"MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM":
GEN 1:27b IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRIESTLY
ACCOUNT OF CREATION[1]

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In the history of biblical interpretation and dogmatic speculation, Gen 1:26–28 has proved remarkably fecund as a source of exegetical and theological reflection. Literature on the passage is now boundless, but shows no sign of ceasing or abating, despite the appearance in recent decades of several exhaustive treatments of the text and the existence of substantial consensus among biblical scholars.[2] The reason

[1] I would like to thank Frank M. Cross for his comments on the MS and William L. Moran for advice on the Akkadian transliterations and translations.

[2] It is impossible to list even the major works on the passage. For the history of modern exegesis, however, two studies require special note: Paul Humbert, "L'*imago Dei*' dans l'Ancien Testament" (*Etudes sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse* [Mémoires de l'université de Neuchâtel 14; Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'université; 1940] 153–75), and Ludwig Koehler, "Die Grundstelle der Imago-Dei-Lehre, Gen 1:26" (*ThZ* 4 [1948] 16–22). Recent detailed exegetical treatments of the Priestly creation account as a whole, with compilations of the most important literature, are offered by Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (BKAT 1/3; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1968) 203–22, esp. 203–4; and Werner H. Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift* (WMANT 17; 3d ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1973). Subsequent specialized literature includes the following: Bernhard W. Anderson, "Human Dominion over Nature," *Biblical Studies in Contemporary Thought* (ed. M. Ward; Somerville, MA: Greeno, Hadden, 1975) 27–45; James Barr, "The Image of God in the Book of Genesis—A Study in Terminology," *BJRL* 51 (1968) 11–26; "The Image of God in Genesis—Some Linguistic and Historical Considerations," *Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap van Suid-Afrika: Proceedings of the 10th Meeting, 1967* (1971) 5–13; "Man and Nature—The Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament," *BJRL* 55 (1972/73) 9–32; Gerhard Hasel, "The Meaning of 'Let us' in Gen 1:26," *AUSS* 13 (1975) 58–66; "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," *EvQ* 46 (1974) 81–102; Norbert Lohfink, "'Seid fruchtbar und füllt die Erde an!' Zwingt die priesterschriftliche Schöpfungsdarstellung in Gen 1 die Christen zum Wachstumsmythos?" *BK* 3 (1975) 77–82; Oswald Loretz, *Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen. Mit einem Beitrag von Erik Hornung: Der Mensch als 'Bild Gottes' in Ägypten* (Munich: Kösel, 1967); Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, "Abbild oder Urbild? 'Imago Dei' in traditionsgeschichtliche Sicht," *ZAW* 86 (1974) 403–24; J. Maxwell Miller, "In the 'Image' and 'Likeness' of God," *JBL* 91 (1972) 289–304; John F. A. Sawyer, "The Meaning of *běṣelem 'ĕlōhîm* ('In the Image of God') in Genesis I–XI," *JTS* 25 (1974) 418–26; Norman Snaith, "The Image of God," *ExpTim* 86/1 (1974) 24; Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) 1–30.

for the perpetual fascination of the passage lies in the nature and limits of the text. The verses contain a fundamental, and unique, statement of biblical anthropology and theology—presented in a terse and enigmatic formulation. A rare attempt within the OT literature to speak directly and definitively about the nature of humanity in relation to God and other creation, the statement is at once limited in its content, guarded in its expression, and complex in its structure. As a consequence, philologist and theologian are enticed and compelled in ever new contexts of questions and understandings to explore anew the meaning and implications of creation "in the divine image"—for it is this striking and unique expression, above all, that has dominated the discussion.

A legacy of the long and intense theological interest in the *imago dei* has been an atomizing and reductionist approach to the passage, in which attention is focused on a single phrase or clause, severing it from its immediate context and from its context within the larger composition, a fixation and fragmentation which has affected exegetical as well as dogmatic discussion. A further legacy of this history of speculation has been the establishment of a tradition of theological inquiry and argument with a corresponding body of knowledge and norms separate from, and largely independent of, exegetical scholarship on the same passage.[3] The rise of a biblical science distinct from dogmatic theology resulted in a dual history of scholarship on the passage with little significant dialogue between the respective specialists.[4] To the biblical

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A fuller listing of titles would reveal even more clearly how discussion of Gen 1:26–28 has concentrated on the *imago dei* and the first person plurals of the divine address in v 26. More limited interest has been shown in the imperatives of v 28, esp. in recent literature concerned with the ethical issues of population, reproduction and ecology. Relatively little attention has been given to the specification of male and female in v 27b, with the exception of recent feminist literature or literature generated in response to feminist critique of the OT's androcentric anthropology. Most of the latter is of a relatively popular nature and while of considerable importance for the question of hermeneutics, has contributed little in the way of new exegetical insight.

[3] Cf. Karl Barth's criticism of the neglect of the text by theologians who regularly cited it, a practice which he traces back into the early church (*Church Dogmatics* [hereafter *CD*] 3/1 [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958] 192–93). On the legacy of a problematic anthropology derived from Gen 1:27 in the earliest period and determinative for later discussion, see also Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "Homo imago Dei im Alten und Neuen Testament," *Der Mensch als Bild Gottes* (ed. Leo Scheffczyk; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969) 17–20.

[4] The origins of an OT exegetical tradition distinct from the dominant philosophical and theological tradition and generally critical of it are usually traced to Theodor Nöldeke ("צלמות und צלם," *ZAW* 17 [1897] 183–87) and Hermann Gunkel (*Genesis* [HKAT 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901]). Their interpretation of the "image" as a physical resemblance, confirmed by the word studies of Humbert (*Etudes*) and Koehler ("Grundstelle"), became the basis of subsequent OT discussion. Cf. Johann Jakob Stamm's review of the history of OT scholarship in "Die Imago-Lehre von Karl Barth und die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft," *Antwort* (Festschrift K. Barth; Zollikon-Zurich:

exegete, the interpretation of the theologian appears frequently strained, sometimes false, and often simply unrecognizable as commentary upon the text.[5] While biblical scholars may feel compelled to challenge or accommodate dogmatic claims or assess current theological interpretations of the text, theologians appear for the most part content simply to "touch base" with the biblical passage, dismissing or ignoring the technical exegetical literature. There may be good reason to ignore or decry restrictive interpretations and proprietary claims of biblical specialists, but absence of dialogue can hardly be viewed as a healthy state for theology. How, in the present organization and functioning of the disciplines, such needed dialogue can take place, is not clear, however, though ventures from both camps would seem to be essential.

An underlying concern of this essay, focused by examination of the literature on Gen 1:26–28, is the question of the relationship between text-critical or historical-exegetical interpretation and constructive interpretation in theology. I am convinced that collapse of the distinction between historical and constructive tasks is fatal, not only to the integrity of the scriptural witness, but also to the credibility of theology. The two tasks describe or relate to distinct modes or moments in the work of theology, however they may be united in the interpretive art of individual scholars. But isolation of the tasks and lack of a critical methodology for relating them appear to me equally disastrous for theology.

The problem may be illustrated by reference to Karl Barth's widely influential treatment of the *imago* passage.[6] His critique of a history of speculation divorced from exegesis—or of speculation construed as exegesis—is apposite and appealing:

> We might easily discuss which of these and the many other similar explanations is the finest or deepest or most serious. What we cannot discuss is which of them is the true explanation of Gen 1:26f. For it is obvious that their authors merely found the concept [of the *imago dei*] in the text and then proceeded to pure invention in accordance with the requirements of contemporary anthropology, so that it is only by the standard of *our own anthropology*, and not according to *its* anthropology and on exegetical grounds, that we can decide for or against them.[7]

Evangelischer, 1956) 84–96. OT treatments of the passage often take up the older theological and philosophical views as a part of the history of scholarship and/or to show their inadequacy (see, e.g., Westermann, *Genesis* 1/3, 205–6, and Loretz, *Gottebenbildlichkeit*, 9–41). Theologians, as heirs to the dominant tradition of speculation, more commonly confine their discussion within it, showing little recognition that an independent exegetical tradition has emerged alongside it. See, e.g., the articles collected under the heading, "Die systematische Durchdringung," in the volume edited by Scheffczyk (*Der Mensch als Bild Gottes*, 331–525).

[5] See, e.g., Mettinger, "Abbild oder Urbild?" 410. Cf. Stamm, "Die Imago-Lehre von Karl Barth," 94.

[6] *CD* 3/1. 183–206.

[7] *CD* 3/1. 193.

Appealing too is Barth's conversance with contemporary OT scholarship and his attempt to incorporate that understanding in his work. Yet his own interpretation of the passage is as problematic as any that he criticizes—and for the same reason. Despite close reference to the biblical text as his primary source, he has failed to discern *its* anthropology—and theology—and has advanced only a novel and arresting variation of the classical trinitarian interpretation, an interpretation characterized by the distinctly modern concept of an "I-Thou" relationship, which is foreign to the ancient writer's thought and intention at all three points of its application (God in the relationship within the Godhead, humanity in the relationship between the sexes, and God and humanity in relationship to each other).[8] At its most fundamental level Barth's exegesis fails to understand the grammar of the sentences he so ingeniously manipulates.

The most serious problem with Barth's impressive theological creation, however, is not its provocative thesis, which must ultimately be judged on internal grounds of adequacy and truth, nor his understanding of the key texts, which can and must be challenged by biblical scholars. It is the fact that his work is so widely accepted as definitive exegesis, obviating or impeding independent access to the text. Approval of the theological construction is taken as validation of the exegesis.[9] Barth's synthesis of exegetical and constructive tasks is attractive in demonstrating the rich possibilities of a theology in close conversation with the biblical text, but it is a dangerous synthesis insofar as it becomes a substitute, rather than a model, for continuing dialogue between theologian and biblical scholar.

I have cited Barth's treatment of Gen 1:26–28 because of the justice of his critique, because of his laudable effort to ground theology in exegesis informed by current biblical scholarship, because of the prominence

[8]Dietrich Bonhoeffer appears to have been the first to interpret the *imago dei* in terms of an *analogia relationis* in which the male-female duality is the defining human relationship (*Schöpfung und Fall* [Munich: Kaiser, 1933] 29–30). It is Barth's development of the idea, however, as a keystone of his anthropology (*CD* 3/1. 194–95), that has made it—and its faulty exegesis—such a widely influential notion.

[9]See, e.g., the argument of Clifford Green ("Liberation Theology? Karl Barth on Women and Men," *USQR* 29 [1974] 221–31), who quotes with general approbation a critique of Barth's exegesis in 3/1 (esp. 183ff., 289ff.) by Paul Lehmann ("Karl Barth and the Future of Theology," *RelS* 6 [1970] 113): "[This] elaborate interpretation . . . offers an impressive correlation of ingeniousness and arbitrariness, which allows Barth to ascribe insights and affirmations to ancient writers which, as historical human beings they could not possibly have entertained." Green qualifies this assessment, however, with the following statement: "This criticism does not, in my view, apply to Barth's reading of the *imago Dei*, which is liberating for women and men alike" (225). Green's argument appears typical of much recent literature, which concerns itself with the consequences or implications of the idea (e.g., is it liberating or not?), but does not question or examine its exegetical base.

and popularity of his interpretation (at least in secondary theological
literature), and because of the unacceptability of his exposition to most
OT exegetes.[10] Barth's attractive, but mistaken, interpretation of the
meaning of sexual distinction in Gen 1:27 has served as a catalyst for
this reexamination of the neglected clause in the Priestly account of the
creation of *adam* and has served to focus the question of the
relationship between historical and constructive theology, both of which
may claim the title "exegetical." But the question of meaning which
impels the study has arisen elsewhere. It is feminist theology, or the
feminist critique of traditional theology and exegesis, that has made
necessary a new look at the passage and forged the encounter with
Barth.[11]

For critics of a biblical and theological anthropology which ascribed
to women an inferior or derived nature, Gen 1:27 has emerged as a text
upon which a corrective anthropology of equality might be built. Barth's
interpretation of the passage has had particular appeal because of his
attempt to ground a relationship of mutuality between the sexes in a
corresponding relationship within the Godhead itself. Feminist theology
turned to Barth, whether to embrace or attack his views, because his
exegetical approach to theology required him to take account of the
prominent attention given to sexual distinction in both of the biblical
accounts of human creation.[12] But the search that led to Barth must

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[10]See, e.g., the critique of Stamm ("Die Imago-Lehre von Karl Barth," esp. 94). Cf.,
however, Friedrich Horst ("Face to Face: The Biblical Doctrine of the Image of God," *Int*
4 [1950] 259–70), who follows closely Barth's argument concerning the *analogia relationis*
(266–67).

[11]By "feminist" theology or critique I refer to that work which is characterized by an
awareness that traditional theology and biblical interpretation have been dominated, in one
way or another, by "patriarchal" or androcentric perspectives, values and judgments.
Awareness of this persistent bias has led to various attempts to expose, explain, and
reinterpret texts that have traditionally carried the patriarchal message and to identify,
where possible, sources which qualify or contradict it. These efforts differ considerably in
methodology, attitude toward the tradition and its authority, and knowledge of the
relevant disciplines and scholarly tools. Much is the work of amateurs, for the origins of
the critique and new constructions were almost entirely "outside the camp"—precisely
because those within the scholarly guilds lacked the necessary experiential base, or, for
other reasons of restricted environment, failed to recognize the problem.

[12]The ambivalence of feminist response to Barth may be attributed to a number of
factors, including selective reading of an extensive and complex treatment of the relation-
ship of the sexes and dependence on an inadequate English translation. Most criticism has
focused on his discussion of order in the male-female relationship, developed in relation to
NT texts and Genesis 2 (*CD* 3/4). The notion of "ontological subordination" ascribed to
Barth on the basis of this reading has become a commonplace, though Green ("Liberation
Theology," 222–23 and 229) argues that the expression cannot be attributed to Barth and
that it misconstrues his intention—and language. Cf. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father*
(Boston: Beacon, 1973) 3, 22; Linda L. Barufaldi and Emily E. Culpepper, "Androgyny
and the Myth of Masculine/Feminine," *Christianity and Crisis* 33/6 (16 April 1973) 69; and

return to the text. The rationale for our reexamination of the passage is this: a new socio-theological context, characterized by new questions, perceptions and judgments, requires a new statement of the meaning of the passage in its primary OT context—even if this be largely a restatement of older findings and arguments. The result, I believe, is more than a restatement, though few of the elements are entirely novel.

The argument of this essay may be summarized as follows. Gen 1:27 must be understood within the context of vv 26–28, and this complex within the larger structure of the Priestly creation account. V 27 may not be isolated, nor may it be interpreted in relation to v 26 alone; vv 27–28 form an expanded parallel to v 26, in which 27b is a plus, dependent upon and preparatory to the following statement in v 28 and dictated by the juxtaposition in vv 27–28 of the themes of divine likeness and sexual reproduction. The specification of human sexual distinction and its position in the text are determined by the sequence of themes within the account and by the overall structure of announcement and execution report within the chapter. Our understanding of the place and function of this specification in the account dissociates the word of sexual distinction, specifically sexuality, from the idea of the divine image, and from the theme of dominion, and associates it with a larger theme of sustainability or fertility running throughout the narrative of creation. A general contribution of this investigation is a clearer articulation of the relationships among the several statements about *adam* (image, dominion, sexuality, blessing) and a clearer statement of the meaning and function of each within the Priestly account of creation. The analysis concludes with an attempt to spell out the consequences and implications of this understanding for the theology of P, for a comprehensive OT anthropology, and for contemporary theological anthropology.

Sheila Collins, "Toward a Feminist Theology," *The Christian Century* 89 (2 August 1972) 797–98.

A serious problem involves the key term *ungleich*. Barth characterizes the duality of I-and-Thou in Gen 1:26–27 as a "correspondence of *unlike*" (*CD* 3/1. 196; = "Entsprechung des Ungleichen" [*KD*, 220]), but appears to spell this out in his discussion of Gen 2:18–25 as a relationship of inequality ("*unequal* duality" [*CD* 3/1. 288]) (Joan Arnold Romero, "The Protestant Principle: A Woman's-Eye View of Barth and Tillich," *Religion and Sexism* [ed. Rosemary R. Reuther; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974] 324). However, the German adjective is identical in both passages ("ungleiche[n] Zweiheit" [*KD* 3/1. 329]) and means to negate the idea of "sameness," not "equality," in the pair (Green, "Liberation Theology?" 229, n. 14).

For feminists who have been able to read Barth's exposition of the *analogia relationis* in Gen 1:27 apart from—or over against—his treatment of the male-female relationship in other contexts, the possibilities it suggests for a new appreciation and evaluation of human sexual distinction have been attractive. See, e.g., Paul Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) esp. 33–48, and Emma Justes, "Theological Reflections on the Role of Women in Church and Society" (*Journal of Pastoral Care* 32 [1978]) 42–54.

The Priestly Account of Creation: Overall Structure and Themes

The Priestly account of creation is an exceedingly compressed account, marked by a repetitive structure of announcement and execution report (*Wortbericht* and *Tatbericht*). But is it also comprehensive in its intention and design, attempting to identify, locate and describe in their essential features all of the primary elements and orders of creation. The author has chosen his terms with care, from names to to descriptive statements.[13] As von Rad has rightly emphasized, only what is essential is here; nothing is accidental or included merely because it stood in the received tradition.[14] Though bound in significant measure to the items, order and conception of process found in older creation accounts of the ancient Near East and circulating in Israelite tradition, the Priestly author has selected from the tradition and shaped it to carry his own message. And though the history of the Priestly composition is itself complex, the final design and wording is governed by a unified conception and purpose and the account set as the lead statement in a

[13]I assume for Gen 1:1–2:3 a unified work by a priestly editor/author active in and during the Babylonian exile, who edited an already existing Israelite creation account (perhaps extant in multiple variants, or supplemented by material from other traditions) to form the opening chapter of a great history of beginnings reaching from creation to the death of Moses and climaxing in the revelation/legislation at Sinai. Whether the author/editor was a single or corporate "individual" is irrelevant to the argument of this essay. The two essential assumptions of my analysis are (1) that the present (final) edition of the material displays a unified overall conception characterized by recognizable stylistic and theological features and forms part of a larger whole displaying similar literary and theological characteristics, and (2) that the present form of the composition in Genesis 1 is the result of a complex history of growth, stages of which are apparent in the received text, but can no longer be isolated or fully reconstructed.

I agree with Werner Schmidt (*Schöpfungsgeschichte*) that the framing structure of *wayyō'mer 'ĕlōhîm* + *wayĕhî-kēn* and the *Wortberichte* as a whole belong to the final editor and give evidence of selection, shaping and expansion of older material. I am less certain about the recovery of the underlying tradition or of the relationship of *Wortbericht*/ Announcement to *Tatbericht*/Execution Report. I retain the terms to refer not to independent literary compositions, or traditions, but to literary features of the final composition. Anderson's insistence on the stylistic unity of the Priestly creation account and his attention to the controlling patterns of the final form of the text ("A Stylistic Study of the Priestly Creation Story," *Canon and Authority in Old Testament Religion and Theology* [eds. George W. Coats and Burke O. Long; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977] 91–109, esp. 151) represents a welcome shift from earlier dissecting approaches; however, I do not think that his analysis invalidates much of Schmidt's observations and explanations of disparity between *Wort-* and *Tatberichten*. I find it necessary, in any case, to posit a prehistory of Israelite usage; Genesis 1 is in my view neither a "free" composition nor a direct response to any known Mesopotamian or Canaanite myth, despite clear evidence of polemical shaping (cf. Hasel, "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," and Victor Maag, "Alttestamentliche Anthropogonie in ihrem Verhältnis zur altorientalischen Mythologie," *Asiatische Studien* 9 [1955] 15–44).

[14]Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis. A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 45.

larger historico-theological work. Thus every assertion and every formulation in this highly compact and selective account warrants careful attention and questioning with regard to its origin and meaning. How does it function within the Priestly composition? Why was it included? Is it unique to P, a new idea, or a new formulation? Was it present in essentially the same form in older tradition or does it represent an alteration of the tradition, a substitution, or a reformulation?

Because descriptive statements are so limited in P's account, the two which amplify the report of *adam*'s creation are immediately striking:

(27aβ)   *běṣelem 'ělōhîm bārā' 'ōtō*
(27b)   *zākạr ûněqēbâ bārā' 'ōtām*
(27aβ)   in the image of God he created him;
(27b)   male and female he created them.

The parallel construction invites the question of how the two clauses are related. But other questions impose as well. Why does 27aβ repeat the content of 27aα? What is the relationship of v 27 to vv 26 and 28? And why of all that might be said about *adam* does the author choose to emphasize their bisexual nature, using language employed elsewhere by P to characterize the animal orders but omitted from their description in Genesis 1? The answer to all of these questions lies in an analysis of the structure of vv 26–28 as a whole and of the place and function of these verses within the overall structure of Gen 1:1–2:3 and the larger Priestly work.[15]

The primary concerns of the Priestly creation account are two: (1) to emphasize the dependence of all of creation on God—made explicit in the framing structure that marks each stage of creation: "God said ... and it was so,"[16] and (2) to describe the order established within creation—as an order determined by God, from the beginning.[17] Secondary or subordinate concerns are evident in emphasis on the permanence, or maintenance, of the created cosmos and its orders, and in

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[15]Vv 29–30 are an essential part of P's statement about the nature and role of *adam* within the created order and form a significant link with the later P complex, Gen 9:1–3, bringing to the received tradition a peculiar interest of the final Priestly writer (Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 152–53; cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, 227–28; Sean E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* [Rome: Biblical Institute, 1971] 66–71; and Miller, "In the 'Image' and 'Likeness' of God," 299–304). We omit consideration of these verses here because they constitute a distinct unit and lack any connection, direct or indirect, to 27b, which is the focus of this investigation.

[16]The full series is found only in the LXX. Cf. Anderson, "A Stylistic Study," 152.

[17] The theme of order and the specification of orders cannot be reduced to cultic interest, though elements of that are present. Nor can it be subsumed under the needs of *adam*, though the account is certainly anthropocentric. It is rather a broad and fundamental theological concern, which may properly be characterized as "scientific" in its interest and observations.

anticipation of the history which will be played out within it, a history centering upon *adam* and initiated in the final, climactic word of creation and blessing.

26) *wayyō'mer 'ĕlōhîm*
   na'ăśeh 'ādām bĕṣalmēnû kidmûtēnû
   wĕyirdû bidgat hayyām ûbĕ'ôp haššāmayim
      ûbabbĕhēmâ ûbĕkol-hā'āreṣ
      ûbĕkol-hāremeś hārōmēś 'al-hā'āreṣ
27) *wayyibrā' 'ĕlōhîm 'et-hā'ādām bĕṣalmô*
   bĕṣelem 'ĕlōhîm bārā' 'ōtô
   zākār ûnĕqēbâ bārā' 'ōtām
28) *wayĕbārek 'ōtām 'ĕlōhîm*
   wayyō'mer lāhem 'ĕlōhîm
      pĕrû ûrĕbû ûmil'û 'et-hā'āreṣ wĕkibšūhā
      ûrĕdû bidgat hayyām ûbĕ'ôp haššāmayim
      ûbĕkol-ḥayyâ hārōmeśet 'al-hā'āreṣ[18]

26) And God said:
   "Let us make *adam* in our image, according to our likeness,
   and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and
      the birds of the air,
      and the cattle and all the earth
      and everything that creeps upon the earth."
27) And God created *adam* in his image,
   in the image of God he created him;
   male and female he created them.
28) And God blessed them,
   and God said to them:
   "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it,
   and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the
      birds of the air
      and every living creature that creeps upon the earth."

Image and Dominion

The order described in Genesis 1 is progressive, structured as a twofold movement oriented toward the earth and culminating in *adam*.[19] The crowning species in this account is defined, uniquely, ih terms of a dual relationship or identity, a relationship to God and to coinhabitants of earth. Humanity, according to this statement, is created

[18]Textual variants are few and of minor significance for our analysis. LXX has a conjunction (*kai*) between *bĕṣalmēnû* and *kidmûtēnû* in v 26 and reads only the second *bĕṣelem* in 27a (see discussion below), while individual MSS and versions assimilate the singular and plural object pronouns or eliminate *bārā' 'ōtô* in 27aα. LXX also renders more uniform parallel lists and formulas repeated with variation in MT (28b // 26b; 28aα // 22a). See commentaries.

[19]Anderson, "A Stylistic Study," 154–59.

"like God"[20] and with dominion over other creatures. The two state-ments of v 26 must be understood in conjunction; in P's construction they belong to a single thought complex. Nature or design in creation is related to function and status, or position: the firmament is to divide the waters, the luminaries are to give light (and in their specific identity as planets, to mark time and seasons, etc.), and humankind is to rule over the realm of creatures.[21] The presupposition and prerequisite for this rule is the divine stamp which sets this creature apart from all the rest, identifying *adam* as God's own special representative, not simply by designation (command), but by design (nature or constitution) — i.e., as a representation of God.[22] The notion of the divine image serves here to validate and explain the special status and role of *adam* among the creatures.

[20]The basic meanings of the terms *ṣelem* and *dĕmût* are "representation" and "likeness" (see further below). The prepositions, which are used synonymously, create parallel and synonymous adverbial clauses which describe the manner and end of construction (*adam* is "modeled" on '*ĕlōhîm* and is consequently a model of '*ĕlōhîm*). The intention is to describe a resemblance of *adam* to God which distinguishes *adam* from all other creatures — and has consequence for *adam*'s relationship to them.

[21]For the understanding of *wĕyirdû* . . . as a purpose or result clause, see, *inter alios*, Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 127 ("damit sie herrschen"); NEB ("to rule"); Snaith, "The Image of God," 24; and Westermann, *Genesis*, 216. The function of *wĕyirdû* as specification of purpose or consequence has been understood in a number of different ways, often as a direct explication of the image, or of creation in the divine image (cf. von Rad, *Genesis*, 57; Snaith, "The Image of God," 24). Westermann observes that specifica-tion of purpose or goal is a characteristic feature of accounts of human creation (*Genesis*, 218).

[22]Westermann has correctly emphasized the adverbial character of *bĕṣalmēnû kidmûtēnû* (*Genesis*, 214), basing his analysis on the consensus of recent scholarship which rejects the *b*-essentiae interpretation and recognizes the essentially synonymous meaning of the two phrases, whose interchangeable propositions must have the meaning "according to," "nach" (so LXX [*kata* for both] and Vg ["ad" for both]) (*Genesis*, 201; cf. Sawyer, "The Meaning of *bĕṣelem* '*ĕlōhîm*," 421; Mettinger, "Abbild oder Urbild?" 406–7; Miller, "In the 'Image' and 'Likeness' of God," 295). This grammatical analysis leads Westermann to argue that the text "macht nicht eine Aussage über den Menschen, sondern über ein Tun Gottes" (*Genesis*, 214). But the alternatives are too exclusively drawn. What describes the act or mode of construction cannot be excluded from an understanding of the product; i.e., construction (as process and design) determines or affects construction (as product or result). Surely the Priestly writer intended to characterize *adam* by this formulation, to specify more closely the essential nature of humanity, while avoiding direct description. P intends a comparison between God and *adam*, but he intends it to be indirect. The prepositions guard against identity, even the identity of an image or icon. Strictly speaking. *adam* is not the image of God (so rightly Westermann) nor one possessing the divine image, but only one who is like God in the manner of an image or representation.

Since *bĕṣelem* '*ĕlōhîm* describes, indirectly, the nature of *adam*, it characterizes all humankind in all time and not simply the original act, or specimen, of creation. The stamp of divine likeness must therefore be understood to be transmitted not through repeated acts of God but through the process by which the species is perpetuated in its original identity, viz., through procreation (Gen 5:3).

The adverbial modifier *bĕṣelem-*, further qualified by *kidmût-* in v 26,[23] describes a correspondence of being, a resemblance—not a relationship nor an identity, even partial identity. And it is a resemblance described in terms of form, not of character or substance.[24] *Ṣelem*

[23]So correctly Koehler ("Grundstelle," 20–21), building on Humbert (*Etudes*, 163); the qualifying character of *kidmût* is suggested by its position as the second term (Sawyer, "The Meaning of *bĕṣelem 'ĕlōhîm*," 421) as well as by its common lexical meaning and use. As an abstract term, whose very meaning suggests approximation, it weakens or blurs the outline of the preceding concrete term. *Dĕmût* is used by P's contemporary, Ezekiel, in the same sense of qualified resemblance that it has in Genesis 1; and it is employed elsewhere by P, alone (in 5:1), where the specific content or connotation of *ṣelem* is not required or desired. *Ṣelem*, in contrast, is the specialized and unique term, "defined" by its use in Genesis 1.

Miller's argument for the priority of *dĕmût* ("In the 'Image' and 'Likeness' of God," 299–304) is not convincing. *Dĕmût* belongs to the final P edition of Genesis 1 and occurs alone in 5:1, which is a purely P construction, creating a bridge between the creation story (traditional material shaped by P) and the genealogical framework of the primeval history. There, in 5:1–2, the essential content of 1:26–28 is recapitulated in P's own terms—with the addition of the naming motif that prepares for the transition from collective *adam* in Gen 1 and 5:1–2 to the representative individual, Adam, who heads the genealogy of 5:3ff.

[24]See Humbert (*Etudes*), Koehler ("Grundstelle"), and n. 34, below. *Ṣelem* in P's use is neither the crudely or naively literal image assumed by those who fail to recognize the determining metaphor, nor the description of a conversation partner or counterpart. Recognition that the term is basically concrete in its meaning has not stopped commentators from asking wherein the resemblance lies and from drawing 'on other OT texts, as well as modern psychology, for their answers. Thus, e.g., Koehler sought the resemblance in *adam*'s "upright stature" ("Grundstelle," 20), while others endorse a more general physical resemblance, noting, however, that Hebrew thought treated the individual as a psycho-somatic unity, thereby excluding the notion of merely external correspondence (so, e.g., Gunkel: "das Geistige [ist] dabei nicht ausgeschlossen" [*Genesis*, 99]; cf. von Rad [*Genesis*, 56] and Westermann [*Genesis*, 207–8]). For many interpreters influenced by Barth, the correspondence suggested by the metaphor is spelled out as a relational correspondence describing a capacity and need for relatedness, including communication. Thus Stamm sees the meaning of the *imago* as "Partnerschaft und Bündnisfähigkeit" (*Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen im Alten Testament* [Theologische Studien 54; Zollikon-Zurich: Evangelischer, 1959] 19), while Horst would have it describe a special capability of intercourse with God ("Face to Face," 267), making *adam* "the vis-à-vis (*Gegenüber*) of God in the same manner as the woman, in Gen 2:20, is a helpmeet 'as over against' (*im Gegenüber*) the man" (265). This argument is faulty on a number of grounds. There is no similarity in language or idea between the *kĕneged* of Gen 2:18, 20 and the *bĕṣelem-/kidmût-* of 1:26. And it is obvious from the (secondary) use of *ṣelem* in 5:3 and 7:6 that it does not describe a quality of relationship or even precondition of relationship. P is not concerned with communication between Adam and Seth, but with the preservation of an essential likeness of the species through successive generations. Cf. also the critique of Victor Maag ("Alttestamentliche Anthropogonie," 34).

In response to continuing attempts to spell out the content of the image, James Barr has recently argued that the term *ṣelem* was deliberately chosen for its opaque etymology and ambivalent connotations as the best term available in Hebrew to describe a likeness without giving it a particular content ("A Study in Terminology," 18, 20–21; cf. "Some Linguistic and Historical Considerations," 12–13). Recent literature has also stressed the

as a metaphor for likeness is concrete, formal, holistic—and "empty," lacking specific content, and thus an ideal term for P, who employs it with changing connotations in changing contexts (cf. 5:1, 3 and 9:6). Here, in its primary and initial use, its content or implications must be spelled out, and that is the contribution of *wĕyirdû*. The *ṣelem 'ĕlōhîm* in Genesis 1 is, accordingly, a royal designation, the precondition or requisite for rule.

The interpretation of the expression as a royal motif is not simply dependent, however, on the context of its use in Gen 1:26. Though the term *ṣelem*, by itself, lacks specific content, the phrase *ṣelem 'ĕlōhîm* appears to derive its meaning from a special association with the royal ideology of the ancient Near East.[25] It is true that OT uses of *ṣelem* do not point to such a thesis, nor does the OT's ideology or lexicon of kingship.[26] If a royal image lies behind the use of *ṣelem* in Gen 1:26–27, it must rest on an idea or expression of kingship found outside of preserved Israelite sources. That appears to be supplied by evidence from Egypt, where the idea of the king as "image" of the god is a common one, finding expression in a rich and diverse vocabulary of representation which describes the pharoah as image, statue, likeness, picture, etc., of the deity (usually the chief, creator god).[27] However,

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fact that the notion of humans as godlike creatures, created according to a divine model or prototype and standing in a special relationship to the gods, is not unique to Israel, but is a widely shared notion, though implications of this likeness may be spelled out in quite different ways. The concept, in this analysis, is an inherited one for P, whose problem was to fit it to Israelite theology and exclude as far as possible false understandings which may have accompanied it (Maag, "Sumerische und babylonische Mythen von der Erschaffung der Menschen," *Asiatische Studien* 8 [1954] 96–98; cf. "Alttestamentliche Anthropogonie," 36–37; Westermann, *Genesis*, 212–13; and Loretz, *Gottebenbildlichkeit*, 63–64).

[25] The first scholar to read the expression of Genesis 1 as the adaptation of a royal title or designation appears to have been Johannes Hehn in 1915 ("Zum Terminus 'Bild Gottes,'" *Festschrift Eduard Sachau* [ed. Gotthold Weil; Berlin: Reimer] 36–52). Hehn's lead has been followed by von Rad (*Genesis*, 58); Wildberger ("Abbild," 245–59, 481–501); and Schmidt (*Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 137–48), *inter alios*.

[26] It is often noted that *ṣelem* and *dĕmût* are not used in the OT to speak of the king. Anderson stresses the contrast between Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 precisely in respect to royal language and theology ("Human Dominion," 39), though he allows that "vestigal remains" of a royal theology can be seen in Genesis 1, especially in "the motif of the image of God which entitles Man to have dominion over the earth" (36).

[27] See esp. Hornung, "Der Mensch als 'Bild Gottes' in Ägypten," in Loretz, *Der Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen*, 123–56; and Eberhard Otto, "Der Mensch als Geschöpf und Bild Gottes in Ägypten," *Probleme biblischer Theologie* (ed. H. W. Wolff; Munich: Kaiser, 1971) 334–48. Schmidt and Wildberger both draw upon Egyptian texts to suggest parallels, and a source, for the expression in Gen 1:26, 27. Of particular interest to Schmidt is the "democratized" usage found in the wisdom literature, in which a title that originally designated, and distinguished, the king is "extended" to humanity as a whole, and associated more particularly with their creation (cf., e.g., "The Instruction of Merikare," *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 139). This evidence, combined with a more limited

the expression in Egyptian royal usage is closely linked to the idea of the pharaoh as the incarnation of the god, the diety's visible form on earth[28]—an idea foreign to Israelite thought. If an Egyptian root for the expression is to be sought, it is the wisdom tradition, with its reference to general humanity and its language of analogy rather than representation, that offers the closest parallels.[29]

Evidence from Mesopotamia is more limited, but appears closer to the Priestly usage in language, conception, and time. One text of Middle-Assyrian provenance and three of Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian date employ the identical cognate expression, *ṣalam-DN*, as a designation of the king.[30]

1) (KN) *šūma ṣalam Enlil dārû*
   He (KN) is the eternal image of Enlil [MA][31]
2) *šarru bēl mātāti ṣalmu ša* ^d*Šamas šū*
   The king, the lord of the lands, is the very image of Shamash [NA]
3) *abūšu ša šarri bēlīya ṣalam* ^d*Bēl-ma šū*
   u šarru bēlī ṣalam ^d*Bēl šū*

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occurrence of the same expression in Mesopotamian royal designations, suggested a common ancient Near Eastern royal ideology. That the expression of Gen 1:26-28 was anchored in this tradition was made virtually certain, Schmidt argued, by the explicit royal language used in Psalm 8, the only OT parallel to the Genesis ₁ account (140).

[28] Otto, "Der Mensch als Geschöpf und Bild Gottes," 344–47; and Hornung, "Der Mensch als 'Bild Gottes' in Ägypten," 147–51. Otto distinguishes the royal usage sharply from the use of similar (in some cases identical) expressions to describe the relationship of nonroyal figures to the god or gods. The royal usage implies—and depends upon—a notion of identity, he insists, while the nonroyal usage describes only a form of analogy. The distinction lies in the ancient and fundamental Egyptian distinction between royal theology and (general) anthropology (344).

[29] So, apparently, Hornung ("Der Mensch als 'Bild Gottes' in Ägypten," 150), who notes that the expression appears in the wisdom tradition prior to and independent of the royal usage. Neither Otto nor Hornung recognize a development within the complex Egyptian usage which could be described as the "democratizing" of an original royal concept and designation.

[30] The following texts are cited in *CAD* (nos. 2–4) and *AHW* (all) under the heading of "transferred meanings," with the translation "likeness"/"Abbild."

[31] From a fragment of the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, probably composed not long after the defeat of Kashtiliash IV (1232–25) (W. G. Lambert, "Three Unpublished Fragments of the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic," *A/O* 18 [1957] 38–51; and William L. Moran, private communication). The statement occurs in a hymn of praise to the Assyrian king, which compares him to a god in his stature (1.16; Moran, citing *AHW* 374b; cf. Lambert, 51) and birth (1.17) and proclaims his exaltation to a position next to Ninurta himself (1.20):

18) He is the eternal image of Enlil, who hears what the people say, the "Counsel" of the land.

....

20) Enlil, like a physical father (*kīma abi ālidi*) exalted him (*ušarbišu*) second to (*arki*) his firstborn son [i.e., Ninurta] (Lambert, 50–51).

The father of the king, my lord, was the very image of Bel,
and the king, my lord, is likewise the very image of Bel [NA][32]

4)   *šar kiššati ṣalam* [d]*Marduk attā*
O King of the universe, you are the image of Marduk [NB][33]

Akkadian *ṣalmu* exhibits the same range of meaning as its Hebrew
cognate, designating in its basic use a statue (in the round), a likeness
or representation, usually of a deity or king, especially as set up in a
temple as a visible sign and manifestation of the living god or person. It
may also describe a relief or drawing, again usually of a king or deity. In
transferred uses the basic idea of a likeness is maintained, with empha-
sis on resemblance, correspondence and representation.[34]

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[32] Nos. 2 and 3 are from petitions of the court astrologer Adad-šumu-uṣur to
Esarhaddon and his son Ashurbanipal, respectively (Simo Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian
Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*, Part 1 [= AOAT, 5/1; Kevelaer:
Butzon & Bercker; Neuk irchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1970] nos. 143 [= ABL 5] r 4ff. [pp.
112–13] and 125 [= ABL 6] 17f. [pp. 98–100]; cf. Leroy Waterman, *Royal Correspondence
of the Assyrian Empire*, Parts 1 and 3 [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1930–31]). In
no. 2 the writer draws an analogy with the sun god (Shamash) who, he says, stays in the
dark only half a day. The king, he urges, should not remain indoors for days on end, but
like the Sun, whose image he is, come out of the dark (Parpola, 113). No. 3 belongs to a
profession of loyalty to the new king. Both texts are a courtier's words of adulation, but
the terms of exaltation are hardly his invention.

[33] From a Babylonian astrological report (= R. C. Thompson, *The Reports of the
Magicians and Astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon in the British Museum*, 2 [London: Luzac,
1900] no. 170 r 2). The text appears to liken the king to Marduk in his display of an-
ger—and reconciliation—toward his servants (Moran, private communication; cf. Thomp-
son, *Reports*, lxii; and Ernst Weidner, *OLZ* 15 [1912] 319).

[34] *CAD/AHW*: *ṣalmu*; BDB: *ṣelem*. The notion of representation goes beyond that of a
representative in suggesting a measure of identity, or an essential correspondence. Such
identity, however, is not identity of substance or being, but of character or function (and
power), for the image is always a copy, not a double or derivative; it is of different
material or kind than the original. The image stands for the original, which it reproduces
and shows forth. The term is basically concrete. It does not refer to an idea, nor does it
describe a model, pattern or prototype (*contra* Mettinger, "Abbild oder Urbild?" esp.
411). Since *ṣalmu/ṣelem* describes a formal resemblance and holistic representation, the
particular attributes of the original which the *ṣelem* may be intended to manifest must be
determined by contexts of use.
In Mesopotamia, the most common use of the term is to designate the statue of a god
or king, while the largest class of metaphorical usage describes an individual as the
"statue/image" of a god. In four of the five examples cited in *CAD* and *AHW*, the one
designated *ṣalmu* of the god is a king. The fifth example describes a conjuror priest and
belongs to a twofold identification, of word and person, which serves to emphasize the
truth and efficacy of his conjuration: *šiptum šipat* [d]*Marduk āšipu ṣalam* [d]*Marduk*: "The
conjuration (recited) is the conjuration of Marduk, the conjuror is the very image of
Marduk" (*AfO* 14 150.225f. [*bīt mēsiri*]) (cited from *CAD*). In both royal and priestly
designations the human representative is viewed above all as one possessing the power
and authority of the god, whether for weal or woe. No "democratized" usage of the
expression is attested in Akkadian sources; "likeness" to the god belongs only to the god's
special representative(s).

The passages cited above use the expression *ṣalam-DN* figuratively to designate one who, according to Mesopotamian royal ideology, is understood to be a special representative of the god or gods, possessing a divine mandate to rule, and hence divine power, but who is himself neither deity nor divine—except in the limited terms of election and exaltation.[35] In these texts the designation of the king as "image of the god" serves to emphasize the godlike nature of the king in his ruling function and power.[36]

But this usage, despite close affinity to the Priestly formulation, is hardly its source. Though our primary clues to the meaning of the language and constructs of Genesis 1 must be sought in Akkadian and Egyptian texts, their origin is presumably in neither, but in a still unknown "Canaanite" tradition. That silent source must have incorporated and mediated both Mesopotamian and Egyptian influences, but it appears to have stood closer to the former in its basic language and thought. To the extent that the Genesis creation account may be viewed as an alternative, or counter, myth, either in its original Yahwistic formulation or in its final Priestly edition, the elements with which it most clearly compares and contrasts are found in traditions known from Mesopotamia. Since the final editing of the work is also located there, a polemical reading of the account may be suggested, even if the terms of the polemic do not originate with the final composition.[37]

[35] Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1948) 215-61, 295-312, esp. 237, 307, 309.

[36] Franz M. T. Böhl ("Das Zeitalter der Sargonide," *Opera Minora* [Groningen/Djakarta: Wolters, 1953] 403) found expression of the idea of the king as image of the god not only in the term *ṣalmu*, but also *ṣillu*, which he translated "Schattenbild" (403). The meaning of the term in his key text (ABL 652 = Parpola, *Letters*, no. 145) is disputed, however, as is the meaning of the proverb cited in the text (cf. *Böhl*, "Der babylonische Fürsten-spiegel," MAOG 11, 3 [1939] 49; Frankfort, *Kingship*, 407, n. 35; and Parpola, *Letters*, 113). The final line appears, nevertheless, to contain a clear expression of the king's likeness to the god, in this case using the term *muššulu* (<*mašālu* "to be similar" [CAD]), a term corresponding to Hebrew *dĕmût* (cf. Wildberger, "Abbild," 254):

> *šarru šu [k]al! muššuli ša ili*
> The king is the perfect likeness of the god

(Parpola, *Letters*, 113; cf. Böhl, "Fürstenspiegel," 49; and "Zeitalter," 403).

[37] Polemical features of the account have been widely noted, often in relation to the dominant Mesopotamian creation myth, *Enuma Elish* (see, e.g., Maag, "Alttestamentliche Anthropogonie," 31-41, esp. 37; cf. Hasel, "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology"). The Babylonian exile surely encouraged sharpening of the distinctive elements of Israelite theology, cosmology—and anthropology—in relation to the views of the surrounding culture. But Israel's dialogue with "foreign" culture did not begin there. Israel's theology was constructed from the beginning in dynamic critical appropriation of the religious heritage of Canaan and confrontation with the recurrent challenge of competing local and foreign cults and myths. The origins of the Priestly creation account and many of the features that characterize it as a counter myth must be placed during the monarchy rather than the exile.

The genius of the formulation in Gen 1:26 may be seen in its use of a common expression and image of Mesopotamian (-Canaanite) royal theology to counter a common image of Mesopotamian (-Canaanite) anthropology, viz., the image of humanity as servant of the gods, the dominant image of Mesopotamian creation myths.[38] The language that describes the king as one who stands in a special relationship to the divine world is chosen by the author of Genesis 1 (perhaps under influence of Egyptian wisdom tradition) to describe humanity as a whole, *adam qua adam*, in its essential nature. The expression of Genesis 1 is unique in the OT, determined, we would suggest, by the genre and context of composition. But the idea of the royal status of *adam* is not; it is prominent in Psalm 8, where the language of coronation is combined with the language of dominion to describe the distinctive status and role of humanity in creation. In our understanding, *ṣelem* and *RDH* belong to a single complex of ideas and describe a sequence of thought which parallels exactly the twofold statement of Psalm 8.

The Unique Creature

The special interest of God in this culminating act of creation and ordering is registered at a grammatical and lexical level by a shift in the word of announcement from intransitive verbal forms or verbs of generation to an active-transitive verb, and from third person to first person speech. The verb *'āśâ*, which has heretofore been used only in the execution reports, to emphasize the divine activity, is now taken up into the announcement itself. The becoming of *adam* is inconceivable

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The significance of the Akkadian cognate equivalents to the unique OT expression, *ṣelem 'ĕlōhîm*, lies in their close association with the royal theology and their distribution in time; the usage spans the period from the origin of the Israelite monarchy and its temple cult to the seventh and sixth centuries, when the temple traditions received their final form. Past emphasis on the latter period as the significant period of cultural interchange, and polemic, may be attributed to the dating of P—and to the dates of the extant parallels. The one early example among our citations, and the one in which the expression is most clearly part of a consciously articulated royal theology, was not published until 1957. Thus Böhl could argue in 1953 ("Zeit der Sargonide," 403) that the idea of the king as image of the god was a new and distinctive feature of the Neo-Assyrian royal theology.

[38] See, esp., *Enuma Elish* 6.34–35. The tradition that humankind was created to serve the gods, and thus free them from their onerous labor, is much older, however, as may be seen from *Atraḥasis* 1. 194–97:

    194 You are the birth-goddess, creatress of mankind
    195 Create *Lullu* that he may bear the yoke,
    196 Let him bear the yoke assigned by Enlil,
    197 Let man carry the toil of the gods!

(W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-ḥasis* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1969] 56–57).

apart from God's own direct action and involvement; the willing of this creation requires divine commitment.

The structure of the final word also differs from that of the words that describe the other orders of living things. For them no purpose or function is announced or reported.[39] And each order is referred to an already existing element of earth (land and water) as its locus and proximate source. In contrast, *adam* is assigned a function or task by the very word of announcement, a task defined in relation to the other creatures and to the earth, which is its habitat but not its source.[40] Humanity is also distinguished from other orders of life by its direct and unmediated dependence upon God. For *adam*, habitat is neither source of life nor source of identity.[41]

The *Wortbericht* emphasizes the exalted, isolated position of *adam* within the created order, as one uniquely identified with God and charged by God with dominion over the creatures. Yet the full account insists that *adam* is also creature, sharing both habitat and constitution with the other orders of animal life. The creation of humankind stands in the overall structure of the Priestly creation account as an amplification and specification of the creation of the land animals, and the two acts of creation together comprise a single day's work. This classification of *adam* with the other creatures of earth has required an adjustment in the account of the sixth day's work, for the formula of blessing which speaks of the filling of earth (parallel to the filling of the seas in v 22) cannot be addressed to two orders occupying the same space. The expected blessing of the land animals has accordingly given way to the blessing of *adam*, the supreme land creature.[42]

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[39] The designation of the plants as food in vv 29–30 is a secondary and subordinate theme and differs in structure from the purpose clauses or compound sentences of vv 6, 9, 14–15, and 26. The specifications, "bearing seed" and "producing fruit," in v 11 do not describe a purpose or function, but introduce the theme of fertility as a subtheme of the word about nature (see below).

[40] The notion of task or function is suggested by the verbal form of the clause; the meaning of the verb itself, however, points to an emphasis on status and power as its primary message rather than exercise of a responsibility or function (see below).

[41] P avoids, or counters, by this formulation not only the primitive notion of humankind "sprouting" from the ground (cf., e.g., "The Myth of the Pickax" and "The Myth of Enki and E-engurra"), but also the more elevated, but likewise unacceptable, notion of humanity as a mixture of earthly and divine substance (clay and blood [—or breath?]; cf. *Atrahasis*, *Enuma Elish* [and Genesis 2]). Nor is *adam* conceived in this formulation as a fallen god, but rather by original design as the "God-like" one among the creatures.

[42] Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 147. Cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, 196. That the blessing of the land animals is to be understood as included in the blessing given to *adam* seems unlikely in view of the expansion of the latter blessing to include the subjugation of the earth (*wěkibšûhā*). Equally unlikely is the notion that the land creatures receive their blessing through *adam*, or that they receive no blessing, since the "renewal" of the blessing after the flood addresses both classes—separately: Noah and sons in 9:1 and the

The combination of events on the sixth day suggests that *adam* is to be understood as a special type or species of earth creature. In contrast to *adam*, all other life is described in broad classes, with subclasses or species (*mîn*) recognized but not named.[43] Thus grasses and fruiting plants represent the primary classes of vegetation, each with its myriad individual species, while "fish," fowl, cattle, and creepers describe comparable classes of animal life. *Adam*, however, is an individual, at once species and order, a creature among creatures yet apart from them and above them.

Sexual Distinction and Blessing

The word that most clearly locates *adam* among the creatures is the blessing of v 28 and the specification which immediately precedes and prepares for it: *zākār ûnĕqēbâ bārā' 'ōtām*. But the theme articulated in these coordinated clauses reaches beyond the world of creatures addressed by the word of blessing to include all life. For P, there is a corollary to the idea that all of creation is derived from God and dependent upon God. It is the idea of the permanence and immutability of the created orders. For living things, with their observable cycles of life, permanence must be conceived in dynamic terms, as a process of replenishment or reproduction. Thus for each order of living thing explicit attention is given to the means by which it shall be perpetuated. That is the meaning of the cumbersome and seemingly unnecessary specification that both classes of vegetation were created bearing seeds — i.e., equipped to reproduce their kind.[44] And that is the meaning of the blessing that imparts to all creatures the power of reproduction: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth/waters."

While the immediate intention of this word in its expanded form (including *mil'û*) is surely to describe the filling of an empty earth through the multiplication of original specimen pairs,[45] there may be

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animals in 8:17 (including birds as land-based creatures—a combination of classes treated as distinct in Genesis 1) (196). What this shows is a selective and flexible employment of categories and formulas, varied according to changing situations and need (e.g., omitting the sea creatures in 8:17).

[43] Eduard König, "Die Bedeutung des hebräischen *mîn*," *ZAW* 31 (1911) 133–46. Cf. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 106–7, 123; Westermann, *Genesis*, 174–75. The differentiation of plant and animal life into species or types does not find a correspondence in the sexual differentiation of humankind, described in v 27 (*contra* Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 107, n. 1). See below.

[44] Cf. Maag, "Alttestamentliche Anthropogonie," 39.

[45] The terms used to describe each order and class are all singular collectives ([*deše'*], *'ēseb*, *'ēs*, [*šeres*], *nepeš hayyâ*, *'ôp*, *bĕhēmâ*, *remeś*, *hayĕtô-'eres*, *'ādām*) with the exception of *tannînim*, a plural used to create a comparable class designation for the creatures of the sea. Each class is understood as an aggregate of species (*mîn*), which could conceivably be represented by individuals of each type (cf., e.g., Gen 2:19, where *adam* is a single

another intention as well, a polemical one. For P, the power of created life to replenish itself is a power given to each species at its creation and therefore not dependent upon subsequent rites or petitions for its effect.[46] The emphatic and repeated word which endows life with the means and the power of propagation undercuts the rationale of the fertility cult—and in yet another manner deposes and annihilates the gods; for the power to create life and to sustain it belongs to God alone, who incorporates the means of perpetuity into the very design and constitution of the universe,[47] and the power to rule earth and its creatures is delegated to *adam*. Thus the gods are denied all power, place and function by this account, whether to create, renew or rule.

Adam is creature, who with all other created life is given the power of reproduction through the word-act of creation, receiving it in the identical words of blessing addressed first to the creatures of sea and sky (v 22). It is in relation to this statement that the specification, "male and female he created them," must be understood. The word of sexual differentiation anticipates the blessing and prepares for it. And it is an essential word, not because of any prehistory which related a separate creation of man and woman,[48] but because of the structure of the Priestly account and the order of its essential themes. Sexual constitution is the presupposition of the blessing of increase, which in the case of the other creatures is simply assumed. In the case of *adam*, however, it cannot be assumed, but must be specially articulated because of the statement that immediately precedes it.

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individual—and also representative of the species). But the theme of reproductive endowment enunciated in the blessing assumes sexual differentiation and hence pairs as the minimal representation of each species. In fact, the image of a pair as the model of a species is so common that it needs no special articulation, especially in such a terse account. It is only where a particular need for clarification or emphasis arises that the assumption must be made explicit—as in 1:27, and 7:9 and 16. See below.

[46] Maag's recognition of the polemical function of the repeated statement concerning the seed and his linking of this to the blessing of the creatures ("Alttestamentliche Anthropogonie" [1955] 39) seems to have been lost in the subsequent literature. I discovered it only after arriving at a similar understanding. My characterization of the polemic (below) is admittedly overstated. I mean thereby to suggest implications, and possible ancient readings of the text, which lie below the surface message and may escape the modern reader.

[47] The blessing of fertility, as Westermann correctly notes, is not a separate or supplemental act, but one which completes the act of creation for the living creatures (*Genesis*, 192). The reason that the power of reproduction is conveyed in a blessing and not simply described as a feature of their constitution, as in the case of the plants, may lie in a recognition that unlike the "automatic" reproduction of plants, animal reproduction is a matter not simply of design, but also of will or of power to realize its end. The blessing activates the latent capacity and directs it toward its goal.

[48] So Westermann, *Genesis*, 220–21.

The word about *adam* is twofold in both *Wortbericht* and *Tatbericht*; it identifies humanity by nature or constitution and by position or function. And the primary word about the nature of *adam*, and the sole word of the *Wortbericht*, is that this one is like God, created in resemblance to God as an image or representation. This audacious statement of identification and correspondence, however qualified by terms of approximation, offers no ground for assuming sexual distinction as a characteristic of *adam*, but appears rather to exclude it, for God (*'ĕlōhîm*) is the defining term in the statement. The idea that God might possess any form of sexuality, or any differentiation analogous to it, would have been for P an utterly foreign and repugnant notion. For this author/editor, above all others in the Pentateuch, guards the distance between God and humanity, avoiding anthropomorphic description and employing specialized terminology (e.g., *bārā'*) to distinguish divine activity from analogous human action.[49] Consequently, the word that identifies *adam* by reference to divine likeness must be supplemented or qualified before the blessing of fertility can be pronounced; for the word of blessing assumes, but does not bestow, the means of reproduction.

The required word of qualification and specification is introduced in v 27b. Unlike God, but *like* the other creatures, *adam* is characterized by sexual differentiation.[50] The parallel clauses of v 27aβb form a bridging

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[49] The *na'ăśeh* of v 26 has long troubled commentators mindful of the deliberateness and precision of P's language, especially in referring to the Deity. In view of the control exercised by P over the final composition and especially evident in the *Wortbericht*, the plural formulation cannot be regarded as a "slip" nor as an undigested remnant of tradition. For though the expression depends ultimately upon the tradition of the divine council, in its Yahwistic and monotheistic adaptation, it appears also to have been *selected* by P as a means of breaking the direct identification between *adam* and God suggested by the metaphor of image, a way of blurring or obscuring the referent of the *ṣelem*. Cf. the *ṣelem 'ĕlōhîm* of v 27aβ, which has a similar function in respect to the preceding *ṣalmô* (see below). The plural *'ĕlōhîm* has a useful ambiguity here (v 27). It is not, however, to be viewed as suggesting a collectivity of male and female deities to which the male-and-female *adam* would correspond (*contra* Loretz, Gottebenbildlichkeit, 68).

[50] The specifying clause, "male and female he created them," must not be understood as distinguishing humans from other creatures or as giving to human sexual distinction a special meaning. In the economy of the Priestly writer's account it is mentioned here only out of necessity (see below). The same specification, in the same terms, *zākār ûnĕqēbâ*, is made elsewhere with reference to the animals—and for a similar reason of clarification and emphasis. In the Priestly account of the flood story, the author wishes to make clear that the "two of every sort" of animals that are to be brought into the ark constitute a minimal pair, capable of reproduction, and thus he specifies, *zākār ûnĕqēbâ yihyû* ("they shall be male and female" [Gen 6:19]; cf. 7:9).

The Priestly writer has chosen his terms, as well as their placement, with care. *Zākār* and *nĕqēbâ* are biological terms, not social terms—as *'îš* and *'iššâ* in 2:22–24. Harmonizing of the creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 has affected the translation as well as the interpretation of the terms in 1:27, especially in the German tradition, where the

couplet between the primary and emphasized statement concerning the divine likeness, introduced in the *Wortbericht* (26) and repeated as the lead sentence of the *Tatbericht* (27aα), and the pronouncement of the blessing of fertility (v 28)—a new theme found only in the *Tatbericht*. It recapitulates the word about the image, in an emphatic yet qualifying manner, and adds to it the word of sexual distinction:

> *bĕṣelem 'ĕlōhîm bārā' 'ōtô*
> *zākār ûnĕqĕbâ bārā' 'ōtām*[51]

The two parallel cola contain two essential and distinct statements about the nature of humanity: *adam* is created *like* (i.e., resembling) God, but *as creature, and hence male and female*.[52] The parallelism of the two

rendering "Mann und Frau" (Westermann, *Genesis*, 108; Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 127, *inter alios*) or "Mann und Weib" (Gunkel, *Genesis*, 103; Zurich Bible, 1942; "Luther Bible," rev. ed., 1964; *inter alios*) is common. Westermann seems to have fallen prey to the subtle persuasion of this traditional rendering, for despite his caution against overloading the interpretation of the clause, he avers: "Wohl aber ist hier ausgesagt, dass der zu zweit geschaffene Mensch sowohl im Verstehen menschlicher Existenz wie auch in den Ordnungen und den Institutionen des menschlichen Daseins als ein *zur Gemeinschaft bestimmter* gesehen werden muss" (*Genesis*, 221; emphasis added).

[51] Most recent analyses of vv 26–28 recognize a complex history of growth resulting in repetitions, expansions, and substitutions in the present text. There is little concensus, however, about primary and secondary elements or stages of growth or editing. Consequently, understandings of how the component parts fit together to make their statement differ considerably. E.g., Schmidt concludes that pre-P tradition is found only in vv 26–27a—and no longer in pristine form. Within this material he finds that 27a gives the impression of particular antiquity (*Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 148–49). Westermann sees the present text as overloaded with "repetitions" (including 26b and 27aβ as well as *bĕṣalmô* in 27aα), which he eliminates from his reconstructed text (*Genesis*, 198–99). The text which he creates by this surgery ("Lasst uns Menschen machen,/ nach unserem Bild, uns ähnlich: //Und Gott schuf die Menschen,/ er schuf sie als Mann und Frau," 198–99) is the text which Barth's exegesis requires, but which the MT with its deliberate qualifications does not allow.

I recognize, with most commentators, a history of growth in the tradition behind the present text, but I do not think the stages can be identified or isolated with any precision. I would regard the couplet in 27a as the work of a single author, more specifically, the final editor, and view the seemingly awkward or redundant *bĕṣelem 'ĕlōhîm* as a deliberate qualification of the preceding *bĕṣalmô*, perhaps employing a phrase from an earlier stage of the tradition. The repetition of *bĕṣelem* with its significant variation in 27aα and β has an important theological purpose. The reflexive singular suffix of 27aα requires that the image be referred directly to God, the sole and single actor, and not to a lower order of divine beings (*contra* Gunkel [*Genesis*, 98], *inter alios*). It thus "corrects" the impression of a plurality of deities which might be suggested by the plurals of v 26. But *bĕṣelem 'ĕlōhîm* qualifies the masculine singular antecedent by repetition of the name, which in its third-person formulation gives both precision and distance to the self-reference. With its ambiguous plural form and its class connotation, *'ĕlōhîm* serves, as the plurals of v 26, to blur the profile of the referent.

[52] The shift from the collective singular (*'ōtô* ["him"]) in the first colon to (collective) plural (*'ōtām* ["them"]) in the second is significant. The author relates the notion of the

cola is progressive, not synonymous. The second statement adds to tne first; it does not explicate it.[53] *IN CC T U*|

Expansion and Conflation in the Tatbericht

The position of the specification of humanity's bisexual nature is dictated by the larger narrative structure of the chapter and by the themes it must incorporate. Here, following the pattern of the preceding acts or episodes, the *Wortbericht* conveys the essential content of the word about the order (viz., created according to divine likeness and given dominion), and the *Tatbericht* repeats it. And here, as in the parallel account of the sixth act of creation, the *Tatbericht* is expanded by a word of blessing, introducing the subtheme of sustainability alongside the primary theme of order. But in vv 27–28 the introduction of the word of blessing, with its clarifying prefatory note, has broken the connection between image and dominion articulated in v 26. In the expanded execution report, the word which conveys dominion is joined directly to the preceding words of blessing, creating an extended series of imperatives, all apparently governed by the rubric of blessing (*wayĕbārek 'ōtām* [v 28])—and all apparently conditioned by the dual qualification of bisexual nature and divine resemblance. Such a reading of vv 27–28, however, which treats the series of words addressed to *adam* as homogeneous and relates both statements of nature (God-like and bisexual) to the whole series without discrimination, ignores the interpretive clues contained in the *Wortbericht* and in the parallel construction of v 22. Fertility and dominion belong to two separate themes or concerns: one, the theme of nature with its subtheme of sustainability (fertility), the other, the theme of order with its interest in position and function. The word of sexual distinction pertains only to the first, and has relevance or consequence in P's theology only for the first.

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divine image only to an undifferentiated humanity as species or order and thus takes pains to use the singular pronoun in both clauses of 27 employing *selem*, despite the fact that the plural has already been introduced in the verb (*wĕyirdū*) of the preceding verse.

[53] *Contra* Barth, who sees 27b as a "geradezu definitionsmässige Erklärung der Gottesebenbildlichkeit" (*KD* 3/1. 219). Cf. Trible (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 16–21), who finds in the parallelism of v 27 a metaphor in which "the image of God" is the tenor and "male and female" the vehicle (p. 17). This interpretation rests on a faulty syntactical analysis which isolates v 27 as a unit of speech/thought. The metaphor is the creation of the interpreter. Schmidt, who judged 27b a secondary addition on grounds of vocabulary, style, and meter, noted that apart from Gen 1:27 and 5:1–2 the themes of divine image and sexuality are associated nowhere else, either in the OT or in the ancient Near East (*Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 146–47). He failed to recognize, however, why the two are juxtaposed here.

There is no message of shared dominion here,[54] no word about the distribution of roles, responsibility, and authority between the sexes, no word of sexual equality. What is described is a task for the species (*kibšūhā*) and the position of the species in relation to the other orders of creatures (*rĕdû*). The social metaphors to which the key verbs point are male, derived from male experience and models, the dominant social models of patriarchal society. For P, as for J, the representative and determining image of the species was certainly male, as 5:1–3, 9:1, and the genealogies which structure the continuing account make clear.[55] Though the Priestly writer speaks of the species, he thinks of the male, just as the author of Psalm 8. But maleness is not an essential or defining characteristic. Against such reduction or confusion of attributes the word of bisexual creation stands as guard, even if it provides only a minimal base for an anthropology of equality.

The theme of sexuality (reproduction) has a limited function in this account. And the words which introduce it are bracketed within the *Tatbericht*. The divine address, initiated in the blessing of fertility, moves beyond the idea of increase to climax in the independent theme of dominion, resuming the thought and expression of the announcement in v 26.[56] But the resumption in v 28 appears to contain an

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[54] *Contra* Anderson ("Human Dominion," 43) and Trible (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 19), *inter alios*. Anderson rightly argues that "dominion is 'given to mankind as a whole," finding in this collective understanding a clear expression of the "democratization" of the royal motif (42). But then he explicates "mankind as a whole" to mean "man and woman." "Here," he notes, "the priestly view departs from royal theology in Egypt, for it is not said that Pharoah *and* his wife represent together the image of God." Psalm 8 stands much closer to the royal theology, he argues, in that "'man' is spoken of in the singular and no reference is made to male and female" (43). Both contrasts are false, however, since the specification of male and female relates neither to dominion nor to the image. The "Egyptian pattern" of male representation is continued unqualified in the biblical tradition of Genesis 1 as well as Psalm 8. See below.

[55] When P moves from protohistory (creation) to "history" his view of humankind is limited to the male actor or subject. Thus *adam* becomes Adam and is renewed in Noah and his sons, not Noah and his wife. The blessing of fertility is addressed in 9:1 to the men alone, with no mention of the wives, who as necessary helpers in the task of maintaining the species are explicitly noted in the enumeration of those entering the ark. The pointed reference to the unnamed wives of Noah and of his three sons in 7:7 and 7:13 has the same function as the specification of "male and female" in 1:27. This theme of reproductive capability also finds expression in the phrase, "other sons *and daughters*," incorporated into the summarizing statement of each generation of P's otherwise all-male genealogical tables (5:4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, 30; 12:11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25). The history in which P's theological interest lies is a history carried by males and embodied in males. Females come into view only where the issue of biological continuity or reproduction is raised.

[56] The expansion of the introduction in v 28 over the parallel in v 22 may be related to the expanded statement which it introduces. The repetitive *wayyō'mer lāhem 'ĕlōhîm* following *wayĕbārek 'ōtām 'ĕlōhîm*, in place of the simple *lē'mōr* of v 22, is usually

expansion, extending *adam*'s dominion from rule over the realm of creatures to subjugation of the earth. The expression *wĕkibšūhā* forms a bridge in the present text between the word of increase and the word of sovereignty. In subject matter it appears linked to the latter, suggesting that *RDH* might be understood as an elaboration or specification of *KBŠ*.[57] Grammatically, however, it is an extension of the blessing, with an object and function distinct from that of the following verb, and must consequently be distinguished from the theme of dominion articulated by *RDH*.

The theme of divine blessing, specifically blessing of increase, is a key interpretive element within the larger Priestly work, located at strategic points in the account and formulated according to the particular demands of each situation. The vocabulary is neither fixed nor unique to P, though the root pair *PRH* + *RBH* forms a constant core of his usage and may be seen as a signature of his work.[58] Outside of P, or dependent usage,[59] the closest parallels are found in exilic prophecies of restoration (Jer 3:16; 23:3; Ezek 36:11). In all usage, the word of blessing, whether direct or indirect, past or future, has a particular end or goal related to a particular situation of need; and in the majority of cases it is a territorial goal.[60]

This is explicit in the Patriarchal History, where the language of blessing has been assimilated by P to the older tradition and form of the promise. Here the goal, given by the promise tradition, is posession of the land—a historical as well as a territorial goal.[61] In P's edition of the Primeval History, the language of increase has been adapted to the situation of prehistory and the emptiness of newly created earth in a three-part

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explained in terms of emphasis and differentiation: in the case of *adam*, unlike the lower creatures, the divine word has become a word of address, an act of communication. But the twofold introduction may indicate an awareness that what follows is not simply blessing, but rather blessing together with a word conveying authority (Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 148–49).

[57] Cf. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 147; and Westermann, *Genesis*, 222.

[58] Cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, 192–95; Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 147–48.

[59] P: Gen 1:22; 1:28; 8:17; 9:1; 9:7; [17:6 *PRH* alone (hiph.)]; 17:20 (hiph.); 28:3 (hiph.; Isaac as subject); 35:11; 47:27; 48:4 (hiph.); Exod 1:7. Dependent on P: Ps 105:24 (*PRH* hiph. + '*ŚM* hiph., reflecting Exod 1:7); Lev 26:9 (*PRH* hiph.); Exod 23:30 (*PRH* qal).

[60] In extra-P usage, *PRH*, as a term for human and animal increase, is typically related to possession of (the) land and/or security against foes, with increase understood as the necessary condition or presupposition. Jer 3:16, 23:3 and Ezek 36:11 envision the increase of a remnant which shall again "fill" the land, while Exod 23:30 speaks of Israel's original possession of the land. All of the "historical" uses of *PRH* point to a future or restored Israel, closely associating the ideas of territorial possession and nationhood.

[61] That the historical goal may be future as well as past (assuming a programmatic or eschatological dimension to the Priestly Work) does not change this assertion. The promise of P is not open ended. It envisions historical fulfillment.

formula of blessing, repeated in Gen 1:22, 28 and 9:1: *pĕrû ûrĕbû ûmil'û* . . . ("be fruitful and multiply and fill . . ."). The orientation of the words of increase toward particular time and space is clear from the final term of the formula, *ûmil'û*, and from the placement of the blessing, addressing creatures classified by habitat (land and nonland creatures) and by "historical" circumstances (Noah and sons after the flood).[62]

The blessing of 1:28, directed to the first, representative specimens of humanity, adds an element lacking in the parallels of 1:22 and 9:1, one which establishes the conditions essential, and unique, to this species for continuing life and for history. The newly formed earth must not only be filled, but also tamed or "harnessed."[63] The author knows that earth will support human life only when it is brought under control—a condition distinguishing *adam* from the birds and sea creatures, who appear to be sustained by their environment rather than having to win life from it. The agrarian perspective is obvious and is shared with the Mesopotamian author of *Atraḥasis*, who views the task as drudgery, however, not as an act of mastery, a burden imposed upon humanity, not a blessing. It is also shared by the Yahwist, who distinguishes an "original" relationship to earth from the historical one and thus accommodates, in sequential arrangement, both the sense of mastery and the experience of drudgery or servitude. For P, who adapts the views of his cultural ancestors, the presupposition of history and culture is the subjugation of earth, rendering it productive and responsive to a master, *adam*. Because this subjugation is essential to the sustaining of human life it is included in the original blessing.[64]

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[62] The periodization of the Primeval History is overlooked by Lohfink, when he suggests that the blessing of 1:28 looks to the rise of the various nations and the settlement of their lands ("Seid fruchtbar," 82). He is right, however, in stressing that the imperative of Gen 1:28 is not a general word for all time, but a word that belongs to the situation of origins (80). Thus neither the historic problems of underpopulation or overpopulation are relevant to the interpretation of this word.

The repetition of the blessing in 9:1 focuses on the human species alone, whose history now becomes the subject of the continuing account. This renewed blessing sets in motion the growth which leads to the rise of nations, in which the history of Israel is hidden.

[63] The basic sense of the root *KBŠ* is "subdue, bring into bondage" (BDB; preferable to KB: "treten, niedertreten, drücken"). All uses of the qal, niphal and hiphil are exilic. The oldest usage is in 2 Sam 8:11, a piel, with king David as subject and *haggôyîm* ("the nations") as object. While the image is forceful, attention is directed to the resultant state, as subdued, deprived of (threatening) power, hence "pacified," controlled. Cf. George W. Coats, "The God of Death, Power and Obedience in the Primeval History" (*Int* 29 [1975] 227–39) esp. 229 ("render productive"); and Barr, "Man and Nature," 63–64 ("work or till"). Most discussions of v 28 treat this clause under the heading of "dominion" and do not distinguish between *KBŠ* and *RDH*.

[64] It is not repeated with the blessing to Noah after the flood, since the blessing there has a new and more limited function. The issue is no longer the preconditions of human life and culture but the history of the nations. See above.

The theme announced by the final imperative, *ŭrĕdû*, is distinct from that of the preceding "commands," despite the similarity in meaning of the verbs *RDH and KBŠ*. This theme describes the relationship of *adam* to the other creatures who share the earth. Its concern is order and status, rather than life and growth. Its message of human superiority and sovereignty over the creatures appears independently in the creation hymn, Psalm 8, associated there as here with the idea of humanity's proximity to the divine world, but there without any hint of the theme of increase and subjugation of the earth.[65]

RDH in OT usage describes the exercise of dominion, authority or power over an individual, group or territory (nation), often in contexts that specify harsh or illegitimate rule.[66] The term cannot simply be equated with the idea of governing, ruling, or managing, with or without emphasis on a caretaker function or maintenance of harmony and order.[67] And, as is often noted, it is not exclusively, or even predominantly, royal language, though, I have argued, it does describe a royal function or prerogative in Genesis 1. When used of kings, it is usually to describe their subjugation of other nations or peoples,[68] or rule over their own people as though they were foreigners.[69] The term emphasizes superior position and power rather than any particular activity, purpose, or quality of rule.[70] The sentiment expressed by the verb *RDH* in Gen 1:26, 28 is, in fact, very close to that expressed by the distinctively royal and hymnic language of Psalm 8, where the idea of dominion is spelled out as subordination/subjugation ("put all things under his feet," v 7) and linked to the idea of exaltation. Human superiority over other creation is stressed in both accounts. The primary

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[65] Anderson sees this absence of the increase-subjugation motif as the clearest evidence for the independence of Psalm 8, but mistakenly links the theme of dominion to the blessing in Genesis 1 ("Human Dominion," 36).

[66] BDB gives as the basic meaning: "have dominion, rule [over . . .]." Cognate usage suggests a prevailing negative connotation: Aramaic, Syriac: "chastise"; Arabic: "tread, trample." In OT usage the verb is often accompanied by qualifying expressions such as *bĕperek* or *bĕhozqâ* (Lev 25:43, 46, 53; Ezek 34:4), *bâ'ap* (Isa 14:6) or by parallel verbs such as *NKH* (hiph.; Isa 14:6), *NŚ'* (hithp.; Ezek 29:15), *NGP* (Lev 26:17), *'BD* (Lev 25:46).

[67] *MŠL* is not chosen here, though it is used to describe the function of the sun and moon in v 16.

[68] 1 Kgs 5:4; Ps 110:2; 72:8; Isa 14:6; 41:2.

[69] Ezek 34:4; Lev 25:43, 46, 53.

[70] I do not think that Lohfink's interpretation of *RDH* in Gen 1:26, 28 as "domestication" of the animals (including fish and birds!) can be defended, though it rightly grasps the elements of superiority and constraint which color the biblical use of the term ("Seid fruchtbar," 82). *RDH* is appropriate in this context to describe rule over those who are not of the same kind or order and who may be viewed in their created state as potentially hostile. This is not the rule of a "brother" but of a stranger. Cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, 219–20.

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function of *RDH* in Genesis 1 is to describe *adam*'s place in creation. If there is also a message of responsibility here, it is not dependent on the content of the verb but on the action of God in setting *adam* over the creatures in an ordered and sustaining world.

Summary and Conclusions

If the foregoing analysis is correct, the meaning and function of the statement, "male and female he created them," is considerably more limited that is commonly assumed. It says nothing about the image which relates *adam* to God nor about God as the referent of the image. Nor does it qualify *adam*'s dominion over the creatures or subjugation of the earth. It relates only to the blessing of fertility, making explicit its necessary presupposition. It is not concerned with sexual roles, the status or relationship of the sexes to one another, or marriage. It describes the biological pair, not a social partnership; male and female, not man and wife. The specification is not dictated by any prehistory that told of a separate creation of man and woman. Rather, it is P's own formulation, dependent upon his overarching theme of the sustainability (fertility) of the created order. It may also serve, secondarily, to link the creation narrative to the genealogically structured history which follows.

These conclusions may disappoint in their largely negative formulation, but they have positive consequence as well. The Priestly writer appears in our analysis as a more consistent and intentional theologian in his treatment of the sexes. And the contemporary theologian-exegete is reminded that the Bible is often quite uninterested in, or unable to comprehend, the questions pressed upon the text from modern perspectives and experiences. To describe and to emphasize the limits of a biblical text is not to dishonor it or depreciate its message, but to give integrity and authority to its voice where it does have a word to speak. Sharpening the countours of a given text or profile of an author brings into our range of hearing a greater variety of voices and enables us to discern more clearly common themes and motifs, as well as dissonances. Questions of context (literary, historical, and theological) acquire greater prominence, prohibiting simple transfer of words from the past into modern contexts. The ancient text in historical analysis presents to the contemporary theologian not simply a vocabulary, a treasury of images and concepts, but also a grammar, or grammars, which are fully as essential to the message as the individual terms.

Emphasizing the literary and historical integrity of the ancient text draws more sharply the line between historical and constructive theology, but it may also enable recognition of affinity between the two disciplines, namely, in attention to process in interpretation. Both biblical and contemporary theology may be seen as creative responses to

directives concerning the circumstances of its use. The concerns of creation, as concerns of nature, must be supplemented by the concerns of ethics to produce an adequate anthropology; and for the latter one must look beyond Genesis 1. For the Priestly account of origins ignores completely the question of the social structuring of roles and of individual and collective responsibility in carrying out the charge addressed to the species. The author may simply have assumed the roles and norms of his day, but he offers no theological rationale for them. P's silence at this point enables the interpreter to move readily into areas where that author had no answers or perceived no questions. In this movement into the areas of P's silence, texts such as Genesis 2-3, which offer differing or supplementary statements and perspectives, must be taken into account, with the possibility that they may ultimately challenge or qualify the thesis of the initial text.

That is the case with the Yahwistic account of creation, in which the primary meaning of sexuality is seen in psycho-social, rather than biological, terms. Companionship, the sharing of work, mutual attraction and commitment in a bond superseding all other human bonds and attractions—these are the ends for which *adam* was created male and female and these are the signs of the intended partnership. This is not to deny that the help which the woman was intended to give to the man was the help of childbearing (implied in Gen 3:16), but that does not express the full intention of the writer of Genesis 2-3, whose interest also includes the socio-sexual bond. And because the social relationship of the sexes is addressed in this account, the question of equality or status is also addressed, though indirectly. The intended partnership implies a partnership of equals, characterized by mutuality of attraction, support and commitment. That the story is *told* from the point of view of the man and is thus clearly androcentric in construction, does not alter this basic tone of the account as a tone of mutuality and equality. But the most explicit statement of the intended equality of man and woman is found in the account of the "fall," J's picture of creation in its historical manifestation. Here the consequence of sin, the disturbance of the original (i.e., intended) relationship between God and creation, is portrayed as the disturbance of the original/intended relationship between the man and the woman. And the sign of this disturbed relationship is this, that while the woman's relationship to the man is characterized by desire, the man's relationship to the woman is characterized by rule. The companion of chapter 2 has become a master. The historical subordination of woman to man is inaugurated—and identified as the paradigm expression of sin and alienation in creation. Thus Genesis 2-3 supplements the anthropology of Genesis 1, but also "corrects" or challenges it by maintaining that the meaning of human sexual distinction cannot be limited to a biological definition of origin or

function. Sexuality is a social endowment essential to community and to personal fulfillment, but as such it is also subject to perversion and abuse. Genesis 2–3 opens the way for a consideration of sex and sexuality in history.

There remains a word about the image of Gen 1:26–27. Though the note of sexual distinction does not qualify or explain it, the juxtaposition of the two statements does have consequence for theological anthropology and specifically for a theology of sexuality. Sexuality and image of God both characterize the species as a whole and both refer to *adam*'s fundamental nature; but they do so in different ways. While the image is referred always and only to the species as a whole (*adam/'ōtô*—singular, undifferentiated collectivity), sexuality is referred to individuals of the species (*'ōtām*—plural, differentiated collectivity). Thus the grammar of the parallel clauses in v 27 prevents identification or interchange of the defining terms. While P's own image of *adam* as the image of God was surely male, as the terms for task and position (*KBŠ* and *RDH*) as well as the note of 5:3 suggest, the carefully guarded language of 1:26–27 does not allow this masculine identification to define the image.

But if the divine image characterizes and defines the species as a whole, it cannot be denied to any individual of the species. To be human is to be made in the image of God. And if to be human means also to be male *or* female (the plural of v 27 also works against any notion of androgyny), then *both* male and female must be characterized equally by the image. No basis for diminution or differentiation of the image is given in nature. Thus it cannot be altered or denied by history. What belongs to the order by constitution (creation) is immutable and ineradicable. It is essential to human identity. Distinctions of roles, responsibilities or social status on the basis of sex—or other characteristics—are not excluded by this statement. But where such distinctions have the effect of denying to an individual or group the full and essential status of humanity in the image of God, they contradict the word of creation. Contemporary insistence that woman images the divine as fully as man and that she is consequently as essential as he to an understanding of humanity as God's special sign or representative in the world is exegetically sound even if it exceeds what the Priestly writer intended to say or was able to conceive. Like Paul's affirmation that in Christ there is no more "male and female" (Gal 3:28), the full content and implications of the Priestly statement lie beyond the author's ability to comprehend.