or has it reached you alone (*monous*)?,” in its use of the adjective *monos* also recalls the creation narrative, specifically, the reason God created woman: “it is not good for man to be alone (*monon*, Genesis 2:18; cf. Wisdom 10:1).” In effect, this second question challenges women’s presumptuous speaking initiatives by reminding them of their created identity and status within the marital gender order: married women are not *monous* (alone, single). Rather, each woman is part of the “them” (Genesis 1:27) that is now “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24), i.e., the “him” (Genesis 1:27) who is the “head” (*kephalē*) of their “one flesh.” The Word of God, then, has reached *them*, not her; and so, it is her husband who has the AUTHORity to speak with her about any WORD of God about which she might have questions.

### 1 Timothy 2:11-15: “I do not permit a woman . . .”

The gendering of AUTHORity as a male prerogative in accord with creation cosmology is explicitly stated in 1 Timothy 2:11-15. The opening injunction, “let a woman learn in silence” (2:11) in effect denies to women the right and freedom (AUTHORity) to speak, thereby preserving the power of speech and WORD as male prerogative in accord with the creation cosmology. The insistence on women’s silence is reiterated at the end of the next verse: “she is to be in silence” (2:12). The repetition of the phrase “in silence” (*en hēsuchia*) at beginning and close of the injunction forms an *inclusio* of sorts, in effect constructing the very “in silence” space where women learn from the male voice and word that AUTHOR this prohibition. Although verse 11 implies that women are allowed to learn (*manthanetō*), two phrases constrict the conditions in which their learning may occur: “in silence” and “in full submission,” in other words, placed under and obedient to male AUTHORity, as the word *hypotagē* indicates.

In the next verse, the text’s male author, speaking in the first person from within her “in silence” space (1 Timothy 2:11-12), asserts his AUTHORity: “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have AUTHORity over a man.” In accord with the subordinate position for which she was created, a woman may learn from man, including the one who speaks here (2:11), but the speaking male AUTHORity denies her the right to teach or to have AUTHORity in relation to a man. “To teach” (*didaskein*) requires the power of WORD and speech, which, as we saw in the preceding, are coded as masculine in the gender discourse of Genesis. The second element of the prohibition in 2:12, “I do not permit a woman . . . to have authority

over a man,” has been, arguably, one of the most consequential biblical injunctions for gender relations to the present. In its explicit and unequivocal denial of AUTHORITY to women, it genders the exercise of AUTHORITY as exclusively a male prerogative.<sup>30</sup>

That the silence injunctions have their genesis in the creation cosmology examined above is confirmed in 1 Timothy 2:13-14, where the AUTHOR cites the narratives of origin in Genesis, a rhetorical move that effectively trades upon their AUTHORITY. The first – “For Adam was formed first, then Eve” – reads the order of creation in Genesis 2 as establishing a male primacy that is construed as purposeful and consequential, not aimless or accidental. In the narration of a linear creative process in which God is the One and Eternal “First,” sequence is significant. Thus, that the male Adam is shaped first (*prōtos*) constructs the male sex as closer to God than Eve, who is secondary and derivative. Indeed, his status as one and first constitutes, in part, his likeness to or imaging of God, hence, his AUTHORITY.

The second reason given for the prohibition of women teaching or having AUTHORITY in relation to a man cites the first couple’s conduct in Genesis 3: “and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (1 Timothy 2:14). Unsurprisingly, Adam’s conduct is cited first, then Eve’s. Consistent with earlier biblical gender discourse, which emphasizes the difference, not the likeness, between the sexes, here the rationale constructs a pointed contrast between them, reflective of and thereby reinforcing the gender constructs in Genesis.<sup>31</sup> For some readers, the claim that “Adam was not deceived” hardly seems an accurate reading of the Genesis text; Adam, after all, ate the forbidden fruit offered by his wife, for which he, too, was punished by God. The verbs used here, however, clarify the logic. Both *apataō*, the verb used with regard to Adam, and *exapataō*, the verb used for Eve’s conduct, mean “to deceive,” that is, by another, in this case, the wily serpent who approached and spoke only with Eve, not Adam. Hence, Adam is off the deception hook, although his inclusion in punishment suggests culpability for a misstep. It is worth noting that, as is the case examined above, the AUTHOR uses different verbs for the actions of the two sexes, not the same verb, *apatao*, as one might expect. As in the examples observed above, such linguistic choices subtly reinforce the fundamental difference of the sexes. In this case, the verb expressive of Eve’s deception, *exapatao*, bears the added connotation “to seduce,” thereby adding sexual nuance to her deception by the snake. On being “seduced” or “deceived” by the serpent, Eve “becomes a transgressor,” or in a more literal translation, “was in transgression” (*en parabasei gegonen*). The nature of her transgression is adumbrated by the additional denotations of *parabasis*: “a going aside, escape; a deviation; an overstepping” (Liddell and Scott: 1305), all of which connote wrongful or disorderly movement.

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<sup>30</sup> The prohibition of woman’s AUTHORITY does not use the noun *exousia*/AUTHORITY. Instead it uses the verb *authentēō*, “to have full authority or power over,” which is related to the noun *authēntia*, “absolute sway, authority” (Liddell and Scott: 275). The larger project of which this work is a part includes an examination of the occurrences of *exousia*, *authēntia*, and their related verb forms in biblical gender discourse.

<sup>31</sup> Social scientists and critical theorists have shed light on the politics of difference. Emphasis on difference, be it sexual, gender, race-ethnicity, class, able-bodiedness, rather than on commonality or likeness serves the establishment and preservation of systems of privilege, in this case, male privilege (see Johnson 2017; also Kimmel and Ferber).

The full significance of this rationale emerges upon consideration of the Fall episode in relation to the creation order that precedes it. The interdependent gender hierARCHY established in Genesis 2, that is, the man/husband has primacy, thus “headship” over his helpmate/wife, is disrupted by the serpent’s conversation with Eve. Whereas the intended order is from man to the woman, with man as agent (e.g., begetting and naming) and woman as his procreative “helpmate,” in the serpent scene it is the woman who acts with initiative (speaking, taking the forbidden fruit, giving it to her husband), and the man listens, receives and eats the fruit, acquiescing to her initiative. As a result, both are punished by God. The words with which the punishment on Adam begins, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you” (Genesis 3:17), confirm the threat to the intended gender order and clarify the reason for God’s punishment upon Adam: the man listened not to God, who had commanded him not to eat the fruit (Genesis 2:17) but to his wife; thus, the legacy of Eve cited in 1 Timothy: women cannot be trusted to teach or to have AUTHORity over men, for women lead men astray, and so, must be put under the control of their husbands (see Yee). Hence, the punishment on Eve, “mother of all the living” – the pain of her childbearing will be increased and “your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you” (Genesis 3:16) – and upon her “daughters” addressed in 1 Timothy – learn in silence, in complete subordination, in hope of salvation by acceptance of her intended helpmate status: “Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty” (1 Timothy 2:15). In accord with the creation cosmology, reproductive assistance and child-rearing are the sole and defining activities of women in biblical patriARCHY, “father-rule” based on “father-beginning” . . . as it was “in the beginning.”

## Conclusion

### *The Legacy of Biblical Gender Discourse: Male AUTHORity and Female Coverture as Right Relation*

The Bible has exercised enormous AUTHORity in the West for centuries. Not only has it informed and guided the personal lives of generations of Christian believers. It has shaped major institutions and inspired AUTHORship of the countless texts and discourses by which Christian peoples have attempted to order their lives and their societies, e.g., laws and legal judgments, public policies, and social mores, including those that order relations between the sexes.

This study and the larger project of which it is a part has sought to illumine the biblical understanding of AUTHORity that is foundational to the traditional gender order in patriARCHY. The critical examination of select texts undertaken here has yielded the results presented above and here summarized: a sustained gender discourse spanning the length of biblical tradition from the creation narratives to the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline texts CONCEIVEs of AUTHORity as a two-fold generative power and right: the power and right to procreate by means of the male reproductive organ, culturally construed as equivalent to *phallos*; and the power and right to speak and to name by means of Word/*logos*. In short, AUTHORity is the power and right to AUTHOR offspring by male “seed”/*sperma* and to AUTHOR cultural and discursive reality by male speech and word. Thus, AUTHORity has been CONCEIVED as the prerogative of men/husbands/fathers who, due to the primacy of the one male Adam, from whose “seed” all others have come, are “the image and likeness” of

the Creator God in a way that women/wives are not. Women/wives, as a secondary and derivative creation, are “helpmates” who, by living under the AUTHORITY of their male “heads,” assist them in fulfillment of the divine command to “be fruitful and multiply.” In short, AUTHORITY is the prerogative of patriARCHS, those who “father-rule.” Based on this creation cosmology and its monogenetic understanding of procreation, biblical gender discourse constructs “right relation” between the sexes as hierARCHY: male AUTHORITY and female subordination.

Due to the assumption of its divine AUTHORship, this biblical understanding of AUTHORITY as a male prerogative has had enormous consequences for gender relations to the present. Indeed, although the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline discourses examined in this study were AUTHORED some two thousand years ago, and the creation narratives upon which they draw were composed centuries earlier, their impact has proved long-standing and far-reaching. From its ancient origin to the present, this biblical gender discourse has been preserved and mediated to later generations by various forms of ecclesial discourse: papal teachings, preaching from the pulpit, and the work of theologians such as Augustine and Aquinas.<sup>32</sup> The centuries-long legacy of this biblical gender discourse is far too extensive to review here. Nonetheless, this volume’s focus on justice, i.e., “right relation,” warrants a few concluding remarks regarding the consequences of this discourse and their implications for the justice that is our shared concern. Two consequences in particular require comment.

*The Legal Doctrine of Coverture aka The Unity Principle*

First, the gender hierARCHY that was CONCEIVED in biblical traditions, then sustained and developed in the theological discourses and practices of the church, was encoded into law throughout the centuries. Of particular interest here is the common law doctrine of coverture, which was imported from England, later adopted by the American colonies, governing the lives of women in England and the United States until well into the nineteenth century. This doctrine held that a wife had no legal standing in her own right because her own being was completely incorporated into that of her husband. Upon marital union, the husband and wife become a single legal entity, namely, Him. In his legal commentaries, the English jurist, William Blackstone, describes coverture, also known as “the unity principle,” as follows:

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband; under whose wing, protection, and *cover*, she performs every thing; and is therefore called in our law-French a *feme-covert* . . . under the protection and influence of her husband, her *baron*, or lord; and her condition during marriage is called her *coverture*. For this reason, a man cannot grant anything to his wife, or enter into covenant with her; for the grant would be to suppose her separate existence; and to covenant with her, would only be to covenant with himself . . . But though our

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<sup>32</sup> Of particular significance for this project are Thomas Aquinas’ thought on “the production of woman” (*de production mulieris*) and on “the purpose or term of man’s production” (*de fine sive termino productionis hominis*), Questions 92 and 93 of his *Summa*, which cites the creation narratives as well as 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 1 Timothy 2:2:12.

law in general considers man and wife as one person, yet there are some instances in which she is separately considered; as inferior to him, and acting by his compulsion. And therefore all deeds executed, and acts done, by her, during her coverture, are void . . . She cannot by will devise lands to her husband, unless under special circumstances; for at the time of making it she is supposed to be under his coercion. . . . These are the chief legal effects of marriage during the coverture; upon which we may observe, that even the disabilities which the wife lies under are for the most part intended for her protection and benefit; so great a favorite is the female sex of the laws of England (Zaher: 460).

Under the law of coverture, a married woman's personal and real property, as well as her person, belonged to her husband. She had no rights, resources, or power of her own. Blackstone's reference to "the disabilities which the wife lies under" acknowledges as much, to which he adds, in a familiar rhetorical ploy of patriARCHAL discourse, a WORD of paternalistic reassurance: these disabilities "are for the most part intended for her protection and benefit." Such "protection and benefit," however, is belied by one of the most troubling consequences of legal coverture: the denial of marital rape, based on the reasoning that, because the husband and wife were one entity, there could be no rape since the husband could not rape himself (Jackson). Although the Industrial Revolution wrought economic and social changes that revised both marital relations and the law, coverture did not soon disappear. It remained firmly entrenched under new rationales.<sup>33</sup> Well into the twentieth century efforts to dismantle coverture met with resistance, due in large part to belief that it reflected the divinely-ordained natural order of marital relations, based on God's words to Eve, "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Genesis 3:16). When the concept of sexism and "sexual politics" emerged in public discourse in the 1960s and 1970s, federal laws prohibiting employment and wage discrimination enabled women to reject their restrictive traditional gender role and enter the workforce. In 1975 the Supreme Court contributed to the demise of coverture with its assertion that "no longer is the female destined solely for the home and the rearing of the family, and only the male for the marketplace and the world of ideas" (Feinberg: 317). The final remaining legal feature of coverture, the marital rape exemption, began to be eliminated by states in the late 1980s, thereby signaling society's rejection of the legal notion that a husband had control over his wife's body.

*Coverture in Contemporary Catholic Justice Discourse*

Although the legal coverture AUTHORIZED by biblical discourses has ended in the U.S., "coverture" endures in other, more covert, forms. Based on Blackstone's description of the legal doctrine, coverture is the condition in which wives have no independent existence. Incorporated into their husband's identities to live under their AUTHORITY, they have no

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<sup>33</sup> During the Industrial Revolution, when men left their homes and farms to work elsewhere, women were no longer viewed as the property of a baron/lord/husband. Instead they were individuals who operated in a "separate sphere" from that of men: men were responsible for public activities and relationships outside their families, while women were responsible for the private, domestic realm of the home and family. Because the private realm was considered inferior to the public, women continued to function legally under the cover and protection of their husbands (see Zaher: 461-62).

power, no voice, no agency of their own beyond their domestic duties. Under the cover of their male “heads,” married women are neither seen nor heard. Rather, it is their men/husbands who, as AUTHORities, are seen, heard, and, if and when they see fit, speak for and on behalf of their wives. In short, married women, as women, are invisible, inaudible, under cover.

That description, I suggest, describes well the condition of women in the Roman Catholic justice discourse to which I referred in the Introduction. This is not to deny the enormous value of Catholic social teaching, which has been and will continue to be a rich expression of the church’s prophetic identity and mission. In their attention to “the signs of the times” and their identification of the social, economic, and cultural *forces* that create misery and suffering in this world, church AUTHORities call the Catholic community to see, hear, and respond to a realities beyond the private and personal. Thus, their documents rightly turn Catholics’ attention to the issues that threaten the welfare of our human community, our fellow creatures, and the planet that is our shared home: the violence of war, the nuclear threat, economic disparities and injustice, labor exploitation, racism, climate change, and environmental degradation.

And yet, these documents, for all the profound insight and concern that they communicate, evidence a blindspot in their attention to and vision of the world: the realities of women’s lives around the globe. In short, the church’s justice discourse is characterized by what I term a “textual and discursive coverture” that renders women invisible and inaudible, silenced and covered over by male ecclesial discourse, their experience, including the injustices that they suffer, overlooked, unacknowledged, under cover. This textual and discursive coverture in Roman Catholic justice discourse takes two forms.

First, examination of two collections of the social documents of the church (O’Brien and Shannon: 1977, 1985) yields a disconcerting result: references to women and to their experiences are almost entirely absent from the documents. In the Subject Index of the most recent edition, which includes the documents AUTHOREd by Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis, the entry “women” lists a total of five references, an increase of four from the 1977 edition, which listed but one. None of the five references, however, evidences their attention to the injustices that women suffer as women: high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity around the world; lack of the educational opportunities afforded to boys and men; domestic violence and marital rape, which are the rule, not the exception, in many parts of the world; unjust remuneration for women’s labor; sex trafficking; the feminization of poverty; sexual assault; the gender wage gap; harassment in the workplace; lack of access to medical care; the unexplained disappearance of women and girls from their homes and villages; and feminization of the AIDS epidemic, which in Africa kills far more women than men. These realities in the lives of women and girls are not only well documented by scholars and journalists; they have become a matter of urgent concern to international and national organizations and individuals worldwide (see Kristoff and WuDunn: esp. 253-55). With respect to the AIDS epidemic ravaging Africa, for example, Alex de Waal writes, “The subordinate position of women and girls – politically, socially, and in sexual encounters – is ingrained in every aspect of the pandemic” (quoted in Goldberg: 224), with which former UN ambassador, Stephen Lewis, concurs, “Gender inequality is driving the pandemic,” hence, his conviction that “The struggle for gender equality is the single most important struggle on the

face of the planet” (quoted in Kristoff and WuDunn: 138; Goldberg: 224). Moreover, there is widespread recognition that human reproduction, both responsible and irresponsible, is at the nexus of the multiple crises – social, economic, cultural, and environmental – that now threaten human and planetary welfare. And yet, the injustices that women and girls suffer around the world are nowhere to be seen or heard, even in the most recent documents. Given all that we now know, this silence speaks volumes: the suffering that is particular to women and girls, much of it related to the abuses to which patriARCHY is prone, appears to be not yet a matter of concern to church AUTHORities, or at least not one they are ready and willing to address.

That silence in the documents is broken, however, by the five references to which the Subject Index directs us. *Gaudium et Spes*, for example, acknowledges that, “Women are now employed in almost every area of life,” then adds, “It is appropriate that they should be able to assume their full proper role in accordance with their own nature. Everyone should acknowledge and favor the proper and necessary participation of women in cultural life” (O’Brien and Shannon 2016: 217). Similarly, in *Octogesima Adveniens* Pope Paul VI observes that “in many countries a charter for women which would establish relationships of equality in rights and of respect for their dignity” is being studied and even at times demanded. His recognition is followed, however, by a warning against pursuit of “that false equality which would deny the distinctions laid down by the Creator himself and which would be in contradiction with woman’s proper role,” after which he urges that legislation protect “her proper vocation” (359). Likewise, John Paul II, in his *Laborem Exercens*, observes “that in many societies women work in nearly every sector of life,” then adds, “But it is fitting that they should be able to fulfill their tasks in accordance with their own nature, without being discriminated against and without being excluded from jobs for which they are capable, but also without lack of respect for their family aspirations and for their specific role in contributing, together with men, to the good of society. The true advancement of women requires that labor should be structured in such a way that women do not have to pay for their advancement by abandoning what is specific to them and at the expense of the family, in which women as mothers have an irreplaceable role” (O’Brien and Shannon 2016: 409).<sup>34</sup>

Why the five exceptions to the rule of silence in the discourse? Examination of the women references reveals a consistent pattern: women make an appearance in these texts when, and only when, their traditional reproductive identities are thought threatened by the social and economic realities addressed in the documents.<sup>35</sup> In other words, the discourse speaks of women, thereby affording a glimpse of them, only *as women in their traditional reproductive helpmate*

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<sup>34</sup> In their *Justice in the World* (1971), the U.S. Synod of Bishops refer to women in the following: “We also urge that women should have their own share of responsibility and participation in the community life of society and likewise the Church” (O’Brien and Shannon 2016: 312). The acknowledgement of women’s responsibility and participation in society and church is a welcome sign of progress in this text; unfortunately, it includes no clarification of what that might entail. Moreover, the words “have their own share” seem to suggest a kind of “separate sphere” of activity from that of men, which would reflect and reinscribe the patriARCHal gender hierARCHY.

<sup>35</sup> In a welcome exception to this pattern, the dedication of the latest edition reads, “We dedicate this edition with deep gratitude to all the Women Religious of the United States, who have done so much to make social justice a living reality” (O’Brien and Shannon 2016).

*function*. Otherwise, they are “under cover.” Moreover, phrases such as “proper role in accordance with their own nature,” “false equality,” “their own nature,” “woman’s proper role,” “the distinctions laid down by the Creator himself” reflect the hierARCHic construction of the differences between male and female bodies characteristic of biblical patriARCHY, with women’s reproductive role here constituting “their own nature.” While no one would contest, of course, that only women’s bodies can hold and birth a developing life, thus, that the maternal role deserves the respect accorded it here, the assumption that that capacity constitutes and *defines* “their own nature” is increasingly contested by many. Decades ago wise Pope John XXIII discerned as much when he forthrightly observed, “Since women are becoming ever more conscious of their human dignity, they will not tolerate being treated as mere material instruments, but demand rights befitting a human person both in domestic and in public life” (O’Brien and Shannon 2016: 144). If Pope John’s observation was prescient in the early 1960s, as I believe it was, how much more so for today’s women, whose consciousness of gender politics has been raised by women’s movements across the globe. In effect, the five exceptions to women’s coverture in the documents simply reinforce the reduction of women to their reproductive capacities. Furthermore, in the absence of attention to women’s aspirations, struggles, and the injustices that they suffer throughout the world, including as mothers, the respect for women’s reproductive capacity expressed in these few references feels not only hollow, empty of substantive care for women; it fails to speak with AUTHORITY to many, believers and unbelievers alike.

Second, androcentric linguistic practices also create the textual and discursive coverture of women in Catholic social documents. Most obvious is the consistent use of male generic language such as “mankind” rather than “humankind” and use of “brotherhood” and “man” followed by the masculine pronoun “he” when referring to the human person(s).<sup>36</sup> The effect of this linguistic practice is three-fold: in reading these documents we women must decide whether and in which occurrences of the words “man” or “he” we are included; we must think of ourselves as contained within the “he” and the “brotherhood” despite the fact that we do not self-identify as either; and most importantly in my view, we women are rendered textually and discursively invisible, our agency and subjectivity submerged, suppressed, disregarded.

Given these patterns, an observation by Pope John Paul II seems apt, but in a way of which he was likely unaware: “Today, the church’s social doctrine focuses especially on man as he is involved in a complex network of relationships within modern societies” (O’Brien and Shannon 2016: 516). Indeed, Roman Catholic social teaching constitutes a male-AUTHORED and male-focused discourse that, in its silence and inattention to women in their full humanity and personhood, subjects them to a textual and discursive coverture, and in doing so, diminishes the AUTHORITY with which it speaks to many. That it is a male discourse does not, of course, make it bad or evil per se. It does, however, make it partial in both senses of the word: “only part of” the reality of what is happening in this world; and “partial to” the experiences, voices, interests, and perspectives of men, who are the privileged in the system of “father-rule” known as patriARCHY. Thus, Catholic justice discourse lacks, not credibility but integrity, in that it fails to integrate into its vision matters of gender justice, including those

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<sup>36</sup> In a notable departure from the discourses of his papal predecessors, Pope Francis addresses his intended audience more inclusively in his *Laudato Si’* (at least in its English translation).

that attend the gendering of AUTHORity as an exclusively male prerogative. To the present that prerogative privileges males as “heads” over social bodies such as families, churches, and nation-states and as “heads” over the physical bodies of women, to which increasing numbers of contemporary women refuse to consent. Moreover, that male prerogative not only denies AUTHORity *to women*; in so doing, it has, in effect, denied *to social bodies* the generative capacity of more than half the human race to AUTHOR our shared life.

This project has sought to illumine the genesis of this gendered understanding of AUTHORity as the preliminary deconstructive task that necessarily precedes the constructive task that is needed, namely, to reCONCEIVE together an understanding of AUTHORity based on a theological anthropology that is informed not simply by a literalist reading of the creation narrative and the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline literature, but by a reading of the AUTHORity of scripture in light of the additional sources of theology, namely reason and human experience. Without denying the AUTHORity of sacred scripture, a reconceptualization of AUTHORity and gender relations would read the relevant scripture texts, such as the creation narratives, in light of the AUTHORity of reason, and more specifically, in light of the knowledge afforded by the biological sciences: both the male and female actively AUTHOR life by means of the sexual capacities of their bodies to produce the necessary material – sperm and ovum – that each contributes in the genital expression of sexuality. The beginning (*archè*) of a human life is not one (semen/seed/*pater*) but two (semen and ovum, *pater* and *mater*). Moreover, the AUTHORity of experience sheds additional light: women are as capable of AUTHORing by rational WORD/speech (*logos*) as men are. These deconstructive and constructive tasks would, I believe, increase the integrity, and so, too, the AUTHORity, of Catholic JUSTICE discourse in the eyes of many, and in so doing, advance the reign of the God who wills well-being (*shalom*) based on justice or right relation between the sexes.

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