“VIRGIN” AS SECONDARY GENDER IDENTITY IN 1 CORINTHIANS 7 AND ITS JEWISH AND GRECO-ROMAN BACKGROUND

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"VIRGIN" AS SECONDARY GENDER IDENTITY IN

1 CORINTHIANS 7 AND ITS JEWISH AND

GRECO-ROMAN BACKGROUND

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BDAG	Walter Bauer, William Fredrick Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilber Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament
BBR	*Bulletin of Biblical Research*
BJSP	*British Journal of Social Psychology*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EJ	Evangelical Journal
EQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
ESV	English Standard Version
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JPSP	*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint

NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
PSPR	*Personality and Social Psychology Review*
TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
USQR	*Union Seminary Quarterly Review*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

PREFACE

After spending fourteen educational years at Southern Seminary, I'm not sure a single preface is sufficient to mention all the students, professors, mentors, and colleagues who have made my experience here both memorable and life-changing. The three members of my dissertation committee, Drs. Schreiner, Williams, and Allison, have all been selfless with their time, particularly in the past few years as this project gained steam. All three have encouraged me at various points when I needed extra motivation to finish, but Dr. Schreiner in particular has been the best doctoral supervisor I could ever imagine.

Several of my fellow New Testament PhD student colleagues deserve a special thanks for their willingness to listen to the musings of a "systematics guy" like myself who wanted to dive into the field of NT studies instead. I particularly appreciate Trey Moss, Brian Renshaw, and Shawn Wilhite for the many productive conversations we've participated in over the past several years.

Finally, I am grateful for the longsuffering patience of my wife, Sara, over the past seven years. More than anybody, she has borne the weight of my academic endeavors and has sacrificed much because she believes not only in me, but in the work I have produced and its potential to impact the Kingdom of God. It is with great joy and immense gratitude that I dedicate this dissertation to her.

Nate Collins

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2017

CHAPTER 1

GENDER AND NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES: A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY

As the 2008 election season began to take shape in the United States, it soon became evident it would be a momentous occasion in the country's history if the Democrats won. If they nominated Hillary Clinton, she would become the first female president of the United States, and if they nominated Barak Obama he would become the first African American president. Although the prospect of dealing another blow to the crumbling façade of discrimination in the United States no doubt excited the clear majority of Americans, at least one group of people felt caught in the middle of an intractable dilemma: black women. Indeed, perhaps nobody experienced the tension of this dilemma as acutely as talk show host and media empress Oprah Winfrey. Winfrey stunned millions, including the vast majority of her overwhelmingly female fan base, when she opted in favor of her racial identity and decided to endorse Obama over Clinton.

Scholars in the fields of feminism, womanism, and contemporary gender theory refer to this crisscross-identity phenomenon as "intersectionality," a term coined by critical race theorist and legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw.[1] According to Crenshaw, intersectionality refers to the compounded marginalization that black women experience due to intersecting forms of discrimination against them as a result of their gender and racial identities. Intersectional feminism and womanism both draw attention to structural

[1] See Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1 (1989): 139-67; "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-99.

inequalities in society that perpetuate the continuation of these compounded axes of discrimination. The experience of Winfrey is instructive, however, because it highlights the manner in which some aspects of personal identity that we experience as "givens" (such as race and gender) often influence the manner in which we relate to and identify with other members of our own gender.

Five years later, a different event illustrates another intersection of social identity and gender. On October 11, 2013, the Gender Relations Center at the University of Notre Dame celebrated the 25th annual National Coming Out Day in a manner both novel and straightforward. After constructing makeshift wooden doorways in various places around the campus, they invited students to publicly embrace whatever particular identity was important to them as they stepped through the threshold of the doorway. The Gender Relations Center website said "individuals [could] 'come out' as anything – a business major, a country music fan, a lover of bad horror movies," and urged students to "join us… as we celebrate the endless variety of identities that make each and every one of us unique."[2]

Debates concerning the morality of same-gender sexual behavior aside, what sense are we to make of celebrations like National Coming Out Day? When individuals participate in this event, what is the meaning of the identity statements that they are making? Do they regard their sexual orientation as a constituent part of their gender identity in particular, or is it simply one piece of the pie that represents the entirety of their self-identity? Or does sexual orientation constitute a 'given' (perhaps similar to race?) that can index an intersectional identity (of sorts?) within individual gender identities? Although scholars in the fields of theology and biblical studies have explored gender-related topics for several decades now, not many of these studies reflect on

[2]Calendar of Events for the Gender Relations Center, The University of Notre Dame, http://grc.nd.edu/events/calendar-of-events/, accessed 02/06/14.

questions about the ontology of gender or its theological meaning.[3]

This hardly means that theologians and biblical scholars avoid talking about gender-related issues altogether. Projects related to gender that scholars have pursued in the past 40 years include examining the extent to which the New Testament writings might have been conditioned by the social forces of patriarchy that were operative at the time of the first-century church;[4] exploring the normative or descriptive status of gender roles that one encounters in holy Scripture;[5] and defending a traditional vision for sexuality in the face of the normalization of homosexuality in our culture. These are all very worthwhile endeavors, and our tradition is richer for having been engaged in them.

It is surely illuminating to note, however, the generally *prescriptive* thrust that each of these discussions share. Perhaps the most self-evident indication of this is the predominantly ethical or polemical contexts within which each of these lines of doctrinal enquiry tends to take place. Whether the issue at hand is the oppression of women by the forces of patriarchy, or the proper role of women in the church, or the morality of homosexual behavior and same-sex marriage, the overall ethical thrust of these discussions suggests that they are primarily an expression of the prescriptive task of theology, or theology as *sapientia*.[6] Yet if this is the case, then what might we say *descriptively* about gender identity? Indeed, what might a theological *scientia* of gender

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[3]Notable exceptions include Elain Graham, *Making the Difference: Gender, Personhood, and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996); Elaine Storkey, *Origins of Difference: The Gender Debate Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001); Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Coakley, *The New Asceticism: Sexuality, Gender, and the Quest for God* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2016).

[4]See Gordon D. Fee, ed., *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd ed., (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, ed., *After Eden: Facing the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

[5]See John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, 2nd Ed., (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006).

[6]Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 307-59.

look like, and how might this intersect with the field of New Testament studies?[7]

Thesis

Before I state my thesis, I would first like to specify three initial guidelines that will shape the various stages of my argument. First, it is important to remember that gender *in res* ought not to be conflated with gender *roles*, whether construed as hierarchically stratified or not. It is insufficient to respond to questions such as "What is gender?" or "What is masculine/feminine?" with statements that merely describe things men/women *do* (or *should* do).

Second, we must bear in mind the common distinction in feminist and gender studies between 'sex' (sometimes construed as a biological classification belonging to the realm of nature) and 'gender' (a sociocultural category belonging to the realm of culture).[8] The adjectives "male" and "female" do not encompass everything that we mean when we refer to an individual as "masculine" or "feminine." Cultures routinely ascribe meaning to individuals on the basis of gendered differences that are socially significant. In other words, cultural descriptions of masculinity and femininity vary, while the words "male" and "female" tend to remain fairly stable. If this distinction can be borne out exegetically in an examination of the relevant texts in scripture, then it likely ought to function programmatically in a theological *scientia* of gender.

Third, this current study is best understood as an emic/etic hybrid account of gender in Paul and his socioreligious background.[9] In the field of cultural anthropology,

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[7]Vanhoozer, *Drama*, 265-305.

[8]As we will see, however, the validity of the distinction itself is hotly contested within some of the same circles of feminists and gender theorists. Science historian Thomas Laqueur, for example, says he has "no interest in denying the reality of sex or of sexual dimorphism," even though he continues to concede that "everything one wants to *say* about sex . . . already has in it a claim about gender" (Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 11). Cf. the assessment of Judith Butler: "perhaps this construct called "sex" is as culturally constructed as gender; perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all" (Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 9-10).

[9]See Kenneth Pike, *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of Structure of Human Behavior* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967). The terms are derived from the words 'phonemic' and 'phonetic,' which are

an emic account of a belief, behavior, or social phenomenon utilizes terms and categories that would have been meaningful to an inhabitant of the culture being described. It is an 'insider' account. Etic accounts, on the other hand, represent an 'outsider' perspective. They aim at systematization of the subject matter in a culturally neutral manner. As we will see, studies of gender in ancient texts can utilize both emic and etic approaches.

Given these guidelines, this dissertation will argue the thesis that the Greek word παρθένος functions as a label that indexes a secondary gender identity in Paul's discussion of virgins in 1 Corinthians 7. The meaning of most of the elements in this thesis is transparent enough, but the phrase *secondary gender identity* requires an initial definition. In this dissertation, I will distinguish between *primary* gender identity and *secondary* gender identity. 'Primary gender identity' is binary, and reflects the original divine intent to create male persons ("men") and female persons ("women"). 'Secondary gender identity,' on the other hand, is non-binary and is the result of the pluriform effects of the enculturation of gender within human society. For now, we will operate with the following working definition in mind: a secondary gender identity is *a gendered sub-identity that forms around a socially meaningful category (1) that is itself gendered in some way by the surrounding culture and (2) that is indexed by a linguistic label*.

Demonstrating this thesis will provide a degree of clarity about issues related to the ontology of gender itself, while sidestepping the related topic of gender roles and the cultural landmines clustered around it. It will also illustrate the significance of the sex/gender distinction within Christian theology in ways that are less than apparent to secular forms of gender theory. And finally, it will yield a broadly applicable etic framework that can be flexibly applied in a variety of communities of practice and the texts they produce, including ancient texts like 1 Corinthians 7.[10]

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insider and outsider (respectively) accounts of a language.

[10]Linguist Sally McConnell-Ginet borrows the phrase "community of practice" (or CP) from the field of social learning theory (see Sally McConnell-Ginet and Penelope Eckert, "Constructing

History of Research

As one might gather from my presentation thus far, this project lies at the intersection of several lines of inquiry within and between both New Testament studies and the field of gender studies. Indeed, my intention is to explore possible solutions to three different kinds of questions at this intersection of disciplines. First, this project will join the mêlée of feminist and gender studies scholars over the past half-century who have attempted to answer both the general question, "What is gender?" and the more specific question, "What role do individual cultures play in constructing gendered identities?" My initial interlocutors in this endeavor will be feminist accounts of gender theory ranging from the Big Three (i.e., liberal, Marxist, and radical feminism) to more sophisticated accounts of gendered particularity.

Second, this project fits into the space opened up within the past thirty years in New Testament studies examining the use of the social sciences to illuminate our understanding of the textual world within scripture. In particular, I am interested in discovering how recent uses of social identity theory and self-categorization theory in New Testament studies might be relevant to the task of analyzing the social significance of the gendered identity labels that Paul deploys in his letters.

Finally, the Pauline tradition has variously been represented by feminists of various stripes, as well as historical critical New Testament scholars as not only androcentric and misogynistic, but also internally inconsistent.[11] These charges are

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Meaning, Constructing Selves: Snapshots of Language, Gender, and Class from Belton High," in *Gender, Sexuality, and Meaning: Linguistic Practice and Politics* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 129-63); see also Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[11]Many feminist interpreters, following French feminist Luce Irigaray, regard as axiomatic the notion that the category 'woman' itself is inherently unstable, a principle which they apply with great rigor to ancient texts such as those in the Pauline corpus; see Elizabeth A. Clark, "Ideology, History, and the Construction of 'Woman' in Late Ancient Christianity," *JECS* 2, no. 2 (1994): 155-84; Denise Riley, "Does Sex Have a History," in *Feminism and History*, ed. Joan Scott (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 17-33; and Jorunn Økland, *Women in Their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 20. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 312, is also representative of the historical critical tradition, which claims to find various forms of progression within

leveled in at least two distinct contexts in the field of Pauline studies: discussions about feminist hermeneutics, and the significance of the various *Haustafeln* texts in the New Testament.[12] For these reasons, the time seems ripe for an interdisciplinary exploration of gender and its sociocultural background in the writings of the apostle Paul. And although a variety of texts might be appropriate targets of such a study, I will suggest that Paul's extended paraenesis regarding virgins in 1 Corinthians 7 holds particular promise. By conducting a thorough survey and analysis of the Greek word παρθένος ('virgin') in the literature of Second Temple Judaism and the Greco-Roman world, and examining 1 Corinthians 7 in light of this analysis, I hope to introduce an additional degree of clarity into the specific exegetical difficulties that scholars have identified in their study of this text.

Gender Studies

Historically speaking, the modern study of gender is rooted in the various women's liberation movements in England and in the United States. The movement that became subsequently known as "first-wave" feminism began in earnest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and was essentially a one-issue endeavor; once equal suffrage rights were finally achieved in America in 1920 and in Britain in 1928, feminist movements took on a decidedly more philosophical approach to their cause. Indeed, soon after the dust of the Great Depression and the Second World War settled, the French publication of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in 1949 set the feminist agenda for years to come with her application of existentialist philosophy to the question

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the texts of the New Testament.

[12] See Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984). CFor representative discussions about the *Haustafeln* texts, see Abraham. J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), E. Schweizer, "Die Weltlichkeit des neuen Testamentes: die Haustafeln," in *Beiträge zur altestamentlichen Theologie*, ed. H. Donner, R. Hanhart, and R. Smend (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977), and Wolfgang Schrage, "Zur Ethik der neutestamentlichen Haustafeln," *NTS* 21, no. 1 (1974): 1-22.

of the gendered "autre."[13]

In the intervening decades of scholarship in feminism, contemporary gender theory, and eventually even critical race theory, social constructionist accounts of reality[14] began to mingle with political agendas in service to a common goal of righting a variety of wrongs suffered by specific populations of women at the hands of those wielding power over them.[15] The precise nature of this power has been the object of these theorists' analysis, and the various models of this "second-wave feminism" represent attempts to understand the specific manner in which the gendered "other" is subsequently produced.[16] The stated purpose of those who approach the study of gender in this manner is to reshape societal forces so that gender can be reconstructed in ways that generally reflect equity instead of hegemony.

As these social constructionist approaches to gender began to gain momentum, it became apparent that their academic popularity came at the expense of their essentialist counterparts. Indeed, the medical sexologists of the early and mid twentieth century, together with the marriage manuals that popularized their essentialist conclusions about sex-gender[17] difference were soon recognized as cultural artifacts that also reflected their

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[13]Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949).

[14]See Peter Berger, Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), and John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

[15]Beginning with Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), contemporary feminist and gender theorists readily acknowledge the utility of the critical theory of Michel Foucault, despite their implicit awareness that it actually deconstructs the starting point upon which the entire feminist emancipatory agenda is founded: the stability of the sexed body (23-25, 130). Another example of the intersection of critical theory and gender is the field of study known as Womanism. Many womanist scholars eschew the 'feminist' label because they do not believe that it reflects the concerns of black women. See Clenora Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*, 4th rev. ed. (Troy, MI: Bedford Publishers, 2004).

[16]See Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 25; see also Elaine Storkey, *Origins of Difference: The Gender Debate Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 35-50, for a brief summary of these academic trends. See also the extended analysis of liberal, socialist, and radical feminism in Storkey, *What's Right With Feminism* (London: SPCK, 1985), 57-110.

[17]Like the term 'ethnicity,' the term 'gender' is an etic category used to classify "types" (γένοι) in both the modern and ancient worlds. In her work on the function of racial and ethnic rhetoric in Paul, Denise Kimber Buell uses the term "ethnoracial" to refer to the elements of continuity and discontinuity

own social context. Essentialist accounts of gender fell even further out of vogue as the academy became gripped by the postmodern promise of an open-ended vision for the unrestrained performance of gender identity. If neither manhood nor womanhood could be reduced to an inherent essence (whether biologically, neurologically, or psychologically construed), then the deterministic cords that had bound men and women to inherently masculine and feminine natures could be cut with impunity.

In particular, two academic trends that either flow from or are related to the feminist movement (broadly construed) are of particular interest to projects like this one that are interested in discerning the impact and influence of gender in ancient texts. The first is the theoretical study of women and gender, and spans the past 50 years from the beginning of 2nd wave feminism until the present. The second trend stems from renewed interest in historical matters related to the representation of gender in antiquity in Classics departments around the globe.

Women's and gender studies. It is natural to begin an account of the contemporary study of women and gender theory begin with the Big Three: liberal, Marxist, and radical feminism.[18] We will examine each of these major contributors to feminism and gender theory in the following chapter, but a few introductory comments here can set the stage for that discussion. In general, the differences between the Big Three can be reduced to the type of strategies they employ to combat the social forces of patriarchy that oppress women. As we will see, these individual strategies actually reflect

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that exist between the terms "race" and "ethnicity" in both modernity and antiquity ("Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition," *HTR* 94, no. 4 [2001]: 450n3; see also Denise Kimber Buell and Caroline Johnson Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation," *JBL* 123, no. 2 [2004]: 236). Because similar overlap exists between many of the dynamics that animate discussions about sex and gender in both contemporary and ancient discourse, I will sometimes use the term "sex-gender" in contexts where this blend of emphases is in mind.

[18]Although in reality the distinctions between these broadly construed approaches to feminist theory are not always easily distinguishable, a "history of feminism" will be unable to avoid discussing these three major players in North American feminism for pedagogical reasons. Cf. Mary Maynard, "Beyond the Big Three: The Development of Feminist Theory into the 1990s," *Women's History Review* 4, no. 3 (1995): 269-81.

competing diagnoses of the shape of patriarchy itself. These competing attempts to describe the problem of patriarchy underline a common thread that runs through each of the Big Three, namely their central focus on viewing women collectively as a class of individuals who are united by their common gender.

Although varieties of the Big Three continue to animate contemporary study of feminism today, subsequent developments in philosophy and sociology have expanded the horizons of most gender theories in ways that render attempts to unify women under the banner of their common gender inherently problematic. As a reaction to the structuralism of the early twentieth and mid-twentieth century, for example, post-structuralist philosophy emphasizes the inherently discursive nature of reality. It views the structures that undergird reality as not in any way transcendent and unchanging, but as contingent and rooted in history. Likewise, post-structural gender theories emphasize the discursive nature of all personal and social identities, including gender.

Judith Butler is by many accounts regarded as a pioneering post-structural feminist and queer theorist, although other French philosophers had already begun applying the principles of post-structuralist philosophy to the question of gender by the time she published her groundbreaking work *Gender Trouble*. The two most important ideas most often associated with her are her attempt to destabilize the category of 'sex' and her definition of 'gender' according to the rubric of performativity. According to Butler, the popular distinction between 'sex' (a biological classification) and 'gender' (a sociocultural category) is meaningless because we have no recourse to the meaning of sexed bodies apart from the social significance of gender differences. Our social understanding of gender predetermines the shape of our understanding of sexual difference.[19]

Although not as well-known as other, more popular Anglo-American feminist

[19]Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 9-10.

theorists, the work of Monique Wittig is also relevant to this study because of the manner in which her understanding of gender is shaped by her critique of heterosexism.[20] For Wittig, the category of sex itself is contaminated because of its complicity with "compulsory heterosexuality" that pervades all modern societies, and that must be overthrown before a truly free Subject can use language to define gendered experience. Wittig identifies this Subject as the "lesbian," which functions as a type of third sex in Wittig's thought.

Histories of sexuality and gender. Another result of the dominance of constructionist perspectives has been the explosion of research initiatives exploring the manner in which the gendered "other" has been constructed throughout history. This predominantly historical focus reinforces the idea that the heart of the contemporary field of gender studies centers on the common ground of the nature of "difference" in general, and in particular the significance of the gendered "other." Whereas essentialist perspectives understand gender differences as a function of natural or "fixed" essences that are inherent to an individual's personhood, constructionist perspectives construe gender differences as reducible to historically contingent processes in which emergent identities are organically related to the influences that characterize their particular cultural context.

Like many disciplines with one foot in antiquity, historical studies of sex and gender come to us in two main flavors. Studies of the first type are largely 'archaeological' endeavors; they adopt a specific contemporary perspective on sex and gender and attempt to uncover the way these concepts are represented in the texts of antiquity.[21] The second type of study, on the other hand, moves in the opposite direction. Instead of using

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[20]See Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).

[21]In the parallel field of racial and ethnic studies, Jonathan Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) is a prototypical example of this type of project.

modern-day concepts and ideas about gender and sex to interpret ancient texts, they search for the 'genealogy' of a specific modern concept within ancient texts.[22]

Thomas Laqueur's *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* is a prime example of an etiological account of gender belonging to the first group of historical studies; he develops his "one-sex" model by tracing the manner in which sex and gender are represented in the texts of antiquity.[23] Likewise, Ross Kraemer's *Her Share of the Blessings* is another example of the kind of historical study that attempts both to describe as well as to structure the various cultural constructions of gender, with a particular focus on the religious life of women in antiquity.[24] Finally, although scholars in university classics departments most often undertake projects of this particular variety, they can also be found in the field of biblical studies. In her book *God, Gender and the Bible*, Deborah Sawyer explores the manner in which the boundaries of gender are constructed, tested, transgressed, and transcended in scripture.[25]

The second type of study is a relatively recent development in historical studies of gender and sexuality. In her simply titled book *Gender*, classics historian Brooke Holmes attempts to follow "the ways the ancients have been used over the past

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[22]See Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), another exemplar from the field of racial and ethnic studies. It might be helpful to note that, strictly speaking, neither of these types of projects emphasizes *ethical* judgments about representations of gender in contemporary culture or antiquity; they do not purport to address particular ways gender *ought* to be constructed and expressed.

[23]Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

[24]Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); see also her more recent work *Unreliable Witnesses: Religion, Gender, and History in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), in which Kraemer advances the same agenda as her previous work, yet with even greater emphasis on etic issues related to the tasks of explanation and redescription. Cf. the distinguished efforts of Bernadette Brooten in *Love between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) and Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982).

[25]Deborah F. Sawyer, *God, Gender, and the Bible* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

forty years to helps us formulate the very *idea* of gender."[26] In religious studies, a recent work by Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler examines the influence of the Adam and Eve narrative in Genesis 1-3 on contemporary ideas about gender and sexuality. In *Enticed by Eden*, they present two strands of this influence—recreating Eden and recycling Eden—and frame the academic task as one in which historians and social scientists determine "*whose* Eve, *whose* Adam, and *whose* Eden prevails."[27]

With these two strands of historical studies of gender setting the stage for the following discussion, we can now turn our attention to projects about gender in the field of Pauline studies specifically, in which the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza looms large by all accounts. Beginning with her trajectory-setting work *In Memory of Her*, Fiorenza embarks on a journey in which she reconceives and recasts Christian history, doctrine, and ethics according to a feminist critical hermeneutic and method.[28] Although New Testament scholars have criticized her work for a variety of reasons,[29] her influence and perspective endure to this day.[30]

Our differences in methodological presuppositions aside, opportunities for

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[26]Brooke Holmes, *Gender: Antiquity and Its Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2 (emphasis original).

[27]Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler, *Enticed by Eden: How Western Culture Uses, Confuses, (and Sometimes Abuses) Adam and Eve* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 11 (emphasis original).

[28] Fiorenza, *In Memory*; see also Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone* and Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word: Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Context* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).

[29]E.g., Anne-Louise Eriksson, in her published PhD dissertation *The Meaning of Gender in Theology: Problems and Possibilities* (Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University, 1995) suggests that Fiorenza's critique of androcentrism presupposes the very notion of an essentialized femininity that it purports to criticize (87-106); see also the published PhD dissertation of Esther Yue L. Ng, *Reconstructing Christian Origins? The Feminist Theology of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza: An Evaluation* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2002), which suggests that Fiorenza's reconstruction both of the Jewish and Greco-Roman background of the New Testament, as well as the emergence of an egalitarian Christian community, is unviable.

[30]See her two most recent works, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Transforming Vision: Explorations in Feminist The*logy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011) and Fiorenza, *Changing Horizons: Explorations in Feminist Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), which are the first and second volumes of a collection of her articles and lectures centered on the topic of feminist theology and hermeneutics.

fruitful interaction with Schüssler Fiorenza abound as a result of a study such as the one I attempt here. First, we share a concern for the gendered "other" that is sometimes elided in contemporary ethical formulations that involve inherent power structures. Second, we share a commitment to textual matters related to the exegesis and interpretation of scripture. And finally, we both agree that the early Christian movement was countercultural in its treatment of women. Unfortunately, in-depth engagement with the broad corpus of Fiorenza's scholarship is beyond the very particular scope of this project, as we will see.

Perhaps the most intriguing work in recent years at the intersection of gender studies and New Testament studies is that of Norwegian feminist scholar Jorunn Økland. In her published dissertation, *Women in Their Place*, Økland argues that "Paul's exhortations concerning women's ritual roles and ritual clothing in 1 Corinthians 11-14 structure and gender the Christian gathering as a particular kind of space constructed through ritual, a 'sanctuary space.'"[31] Økland brings together a variety of discourses—including ritual theory, critical space theory, and post-structural feminist theory—in an attempt to illuminate the manner in which gender boundaries structured ancient conceptions of order, both cosmically and ecclesially.

Although the thesis I advance in this project is not directly related to the specific thesis that Økland's project advances, my study will traverse similar terrain. Specifically, I hope to adopt a more critical appropriation of post-structuralist perspectives than Økland seems to demonstrate, as well as incorporate a fair amount of dialogue with existing Pauline theologies and exegetical commentaries in my examination of 1 Corinthians 7. This latter difference, in particular, seems to be a significant weakness in Økland's work, particularly because it purports to explore the

[31]Jorunn Økland, *Women in Their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 1.

overall coherence of 1 Corinthians 11-14.[32]

Finally, Talmudic scholar Daniel Boyarin has made a fairly unique contribution to the discussion of Paul's use of gender language. In his book *A Radical Jew*, he devotes a chapter to the alleged "backsliding feminism" of Paul in Corinthians, in which his instructions regarding marriage seem to confirm existing gender hierarchies, thus contradicting the programmatic statement about gender in Galatians 3:28.[33] To resolve this tension Boyarin appeals to the "myth of the primal androgyne" that was prevalent in antiquity. He points out, however, that philosophers in the Hellenistic world understood the primal androgyne to be fundamentally disembodied, so that it was effectively "no-body," and the sex duality was reduced to "no-sex." From this perspective, Boyarin suggests that Paul advances a theology of the body in Corinthians and a theology of the Spirit in Galatians.[34]

Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation

When the first edition of Bruce Malina's landmark study, *The New Testament World*, appeared in 1979, the field of cultural anthropology had received scant attention from New Testament scholars.[35] Since then, the use of social scientific approaches to interpret scripture has gained in popularity as it has demonstrated its utility in illuminating the world behind the text. Scholars such as John Elliott and Philip Esler have joined Malina in producing monograph-length treatments of the approach broadly encompassed by the term "social scientific criticism," and numerous edited volumes on

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[32]So Anthony Thiselton, review of *Women in Their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space*, by Jorunn Økland, JTS, 58.1 (2007), 236-9.

[33]Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 180-200.

[34]Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 184.

[35]Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, revised ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993).

the subject exist, as well.[36]

Among the various kinds of social-scientific studies published by New Testament scholars, two particular types are of special relevance to this project. The first reflects the growing interest among New Testament scholars in the social aspects of personal identity. The second type of social-scientific study of interest to this project is the relatively large corpus of literature devoted to background studies of the lives of women in the time of the early church.

Identity and cultural context. Understandably, because of texts like Galatians 3:28, much discussion about identity-related topics in New Testament studies has centered on the nature of racial and ethnic identity in the early days of the Christian movement. For example, both Denise Kimber Buell and Caroline Johnson Hodge have produced monographs that posit kinship as the fundamental metaphor for the "in Christ" identity of Christians.[37] Their argument centers on the reception of the Spirit as a substitute for the shared blood that typically grounded kinship relationships in ancient cultures. Gentiles who became Christians gained the Spirit, who seals the kinship bond with Jewish believers. Love Sechrest, on the other hand, also affirms the centrality of the Spirit, but suggests that this elevation of kinship as the basis upon which Christian

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[36]See monographs by John H. Elliott, *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), and Philip F. Esler, *The First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 1994); see also the following edited volumes: Philip F. Esler, ed., *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Richard L Rohrbaugh, ed., *The Social Sciences*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996); and David G. Horrell, ed., *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999); finally, see also the related body of literature in Pauline studies, including Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), and N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), among many others.

[37]Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); see also Denise Kimber Buell and Caroline Johnson Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul," *JBL* 123, no. 2 (2004): 235-51; Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

identity is formed is inconsistent with the way Paul refers to conversion in contexts that signal fundamental shifts in ethnoracial identity.[38]

And yet, Paul does not single out ethnoracial distinctions in Galatians 3:28, but mentions them alongside differences in economic status as well as sex difference. This suggests, at the very least, that New Testament scholars might also explore Paul's understanding of sexual difference using some of the same social scientific methods and theories as the studies of Buell, Hodge, and Sechrest. In particular, the social identity theory (SIT) of Polish social psychologist Henri Tajfel and his British colleague Nigel Turner has been demonstrated to be of great utility in understanding the nature of the Jew/Gentile conflict in the early church, as well as the emerging "in Christ" identity that was attributed to members of the Christian movement.[39] Two recent monographs by Brian Tucker make use of SIT to illustrate how a believer's "in Christ" identity transformed previously existing identities without replacing them.[40] Finally, a recent monograph by Kathy Ehrensperger arrives at a similar conclusion through the use of bi-cultural theory.[41]

Women in the New Testament and in Paul. Although similar to the histories of gender and sexuality mentioned above, the following presentation consists of works with an explicitly social-scientific method. Both types of studies originated around the same time, and yet New Testament scholars have more often attempted the latter than the former. Indeed, background studies of women and the various roles they typically had

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[38]Love L. Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 15.

[39]See J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A Baker, eds., *The T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2014).

[40]J. Brian Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Social Identity in 1 Corinthians 1-4* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), and Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling: Paul and the Continuation of Social Identities in 1 Corinthians* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

[41]Kathy Ehrensperger, *Paul at the Crossroads of Culture: Theologizing in the Space-Between* (London: T&T Clark, 2013).

have abounded both in New Testament studies in general,[42] and in Pauline studies in particular.[43] Finally, within this latter group of studies, some scholars have focused their attention on the paraenetic sections in 1 Corinthians 7 and 1 Timothy 5 that address widows and virgins.

The situation Paul addresses in these two texts is the nexus of several issues of interest as it relates to Paul's proscriptions for widows and virgins. First, some allege that the paraenesis in 1 Timothy 5 reflects a later, more developed tradition in which patriarchal concerns have infiltrated the originally egalitarian ethos of the nascent Christ community.[44] Second, the adjective ὑπέρακμος in 1 Corinthians 7:36 could either refer to the man or the virgin in that context, and could either be a chronological reference to age, or a reference to excessive passions.[45] Third, many have speculated about the appearance in 1 Timothy 5:11 of teaching directed towards "young widows," suggesting that it is incompatible with Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 7 concerning virgins.[46] Finally, both terms come together in a letter from Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, which contains a cryptic reference to "virgins who are called widows" (τὰς παρθένους τὰς λεγομένας χήρας).[47]

In the second monograph derived from his PhD dissertation, Ben Witherington

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[42]See the excellent survey of Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009); see also Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), and Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A Study of Jesus' Attitudes to Women and Their Roles as Reflected in His Earthly Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[43]See Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992); Gillian Beattie, *Women and Marriage in Paul and His Early Interpreters* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

[44]E.g., Fiorenza, *In Memory* (315).

[45]E.g., in Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), Martin discusses this verse under the heading "The Problem of Virgins," and suggests that the adjective describes a virgin who is just past puberty (*not* someone who is past her youth, or prime), but does not exclude the possibility of an oblique reference to the excessive passions commonly believed to characterize young, unmarried women (219-28).

[46]Fiorenza, *In Memory,* 312.

[47]Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 13:1.

explores the life of women in Pauline communities, the representation of women in Luke-Acts, women in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, and concludes with a discussion about "trajectories" beyond the New Testament era.[48] In his discussion about 1 Corinthians 7, he suggests that Paul was interested in the *attitude* of a Christian towards his or her marital status changing, and not in legislating a particular change in response to a particular situation. "The Christ-event conditions how one should live, whatever one's marital or social status."[49] He also argues against the traditional view that verses 36-38 refer to a man's dealings with his virgin daughter,[50] and suggests that χήρα in Ignatius's letter to the Smyrnaeans be interpreted as a technical term referring to all unmarried women.[51]

In a different study about women and marriage, Gillian Beattie focuses specifically on the Pauline tradition, and argues that the Pastoral Epistles and the 'gnostic' texts of Nag Hammadi are both valid interpretations of Pauline paraenesis.[52] She suggests that the author of the Pastorals selectively applies tenets of Paul's teaching that are pro-marriage, while ignoring tenets with an alleged egalitarian thrust. Conversely, Beattie suggests that the "pro-women and anti-marriage reputation" of the Nag Hammadi texts might be evidence of an alternative reception of Pauline teaching.[53] References to both virgins and widows figure prominently at various points in her

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[48]Witherington, *Earliest Churches*.

[49]Witherington, *Earliest Churches*, 42.

[50]Ibid., 37.

[51]Witherington, *Earliest Churches*, 201. The entry for χήρα in *TDNT* might corroborate this suggestion, which defines χήρα both as a "woman left without husband" (ἡ τὸν ἄνδρα στερηθεῖσα γυνή) and a "woman living without a husband" (ἡ μετὰ γάμον μὴ συνοικοῦσα ἀνδρί) citing the late fifth-century grammarian Hesychius of Alexandria. The entry seems not to notice, however, the specification μετὰ γάμον ("after marriage") within the second definition, which seems to refer to a *married* woman who is living without her husband (G. Stählin, "χήρα," in *TDNT* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], 9:440).

[52]Beattie, *Women and Marriage*, 3.

[53]Ibid., 2.

discussion, which suggests that her argument and conclusions might be relevant to the study proposed here.

Finally, two projects about widows specifically contribute unique perspectives to this study. Bonnie Bowman Thurston surveys the literature of the early church up until AD 325, and highlights the position of widows in various contexts of church ministry during this era.[54] And in a broader study that encompasses the Greco-Roman context of the New Testament, Bruce W. Winter argues that the contemporary (to Paul) phenomenon of the "new woman" forms the background for discussions about women in the Pauline communities in general, and the discussion about young widows in 1 Timothy 5 in particular.[55] And yet despite the careful attention to historical detail that characterizes these background studies of women in the life of New Testament churches, as well as the others already mentioned, they all lack the conceptual precision about gender identity itself that a study such as the one I will propose can potentially contribute.

Semantics and Methodology

The following discussion is intended to present the methodology behind two works that have been influential in shaping the method of this current study. The first is the published PhD dissertation of Love Sechrest, *A Former Jew*, which has already been mentioned above. I am also mentioning it here, however, because this project will adopt a specific component of the method that Sechrest employed in her own study. In *A Former Jew*, Sechrest catalogued each use of γένος and ἔθνος in Jewish and non-Jewish literature from the turn of the era (almost 5,000 passages roughly between 100 BC and AD 100), assessing the "contours and features of identity in antiquity by identifying the network of

[54]Bonnie Bowman Thurston, *The Widows: A Women's Ministry in the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

[55]Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

ideas . . . most often associated with these words."[56]

A recent study by Paul Trebilco attempts a similar project, although he uses a linguistic method to identify seven labels used in the New Testament to refer to members of the Christ community.[57] He then examines these labels in their sociocultural context and in the New Testament texts in which they occur in order to understand "how self-designations function in a particular community and to determine what role a self-designation plays in a particular social context."[58]

Methodology

The first chapter of this project outlines the background of studies about the Bible, gender, and social theory.

The second chapter of this project surveys the landscape of contemporary feminist theory and gender studies, with particular focus on approaches that theorize feminine identity as a relatively stable and intact cultural category. The purpose of this first chapter is to highlight possible points of contact between theological priorities concerning gender in Christian doctrine and humanistic approaches to theorizing gender.

The third chapter of this project focuses on attempts to theorize the significance of secondary gender differences between men and between women. It begins with a survey of theories about how categories function as markers of identity, and then explores accounts of secondary gender difference within feminist theory and gender studies. It concludes with an examination of social identity theory, and suggests that

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[56]Sechrest, *Former Jew*, 63. For extended discussion on the relationship between racial and gender identity, see Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?" *Nous* 34, no. 1 (2000): 31-55; see also Naomi Zack, *RACE/SEX: Their Sameness, Difference, and Interplay* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[57]Paul Trebilco, *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Interestingly, Trebilco himself deploys a linguistic method developed in Sally McConnell-Ginet, *Language, Sexuality, and Meaning: Linguistic Practice and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[58]Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender*, 15.

incorporating this approach from social psychology can be a helpful heuristic device in a Christian understanding of secondary gender identity.

The fourth chapter examines the manner in which a specific identity label—virgin (παρθένος)— circumscribes a gendered social identity with respect to unmarried female sexuality. It does this through the presentation of an exhaustive survey of the lexical, semantic, and syntactic function of the label across 529 uses in the Jewish and Greco-Roman background literature of the New Testament, as well as the contextual associations surrounding its use in these texts.

The fifth chapter examines 1 Corinthians 7 in light of the previous chapter's findings, highlighting any additional significance they might add to Paul's statements about virgins in his paraenesis. It proposes a newer, alternative approach that is not beset with the weaknesses of prior approaches, and suggests that the perspective on the identity of virgins gained from the previous chapter resolves some well-known tensions in interpretations of 1 Corinthians 7.

The sixth and final chapter explores potential lines of scholastic inquiry that might surface as a result of this study, as well as the various conversations in our culture about gender-related issues that might be implicated by the conclusions drawn about the nature of gender identity.

CHAPTER 2

FEMINISM AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Family therapist John Gray was a relatively unknown figure in the world of counseling until 1992, when he published *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*. By the end of the year he had become a *New York Times* best-selling author, however, and by the end of the decade it had become the "highest-ranked work of non-fiction" with 6.6 million copies in print.[1] Indeed, few contemporary authors have exerted through one book as much influence on popular conceptions of the difference between the sexes as Gray.[2]

Two years later, however, popular American humorist Garrison Keillor reflected a fundamentally different approach to understanding gender difference. In *The Book of Guys*, Keillor suggests that

> Girls have it better from the beginning – don't kid yourself. They were allowed to

[1]"Grisham Ranks as Top-Selling Author of Decade," Book News at CNN.com, December 31, 1999 (http://archives.cnn.com/1999/books/news/12/31/1990.sellers/index.html, accessed July 28, 2014).

[2]The distinction between sex and gender has been variously assumed, disputed, and contested in a variety of contents and for multiple reasons. Simone de Beauvoir famously claimed that "one is not born a woman, but becomes one," foreshadowing academic distinctions between biological and sociological components of identity that were subsequently forged by psychoanalyst Robert J. Stoller in *Sex and Gender* (London: Hogarth Press, 1968). Just ten years later, however, social psychologists Suzanne J. Kessler and Wendy McKenna challenged the sharp dislocation of sex from the forces of social construction in *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach* (New York: Wiley, 1978), 7. Likewise, Rosalind Coward refers to the "very real problem that there . . . is no ready solution to the double exigency to look at women as a sex, but at sex as a socially constructed category" (*Patriarchal Precedents: Sexuality and Social Relations* [London: Routledge, 1983], 6). Finally, the slippage between the effects of both raw biology and cultural construction are on full display in the work of queer theorist Judith Butler, who wonders at the outset of *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) whether "perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all" (9-10). For theological reasons, which will become clearer in chap. 2, it seems helpful to maintain at least a rudimentary distinction between the two, if only as a means of signifying the indeterminate influence of both 'givens' (i.e., the body and its biology) and 'discursivity' (i.e., gender and its effects) in the emergence of identity.

> play in the house where the books were and the adults[,] and boys were sent outside like livestock – boys were noisy and rough and girls were nice so they got to stay and we had to go. Boys ran around in the yard with toy guns going "shwsh, shwsh," fighting wars for made up [sic] reasons and arguing about who was dead, whilst the girls stayed inside and played with dolls creating complex family groups and learning to solve problems through negotiation and role play. Which gender is better equipped to live an adult life would you guess? Is there any doubt about this? Is it even close?[3]

The premise of the joke is actually an ironic reversal of a common feminist refrain, namely that women would fare better if they had access to the same privileges that men typically enjoy in societies where forms of patriarchy are operative.

As the title indicates, *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* lies squarely within the essentialist tradition of gender theory. Metaphorically speaking, a cosmological origins etiology of sorts accounts for gender differences between men and women and communicates in a particularly striking manner the fixed nature of masculinity and femininity. Men and woman act the way they do because it is within their nature to do so as individuals from their respective "planets."

Conversely, Garrison Keillor's comical reflections on the distinctive childhood activities of boys and girls comprise a largely constructionist account of gender differences, although one with a somewhat unconventional narrative. As with all constructionist narratives gender identity develops contingently as the "plot" unfolds. There is no necessary way of being feminine or masculine, any more than it is "necessary" for historical events to unfold one way rather than another.

Both essentialist and constructionist accounts of gender attempt to answer two questions: What is the significance of gender difference? and What role does sexual difference play in the emergence of gender identity? Indeed, the following brief historical survey of various answers to these questions will provide the necessary conceptual context for our current proposal.

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[3]Garrison Keillor, *Book of Guys* (New York: Penguin, 1994), 14, cited in Elaine Storkey, *Origins of Difference: The Gender Debate Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 68.

Gender Essentialism

According to gender essentialists, sex differences are encoded deterministically in structures within nature. As such, they can be detected and observed if studied correctly, which has typically been understood since the Enlightenment in terms of the modern scientific method.[4] Indeed, this close association with scientific inquiry has had long-term effects on popular conceptions of gender.

Sexology and the New Medical Science

The first essentialist explanations of gender in the modern era accompanied the emergence of sexology as an established scientific discipline. And among these first essentialists, the work of Havelock Ellis, a physician who had been strongly influenced by anthropology, looms large. In 1913, Ellis published his seven-volume *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, which cemented his position as a trailblazer within the new field and fueled a conceptual revolution in popular opinion on gender and sexuality.[5]

Of all the intellectual contributions Ellis made to the field of sexology, perhaps the most significant among them for our purposes here was his practice of interpreting human sexuality through the lens of then-common anthropological conclusions regarding courtship in the animal world. In essence, Ellis believed that animal courtship rituals could play a central role in organizing beliefs and practices regarding human gender and sexuality.[6] According to this theory, man is a hunter by nature who pursues and conquers

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[4]For a survey of premodern to early modern essentialist accounts of gender, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), in which Laqueur suggests that a 'one-sex' model of sex-gender difference dominated premodern accounts of gender. According to this model, the bodies of women were construed as imperfect versions of the male body that lacked sufficient 'vital heat' to expel physically the primary sex organs outside the body.

[5]So Margaret Jackson, *The Real Facts of Life Feminism and the Politics of Sexuality c. 1850-1940* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994), 159. See also Paul A. Robinson, *The Modernization of Sex: Havelock Ellis, Alfred Kinsey, William Masters and Virginia Johnson* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), and Edward Brecher, *The Sex Researchers* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1969).

[6]Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Part 1 (New York: Random House, 1942), 39-41.

woman, his 'prey.' Masculinity is therefore defined with reference to demonstrations of power, while femininity is associated with modesty, or an "instinctive fear."[7] According to Ellis,

> Force is the foundation of virility, and its psychic manifestation is courage. In the struggle for life, violence is the first virtue. The modesty of women – in its primordial form consisting of physical resistance, active or passive, to the assaults of the male – aided selection by putting to the test man's most important quality, force.[8]

A related theme in the sexologists' writings is the association of pain with feminine pleasure. This, too, is related to anthropological courtship observations that the conquest in nature of female animals by the male often involved a degree of force. They observed that in these cases only by subjugating the female could the male then proceed with the act of coitus. Likewise, Ellis openly drew the conclusion that women in particular were apt to associate pain and pleasure with each other so closely that sometimes it was difficult to distinguish between the two, as Table 1 illustrates.

The Marriage Manuals

While the sexologists wrote for a primarily academic audience, a genre of literature known as the "marriage manual" was born when medical doctors and other professionals began to publish the sexologists' ideas in more concentrated, but accessible forms. Among these marriage manuals, none was more influential than *Ideal Marriage*, originally published in 1928 by Theodore Van de Velde, a Dutch gynecologist.[9] Appealing simultaneously to doctors as well as to nonprofessionals, the prose of *Ideal Marriage* could be characterized as medical discourse "for the masses." Although Van de

Table 1. Female sexuality associated with physical pain

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[7]Ellis, *Studies*, Part 1, 1.

[8]Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Part 2 (New York: Random House, 1942), 33.

[9]Theodore Van de Velde, *Ideal Marriage: Its Physiology and Technique*, trans. Stella Browne (New York: Random House, 1930). By 1965, *Ideal Marriage* was in its 45th printing.

Tied to animal courtship rituals	The masculine tendency to delight in domination, the feminine tendency to delight in submission, still maintain the ancient traditions when the male animal pursued the female.[10]
Masculine pleasure in inflicting pain	. . . a certain pleasure in manifesting his power over a woman by inflicting pain upon her is an outcome and survival of the primitive process of courtship.[11]
Feminine pleasure in inflicting pain	The intimate connection of love with pain, its tendency to approach cruelty, is seen in one of the most widespread of the occasional and non-essential manifestations of strong sexual emotion, especially in women, the tendency to bite.[12]
Feminine pleasure in suffering pain	While in men it is possible to trace a tendency to inflict pain, or the simulacrum of pain, on the women they love, it is still easier to trace in women a delight in experiencing physical pain when inflicted by a lover, and an eagerness to accept subjection to his will . . . [to] abandon herself to her lover, to be able to rely on his physical power.[13]

Velde employed scientific terminology liberally, he did so in the context of plain-sense explanations of the physiology of sex.

For our purposes, it is sufficient to note the extent to which Van de Velde perpetuated many of the anthropological perspectives of Ellis. For example, Van de Velde followed Ellis in construing sexual intercourse in terms of an inherent power differential between the man and the woman. Indeed, the force of such a power

[10]Ellis, *Studies*, Part 2, 82.

[11]Ibid., 83.

[12]Ibid., 84.

[13]Ibid., 89.

differential is readily discernable in Van de Velde's striking suggestion that what "both man and woman, driven by obscure primitive urges, wish to feel in the sexual act, is the essential force of maleness, which expresses itself in a sort of violent and absolute possession of the woman."[14]

Feminist Perspectives

Although the seeds of modern feminist ideology were sown in the various suffrage movements of the mid-1800's, competing feminist accounts of gender difference only began to accrue widespread intellectual credibility when they gained access to the academy during the social upheaval of the 1960's and 1970's. By this time, women in the United States had been voting for more than forty years, and yet still did not have access to the same set of social, economic, and legal benefits as men. Although the history is complicated, there are two reasons for this. Many feminists had aligned themselves with the sexologists, having assumed that greater awareness of their scientific insights would lead to increased recognition of female autonomy.[15] Second, and perhaps more fundamentally, it is difficult to institute a regime of social change if the status quo is widely perceived as 'natural.' If differences between the sexes are necessary (i.e., a function of biological, genetic, or psychological determinism), then contesting the various forms of inequalities between them might seem misguided at best, and at worst impossible. The need thus began to emerge for an alternate account of gender differences that could underwrite a program for enacting social change.

The account of sex-gender difference that began to emerge in competition with essentialist accounts of gender is the idea that genders are social constructs.[16] They are

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[14]Van de Velde, *Ideal Marriage*, 159 (emphasis original).

[15]Jackson, *Real Facts of Life*, 142-56.

[16]See Peter Berger, Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), and John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1995); see also Sally Haslanger, "Social Construction: The 'Debunking' Project," in *Socializing Metaphysics: The Nature of Social Reality*, F. Schmitt, ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman

not deterministically related to the 'givens' of nature, whether construed in genetic, biological, or psychological terms. Instead, gender identities are formed in a culturally contingent fashion, being embedded within the particular social forces that characterize the context within which they emerge.[17] Therefore, the fundamental task of understanding gender is not a matter of pursuing deeper forms of knowledge and insight into the nature of what is 'given,' but of exploring and critically analyzing the social context within which existing gender differences gain their significance. Constructionists do not necessarily deny that apparent 'givens' influence the final form of gender; they reject, however, the assumption that gender is an essence that can be exhaustively explained in terms of these 'givens.'

Feminist scholars have proposed various taxonomies of twentieth-century feminism in order to classify the multifaceted strands of this discipline. Karen Offen, for example, distinguishes between relational and individualist "modes of historical argument or discourse that have been used by women and their male allies on behalf of women's emancipation from male control in Western societies."[18] In 'relational' modes of feminist thought, the basic unit of society is the gendered male-female couple, construed in a non-hierarchical manner. 'Individualist' modes, however, posit a genderless personal agent as the basic unit in society in order to emphasize the more fundamental issues of human rights and personal autonomy.

A more common approach categorizes feminist theories according to their primary animating principle or undercurrent, generally represented by two broad groups:

& Littlefield, 2003), 301-25, for an analysis of feminists' use of social constructionist frameworks, which arrived on the academic scene well after the feminist movement began in earnest.

[17]This connection between power and identity is central to the poststructuralist theory of Michel Foucault, in which all social forces are reframed as forms of knowledges masquerading within a certain social context as power.

[18]Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach," *Signs* 14, no. 1 (1988): 134.

equality feminism and difference feminism. Elizabeth Grosz, for example, suggests that theories motivated by the fundamental equality of the genders tend to emphasize the common humanity of men and women as a basis for protecting the social, economic, and legal rights of women.[19] Such approaches minimize the significance of apparent gender differences, insisting instead on the equal capacity of both genders to accomplish tasks traditionally associated with either masculinity or femininity. Feminisms in the other group, however, are eager to structure their theories around a central commitment to the fundamental difference between the genders. This emphasis on 'difference,' they believe, is more compatible with the activist impulses latent within the identity politics that were influential in feminist circles in the 70's and 80's.[20]

Because later phases of this study will focus on the role of nature as it relates to the emergence of gender identity, we will adapt this second taxonomy in the following presentation of feminist theories. Instead of dividing feminist theories into distinct 'equality' and 'difference' groups, however, perhaps it is more helpful to imagine a dual-gradient continuum in which both 'equality' and 'difference' are represented at opposite ends of a spectrum in an indirect relationship to each other. On one end of the spectrum reside modes of feminist thought that emphasize the equality of men and women in terms that are not essentially gendered. As one progresses towards the middle of the continuum,

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[19]Elizabeth Grosz, "Conclusion: What Is Feminist Theory?," in *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, ed. Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Grosz, (Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 190-204. Cf. Maggie McFadden, "Anatomy of Difference: Toward a Classification of Feminist Theory," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 7, no. 6 (1984): 495-504, who organizes feminist theories as 'minimalist' and 'maximalist' along the single axis of 'difference.'

[20]Conversely, Jackie Stacey suggests that both synchronic and diachronic accounts of feminist theory can obscure the basic fact that they "often constitute a very particular historical narrative" ("Feminist Theory: Capital F, Capital T," in *Introducing Women's Studies: Feminist Theory and Practice*, ed. Victoria Robinson and Diane Richardson [New York: New York University Press, 1997], 58, emphasis original). Admittedly, adopting a typology to describe the various approaches to a field as broad as women's and gender studies introduces a degree of oversimplification. Elizabeth Grosz nonetheless suggests that synchronic and diachronic categories, although arbitrary, still allow feminists strategically to locate their discipline within the larger context of academic discourse ("The In(ter)vention of Feminist Knowledges," in *Crossing Boundaries: Feminisms and the Critique of Knowledges*, ed. Barbara Caine, E. A. Grosz, and Marie de Lepervanche [Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988], 93).

one encounters increasingly alloyed perspectives in which both 'equality' and 'difference' meld in ways both complementary and conflicting. Finally, on the opposite end of the continuum one encounters perspectives in which the concept of 'difference' itself is transposed into various discursive keys, effectually rendering individual gender identities incommensurate, and thus beyond the reach of comparative notions like 'equality.'

Equality Feminism

The philosophy of French feminist Simone de Beauvoir in many ways influenced a generation of feminists, beginning with the publication of her book *Le Deuxième Sexe* in 1949.[21] Indeed, the existentialist flavor of her famous proclamation that "one is not born a woman, but becomes a woman,"[22] prefigured the activist thrust of feminist theory at both the academic and popular level. Woman, according to de Beauvoir, has been defined as man's "other," which implies a masculine standard:

> Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being . . . . For him she is sex—absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other.[23]

Feminist scholars widely acknowledge that liberal feminism and anti-capitalist feminisms are the two major currents of feminist thought within the 'equality' stream of contemporary feminism.[24] In order to understand these two distinct movements, we must introduce a term with a long, checkered history in the history of feminist studies: patriarchy. According to its etymology, patriarchy denotes a formal social structure that is

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[21]Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949). For the English translation, see de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by H. M. Parshley (New York: Bantam, 1952).

[22]De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 267.

[23]Ibid., xvi. Betty Friedan examines the effects of this "othering" of 'woman' in her enormously popular book *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963).

[24]Grosz, "Conclusion," 190-1.

characterized by a ruling male figure who possesses authority over those regarded as his physical or symbolic offspring. Although liberal feminists and anti-capitalist feminists diagnose the problem of patriarchy differently, both are motivated by a fundamental commitment to the equality of the sexes.

A strategic beginning. The tradition of liberal feminism is widely regarded as the most "mainstream" of the various feminist movements, a distinction stemming from the willingness of its proponents to work within preexisting social structures in order to bring about reforms within specific cultures. As the heir to first-wave feminism, liberal feminism stands solidly in the 'equal rights' tradition of its forebears.[25] Besides this general optimistic outlook on working within the public arena, two themes distinguish liberal feminism from other varieties of feminist theory.

First, liberal feminism often emphasized similarities between men and women, while minimizing the significance of apparent differences between them. Because structures in the social order are largely the product of patriarchal influences (e.g., the professions, the press, government, etc.), participation in them by women must necessarily take place on masculine terms. Indeed, many critics of liberal feminism claim that women in practice identify themselves with masculinity by adopting social roles created by men, and within men's world.[26] Instead of dismantling patriarchal structures in the public sphere by expanding their social and professional footprint in it, women are actually reinforcing these structures by conforming to their norms and expectations.[27]

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[25]It is worth noting, however, that the feminist writings of Mary Wollstonecraft actually predate by almost eighty years the political ideology of John Stuart Mill, who is commonly regarded as the father of modern liberalism.

[26]E.g., see the analysis of Carol Lee Bacchi, *Same Difference: Feminism and Sexual Difference* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990), who examines the historical context of this tension between equality with men and identity with men.

[27]Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," *Signs* 7, no. 1 (1981): 18-19, describes this problem by the phrase "logic of identification."

Second, liberal feminism emphasizes the social values of personal autonomy and freedom of choice. It calls on women to combat patriarchy and institute social change incrementally by engaging fully in public life as moral agents capable, like men, of making both good and bad decisions. Although this can be difficult to accomplish, liberal feminists maintain a dogged optimism that repeated, principled attempts by women to take their place in society alongside men will cement their position together in a common humanity. In the words of Naomi Wolf,

> If we suppress the truth that sometimes women do have choices and consciously choose to do wrong, then we have fallen short of what should be our baseline feminist goal: laying claim to our humanity, all of it, not just the scenic parts. We must dare to assume full responsibility as well as ask for full rights, because human status brings with it the ineradicable moral weight of making choices . . . .[28]

Anti-capitalist movements. In some ways, the anti-capitalist impulse in some forms of feminism is a development of the liberal agenda.[29] Patriarchy is still the problem, but Marxist and socialist feminists examine the relationship of patriarchy specifically with respect to class systems. This expansion of patriarchy into the realm of a society's economy is a form of symbolic patriarchy, or "a social structure or community within which power is dispersed among the male subjects."[30] Indeed, feminists initially found in anti-capitalist theories a conceptual framework that simultaneously explained both how patriarchy oppressed women, as well as what they could do to bring about social change.

Anti-capitalist feminisms trace their origins to the Marxist doctrine of

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[28]Naomi Wolf, *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century* (New York: Random House, 1993), 232.

[29]I designate both Marxist and socialist feminisms as "anti-capitalist" in order to differentiate them both from later versions of materialist feminism. Whereas the former are uniformly committed to some form of opposition to the economic system of capitalism, the latter iteration of materialism (as demonstrated in chap. 3) are united primarily in their opposition to post-structuralist construals of gender identity. See Susan Archer Mann, *Doing Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 148-50.

[30]David Buchbinder, *Studying Men and Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 2013), 67.

historical materialism, or the belief that systems of collective activity result in the ongoing production of human culture, which is understood in terms of the concrete production of labor and manufactured goods necessary for the survival of individual men and women. Although Marxist philosophy has tended to focus on the public sphere as the site of capitalist economic activity, feminists soon began to inquire into the domestic preconditions that supported the framework of the capitalist economic model. Indeed, these early Marxist feminists proposed that historical materialism must also problematize the supposed isolation of the private sphere from the public sphere. According to their perspective, the private sphere is equally involved in the production of labor and manufactured goods, which are subsequently transferred to the public sphere through the marketplace. In other words, not only is the distinction between public and private spheres artificial, but it also serves the interests of those who derive economic benefit from the unequal distribution of resources within and between these spheres.

The early Marxist feminist Margaret Benston was among the first to point out that families in capitalist economies were primarily "production units" for housework and child-rearing, and not merely passive consumption units.[31] By restricting the labor of women to the domestic realm, the capitalist class of men—together with patriarchal socialist men!—are able to benefit both from the supply of free labor they represent, as well as from the production of new workers to fuel the capitalist economic vision. But aside from this single element of common ground, little agreement exists among anti-capitalist feminists regarding the precise origins of the economic oppression of women.

The root of these disagreements can be traced to the initial encounters the first Marxist feminists had with the claims of the radical feminists.[32] Indeed, through their

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[31]Margaret Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," *Monthly Review* 21, no. 4 (1969): 13-27.

[32]The radical feminists are much closer to the 'difference' end of the equality/difference continuum of feminist thought, and will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

interactions with radical feminists it became apparent that many of these initial anti-capitalist feminists were Marxists, first and foremost, who had grafted onto their critique of capitalism an additional critique of patriarchy.[33] In other words, feminist concerns, specifically the oppression and exploitation of women by men, were understood in terms of the Marxist narrative of class struggle between those who own the means of production and the working class who do the producing.[34] In social constructionist terms, Marxist feminists claim that the forces of capitalism operate at a more basic level than the forces of patriarchy, although both conspire together to influence the emergence of contingent identities in the context of oppression.

The precise relationship between the twin forces of capitalism and patriarchy forms the basis for the numerous variations of socialist feminism. In general, these can be divided into two main groups. The first group consists of socialist feminists who attempt to address the two problems separately in a 'dual systems' approach, predicated on the notion that the class system and gender system occupy separate economies of power.[35] The second group, on the other hand, resists a dual systems approach in favor of a unifying master theory in which both economies are held together in one account of power.[36] Although these two types of socialist feminism are united in their commitment

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[33]See Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), and Martha Gimenez, "The Oppression of Women: A Structuralist Marxist View," in *Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference, and Women's Lives* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 71-82.

[34]This is not the same as saying that Marxist feminists were less committed to the feminist cause than other feminists, but simply that they proposed a Marxist answer to the problem of patriarchy. For example, Gimenez, "The Oppression of Women," 82, characterizes her analysis of sexual inequality as "a Marxist theory of the oppression of women, asking Marxist questions, and developing Marxist answers."

[35]See, for example, Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), who reconceptualizes the economy of patriarchy in psychoanalytic terms that are inherently susceptible to the effects of the economy of class; cf. Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," in *Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism*, ed. L. Sargent (Boston: South End Press, 1981), who suggests that both economies contain a material component, and can thus interact transparently with each other.

[36]See Iris Marion Young, "Socialist Feminism and the Limits of Dual Systems Theory," in *Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference, and Women's Lives* (New York: Routledge, 1997),

to both equality and difference, the two approaches interface differently with equality and difference, even as they attempt to operate within a generally materialist, Marxist framework.

Difference Feminism

Whereas liberal and anti-capitalist feminisms are both animated by a common, baseline commitment to the fundamental equality of the sexes, the various forms of difference feminism emphasize the collective voice and experience of women as distinguished from men.

"Anything you can do, I can do better." Historically, the radical feminist movement emerged alongside its liberal counterparts during the early days of second wave feminism. Unlike liberal feminists, however, the early radical feminists were not animated by a fundamental commitment to the common humanity shared by men and women. Instead, radical feminists characterized their mission as a tooth and nail struggle against the oppression of women by individuals who are first and foremost men. According to radical feminism, this oppression is fueled by a culturally and historically transcendent, symbolic patriarchy that operates at the most basic level of all human societies.

Although this wholesale focus on gender differences laid the foundation for promising new theoretical trajectories, in the early years of the radical feminist movement it was far from clear that its proponents would actually achieve their goal of eradicating patriarchy. Historically, the radical feminist tendency to accuse patriarchy as the original source of inequality has resulted in at least two extreme implications, depending on how one accounted for the origin of patriarchy. Some traced patriarchy to

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95-106.

the control men exercised over the biological process of reproduction.[37] According to this perspective, freedom from patriarchy amounted to liberation from the natural order, and would thus require the invention of futuristic technologies that could bestow upon women complete autonomy over the reproductive process (e.g. not only artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization, but also a bionic womb and public post-natal care facilities). At the other end of the spectrum, radical feminists less inclined towards an essentialist framework recognized that liberation from a force as deeply entrenched into humanity as patriarchy would require nothing short of an activist advancement of revolution.

"Patriarchy, meet Oedipus." The appearance of the various psychoanalytic feminisms reflects the disillusion many felt regarding the lack of success of earlier socialist and radical attempts at achieving social change. Accordingly, the admixture of psychoanalysis with discursive theories resulted in a feminism that was arguably less connected to the real, day-to-day lives of women than the "Big Three" (liberal, anti-capitalist, and radical feminism).[38] Psychoanalytic feminisms can be divided into roughly two groups: those that adapt Freudian theories of sexual difference and those that adapt the post-Freudian theories of Jacques Lacan.

According to Freudian psychoanalysis, both masculine and feminine identities are the result of a successful resolution of the Oedipus complex, defined by Freud as "castration anxiety" (for young boys) or "penis envy" (for young girls). According to Freudian feminists, this "psycho-structural" patriarchy constructs rigid gender identities in a persistent, subconscious attempt to reinforce cultural norms of masculinity and femininity that perpetuate the superiority of men. Their diagnosis could not be clearer:

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[37]See Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: Bantam, 1981).

[38]For an analysis of the "things-to-words" shift in feminism, see Michèle Barrett, "Words and Things: Materialism and Method in Contemporary Feminist Analysis," in *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates*, ed. Michèle Barrett and Anne Phillips (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 201-19.

"the girl felt totally inferior, because she lacked something, and the boy felt temporarily inferior to his more phallicly powerful father."[39]

In order to rescue Freudian psychoanalysis from this patriarchal bias, psychoanalytic feminists paint alternate portrayals of the Oedipus complex and its impact on the production of gender identities. Nancy Chodorow, for example, employs object relations formations of the pre-Oedipal phase to highlight the inherent asymmetry between masculine and feminine resolutions of the Oedipus complex, problematizing the masculine process of individualization rather than the feminine process of maternal identification.[40] The result, Chodorow claims, is a powerful contrast between the unidirectional nature of masculine love-object orientation and the multivalent set of love-objects that characterizes feminine experience, underwriting universal relational patterns of feminine "mothering" and masculine ambivalence. Ultimately, "women's mothering generated . . . a defensive masculine identity in men and a compensatory psychology and ideology of masculine superiority."[41] In order to counteract these impulses, therefore, a regime of social change must target the relational incapacities of men.[42]

In contrast to the relatively concrete, biosocial focus of classic psychoanalysis, the psychoanalytic framework of Jacques Lacan introduces a level of abstraction into Freudian theory by reframing 'penis envy' in purely symbolic terms. Indeed, Freud never adequately addressed accusations that his formulation of the psychoanalytic task was constructed on an essentialist framework, since its postulates were constructed with

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[39]Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 75-76.

[40]Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

[41]Nancy Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 1.

[42]Cf. the complementary feminist account of sex-gender differences in moral reasoning of Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

reference to biological facts (specifically the presence, or absence, of external male genitalia). Against this backdrop, the poststructuralist iteration of psychoanalysis proposed by Lacan can be seen as an attempt to forestall accusations of essentialism by recasting traditional psychodynamic conflicts as indeterminate discursive processes.[43]

In order to understand the impact of this shift, one must first understand the general framework of Freudian theory as it relates to the psychoanalysis of the "split subject." Specifically, psychoanalytic theory is a set of explanatory hypotheses that postulates a semio-erotic etiology of the unconscious mind, as well as an account of how the realm of the unconscious subsequently interacts with the conscious mind. Central to these canons of psychosexuality is the belief, according to Freud, that the unconscious mind is a natural, biological structure that operates entirely beneath the surface of consciousness, and is hence unknowable, even as it constrains the shape of consciousness through the forces of repression. The effects of this repression, however, are manifest in the various defense mechanisms, projections, and introjections deployed by the ego both to protect and to advance the cause of the id in the context of the harsh reality of the external world. According to Freudian psychoanalytic theory, these strategic maneuvers provide a back door to the realm of the unconscious, which itself consists of an infantile conglomeration of memories, experiences, and perceptions that co-energize primal sexual drives as they emerge and become the subject of representation.

By infusing the unconscious with psychosexual energy, or libido, while simultaneously ascribing agency to the ego, Freud aligns the split character of the subject along an internal/external axis of agency. This "realist"[44] account of the split subject adequately described most psychodynamic phenomena, yet with one vexing exception. In

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[43]See Elizabeth Grosz, *Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge, 1990) for a thorough appraisal of Lacan's contribution to psychoanalytic theory, particularly as it relates both to the tradition of Freudian theory within which it arose, as well as to the tradition of feminism to which it gave rise.

[44]Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, 25-28.

the case of narcissism, desire is not directed toward an object outside the subject, but internally, towards some aspect of the subject itself. In order to account for this, Freud developed an alternate account of the ego that hypothesized a different internal/external axis along which the subject was split, namely the axis of libidinal object. In this account of the "narcissistic"[45] ego, the subject is actually an subject/object, and the ego is construed as the margin within which desire ebbs and flows, and is therefore defined by pleasure and ungoverned by reality.

In his development of Freudian theory, Jacques Lacan employs this second "narcissistic ego" and its subject/object-constituted self because it enables him to cast psychodynamic developmental processes as constituted by an indefinite self/other symbolic exchange. In this account of the subject, sexual identities do not emerge through the concrete (although unconscious) experience of 'penis envy' or the 'castration complex,' but are forged in terms of their relationship to the phallus, which Lacan posits as the ultimate signifier of difference. Since the phallus is not identified with the actual male organ, it is able to circumscribe both masculinity and femininity, representing the means by which sexual difference is perceived to have meaning. In fact, as the ultimate signifier, the phallus represents language, society, indeed all human culture. As such, it cannot ever be possessed, so even men experience their subjectivity as lacking the emblematic power symbolized by the phallus. Likewise, insofar as women become subjects when they enter human culture, they do so in masculine terms because the phallus rules the symbolic order of all society.

As with Freud, the form of symbolic patriarchy operating in Lacanian psychoanalysis is somewhat nebulous; it is unclear whether Lacan believed that the current symbolic order was inevitable, or whether it was subject to change, and the various formulations of post-Lacanian feminism reflect this ambiguity. In an attempt to

[45]Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, 28-31.

rehabilitate Freud through a Lacanian rereading, for example, Juliet Mitchell claims that "to Freud, if psychoanalysis is phallocentric, it is because the human social order that it perceives refracted through the individual human subject is patrocentric."[46]

Perhaps the most widely recognized branch of feminists who relied heavily upon Lacanian psychoanalysis is the group often collectively referred to as the "French feminists." Admittedly a diverse group, these theorists are united by their efforts to create literary and social space within which at least the outline of a truly feminine Subject might emerge, even if its actual content would remain shrouded in the indefinite fog of deferred meaning.[47] Hélène Cixous coined the phrase *écriture féminine* (literally "women's writing") in her 1975 essay "Le rire de la méduse" in order to associate the fecundity of written language with this feminine Subject.[48] Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, together with Cixous, comprise this new approach to addressing the epistemological inequalities constructed by androcentric systems of meaning, which they refer to by the neologism 'phallogocentrism.'

Although French feminism precipitated most directly from Lacanian accounts of the Subject, it is also organically related to the deconstructionist literary theory and post-structural philosophy of Jacque Derrida and Michel Foucault, and represents together with them a further development of Saussurean structuralism and its construals of language and meaning in terms of reciprocal determination and binary opposition. According to Ferdinand de Saussure, language is essentially a system of signs in which

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[46]Juliet Mitchell, "Introduction I," in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), 23.

[47]This common thread leads some, such as Vanda Zajko and Miriam Leonard, *Laughing with Medusa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) to reinforce the impulse to group them together. The similarities among them notwithstanding, the French feminists are quite a diverse group, as can be seen, for example, in Graham Ward, *Theology and Contemporary Critical Theory*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), who discusses Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Hélène Cixous in three separate chapters ("Theology and Representation," "Theology and Ethics," and "Theology and Aesthetics," respectively).

[48]Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs* 1, no. 4 (1976): 875-93.

the ‘signifier’ (i.e., specific ‘sound images,’ or words) and the ‘signified’ (i.e., the concepts that are linked to specific sound images) continually negotiate meaning within langues, or fixed linguistic systems. According to Derrida, however, the reciprocity involved in the linkage of signifier to signified operates not merely by neutrally excluding parallel concepts (i.e., A ≠ B), but by establishing oppositional hierarchies (i.e., A ≠ -A).

This construal of linguistic meaning in terms of opposition and difference is the platform upon which feminist readings of Lacan construct their accounts of the feminine Subject. Noting the privileged role of the phallus as the ruler of the symbolic order, the French feminists point out that the masculine Subject emerges from the castration complex as he comes to terms with his experience of ‘lack’ (i.e., that he lacks the phallus, or the transcendental signifier). And yet, even though he does not actually possess the phallus, his subjectivity is nonetheless defined in relation to it, thereby linking him to the ‘signified’ order of culture and language. Feminine subjectivity, on the other hand, emerges apart from the castration complex, and therefore exists completely outside the realm of the symbolic order. According to Cixous, women quite simply lack *Lack*:

> What psychoanalysis points to as defining woman is that she lacks lack. She lacks lack? Curious to put it in so contradictory, so extremely paradoxical, a manner: she lacks lack. To say she lacks lack is also, after all, to say she doesn’t miss lack . . . since she doesn’t miss the lack of lack. Yes, they say, but the point is “she lacks the Lack,” The Lack, lack of the Phallus. And so, supposedly, she misses the great lack, so that without man she would be indefinite, indefinable, nonsexed, unable to recognize herself: outside the Symbolic.[49]

The feminist task, according to Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva, is to subvert the hegemony of the Phallic order by reclaiming an authentic, independent femininity.

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[49]Hélène Cixous, “Castration or Decapitation?” *Signs* 7, no. 1 (1981): 41-55.

Identity trouble. In many ways the various post-Lacanian formulations of feminism reflect the growing influence of standpoint and discursive models of knowledge within the academy. Indeed, the connection forged by poststructuralism and postmodernism between language and its capacity both to construct universal categories and to restrict or repress identification with these categories is the animating principle in current intersectional and post-structuralist feminist theories about gender. Two concepts in particular are central to intersectional and discursive feminisms.

First, the idea of difference itself is simultaneously expanded and particularized. Rather than utilizing difference as a means of categorizing universal identities, these newer feminisms problematize differences between individuals within the category 'woman.' Ethnoracial differences, for example, between individual women call into question the universality of the category 'woman' if femininity is constructed differently among individuals of different races and ethnicities.[50] Other axes of difference include socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and occupation.

Second, intersectional and discursive feminist accounts of gender difference critique patriarchy not merely on the grounds that it oppresses women, but at a much deeper level. The signal problem of patriarchy, according to these newer feminisms, is that it operates at a subterranean level as an unexamined form of knowledge that legitimates repressive and restrictive expressions of power. This organic connection between knowledge and power characterizes the poststructuralist philosophy of Michel Foucault, and is central to discursive feminisms and queer theory.

Initially developed in response to Saussurian structural linguistics, the version of poststructuralism associated with Foucault expands the principle of linguistic differentiation to signs outside the realm of language proper. Like language, which creates meaning by means of exclusionary systems of signification, Foucault suggests

[50]See the extensive discussion in the second major section of the following chapter.

that knowledge can also be described as collections of exclusionary systemic discourses that regulate truth through the exertion of power.[51] Each collection of discourse functions as an individual system of meaning, resulting in a plurality of knowledges/powers that compete against each other. Indeed, some feminists became interested in highlighting the manner in which patriarchy validated some truths while excluding and repressing others by reframing it as a form of knowledge, or system of meaning.

Among the discursive feminists, Judith Butler is widely regarded as the most influential and consequential. Her book Gender Trouble sparked an identity crisis in feminism by detaching the significance of sexual difference from the context of the actual lived experience of women and replacing it with a performative framework of individuating gender difference. There is no "inner truth" of gender because the body itself is "a variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated."[52] Gender is "an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts."[53] And again, "if gender attributes and acts, the various ways in which a body shows or produces its cultural signification, are performative, then there is no preexisting identity by which an act or attribute might be measured."[54] All identities, including those regarded as gendered, are incommensurate.

A Canonical-Linguistic Doctrine of Gender

As we contemplate the shape of a canonical-linguistic gender theory,[55] four

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[51]Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 118-122.

[52]Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 189.

[53]Ibid., 191 (emphasis original).

[54]Ibid., 192. See also Eve Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) for a complementary account of queer theory.

[55]The use of the phrase "canonical-linguistic" here is drawn from the work of Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and reflects a commitment to both the canonical bounds of Christian doctrine, as well as its boundedness within human language. See Vanhoozer, The *Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic*

specific elements of the contemporary feminist theories surveyed above are of particular interest. First, a canonical-linguistic gender theory must devote itself to the fundamental difference and equality of the sexes. Secondly, however, it must recognize that even as the body itself is a contested entity across a broad spectrum of feminists and gender theorists, it is also a central element within Christian theology. And finally, the power of human culture to shape and influence identity and action has been widely noted in feminist and gender theories, and is of particular interest to a canonical-linguistic gender theory.

Besides these three initial points, we must also note that despite the extremely variegated nature of secular accounts of gender throughout the past one hundred years, they all retain one common feature: their basis in a naturalistic framework. For this reason, a canonical-linguistic gender theory will no doubt find various elements of these accounts of use, but these elements will be oriented around a different starting point, and aimed along a different set of trajectories due to the additional influences and possibilities within a supernatural framework. Indeed, a canonical-linguistic gender theory will interrogate naturalist accounts of gender identity in order to distill their constituent dogmatic elements and correlate them with the Christian doctrines of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation. And a good place to begin such an endeavor would be to reconsider the common practice of plotting gender theories linguistic an equality-difference continuum.

Such a polarity between ‘equality’ and ‘difference’ would certainly not be without precedent in Christian theology. The earliest ecumenical councils, for example, framed the doctrine of the Trinity in precisely these terms by highlighting both the essential equality of the persons of the Trinity, as well as the unique differences between them. Such apparent thematic continuity might provide warrant for ordering theological

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Approach to Christian Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005).

discussions about sex and gender in a similar manner.

Despite this apparent similarity, at least two factors mitigate the benefits of construing human gender in terms of an equality-difference polarity that is itself a reflection of intra-Trinitarian ontology. First, the tenability of conclusions drawn from a comparison between uniquely human experience and transcendent reality is far from clear. Personhood of one sort or another is an insufficient common ground upon which to base a meaningful analogy if one of the comparands is a *divine* person.[56] This difficulty is only compounded by the reality that the gender of the divine persons is not rooted in and constrained by physical sex as it is in human persons.

Second, the equality-difference polarity itself originates primarily with respect to basic anthropological loci within the doctrine of creation, but is only loosely coordinated with other, equally relevant doctrines, such as hamartiology, sanctification, and eschatology. The emphasis on creation as a primary reference point obscures these other meaningful, and equally important doctrinal loci, potentially even introducing a degree of imbalance into final theological formulations. Instead, I propose that a more fruitful and theologically relevant reference point to consider is the doctrine of personhood, specifically personhood as embodied, social, and developmental. These three touchpoints are concepts that can all claim a rich heritage within the Christian tradition, and can easily incorporate doctrinal perspectives from biblical narratives about creation, fall, redemption, and new creation. Furthermore, they are also concepts with a preexisting history within the fields of feminism and gender theory itself.

This dissertation would no doubt benefit from an in-depth examination of human personhood and its connection to gender, but that is unfortunately beyond the scope of this project and the current expertise of this author. Instead, a few cursory

[56]Karl Barth is perhaps the most famous proponent of this tight connection between divine ontology and gendered human personhood.

statements about the three aspects of personhood mentioned above must suffice. First, humankind exists as embodied persons in both the first creation and the new creation. One way we can describe the embodiment of human personhood is to note that it is encapsulated by physical borders, or boundaries. These boundaries tell me where "I" end and "not-I" begins. Also, since we can trace the embodiment of human personhood back to the doctrine of creation, it must follow a particular paradigm, namely that which was intended by the One who created it. In other words, human embodiment has an end, or purpose, but this end or purpose must be achieved according to a particular pattern. Not just any paradigm for manifesting one's embodiment will do.

The doctrine of the fall also impacts human embodiment, which means that it also impacts personhood. Not only does it impair the proper functioning of human bodies, but it guarantees that the constraints experienced in and because of these bodies will be exacerbated, frustrated, and sometimes even rendered unsustainable. Physical structures like human bodies are inherently constraining, but after the fall they become sites of dysfunction.

Second, human personhood is social. When the lens of relationship to the lens of creation, we discover that human personhood is not only embodied, but porous. Understanding the human person in this way is especially important today because it represents a course correction in response to the widespread error of viewing people as isolated individuals. But for many, the permeability of personhood might seem to be an *over*correction to understanding personhood as embodied, or as encapsulated by boundaries. After all, what good are boundaries if they are constantly in flux, always susceptible to external forces?

Philosopher Charles Taylor notes this dilemma, and suggests that the emphasis on individualism today is actually a relatively recent development in Western culture. The understanding that personhood is solitary is fundamentally at odds with the way cultures used to think about personhood in premodern times. Commenting on Taylor's analysis,

James K. A. Smith explains that "the premodern self's porosity means the self is essentially *vulnerable*… To be human is to be essentially *open* to an outside (whether benevolent or malevolent), open to blessing or curse, possession or grace."[57] In essence, Taylor reminds us of the implications of recovering a premodern understanding of the self; if personhood is impermeable, then the external world, including the world of other persons (whether human or divine), is powerless to exert any influence on the emergence of personhood. Looking at the other side of the coin: if personhood is porous, then who we are in the core of our being as persons is susceptible to outside influence by the external world, including *other persons*. This means that our personhood changes as a result of our interpersonal connections, which is to say *we become different persons*.

Finally, personhood is developmental, which means that we can view it through the lens of history. Beneath the steady, plodding process by which history unveils the future lie personal stories of growth, change, and development. In one sense, personhood viewed through the lens of history mediates between personhood viewed through the lens of embodiment and society. Once individual persons are born into this world, they are embodied with a bent toward relationship. But the individual persons they become can only be discovered through the passing of time as history unfolds and personhood itself emerges and develops within its surrounding matrix of relationships and events.

In a well-known section at the beginning of his book *Allegory of Love*, C. S. Lewis addresses a common misunderstanding about the so-called "stages" we go through as our personhood develops and matures. According to Lewis, "humanity does not pass through phases as a train passes through stations: being alive, it has the privilege of always moving yet never leaving anything behind. Whatever we have been, in some sort

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[57]James K.A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 29, emphasis original.

we are still."[58] Although Lewis's words seem to refer to humanity as a whole, the same is true with regard to individual people.

Taken together, these three perspectives on personhood simultaneously place constraints on a Christian understanding of gender identity, while also providing avenues for further inquiry that run parallel to discussions we encountered above in our survey of feminism. In particular, a Christian understanding of gender identity that is rooted in creation will acknowledge the function that embodiment plays in determining gender. At the same time, a Christian understanding of gender identity will also recognize that social and developmental aspects of personhood influence the actual shape that gender identity takes in individual people. This second set of influences is often overlooked, however, and will therefore be the subject of the next chapter.

[58]C. S. Lewis, *Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 1.

CHAPTER 3

SECONDARY GENDER IDENTITIES

While the purpose of the previous chapter was to outline the contours of contemporary descriptions of primary gender identity—in particular, *feminine* identity—the primary purpose of the current chapter is to explore the validity of theorizing how secondary gender differences (i.e., variation among individuals within the class 'woman' or 'man') can form the basis of gendered sub-identities. This step is central to my thesis that the Greek word παρθένος indexes a secondary gender identity in 1 Corinthians 7 because we still haven't outlined what exactly a secondary gender identity *is*. The goal of this chapter, therefore, is to examine the space within which such a concept might be developed in contemporary discussions about axes of difference within the class 'woman' and the class 'man.' When this task is complete, the shape and function of the term 'secondary gender identity' will be more clear and we will be better prepared for a more in-depth examination of the lexical and syntactic usage of the Greek word παρθένος in the background literature of the New Testament.

Our exploration will unfold in three steps before drawing conclusions that can inform our examination of the unmarried state as a salient social categorization for women in 1 Corinthians 7. First, we will explore the concept of categorization itself as it has been discussed in various social scientific fields. Second, we will examine selected feminist attempts to theorize secondary particularity as it relates to the relative stability of gender categories. Third, we will present a set of sub-disciplines within the field of social psychology—social identity theory and self-categorization theory—as uniquely positioned to offer a degree of stability and significance to social categorizations that are

inherently gendered. If successful, discussion up to this point will demonstrate that we have sufficient warrant to theorize at least some kinds of social categorizations as capable of constituting culturally salient secondary gender identities.

Categorization and Social Particularity

The philosophical problems associated with the concept of 'categorization' have been widely documented throughout the history of philosophy. Between Plato's transcendent "forms" and Aristotle's particularized "essences" lies a gulf of nuance that has fueled philosophical debate for millennia.[1] In this section we will rehearse selected elements of this debate within the field of the social sciences that are particularly relevant to our current discussion about gender identity.

Categorization Theories

In his exhaustive study of the phenomenon of stereotyping, psychologist David Schneider identifies several distinct approaches to understanding the cognitive process of categorization, particularly as it relates to the categorization of people.[2] The classical definition of a category, for example, is a set "of examples that share certain important defining attributes . . . [that] are both necessary and collectively sufficient."[3] Schneider highlights several problems with this perspective, including the criticism that rigid classification regimes often assign a particular status to an object or person on the basis of a superficial assessment of its characteristics. Some benches, for example, might meet criteria that were initially formed in order to describe chairs.

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[1]See Panayot Butchvarov, "Categories," in *A Companion to Metaphysics*, ed. Jaegwon Kim, Ernest Sosa, and Gary S. Rosenkrantz, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 171-4, for a helpful summary of the history of the philosophical issues involved.

[2]David Schneider, *The Psychology of Stereotyping* (New York: Guildford Press, 2004), 65-106. The material in this section is heavily indebted to Schneider's in-depth and detailed discussion about the cognitive formation of categories.

[3]Ibid., 65.

Other approaches to understanding categories focus on the explanatory power of individual representatives of a category. According to this 'prototype' perspective, the representative individual is actually a hypothetical cognitive structure that occupies the center of a constellation of concrete representatives of the category.[4] Individual members of the constellation are more likely to be classified together to the extent that they resemble the central prototype. Shortcomings of the prototype approach, however, tend to revolve around a central theme, namely the inherently limited explanatory power of a single cognitive structure. Besides varying from individual to individual, cognitive structures within the same individual also vary in different contexts and even across time.

The 'exemplar' approach accommodates research indicating that cognitive representations of a category are more concrete than abstract.[5] In other words, the categorizing power of a concrete exemplar that actually exists in the real world may not be derived from its resemblance to a hypothetical prototype, but from its salience to particular factors within its specific circumstance. When an individual categorizes a piece of furniture as a chair, she does not do so by searching for a mental constellation of chairs orbiting a central Chair. Instead, she notices that it resembles a particular mental image of an actual chair, or a group of images, that is already stored in her brain. If the item of furniture is made of gold and has velvet cushions, it might most resemble the mental image of a throne she has encountered in the past (if only in a picture book as a child). In this case, for example, the gold and velvet components of the furniture are the salient details that trigger her recognition of it as a throne, even though very few would make the additional claim that a throne was a prototypical chair.

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[4]Schneider, *The Psychology of Stereotyping*, 66-68. It is important to note that a concrete example of the category can be regarded as a prototype if it exhibits enough of the standard feature-set of that category to be regarded as "average" representation of that category.

[5]Schneider, *The Psychology of Stereotyping*, 68-72; see also Douglas L. Hintzman, "'Schema Abstraction' in a Multiple-Trace Memory Model," *Psychological Review* 93, no. 4 (1986): 411-28, and E. R. Smith and M. A. Zárate, "Exemplar-based Model of Social Judgment," *Psychological Review* 99, no. 1 (1992): 3-21.

One benefit of the exemplar model is that it accounts for the apparent fluidity of the categorization process, something prototype models handle relatively poorly. Indeed, Schneider claims that "categories are inherently fluid [in exemplar models] because different exemplars may come to mind in different circumstances."[6] Prototype models of categorization have no means of accommodating the secondary details of these "different circumstances" that might provide relevant, but contingent information about the category. At the same time, this extra attention to detail is not entirely beneficial as it multiplies the number of cognitive processes that must take place during what is often a relatively simple decision. Rather than cycling through a myriad choices of possible exemplars when faced with a categorization task, it seems reasonable to suggest that at least the more commonly encountered categorization tasks take place through generalizing the stimulus until it resembles an abstract prototype. Indeed, Schneider highlights research indicating that categorization tasks actually involve both prototype and exemplar processes, but that they take place in different areas of the brain.[7]

The failure of both exemplar and prototype models as comprehensive accounts for categorization tasks is perhaps related to their joint reliance on similarity judgments. Schneider points out that categorizations based on similarity judgments alone are inherently unstable; they foreclose the possibility of different outcomes by privileging one set of features over other features that may be equally salient.[8] For example, a chef at an Italian restaurant might claim that the herb oregano more closely resembles rosemary than mint. A botanist, on the other hand, noting the woody, but less cold-hardy growth habit of rosemary, might categorize it separately from oregano and mint and other

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[6]Schneider, *Psychology of Stereotyping*, 70.

[7]Schneider, *The Psychology of Stereotyping*, 71; see Michael A. Zárate, James D. Sanders, and Azenett A. Garza, "Neurological Disassociations of Social Perception Processes," *Social Cognition* 18, no. 3 (2000): 223-51.

[8]Schneider, *Psychology of Stereotyping*, 72-74.

herbaceous perennials.

A second problem with such "family resemblance" models is that they cannot account for categories that group together items with very little, if any, similarity with each other. For example, if one were to compose a list of items under the heading "Things that clean floors," one would probably mention brooms, vacuums, mops, and dustpans, but one could also include general cleaning supplies like sponges, brushes, rags, old clothes, and even knives (to remove dried gum) and toothbrushes (if you are cleaning an army barracks floor as a punishment). As is the case with many *ad hoc* categories, some of these items are similar to each other in significant ways, but the similarity disappears when all of them are grouped together without a specific, unifying goal.

Perhaps a more circumspect approach to understanding the cognitive process of categorization is one that acknowledges the mental activity often involved in adjudicating between feature sets with multivalent similarities. According to Schneider, "when we group things together to form categories, we have implicated a theory about not only what similarities are important but why."[9] He notes that these theories, or 'cognitive schemas,' are useful because they provide coherence to the category by acting as a framework within which the feature sets of the category can relate to one another. If we consider the above example of herbs, we can readily acknowledge that growth habit, cold-hardiness, the edible part of the plant (seed, leaf, root, etc.), method of harvesting, both general (culinary, medicinal, religious) and specific (Italian cuisine, anti-inflammatory agent, incense) uses, and provenance (Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Chinese) all represent relevant feature sets of plants cultivated for specialized uses. But we can also likely presume that knowing the provenance of an herb will also tell us

[9]Ibid., 74. Schneider later identifies these theories as 'schemas,' which represent the "prior-knowledge" participants in the cognitive process that function as "frameworks for understanding what we see and hear" (120).

something about its cold-hardiness as well as the types of cuisine in which it is commonly found, or that the method of harvesting will tell us something about the part of the plant that is used. By construing categories as theories, we account for our implicit knowledge of these feature sets, their relevance to the category, as well as their relationships with each other.

Besides providing an organizational framework for categories and their feature sets, these cognitive schemas also account for our ability to make categorical inferences about more remote associations that may actually be based on somewhat superficial observations. For instance, if a botanist who was a highly renowned expert on the herb *mentha spicata*, or common mint, asked a student to construct a list of its features, the list would likely mention the essential oils stored in its leaves that are often used as the basis for flavoring in desserts, certain mixed beverages and teas, as well as chewing gum. Less widely recognized features of mint, such as its invasive growth habit or its customary use in lamb dishes in the Middle East, might be neglected. If, however, the gardener were to mention to that student that he had spent all morning in his herb garden trying to keep his plants under control, the student might reasonably infer that the mint plants were the culprit.

Social Categories

The utility of construing categories as cognitive schemas is multiplied exponentially when considering social categories, that is, categories comprised of people. The complexity of social categories when compared to their nonsocial counterparts is self-evident from almost any perspective. Schneider discusses several reasons for this, the last of which is perhaps most relevant for our discussion about enculturated categorization and gender: social categories are often related to corresponding social

groups.[10]

Social categorizations and social groups. The relationship between social groups and social categories is perhaps best described as a classic Venn diagram: social categories often coalesce into concrete groups, but sometimes do not. Likewise, social groups often reflect underlying social categories, but sometimes do not. For example, employees of a large, Fortune 500 company could be divided into categories based on their job description (e.g., analysts, secretaries, legal consultants, executives, etc.), although it seems unwarranted to make the additional claim that these categories represent actual social groups of employees. This seems particularly true if the individuals within these categories never meet together, or act or speak collectively as a group, as the case would be in multinational companies with offices in multiple countries, or even within a specific office building housing multiple departments of employees.

A common exception to these types of situations can be seen in unionized workforces, where employees with a particular job description organize themselves into a group. In this case, category and group membership are continuous. Other, less permanent circumstances can also bring the members of a category together into a group, such as when software engineers in one company department challenge the accountants to a friendly Fantasy Football tournament. Finally, a recognizable group of individuals does not always reflect an underlying social category. A jury, for example, is ideally comprised of a cross-section of a local community. Although the group itself is clearly defined, no underlying social category can account for its composition.

Highlighting the theoretical character of social categorizations, however, raises a somewhat vexing question: on which features do we base our cognitive schemas that form the basis of these theories? Or, to put an even finer point on the question, what

[10]Ibid.,, 77-79.

warrant do we have for linking a schema with one feature rather than another? Furthermore, to what extent do social groups that reflect commonly held schemas reflect a consistent set of features? Taken together, these questions raise a rather vexing question, namely the extent to which we form social categorizations based on psychological essentialism.

Social groups and psychological essentialism. Psychological essentialism is a controversial concept in the field of social psychology for two major reasons.[11] First, most theorists are committed to a social constructionist perspective, and are therefore generally opposed to epistemologies that reframe social kinds as a subset of natural kinds. Although space does not permit a thorough investigation of this claim, all forms of social constructionism construe the essence of things as contingencies, instead of as fixed natures.[12] Second, its cognitive benefits notwithstanding, social psychologists have long suspected that essentialist thinking promotes the formation of stereotypes.[13]

One important study by Nick Haslam, Louis Rothschild, and Donald Ernst on the subject of essentialist beliefs is particularly relevant to our current exploration.[14] In particular, they examined the cognitive structure of essentialist beliefs, specifically with

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[11]Schneider cites the work of W. Ahn et al., "Why Essences are Essential in the Psychology of Concepts," *Cognition*, 82 (2001): 59-69, and S. A. Gelman and L. A. Hirschfeld, "How Biological Is Essentialism?" in *Folkbiology*, ed. D. L. Medin and S. Atran (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 403-46 as representative of supporters of psychological essentialism, and L. J. Rips, "Necessity and Natural Categories," *Psychological Bulletin* 127 (2001): 827-52, and M. Stevens, "The Essentialist Aspect of Naive Theories," *Cognition* 74 (2000): 149-75 as representative of its critics (Schneider, *Psychology of Stereotyping*, 85).

[12]This seems to be true of the 'soft' social constructionism of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), as well as the poststructuralist and postmodernist constructionism of theorists such as Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

[13]In the modern field of social psychology, this suspicion can be traced back to Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954), and continues to be the subject of much research.

[14]Nick Haslam, Louis Rothschild, and Donald Ernst, "Essentialist Beliefs and Social Categories," *BJSP* 39 (2000): 113-27; see also their second important study, Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst, "Are Essentialist Beliefs Associated with Prejudice?" *BJSP*, 41 (2002): 87-100.

respect to 40 types of social categories. Their study began by isolating nine different aspects of essentialist beliefs, and proceeded to measure the degree to which these elements of essentialism contributed to the cognitive organization of the 40 social categories. The study demonstrated that essentialist beliefs generally coalesced around two basic themes: "naturalness" and entitativity.

"Naturalness" and entitativity. Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst classified the first group of essentialist dimensions under the heading "naturalness." Categories that received high scores in this category are perceived as "sharply bounded, unalterable and historically persisting matters of kind, whose members share necessary properties or microstructures."[15] They noted that social categories in this group corresponded quite closely with traditional discussions of 'natural kinds' and "folk theories" of a biological deterministic nature.

The second dimension, on the other hand, corresponded to highly entitative categories, or categories whose members are perceived in terms of a collective "groupiness." According to this dimension, entitative social categories are understood as "distinctly cohering around an underlying core, and having a homogeneity that makes category membership a rich source of inferences."[16] In an important study on the phenomenon of entitativity, researchers examined how a variety of types of groups were perceived by others.[17] In his summary of this study, Schneider notes that

> the best predictor of perceived entitativity was the extent to which members interact with one another, but measures of the importance of the group for individual members, whether group members have common goals, and whether group members are similar to one another also predicted entitativity.[18]

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[15]Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst, "Essentialist Beliefs and Social Categories," 120.

[16]Ibid.

[17]B. Lickel, D. L. Hamilton, G. Wieczorkowska, A. Lewis, S. J. Sherman, and A. N. Uhles, "Varieties of Groups and the Perception of Group Entitativity," *JPSP* 78 (2000): 223-46.

[18]Schneider, *Psychology of Stereotyping*, 78.

For our purposes, it is significant to note that not only did Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst fail to uncover a clear pathway leading from forms of essentialist thinking straight to the formation of prejudicial attitudes, but it was also unable to pinpoint the precise relationship between entitative and naturalness in the cognitive structure of essentialist thinking. Indeed, "entitative categories need not be naturalized, and categories understood as natural kinds need not be perceived as entitative, but both are in some sense essentialized."[19]

Social Categories as a Type of Natural Kind

Perhaps these preliminary considerations about the features of social groups can point us toward a more precise theological account of social categorization itself. Although social categorizations do not seem to be purely biological, and therefore 'natural' in the sense of modern scientific classification systems, we would seem to have theological warrant to construe social categorizations themselves as a subset of 'natural types.' According to most accounts of the Christian doctrine of creation, it is every bit as "natural" for human beings to exist in community (i.e., as social beings, presumably as members of discrete social groups) as it is for them to have a biologically complex body. In other words, there is no contradiction from the perspective of Christian doctrine between understanding social categories in both biological and entitative terms. As we turn our attention to the field of feminist theory, this will be a critical point to keep in mind.

Secondary Particularity in Feminism and Gender Studies

When we translate our discussion about social groups to the discourse of feminism, a complication emerges with construing social categories as reflecting a type

[19]Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst, "Essentialist Beliefs and Social Categories," 123.

of 'natural kind.' Some social kinds might be based on natural structures or events, or even to undeniably "social" processes, but their susceptibility to existing power structures suggests that simple processes of classification cannot account for the varying shapes of social construction of superficially identical social groups. For example, feminist philosopher Sally Haslanger distinguishes between "thin" and "thick" social positions as representing the varying degrees of social impact of social norms and prejudgments upon the construction of a social group on the basis of natural structures in a given context.[20] Haslanger illustrates this distinction by citing the experience of widows in different social contexts, an example of particular relevance to our current investigation of unmarried female sexuality as a salient social categorization in the New Testament era. According to Haslanger, "some social positions carry with them more demanding norms, expectations, and obligations than others; some carry more privileging entitlements and opportunities than others."[21] Therefore, in this second major section of this chapter, we will take a deeper look at the various ways feminist scholars have incorporated accounts of social categorizations besides primary sex difference into their theories.

Feminism and Social Categories as "Difference"

First of all, we must note that within the vast body of feminist literature, the concepts of particularity and difference themselves are hotly contested. Scholarship has frequently noted the tension within various expressions of feminist theory between the fundamental equality of the sexes and the multiple forms of difference between the sexes.[22] As we saw in the previous chapter, it has become quite common, in point of fact,

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[20]Sally Haslanger, "Social Construction: The 'Debunking' Project," in *Socializing Metaphysics: The Nature of Social Reality*, ed. Frederick F. Schmitt (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 313.

[21]Ibid.

[22]See the thorough historical study of Carol Lee Bacchi, *Same Difference: Feminism and Sexual Difference* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990).

to classify second-wave feminist theories according to various equality/difference schemata. According to these classifications, liberal and anti-capitalist feminisms are generally energized by a commitment to the fundamental equality of the sexes, while radical feminism, together with most representatives of the French feminist school, build on the initial assumption that the differences between the sexes are more significant than their equality.[23]

Although the idea itself of 'difference' appears to be fairly innocuous on the surface, we also noted that feminists have long highlighted the subversive role it has played in creating unexamined standards that plot gender identity along an axis of both privilege and disadvantage. This process generally unfolds in two steps. First, identity relies in part on the concept of difference. In the words of feminist philosopher Seyla Benhabib, "there is no identity without difference; to be one of a certain kind presupposes that one is different from another."[24] But 'difference' takes a variety of forms. For example, the difference between an apple and an orange can be distinguished from the difference between a male CEO and his female secretary. Pioneering feminist Simone de Beauvoir pinpoints the implications of this distinction for gender identity constructs in the following statement already noted in the previous chapter:

> Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being . . . . For him she is sex – absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other.[25]

When comparisons take place in contexts characterized by patriarchy, the identities

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[23]So also Elizabeth Grosz, "Conclusion: What is Feminist Theory?" in *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, ed. Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Grosz (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 190-204.

[24]Seyla Benhabib, "Civil Society and the Politics of Identity and Difference in a Global Context," in *Diversity and Its Discontents: Cultural Conflict and Common Ground in Contemporary American Society*, ed. N. J. Smelser and J. C. Alexander (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 297.

[25]Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Bantam, 1952), xvi.

inscribed by difference becomes suffused with the power differential that energizes the patriarchy in the first place.

Because of the linguistic turn and subsequent developments in continental philosophy, furthermore, it became even clearer to some that the concept of difference itself was problematic. Rather than serving as a stable reference point for binary gender identity, some feminists claimed that this newfound appreciation of extreme differences between individual members within the class 'man' and 'woman' began to subvert the system of binary gender identity itself. Benhabib aptly summarizes this new posture of suspicion:

> Every claim to generalization [about women] was suspected of hiding a claim to power on the part of a specific group; every attempt to speak in the name of "women" was countered by myriad differences of race, class, culture, and sexual orientation that were said to divide women. The category "woman" itself became suspect; feminist theorizing about woman or the female of the species was dubbed the hegemonic discourse of white, middle-class, professional, heterosexual women.[26]

According to Benhabib, the presence of particularized power differentials among and between various groups of women belied the assumption that one account of 'womanhood' could adequately account for the experience of every individual within the class 'woman.' We saw in the previous chapter that responses to this fundamental problem typically employ two strategies, namely those that attempt to subvert the class 'woman' and those that attempt to rehabilitate it by incorporating into their theory more sophisticated accounts of secondary gender particularity. This latter option constitutes an important resource in the current phase of this project, and will be the subject of further discussion and analysis in what follows.

"Difference" and Identity Politics

Since the central debates of the feminist movement in most Western cultures

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[26]Seyla Benhabib, "Sexual Difference and Collective Identities: The New Global Constellation," *Signs* 24, no. 2 (1999): 20. One could also add "Western" to the concluding catena.

revolve around the practice of identity politics as an ideology (i.e., its relative value, scope, and viability as a program of social change), we will organize our examination of secondary categorizations according to how they function in the various feminist systems that have been deployed in service to specific aims and goals. In particular, we will employ adapted versions of a simple metaphor — that of a circle, which has both a center and margins — in order to understand the function of 'difference' as it relates to the production and reproduction of sexism and oppression.

Identity politics and secondary particularity. Generally speaking, humanistic gender theories have responded to the problem of secondary particularity by theorizing the cultural meaning of gender identity in three competing ways, which can be roughly correlated with the rise, development, and decline of the contemporary project of identity politics.[27] During the first phase, gender theorists construed 'difference' in ways that minimized secondary particularly. In this very limited sense, liberal, anti-capitalist, and radical feminists were themselves united in their commitment to secure the category "woman" in order that it might continue to fund a program of social change. Indeed, the identity politics of these second wave feminists more closely resembled that of their first wave forebears, at least in the theoretical sense that primary gender identity was the most consequential identity. The politics of identity were fairly simple in these early years; you were either on the side of women, or you were against them.

Indeed, if we use the metaphor mentioned above, liberal, anti-capitalist, and radical feminism could all be described as addressing a scenario in which men are located at the center of a circle, while women occupy the margins. This common starting point notwithstanding, the kinds of solutions proposed by these "Big Three" feminist

[27]See Susan Archer Mann, *Doing Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 160-208; see also James Joseph Dean, "Thinking Intersectionality: Sexualities and the Politics of Multiple Identities," in *Theorizing Intersectionality and Sexuality*, ed. Yvette Taylor, Sally Hines, and Mark E. Casey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 121-7.

ideologies differ widely. Traditional liberal feminism, for example, envisioned a society in which both men and women could occupy the center of the circle. Radical feminists, on the other hand, claim that this solution acquiesces too much to the forces of patriarchy. By failing to aim their critique at patriarchy itself, radical feminists insist that their liberal counterparts are actually complicit in replicating precisely the same system that marginalizes and oppresses them. Instead of sharing the center of the circle with men, it would seem that radical feminists would be content with nothing less than their own circle.

Secondary gender particularity and lesbianism. In the early 80's, however, the theoretical landscape began to change as increased political attention to the oppression of gay and lesbian people drew the attention of feminists in the academy. For this reason, both Adrienne Rich and Monique Wittig began to interrogate the heteronormative foundations of feminine identity as it was typically expressed in previous formulations of feminist theory. In her trajectory-setting 1980 essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," for example, Rich reframes lesbian intimacy as representing one end of a continuum of "woman-to-woman" relationships, along with mother/daughter relationships and platonic friendships between women.[28] She does this in order to buttress her claim that primary gender identity ought to figure more prominently than sexual orientation in the project of identity politics. To use our circle metaphor, Rich urges lesbian women to identify less with gay men (who are located with straight men at the center of the circle) and more with straight women who are attempting to create their own culture of woman-oriented values.

Wittig, on the other hand, although also concerned by hegemonic

[28]Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs* 5, no. 4 (1980): 631-60; the article has been republished numerous times, often in slightly edited form in order to reflect upon recent literature and development within the field of feminism.

heterosexuality, arrives at a mirror opposite conclusion by reconceiving the significance of sexual orientation in relation to gender identity. She makes the controversial claim that a lesbian is not a woman, despite being biologically female. According to Wittig, the identity 'woman' is implicitly defined with reference to 'man,' which implies a heterosexual matrix of meaning. In other words, the identity 'woman' is properly restricted to contexts that are governed by heterosexual norms. Since the identity 'lesbian' is arguably not defined with direct reference to 'man,' nor does it operate within the matrix of heterosexuality, Wittig therefore claims that a lesbian cannot be a woman.[29]

So, in the case of both Rich and Wittig, sexual orientation is a secondary axis of particularity that circumscribes a set of feminine identities, even though they arrive at opposite conclusions about the actual shape of these identities. In the case of Rich, the hegemony of heterosexuality is ultimately subservient to the task of shoring up support for a universal feminine identity. For Wittig, on the other hand, the hegemony of heterosexuality is itself the grounds for a standalone identity, that of the lesbian, which is constructed without reference to either binary gender or the heterosexual matrix within which it operates. This shift away from primary gender identity, particularly in the case of Wittig, gained momentum with the development of standpoint epistemologies that raised the issue of whether or not it was even possible to develop a metanarrative of the oppression of women. Several themes influence the final form of standpoint epistemology, and together form the backdrop of intersectional feminist theories, so we will consider these next.

Standpoint and intersectional feminist perspectives. In her seminal 1983 essay "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," Nancy Hartsock begins with the contention that "there are some

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[29]Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 20.

perspectives on society from which . . . the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not visible."[30] Hartsock elaborates upon several further claims of an epistemological and political nature that can be discerned within this central contention. Perhaps most fundamentally, she notes that human life is politically stratified in ways that both structure and limit the ways we understand society. This political stratification is particularly self-evident when two opposing groups vie for influence within the same cultural context. In a nod to Hegel, Hartsock notes that the viewpoints that emerge from opposing groups in these situations will tend to be mirror opposites of each other. Furthermore, if the situation continues to develop and one group becomes more dominant than the other, Hartsock claims that its viewpoint will promote the development of an opposing standpoint even as it suppresses these alternative perspectives; suppression and resistance are two sides of the same coin.

Susan Archer Mann notes several intellectual commitments that tend to animate standpoint epistemologies.[31] Perhaps the most central of these commitments is a generally anti-essentialist critique of positivist empiricism as an account of knowledge. Standpoint theorists claim that knowledge is not only socially constructed, but also culturally constrained by the social location of the knowledge producer. Mann refers to this dialectic between social location and knowledge production as an example of the "reflexivity" that characterizes standpoint epistemology, and notes that one important implication of this reflexivity is the differential privilege accorded to some producers of knowledge due to the higher status of their social location.[32]

Although standpoint epistemologies are historically associated with the development of materialist and other anti-capitalist feminisms, they also form part of the

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[30]Reprinted in Nancy C. M. Hartsock, *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 107.

[31] Mann, *Doing Feminist Theory*, 142.

[32]Ibid.

conceptual backdrop of newer, more chastened formulations of identity politics. Within these new 'intersectional' feminist approaches, standpoint epistemology has been particularly useful as theorists have attempted to destabilize power differentials that perpetuate the oppression of specific subgroups of women.[33] As a technical term within feminist discourse, the concept of intersectionality was initially advanced by critical race theorist and legal scholar Kimberle Williams Crenshaw.[34] According to Crenshaw,

> dominant conceptions of discrimination condition us to think about subordination as disadvantage occurring along a single categorical axis. [Furthermore,] this single-axis framework erases Black women in the conceptualization, identification and remediation of race and sex discrimination by limiting inquiry to the experiences of otherwise-privileged members of the group. In other words, in race discrimination cases, discrimination tends to be viewed in terms of sex- or class-privileged Blacks; in sex discrimination cases, the focus is on race- and class-privileged women.[35]

Both race and sex discrimination conceptualize subordination along a single categorical axis of disadvantage, and therefore insufficiently account for the marginalization of subsets of individuals such as black women who are effective erased by their double categorization.

Both standpoint epistemology and intersectional feminism rely on social constructionist accounts of knowledge, and consequently highlight the role of social location in feminist theory. But whereas the goal of standpoint feminism is simply to demonstrate the existence of differently gendered standpoints, intersectional feminists attempts to strategize methods for integrating diverse standpoints together in the same

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[33]The relevance of intersectionality theories to our discussion can be illustrated by noting the deep inroads it has forged into various feminist subdisciplines such as feminist geography, feminist economics, and feminist linguistics. Cf. Gill Valentine, "Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality: A Challenge for Feminist Geography," *Professional Geographer* 59, no. 1 (2007): 10-21; Rose M. Brewer, Cecilia A. Conrad, and Mary C. King, "The Complexities and Potential of Theorizing Gender, Caste, Race, and Class," *Feminist Economics* 8, no. 2 (2002), 3-18; and Sally McConnell-Ginet, *Gender, Sexuality, and Meaning: Linguistic Practice and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[34]Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1 (1989), 139-67; see also Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-99.

[35]Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing," 140.

feminist discourse. Mann describes this difference as a shift in focus away from identifying suppressed standpoints that are embedded in a cultural matrix of oppositional perspectives, and toward relocating suppressed standpoints closer to the center of feminist thought.[36] For intersectional feminists, success is achieved to the extent that these efforts are able to empower a stable coalition of standpoints by moving them closer to the center.

Selected gender theories of black women. Perhaps the most widely recognized applications of intersectionality to the problem of secondary gender particularity are the fields of black feminism and womanism. The relationship between black feminist and womanist thought is, however, quite contested.[37] Attitudes of black women towards feminism in general have ranged from agreeable on the one hand to ambivalent and even hostile on the other hand. Patricia Hill Collins represents those black women who locate their discipline within the broader field of feminism, even if the overall shape of their feminism is influenced by their racial identity in various critical ways.[38] In her black feminist theory, Collins emphasizes the subject location of black women and the group knowledge that they produce of the outside world and their oppression within that world, while also framing the importance of this self-defined standpoint in relation to a superordinate humanist vision of social justice and human flourishing.

In contrast to Collins, black novelist and poet Alice Walker frames her brand

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[36]Mann, *Doing Feminist Theory*, 182-183. The work of bell hooks is representative of intersectional approaches to theorizing the relationship between race and gender. See bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (New York: South End, 1984).

[37]Womanists are not the first group of female scholars to eschew the label "feminist." Simone de Beauvoir famously rejected the label for decades because she believed that Marxism held the final solution to the problem of women's exploitation by men.

[38]See Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 22-43.

of feminism as "womanism" in an effort to highlight the experience of a particular type of feminist, namely those who are black women.[39] According to Walker, the term *womanist* refers to "a black feminist or feminist of color" and is derived from the term 'womanish,' as used in the

> black folk expression of mothers to female children, "You acting womanish," i.e., like a woman. [It] usually refer[s] to outrageous, audacious, courageous or *willful* behavior, [or] wanting to know more or in greater depth than is considered "good" for one.[40]

According to Walker, a womanist is also

> a woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. [She] appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. [She] sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually, [and is] committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male *and* female.[41]

In short, Walker's definitions of womanism frame it as stemming from a *specific cultural experience* of womanhood, namely African American culture in North America, but as characterized by traits that might easily describe other groups of women.

The Africana womanism of Clenora Hudson-Weems, on the other hand, represents an entirely different approach to navigating the intersection of gendered and ethnoracial difference. According to Hudson-Weems, the entire feminist enterprise is beholden to European ideals that have been instrumental in the oppression of African American people:

> Feminism, a term conceptualized and adopted by White women, involves an agenda that was designed to meet the needs and demands of that particular group. For this reason, it is quite plausible for White women to identify with feminism and the feminist movement. Having said that, the fact remains that placing all women's history under White women's history, thereby giving the latter the definitive position, is problematic.[42]

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[39]See Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1983).

[40]Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, xii.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Clenora Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* (Troy, MI: Bedford, 1993), 21.

In general Hudson-Weems is skeptical that black feminists can move from "the margin to the center" while also remaining true to the distinctives of their culture.

The approaches to secondary gender particularity that are exemplified in standpoint and intersectional feminist theories and in the ways that black women have applied them contains elements that might be helpful for a Christian understanding of secondary particularity, not least because the emphasis on intersectionality represents a serious attempt to grapple with the effects of diversity on the process of identity formation. As we will soon discover, the language of social identity theory can further illuminate the real-life salience of secondary gender differences.

Postperspectives on difference. Finally, the arrival of postmodernist epistemologies represents a full-scale shift away from theoretical approaches to understanding social groups and the categories they represent as commensurable in any way. Since meaning is endlessly deferred, so is the ability to isolate relevant secondary traits long enough for them to index stable group identities. The postmodern feminism and queer theory of Judith Butler is representative of this approach, in which gender is recast in performative terms.[43] One important component of this approach that is relevant to the issue under examination here is its reliance on post-structural perspectives on the interconnectivity of power and knowledge.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, post-structuralism alleges that the powerful forces of normalization and marginalization often masquerade as more benign processes of socialization. It therefore interrogates seemingly neutral social processes that normalize dominant identities at the expense of weaker identities. It claims that all social processes derive their legitimacy from collective adherence to an underlying ideology,

[43]See also Eve Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) and Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

which is a form of knowledge.

Butler's approach to 'difference' is perhaps most memorably illustrated by her wry comments in *Gender Trouble* about the "exhausted," "illimitable" *et cetera* that typically follows lists of possible axes of secondary particularity:

> The theories of feminist identity that elaborate predicates of color, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and able-bodiedness invariably close with an embarrassed "etc." at the end of the list. Through this horizontal trajectory of adjectives, these positions strive to encompass a situated subject, but invariably fail to be complete.[44]

Originally published in 1990, *Gender Trouble* advocates a thoroughgoing dissatisfaction with identification regimes that privilege cultural categorizations as a means of enforcing norms and practices that guarantee their continued performance. In terms of the circle metaphor, in postmodern gender theories the center of the circle is not occupied by a class of people, but by these hegemonic cultural practices. Furthermore, the emphasis on performativity in postmodern gender theories implicitly obligates those who inhabit the margins to rebel against the cultural practices at the center of the circle in an effort to destabilize the authoritative nature of their claims.

Analysis

Drawing from the work of both Collins and Crenshaw, Mann reflects at length on at least four areas of contrast that can be drawn between standpoint and postmodern epistemologies.[45] First, in standpoint theories the operative viewpoint emerges at the group level, while in postmodernism the source of subjectivity is traced all the way to the individual level. In one sense, the postmodern criticism of the meaningfulness of group categorizations is a function of their epistemology. But in another sense, this contrast can also be understood as stemming from concerns reflected in our previous discussion about

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[44]Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 196.

[45]Mann, *Doing Feminist Theory* , 186-8.

essentialist thinking.

Second, intersectional feminists are primarily interested in differences that stem from social stratifications that distribute power unequally between concrete groups of people. In other words, standpoint and intersectional feminisms are reluctant to depersonalize the group experience of disempowerment, which is precisely what the postmodern vision requires. If margins no longer represent the oppression of concrete groups of people, but are broadened to include the experience of anybody who transgresses social norms, it is difficult to see how postmodern epistemologies do not erase the real oppression of marginalized social groups.

Third, postperspectives tend to focus on sites of power at the local, micro level of society, while intersectional theorists aim their critique at the stratification of power at the macro level. And fourth, it seems self-evident that group-based authority is defanged if the categorizations that constitute the group are deconstructed. Such categorizations form the basis of a shared history that produces a particularized standpoint that represent the shared experience of concrete people.

Several important points rise to the surface when considering the strengths and weaknesses of these competing approaches to secondary difference within the various streams of feminist theory. First, although the impulse of standpoint theorists to reinforce the stability of social categories is surely correct, it also seems true that postperspectives can be used strategically as a means of uncovering new forms of the unequal stratification of power. Second, the fundamental Christian value of upholding social justice clearly implicates Christians in the process of locating occasions of the systemic oppression of marginalized social groups. Third, to the extent that Christians encounter marginalized social groups in culture, a Christian doctrine of social justice must account for the function of social categorizations in the formation of concrete group identities within actual human culture. Fourth, if it is possible to reframe category formation as "theory reformation" (as determined in previous discussion above about the nature of categories),

it seems likely that the shape of group identities can shift and change as the theories that govern group membership are themselves reformed in the ongoing processes of development and implementation.

Categorizations and Social Identity

This third section will introduce a set of subdisciplines from the field of social psychology collectively referred to as the social identity approach. The relevance of these sub-disciplines to the ongoing discussion about secondary gender particularity derives from their focus on the concept of categorization as it relates to the psychological function of group identities within the larger context of an individual's self identity. On the one hand, the dogged attention of feminist and gender theorists has resulted in a multi-perspectival understanding of the problem of categorization as it relates to the cultural production and formation of gender identities. On the other hand, this has resulted in a pessimistic ambivalence about the positive role that categorization processes can play within gender theories. The goal of this section, therefore, is to put the final conceptual background pieces in place before we can start pulling the threads together into a meaningful, constructive account of how stable gender identities might be indexed according to culturally salient categorizations that are in some manner gendered.

Social Identity Theory

Pioneering social psychologist Henri Tajfel defines a social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership."[46] According to this brief definition, a social identity can be described as having three components. First, the cognitive component of social identity is

[46]Henri Tajfel, "Social Categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison," in *Differentiation between Social Groups*, ed. Henri Tajfel (London: Academic, 1978), 63 (emphasis original).

simply the awareness that an individual is a member of a particular group. Second, the evaluative component is comprised of the net social benefits (or lack of benefits) that are attached to group membership. Finally, the emotional component of a social identity is the constellation of affective responses to the previous two components. These responses may be directed towards the group itself, or towards particular individuals who themselves may be either outside or inside the group. And significantly, at least for our purposes here, all three aspects of a social identity are present regardless of the size of the group or the breadth of the group's distribution throughout a society.[47]

These three components indicate the general focus of Tajfel's social identity theory, which is an attempt to explain the dynamics of intergroup relationships and interactions. At the heart of this explanation is a careful distinction between interpersonal and intergroup interactions between individuals. In the case of the former, two hypothetical individuals' interactions are governed purely by personal interests, whereas in the case of the latter, they are governed by their particular group memberships. In reality, these distinctions are not entirely mutually exclusive, but are at opposing ends of a spectrum.[48]

Tajfel further claimed that individuals would approach relationships with members of other groups at an interpersonal level, that is as individuals, if group boundaries were relatively porous and fluid. If a group's boundaries are porous, it will allow outsiders to join or leave the group, even if only temporarily (Tajfel refers to this as 'social mobility'). If a group's boundaries are fluid, group members are able to influence the defining characteristics of the group (Tajfel calls this 'social change'). If a group is neither porous nor fluid, then its members will tend to interact with people outside the

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[47]Henri Tajfel, "Interindividual Behavior and Intergroup Behavior," in *Differentiation between Social Groups*, ed. Henri Tajfel (London: Academic, 1978), 28-31.

[48]Ibid., 41-45.

group at an intergroup level, that is, as representatives of their respective groups. Intergroup behavior would predominate in contexts were group boundaries were relatively fixed and impermeable. And similar to the interpersonal/intergroup continuum, the social mobility/change dynamic also represents a spectrum along which specific group dynamics exist.[49]

Another component of Tajfel's formulation of social identity theory was the postulation of 'ingroup' and 'outgroup' designations as a social mechanism for preserving distinctions between groups. Such a distinction is particularly helpful if the two groups are in outright conflict with each other, but is also beneficial if one of them perceives itself as possessing a lower social status than the other. In situations like these, Tajfel proposed a series of 'social creativity' strategies that a group could deploy in an effort to improve its social location (assuming its members were unable simply to leave the outgroup and join the ingroup). First, it could simply minimize the differences between itself and the ingroup, even to the extent of erasing them entirely and assimilating into the ingroup. Second, a group with negative social identity can also reinterpret in positive ways the features distinguishing it from the ingroup. Finally, the outgroup can also formulate new characteristics that can elevate the social identity of its members to a higher level.[50]

Self-Categorization Theory

In the years since Tajfel first outlined social identity theory in detail, social psychologists have enthusiastically adopted his general framework while also extending it in a variety of fruitful directions. The earliest, and perhaps the most consequential, of these directions has been the work of John Turner, who was one of Tajfel's early students

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[49]Ibid., 46-53.

[50]Henri Tajfel, "The Achievement of Group Differentiation," in *Differentiation between Social Groups*, ed. Henri Tajfel (London: Academic, 1978), 93-97.

and research collaborators. While social identity theory was Tajfel's attempt to explain how groups and their members interacted with each other, Turner wanted to answer a more fundamental problem: how do individuals come to perceive themselves as a member of a particular group in the first place?

Central to Turner's framework is the concept of depersonalization, which he defines as "the process of 'self-stereotyping' whereby people come to perceive themselves more as the interchangeable exemplars of a social category than as unique personalities defined by their individual differences from others."[51] Yet Turner is quick to distinguish this from the more widely known process of de-individuation, which is what happens when an individual loses his or her sense of self when in a particular type of group setting. De-individuation, therefore, is the outright loss of personal identity. When depersonalization occurs, however, personal identity is actually enlarged in order to incorporate the additional information provided by an individual's association with corresponding social elements from cultural and society.

In order for depersonalization to occur, Turner postulates two specific preconditions that must be met. First, a group of individuals must actually perceive or define themselves in relation to a shared characteristic. The resulting ingroup category has a greater likelihood of indexing a social identity if group members perceive differences between them to be less than differences between others outside the group. Second, in order for a particular ingroup categorization to become salient in a given circumstance, it must demonstrate some combination of 'relative accessibility' and 'fit' between the stimulus and the category. In other words, for a categorization to be salient it must either require relatively little input in order to be activated, or it must demonstrate a

[51]John C. Turner, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 50.

high degree of fit with the perceived stimulus.[52]

Finally, Turner theorized that when depersonalization takes place, forces of attraction between group members can produce three related group phenomena: group cohesion, interpersonal attraction, and ethnocentrism. The basic principle undergirding these phenomena is that "people are identified positively to the degree that they are perceived as prototypical of the self-category in terms of which they are being compared."[53] When group members manifest a high degree of shared prototypicality, then the positive identification associated with the self-category of the group produces cohesion among its members. The higher the shared prototypicality, the greater the cohesion within the group. In other words, shared mutual attraction – or a generalized sense of affection spread among group members – will hold the group together.

Similarly, forces of attraction can be observed at the individual level; individuals who exhibit high levels of prototypicality will be perceived by group members as more attractive when compared to less prototypical members. This attractiveness is not absolute and unchanging, however, but is a function of the makeup of the ingroup itself, the group self-categorizations involved in the interpersonal comparison, as well as the specific individuals that are the subject of the comparison.[54]

Finally, the forces of attraction can also be observed at a macro-level in the phenomenon of ethnocentrism. This happens when a particular ingroup is perceived by its members as exhibiting a high degree of prototypicality with respect to its defining self-category. In these circumstances, individual members may extend the principle of attraction to the group itself. In the case of ethnocentrism, the attractiveness of the group itself is a function of dynamics similar to those involved in interpersonal attraction, but

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[52]Ibid., 51-56.

[53]Ibid., 57.

[54]Turner, *Rediscovering*, 60.

abstracted to the level of the group. Indeed, Turner points out that ethnocentrism and group cohesion are two sides of the same coin. The latter refers to "ingroup members' mutual attraction on the basis of the value of shared ingroup membership," while the former refers to "the value of the ingroup perceived by members in comparison with outgroups."[55]

More Developments

One of the first things that becomes apparent when exploring the concept of social identity within the field of social psychology is the possibility of multiple layers, or facets, of our social selves. Indeed, numerous studies have recently explored how group members who share a relatively broad social identity nonetheless exhibit remarkable differences that are sufficiently salient in a number of circumstances to constitute sub-identities in their own right.

In this regard, Zoë Richards and Miles Hewstone published an important study in 2001 in which they explored the important difference between subtypes and subgroups as it related to the issue of stereotype change.[56] Specifically, individuals are subtyped when they are perceived as disconfirming a group's organizing self-categorization. Richards and Hewstone point to the role of typicality in determining those group members who will be sectioned off and isolated cognitively in order to preserve the shape of the superordinate group. Subgroups, on the other hand, are formed when members of a superordinate group are differentiated into neutral subcategories based on individual similarities and differences. Richards and Hewstone note that superordinate groups sometimes resort to subtyping members who disconfirm the group's self-category in

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[55]Ibid., 61-62.

[56]Zoë Richards and Miles Hewstone, "Subtyping and Subgrouping: Processes for the Prevention and Promotion of Stereotype Change," *PSPR* 5, no. 1 (2001): 52-73; see also B. Park, C. S. Ryan, and C. M Judd, "Role of Meaningful Subgroups in Explaining Differences in Perceived Variability for In-groups and Out-groups," *JPSP* 63 (1992): 553-67.

order to preserve a stereotype. Conversely, stereotypes are decreased when members are instead prompted to form subgroups instead of subtypes.

A similar study about different kinds of subgroups was published by Matthew Hornsey and Michael Hogg in 2003.[57] They noticed that subgroups that resided entirely within a single superordinate group sometimes behaved differently when compared to subgroups comprised of members from both inside and outside the superordinate group. Hornsey and Hogg label the former type as a "nested" subgroup, and designate the latter type as a "cross-cutting" subgroup. They further observed two conflicting sets of benefits. First, they noticed that encouraging subgroups to perceive themselves as nested enables the superordinate group self-category to completely contextualize the self-categorization of the subgroup, thus enhancing the superordinate status of the larger group (e.g., Italian American). At the same time, they also note that this can backfire in superordinate groups that contain clear ingroup and outgroup subgroups. In these cases, if both subgroup identities are nested within the superordinate group, there is nowhere to go if one subgroup becomes dominant and tries to influence the shape of the superordinate group. If the subgroups are cross-cutting, however, the shape of the subgroup identity does not ultimately depend on the superordinate group.[58]

Another important study published by Amélie Mummendey and Michael Wenzel explored intragroup dynamics within a superordinate group that contains more than one subgroup.[59] They discovered that when one subgroup becomes dominant within a superordinate group, it may in some environments project its own self-categorizations onto the superordinate group identity. This effectually marginalizes other subgroups by

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[57]Matthew J. Hornsey and Michael A. Hogg, "Assimilation and Diversity: An Integrative Model of Subgroup Relations," *PSPR* 4, no. 2 (2000): 143-56.

[58]Hornsey and Hogg, "Assimilation and Diversity," 150-51.

[59]Amélie Mumendey and Michael Wenzel, "Social Discrimination and Tolerance in Intergroup Relations: Reactions to Intergroup Difference," *PSPR* 3, no. 2 (1999): 168-9.

transforming them into subtypes. In these situations, highlighting in-common, superordinate group identity may not be an effective strategy for improving subgroup relations.

Finally, a much more recent study by Anna Rabinovich and Thomas Morton explored the related issue of how subgroup identities affected the likelihood of superordinate group cooperation in especially large social groups.[60] They noted evidence from self-categorization theory and the Common Ingroup Identity Model that suggests "intergroup cooperation can be promoted by encouraging individuals to categorize themselves as members of a single superordinate category rather than as members of difference subordinate categories (subgroups)."[61] Yet they go on to note evidence that "activating increasingly higher-order identities does not always lead to comparable shifts in identification with the salient group . . . because large groups can be overly inclusive, and thus fail to simultaneously provide their members with crucial feelings of distinctiveness."[62] After conducting their research, Rabinovich and Morton conclude that "activating subordinate identities . . . resulted in stronger intentions to contribute to the resource shared by the superordinate group." They are quick to point out, however, that "subordinate identity was activated within the framework of the superordinate group." This leads them to suggest that clarity of the self was a dominant factor in motivating superordinate group cooperation.[63]

A Taxonomy for Secondary Gender Particularity

Thus far, this chapter has outlined three major strands of thought: the concept

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[60]Anna Rabinovich and Thomas A. Morton, "Subgroup Identities as a Key to Cooperation within Large Social Groups," *BJSP* 50 (2011): 36-51.

[61]Rabinovich and Morton, "Subgroup Identities," 38.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid., 47.

of categorization and its history, accounts of categorization within feminism and gender studies, and the role of categorization in the formation of social identity. This final section will attempt to pull these individual threads together in order to form a compelling account of the social processes involved in the formation of stable secondary gender identities on the basis of salient social categorizations.

Labels and Enculturated Gender Categorizations

As a social category, sex differences (maleness and femaleness) have long been recognized as a primary axis of self-categorization in early childhood.[64] In a recent volume on the development of the social self, for example, psychologists Barbara David, Diana Grace, and Michelle Ryan outline a self-categorization theory approach to understanding the development of primary gender identity. They point out, however, that "correctly applying the label for one's biological sex . . . only answers the . . . question ["Who am I?"] in part for, without a meaning, a label is a long way from being an identity."[65] In their chapter, they use self-categorization theory to provide an account of how gender socialization, or the process wherein sex differences gain social meaning, takes place.

But societies go a step further when it comes to gender and socialization. A number of studies in the field of social psychology explore the processes involved in the formation of gender subtypes and subgroups.[66] In social identity terminology, this would

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[64]Schneider includes gender in his discussion on 'primary categories,' along with age and race, because of the fairly automatic manner in which the become the basis for mental classifications (Schneider, *Psychology of Stereotyping*, 96). See also C. Stangor, L. Lynch, C. Duan, and B. Glass, "Categorization of Individuals on the basis of Multiple Social Features," *JPSP* 62, no. 2 (1992): 207-18.

[65]Barbara David, Diana Grace, and Michelle K. Ryan, "The Gender Wars: A Self-Categorization Theory Perspective on the Development of Gender Identity," in *The Development of the Self*, ed. Mark Bennett and Fabio Sani (New York: Psychology Press, 2004), 135.

[66]Kay Deaux and Marianne LaFrance, "Gender," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, 4th ed., ed. Daniel Todd Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske, and Gardner Lindzey (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 1:788-828, provides a helpful review of the literature up until the turn of the millennium.

suggest that within the superordinate social identities 'man' and 'woman' are a vast number of secondary social identities that are essentially gendered. For example, a 2003 study by Roos Vonk and Richard Ashmore explored the cognitive organization of over 200 female and male gender types along several axes: feminine-masculine, traditional-modern, chosen-given, settled-free (e.g., mother, eternal bachelor), and old-young.

Acknowledging that individuals can be socialized into gendered identities based on secondary particularity raises an important question: at what point does secondary particularity rise to the level of constituting an identity? In other words, how can these identities be discerned? One way of answering these questions would involve examining the labels a specific society uses to index membership within a particular group or class of people. This is precisely the process that Sally McConnell-Ginet describes in her essay entitled "'What's in a Name?": Social Labeling and Gender Practices."[67]

According to McConnell-Ginet, social labels can be classified into three broad linguistic categories: predicative labels, referring labels, and addressing labels. In the case of predicative labels, a nominal word-form is used "to describe or to evaluate, to sort people into kinds."[68] It characterizes the participants in the verbal clause. Examples include statements such as, "People who spend too much time at the office are workaholics," "He's such a bookworm," and "Don't be a sissy."

In one sense, predicative labels are particularly useful for the purposes of analysis because they represent the actual propositional content of the clause. McConnell-Ginet classifies both referring and addressing labels, on the other hand, as "empty" since they lack propositional content. In a referring label, the nominal fulfills

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[67]Sally McConnell-Ginet, "'What's in a Name?" Social Labeling and Gender Practices," in *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, ed. Janet Holmes and Miriam Meyerhoff (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 69-97.

[68]Ibid., 69.

the basic function of identifying "the participants in the eventuality designated by the verb."[69] In general, they are either the subject or object of a verb. Examples include the following: "Girls just want to have fun," "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," and "Participation at the Parent-Teacher Association meeting was diverse, with both soccer moms and stay-at-home dads in attendance." Likewise, addressing labels do not have propositional content in themselves, but simply identify the individual or class of individuals to whom the utterance is directed. Examples include: "Students, pay attention to the substitute teacher," "My fellow Americans . . .," and "Hey guys, wait for me!"

Despite the fact that referring labels communicate no propositional content in themselves, their use can nonetheless be significant, if only because they sometimes highlight the salience of a cultural or social category from which the label derives its meaning. In other words, authors and speakers sometimes deploy a referential label in their texts or speech when the identity indexed by that label supplies a culturally important contextual element to the narrative. Furthermore, in some cases, the label itself can function as a central organizing feature of an entire narrative due to its capacity to evoke a cultural category that is contextually significant within the narrative.

Gender Identities as Enculturated Social Categorizations

The issue of fundamental importance here is that if gender identity as a theological category being a man or a woman – contains a social identity component, and if specific cultures further subcategorize men and women into subgroup and subtype social identities – such as soccer mom, diva, jock, family man – then it seems likely that it would be fruitful to theorize these subgroups and subtypes in properly theological terms, that is, as secondary gender identities. Two further considerations in particular

[69]Ibid., 73.

suggest that this might not only be helpful, but also important. First, viewing enculturated particularity through the lens of SIT provides us with a means to maintain the essential priority of primary sex difference as a normative system of individual classification. Secondary gender identities reflect the social significance of specific categories of individuals within the superordinate social groups of 'man' and 'woman.' This reflects the important doctrinal practice of recognizing the primacy of the male/female creational binary. In other words, *secondary* gender identities themselves function within the *primary* gender identity schema of 'man' and 'woman.'

Second, viewing enculturated particularity through the lens of SIT highlights how the salience of certain instances of particularity is contingent upon specific social situations and contexts, that is, upon concrete communities. This reinforces doctrinal perspectives that we observed in the previous chapter concerning the relationship between gender and personhood. If primary gender identity is a central component of personhood, then it should not surprise us to discover that it can be augmented by means of secondary gender identities that emerge in specific cultural contexts.

Secondary Gender Identities in the New Testament

As a result of the preceding discussion, we are now prepared to outline our interest in possible secondary gender identities drawn from the social world of the first century. In ancient cultures, marital status and marriageability were salient components of feminine identity, and were therefore sites of enculturated categorization. Indeed, a variety of social structures existed within the first century that enabled cultures to subclassify unmarried women in ways that communicated something about their marriagability.[70] The remainder of this dissertation will explore the role that secondary

[70]See discussion in Alison Jeppesen-Wigelsworth, "The Roman Household," in *Themes in Roman Society and Culture*, ed. Matt Gibbs, Milorad Nikolic, and Pauline Ripat (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2014), 94-116. See also S. Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), and Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to*

gender identity classification regimes played in supporting these efforts. It will demonstrate that Greek literature used the παρθένος label to index young, marriageable female identity as a secondary gender identity. If this is true, then English translations of these texts that gloss it as "young woman," or "maiden" are mistranslations that obscure its function as a technical identity marker in ancient culture.

Although several New Testament authors make use of the παρθένος label, we are going to focus on one particularly problematic chapter in the New Testament that might shed additional light on the social identity of virgins in the early church. In 1 Corinthians 7, the apostle Paul provides the church at Corinth with specific instructions regarding married and unmarried men and women, including widows and female virgins. A variety of lexical and syntactical ambiguities, however, render the meaning of Paul's instructions famously vague. For example, Paul applies "unmarriedness" (ὁ ἀγάμος) descriptively to both men and women (vv. 8, 11, 32, 34), but also refers explicitly to female widows and virgins (vv. 8 and 25ff, respectively). In other words, Paul addresses unmarried individuals collectively, at the superordinate level, before appearing to focus on specific secondary gender identities nested within the subgroup of unmarried women. This seems to suggest that Paul regarded the unmarried state as theologically significant in itself, but perhaps uniquely so for women.

In order to understand the meaning and function of the term παρθένος in 1 Corinthians 7, we will turn our attention in the following chapter to the Jewish and Greco-Roman background literature of the New Testament. In that chapter we will examine a broad variety of features of the παρθένος label, including its syntactic, lexical, and contextual usage, in order to discern the shape of the secondary gender identity that it

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the Time of Ulpian (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). The perpetuation of the family name, together with property, rituals, and other social and physical goods associated with the family household, was a primary concern of the *paterfamilias*, or 'head of household.' Begetting legal heirs through a wife to whom one was legally married was the primary means of accomplishing this.

indexes. At the conclusion of that study we will be better equipped to return to 1 Corinthians 7 and perhaps provide a fresh alternative to the exegetical conundrum of the identity of the virgins in verses 25-38.

Conclusion

The goal of this current chapter has been to provide a multifaceted rationale for theorizing sociocultural gendered particularity as discrete secondary gender identities, even in texts as remote from our own cultural context as those in the New Testament. The method for achieving this has involved an examination of the various theories of categorization that underwrite classifications of gendered particularity itself. After arriving at the tentative conclusion that categorization processes function as "theories" that are continually altered, refined, and sometimes redefined, I applied this approach to a specific type of category, namely the social kind and concluded this first major section of the chapter by identifying unique characteristics of social categories, such as social groups, psychological essentialism, and entitativity.

Next, I surveyed selected feminist accounts of secondary gender difference, particularly those in which difference featured prominently at the theoretical level. I discovered that priorities within these feminist accounts that might otherwise conflict and contradict each other might be held together in tension when brought together under the banner of a theory-reformation model of understanding categories. Such a model recognizes the linguistic and social priority of specific communities in the production of group identities, while leaving open the possibility that the theories that undergird the categories produced by individual communities are themselves exposed to external, reforming forces. It is, indeed, at this point, that a Christian doctrine of community will insist that a concern for social justice ought to be a preeminant value that might drive this process of theory reformation.

Third, I turned to the field of social psychology and the social identity and self-

categorization theory of Henri Tajfel and John Turner. After exploring the basic premises that comprise the social identity approach to group identity and behavior, I focused our attention on studies that examined the formation of subgroups and subtypes and their interaction with each other and with the superordinate group. I concluded by examining the possibility that communities might employ labels to index secondary gender identities when the theories that form certain social categories are shaped by gendered particularity.

Finally, I suggested that the Greek word παρθένος might possibly function as a secondary gender identity label in the ancient world. After briefly introducing the discussion of the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 concerning virgins, I claimed that our understanding of that text would benefit from an in-depth study of the παρθένος label and its function in the Jewish and Greco-Roman background literature of the New Testament.

CHAPTER 4

ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ IN THE JEWISH AND GRECO-ROMAN BACKGROUND LITERATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the function of labels that index unmarried female sexuality in antiquity as secondary gender identities. In order to accomplish this, we conducted an exhaustive survey of all major Jewish and non-Jewish sources composed roughly between 100 BC and AD 100 in which the παρθένος label occurs.[1] In particular, we focused on elements within these texts that would outline the shape and function of the social identity of virgins.

For the purposes of this study we adhered to four general guidelines while conducting our analysis of these texts. First, I omitted occurrences of παρθένος that did not index personal identities. For example, authors sometimes used the παρθένος label with reference to nonpersonal entities as a means of ascribing certain attributes associated with virginity (e.g. purity, innocence, etc.) to these objects. In Jewish literature this occurred often in prophetic texts about specific nations, such as "virgin Israel" (Amos 5:2), "virgin daughter Zion" (παρθένος θυγάτηρ Σιων, Isa 37:22, LXX) or the "virgin daughter of Egypt" (Jer 26:11). A second non-personal use of the παρθένος label also occurred in discussions about philosophical or abstract ideas, namely as a means of ascribing a state of perfection to something, such as a mathematical entity (typically the number seven) or an abstract concept.[2]

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[1]This component of our method mirrors that of Love L. Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2010) in her survey of the Greek words γένος and ἔθνος.

[2]In the pseudepigraphal text *Joseph and Aseneth*, Joseph refers to repentance as a "very beautiful 'virgin,' pure and holy and gentle" (15:8); see also Philo, *De decalogo* 102, which describes seven

Second, I included each separate occurrence of the παρθένος label in our quantitative analysis of the texts, even if the label occurred more than once in a particular text. Furthermore, texts were always tagged if a particular element was present, even if the text contained more than one occurrence of a label, but only one occurrence of the particular textual element. For example, if the text contained two occurrences of the παρθένος label, but only one term connoting social justice, each occurrence was still tagged with the Social Justice. Although this might raise the specter of "double-counting," it nonetheless seemed to be the most accurate way to factor these references into our store of data.

Third, I tagged a text once for each textual element that occurred, even if a particular text contained more than one instance of the same textual element. For example, if a text contained more than one term or phrase that connoted the theme of kinship, the Kinship tag would nonetheless be applied to that text just once if the παρθένος label only occurred once in that text. Similar to the previous guideline, it is possible that this procedure might produce an inaccurate data set to the extent that it fails to reflect texts that contain several references to the same contextual element. It seems, however, that an alternative procedure that would, for example, establish a system to weight these various elements differently would extend the scope of this project beyond what is practically possible for a dissertation.

Fourth, the textual element tags can be divided into two groups according to methodology: those that were applied to every text, and those that were applied to selected texts. For example, at least one Context tag was applied to every occurrence of the παρθένος label. Likewise, every text received a Label Function tag that specified both the syntactic role of the label in the proposition in which it was used, as well as certain aspects of the label's referent. Other textual element tags, however, were only

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as "the virgin number."

applied to texts in which those elements appeared. For example, in some texts the author labels a woman as a παρθένος, and then uses a different label or term later in the text to refer to the same individual (e.g., γύνη, θυγατήρ, etc.). In these cases, a separate tag was applied to texts that corresponds to each of the different terms used to refer to the referent of the παρθένος label.

Parthenos in the Background Literature of the New Testament

By using the search function of TLG, I compiled a list of 195 occurrences of the παρθένος label in Jewish literature and 334 occurrences in non-Jewish literature, all in texts written between 100 BC and AD 100 approximately (see Table 1 in Appendix 1).[3] There are, presumably, a variety of methods by which one might attempt to reconstruct an understanding of the social identity of virgins and widows in the Jewish and non-Jewish background literature of the New Testament era. The presentation and data analysis that follows is an amalgamation of sorts in which one can discern methods and research priorities of social identity and self-categorization theory, as well as feminist and gender theory, and will be divided into the following major sections:

1. Categorizations — This section examines the manner in which the παρθένος label is employed in categorization activities by authors and speakers in the primary texts.

2. Head Noun — This section examines the various syntactic constructions that result when a label is used in conjunction with a head noun, such as θυγατήρ.

3. Sameness — This section is similar to the previous section, but examines the surrounding context in order to determine whether or not the παρθένος label is linked conceptually to other social categorizations or identities. The goal of this

[3]Although the Septuagint is outside this date-range, it reflects a social and religious tradition that was highly influential in Jewish culture at the turn of the era. To exclude it on the basis of a strict adherence to the date-range criterion is unnecessary and would, perhaps, even be detrimental to one of the stated goals of this project, which is to explore the manner in which the virgin social identity might have functioned as a secondary gender identity in the New Testament era, and in 1 Cor. 7 in particular. See similar methodological comments in Sechrest, *A Former Jew*, 61.

section is to uncover the range of associations that might be attached to the social identity encompassed by the παρθένος label.

4. Difference — This section tracks the occurrence within texts containing the παρθένος label of other social categorizations or identities that are not identified by the παρθένος label. The goal of this section is to identify the network of identities and categorizations within which the identity-circumscribing behavior of the παρθένος label operates.

5. Essence — This section examines the texts that contain elements indicating various aspects of essentialism that are associated with virgins in antiquity.

6. Social context — This final section is an exhaustive summary of the contextual elements in the texts that contain the παρθένος label.

Categorizations

The discussion about social identity in the previous chapter suggested that in order for a social identity to form, a specific social category must exist around which a corresponding group identity can coalesce. That discussion also suggested that the unmarried state was a salient social categorization for women that was not only culturally meaningful in the New Testament era, but also was sufficiently salient in a wide variety of contexts to form the basis of several broadly recognized social identities. One indication that a social category has achieved sufficient cultural salience to index a group identity is when individuals predicate an identity label to an individual or group of individuals on the basis of this category.[4]

Out of the 195 Jewish texts surveyed containing the παρθένος label, in 21 texts the label was in this predicate position. More often than not, the label was ascribed to a specific (16x) individual (12x) or group (4x) of individuals than to an indefinite (4x) individual (3x) or group (1x). In other words, in the clear majority of cases when the

[4]Discussion in the previous chapter indicated that scholars in the fields of linguistics and semiotic theory compare the propositional content of labels when they are in predicate positions to the "empty" propositional content of labels that are used referentially in a statement. See Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

παρθένος label was used in predicate constructions, the author wished to designate a specific individual as a virgin.

In the 334 non-Jewish texts surveyed that contained the παρθένος label, the label was in the predicate position in a total of 24 texts. The non-Jewish texts, however, demonstrate less of a preference for definite individual vs. group reference than the Jewish texts did; usage was almost split equally between individuals (9x) and groups (8x). The pattern reemerges when the label referred to an indefinite individual or group; the label refers to an indefinite group only once, while referring to indefinite individuals in 6 texts.

With a Head Noun

Like many linguistic labels, both χήρα and παρθένος can function absolutely or in a construction with a head noun. Consider the following English sentences: (1) She was the virgin daughter of the king. (2) The enemy army took all the young men and virgins hostage. In sentence 1, the word "virgin" is in a modifier/head-noun construction with the noun "daughter." In sentence 2, however, the word "virgin" occurs on its own.

In this study of the παρθένος label in Jewish and Greco-Roman literature, several head nouns occurred in close syntactical constructions with it. Out of the 195 occurrences of παρθένος in Jewish literature, about 10 percent of them are used with a head noun. These head nouns are θυγατήρ (7x), ἀδελφή (2x), νεᾶνις (2x), παῖς (2x), ψυχή (2x), γύνη (1x), ὀρφανος (1x), λοχός (1x), a label denoting civic identity (such as a city or nationality, 2x), and a proper name (1x).

A similar percentage of head-noun constructions was identified in non-Jewish literature, as well. Out of the 334 uses of the παρθένος label in non-Jewish texts, approximately 10 percent of them occur in head-noun constructions. Unlike Jewish literature, however, in most of these syntactical constructions the head-noun is a proper name (18x).

Daughter. The παρθένος label occurs in conjunction with θυγατήρ a total of seven times in the Jewish texts we surveyed. Two of these occurrences are in the LXX, one is in the NT, and the remaining four are in Josephus. Philo never refers to "virgin daughters" explicitly.

In most cases, a modifier stands in between the head noun and the παρθένος label. In the story of the Levite and his concubine in Judges 19, an old man takes the sojourners into his home for the evening, and then tries to appease the men of Gibeah who want to rape the Levite: "Behold, here are my virgin daughter (ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἡ παρθένος) and his concubine . . . . Violate them and do with them what seems good to you, but against this man do not do this outrageous thing."[5] Similarly, 2 Samuel 13 relates the story of the rape of Tamar by Amnon, and describes a garment that was worn at that time by the "virgin daughters of the king (αἱ θυγατέρες τοῦ βασιλέως αἱ παρθένοι)."[6]

If these texts illustrate a standard syntactical construction in which both the head noun and the παρθένος label are articular, but separated by an additional modifier, two parallel texts in Josephus stand out as an exception to this pattern. In describing the inheritance that King Herod's relatives received upon his death, Josephus mentions that "Caesar also gave 250,000 silver coins to each of his virgin daughters (αὐτοῦ θυγατράσιν παρθένοις) and married them to Pheroras's son."[7] In this case, the genitive modifier precedes θυγατράσιν, with the result that the παρθένος label and its head noun are immediately adjacent to each other.

In non-Jewish literature, παρθένος occurs with θυγατήρ five times in the writings of Plutarch, and once in Dionysius Halicarnassus. Of these six total occurrences,

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[5]Judg 19:24 LXX.

[6]2 Kgdms 13:18 LXX; cf. Acts 21:9; Josephus, *A.J.* 17:34, 2:258.

[7]Josephus, *A.J.* 17:322; cf. Josephus, *B.J.* 2:99, which relates the same story, also with the phrase αὐτοῦ θυγατράσιν παρθένοις.

only one of them is used with an additional modifier. In his biography of Alexander the Great, Plutarch describes how Alexander graciously alerted the imprisoned mother of Darius—together with his wife and two virgin daughters (θυγατέρας δύο παρθένους)—that Darius was not dead.[8] Furthermore, in two other texts the head noun and παρθένος label are split by their governing participle. For example, in his biography of Timoleon, Plutarch describes how the tyrant Dionysius, who had allied himself with the general Timoleon and thereby guaranteed his own safety as an exile in Corinth, lived to see more than an equal share of sorrow, including seeing "the violent deaths of his adult sons and the violation of his virgin daughters (θυγατέρων καταπορνεύσεις παρθένων)."[9]

Lastly, the three remaining occurrences of the παρθένος label in conjunction with θυγατήρ are contained within relatively straightforward grammatical constructions, and yet all three also happen to be syntactically parallel with another phrase. In his biography of the general/politician Lucullus, Plutarch relates how he attempted to address the lack of justice and law in the cities of Asia, in which "families were forced to sell their handsome sons and virgin daughters (θυγατέρας τε παρθένους)" because of the fraudulent and abusive tactics of tax collectors and money-lenders.[10] In a similar construction, Plutarch says that "Spithridates had a very handsome son, named Megabates…and also a beautiful virgin daughter (θυγατέρα παρθένον) of marriageable age."[11] And finally, Dionysius records a speech given before the Roman Senate in which Tullius asks what he has done to deserve the charges brought against him by Tarquinius:

> I should like to learn from them what injury provokes them to attack me and at what action of mine they are offended. Is it because they know that great numbers during my reign have been put to death without a trial, banished from their country, deprived of their possessions, or have met with any other misfortune which they

[8]Plutarch, *Alex.* 21:1.

[9]Plutarch, *Tim.* 13:10; cf. a similar construction in Plutarch, *Cic.* 10:3.

[10]Plutarch, *Luc.* 20:1.

[11]Plutarch, *Age.* 11:2.

> have not merited? Or, though they can accuse me of none of these tyrannical misdeeds, are they acquainted with any outrages I have been guilty of toward married women, or insults to their maiden daughters, or any other wanton attempt upon a person of free condition?"[12]

The parallelism between "married women" (γυναῖκας γαμετὰς) and "maiden daughters" (θυγατέρας παρθένους) points to a connection between "virgin" and marital status, particularly since the Greek word γαμετή is a technical term that explicitly designates a marital status.[13]

Other head nouns. Other head nouns encountered in this survey of the 195 occurrences of the παρθένος label in Jewish texts include ἀδελφή (2x), νεᾶνις (2x), παῖς (2x), ψυχή (2x), γύνη (1x), ὀρφανος (1x), λοχός (1x), a label denoting civic identity (such as a city or nationality, 2x), and a proper name (1x). Likewise, in the 334 non-Jewish texts that contain the παρθένος label, the label also occurs in a head-noun construction with ethnic or civic lexemes (6x) and with ψυχή, νύμφη, and γύνη (1x each).

Analysis. This brief survey of the use of the παρθένος label demonstrates that it occurs relatively infrequently in conjunction with a head noun; stated differently, the παρθένος label *normally* occurs without a head noun. In other words, the label functions as a sufficiently stable referent for a particular category of individuals for authors to use it by itself without any other identifiers. In the majority of these cases, contextual indicators are sufficient to fill in any background details that might augment the identity of the παρθένος in view. At the same time, the identity indexed by this label is not so fixed that it cannot be affixed or conjoined to a head noun.

And yet, texts that contain the παρθένος label with a head noun communicate aspects of the identity of virgins in ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman society. The

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[12]Dionysius, *Antiquitates rom.* 4:36:1 (Cary, LCL 347:389).

[13]See BDAG, 187.

occurrence of υἱός in parallel constructions suggests that "virginness" was conceptually associated with kinship in general, and with offspring in particular. Likewise, the occurrence of γαμετή in a parallel construction suggests that "virginness" was also an indicator of marital status or marriageability.

Sameness

The second aspect of the linguistic function of παρθένος that seemed important to track was its semantic overlap with other feminine identity labels, or its 'sameness' with respect to these labels. Tracking other words that were used in the surrounding context to refer to the individual, group, or class of people who were simultaneously designated by the παρθένος label yields an additional layer of information that can augment our understanding of the identity of virgins in these ancient societies. Out of the 195 occurrences of παρθένος we surveyed in Jewish literature, 50 of them occurred in texts that also identified the παρθένος with these other labels. These labels include the following words: κόρη (22x), θυγατήρ (20x), παῖς (10x), γυνή (7x), νεᾶνις (5x), παιδισκή (2x), χήρα (1x), and αδελφή (1x). Likewise, in the 334 non-Jewish texts we surveyed containing the παρθένος label, 107 of the uses were in contexts that used a similar group of words to refer to the same individual, group, or class of people who were identified with the παρθένος label. These labels include the following words: θυγατήρ (64x), κόρη (48x), παῖς (17x), γυνή (10x), αδελφή (6x), χήρα (4x), νύμφη (3x), and three other words occurring one time each (αδελφιδός, τέκνον, and παιδίσκη).

These figures represent the number of occurrences of the παρθένος label when the individual to whom it refers is also identified in terms of a different female noun. The following paragraph taken from Plutarch's *Amatoriae Narrationes* illustrates this method well:

> At Haliartus, in Boeotia, there was a girl (κόρη) of remarkable beauty, named Aristocleia, the daughter (θυγάτηρ) of Theophanes. She was wooed by Strato of Orchomenus and Callisthenes of Haliartus. Strato was the richer and was rather the more violently in love with the young lady (παρθένου); for he had seen her in

> Lebadeia bathing at the fountain called Hercynê in preparation for carrying a basket in a sacred procession in honour of Zeus the King. But Callisthenes had the advantage, for he was a blood-relation of the girl (κόρῃ). Theophanes was much perplexed about the matter, for he was afraid of Strato, who excelled nearly all the Boeotians in wealth and in family connections, and he wished to submit the choice to Trophonius; but Strato had been persuaded by the young lady's (παρθένου) servants that she was more inclined towards him, so he asked that the choice be left to the bride-to-be herself. But when Theophanes in the presence of everyone asked the girl (παιδὸς), and she chose Callisthenes, it was plain at once that Strato found the slight hard to bear. But he let two days go by and came to Theophanes and Callisthenes asking that the friendship between him and them be preserved, even though he had been deprived of the marriage by some jealous divinity. And they approved of what he said, so that they even invited him to the wedding-feast. But before he came he got ready a crowd of his friends and a considerable number of servants, who were scattered among the others present and were not noticed; but when the girl (κόρη) went, according to the ancestral custom, to the spring called Cissoessa to make the preliminary sacrifice to the nymphs, then his men who were in ambush all rushed out at once and seized her. Strato also had hold of the young lady (παρθένου); and naturally Callisthenes and his supporters in turn took hold of her and held on until, although they did not know it at the time, the girl (παῖς) died in their hands as they pulled against each other. Callisthenes immediately disappeared, whether by committing suicide or by going away as an exile from Boeotia; at any rate nobody could tell what had happened to him. But Strato slew himself in sight of all upon the body of the young lady (παρθένῳ).[14]

In this paragraph, the same individual is identified as a παρθένος (4x), a κόρη (3x), a παῖς (2x), and a θυγατήρ (1x). In the methodology used in this survey, each occurrence of the παρθένος label was assigned a 'Sameness' tag for all three of the other terms, even though they all three occur less often in the paragraph than the παρθένος label itself.

Many other texts in addition to the above text in Plutarch identified a particular individual using a variety of these words, indicating the fluidity with which authors could alter their usage in order adequately to describe the participants in the narrative. As the following examples illustrate, the NT era authors are capable of demonstrating remarkable semantic flexibility:

> But if there is a girl, a virgin engaged to a man, and a man finding her in the city should lie with her, bring both of them to the gate of their city, and they shall be stoned with stones, and they shall die—the young woman, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he humbled his neighbor's woman (τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον). (Deut. 22:24)

In this text, the author refers to the same individual as a girl (παῖς), virgin (παρθένος),

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[14]Plutarch, *Amat. narr*. 771F-772C (Fowler, LCL 321:5-7).

young woman (νεᾶνις), and woman/wife (γυνή). Consider also this text in Plutarch of the widely recounted story of the rape of the Sabine virgins:

> [The historians] relate that there was a certain young man, brilliant in military achievements and valuable in other ways, whose name was Talasius; and when the Romans were carrying off the daughters (θυγατέρας) of the Sabines who had come to see the games, a young lady (παρθένος) of particularly beautiful appearance was being carried off for him by some plebeian retainers of his. To protect their endeavor and to prevent anyone from approaching and trying to take the girl (παιδός) from them, they shouted continually that she was being brought as a wife (γυνὴ) for Talasius. Since, therefore, everyone honored Talasius, they followed along and provided escort, joining in the good wishes and acclamations. Wherefore since Talasius's marriage was happy, they became accustomed to invoke Talasius in other marriages also, even as the Greeks invoke Hymen.[15]

At least two observations about this set of data seem relevant. First, παρθένος occurs frequently with θυγατήρ in both Jewish (occurs in 10 percent of the texts surveyed) and non-Jewish (18 percent) texts, and in non-Jewish texts it is the word the παρθένος label occurs with greatest frequency. Second, this data seems to complement the observations we made in the previous section about the usage of the παρθένος label with head nouns. While the label normally occurs absolutely, without a head noun, contextual indicators often provide additional background information associated with the identity of the παρθένος.

Difference

In addition to terms that were in some way identified with the παρθένος label, it also seemed important to track identity labels that were used to refer to *other* individuals, groups, or classes of people in the surrounding context. The resulting matrix of identity associations is useful for the opposite reason that tracking head nouns and sameness was: it outlines the axes of difference along which the indexing activity of παρθένος as an identity label takes place. Also, for the sake of consistency and accuracy, these indicators of difference were not "double-counted" along with those noted above

[15]Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 271F–272A (Babbitt, LCL 305:55).

that were equated in some way with individuals or groups singled out by the παρθένος label. Finally, the labeled were divided between gendered labels (i.e., labels that are inherently masculine or feminine) and non-gendered labels.

Out of the 195 occurrences of παρθένος surveyed in Jewish literature, 82 of them occur in contexts that contain one or more other identity labels. In texts containing these 82 occurrences, 52 of these other identity labels were feminine, 52 were masculine, and 11 were non-gendered labels. In other words, several texts contained a combination of these labels. A text in Philo *De vita Mosis* illustrates this helpfully:

> And, having carried off prisoners more than they could count, they felt justified in putting the men and women to death, the former because these iniquitous designs and actions had been begun by them, the women because they had bewitched the younger Hebrews and thus led them into licentiousness and impiety and finally to death; but to the boys who were quite young and the maidens they shewed the mercy which their tender age secured for them.[16]

In this text, the παρθένος label refers to one group of individuals, while other labels are employed to refer to entirely different groups of people.

Likewise, identity labels that referred to other individuals, groups, or classes of people alongside those identified by the παρθένος label were present in 165 of the 334 non-Jewish texts we examined containing the παρθένος label. Out of these 165 texts, 125 of them contained references to masculine identity labels, 84 contained references to feminine identity labels, and 12 contained references to non-gendered identity labels.

Feminine identity labels. By far the most frequently occurring label in the 51 Jewish texts that contained references to other feminine identities was γυνή (32x). Consider the following example from 2 Maccabees: "Women [γυναῖκες] who had wrapped sackcloth under their breasts were thronging the streets, and the cloisters of virgins were all running together to the gates and to the walls, while others were looking out of the windows" (2 Macc 3:19 LXX). Also, in his narrative about the destruction of

[16]Philo, *Mos.* 1:311 (F. H. Colson, LCL 289:439).

Sodom, Josephus says that "Lot departed taking with him his wife [γυναῖκα] and daughters, both of whom were still virgins" (Josephus, *A.J.* 1:202).[17]

The second most frequently occurring label is, perhaps surprisingly, χήρα (11x).[18] Other less frequently occurring words were μήτηρ (6x), πόρνη (5x), θυγάτηρ (4x), αδελφή (2x), παλλακή (1x), and νύμφη (1x). In addition to these identity labels, παρθένος also occurred in narratives containing common feminine participial forms denoting marital status, such as γεγαμημένη (3x), ἐκβεβλημένη (3x), and βεβηλωμένη (3x).

Similar to the Jewish texts in this survey, the most commonly occurring feminine identity label in non-Jewish literature was γυνή (60x). For example, Diodorus describes a scene in which the "highway and all parts of the countryside which led away toward the territory of the Geloans were crowded with women and children intermingled with maidens."[19] Likewise, Dionysius relates the story of Verginius speaking to the camp at Algidum, in which he "assailed the oligarchy with greater boldness . . ., enumerating their insults offered to wives, their seizing of marriageable virgins."[20] In a particularly colorful narrative, after the decemvir Appius attempts to fraudulently take the virgin Virginia away from Icilius, her betrothed, "there was much grieving and beating of breasts on the part of the virgin and of the women surrounding her."[21] In a similar narrative involving

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[17]See also Philo, *Somn.* 2:185, *Spec.* 1:105-6, 2:24, and *Virt.* 43.

[18]E.g., Philo *Spec.* 1:108 ("But they are permitted with impunity to marry not only maidens but widows also.") and *Virt.* 114 ("He shows his compassion for the captive, if she is a virgin, because it is not her parents who are now giving her in marriage, arranging for her a most desirable connection; and if she is a widow, because she, being deprived of her first husband, is about how to make experiment of another.") and Lev 21:14 LXX ("A widow, and one rejected and profaned and a prostitute—these he shall not marry. Rather, he shall marry a wife who is a virgin of his own kin.")

[19]Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 13:89:3 (Oldfather, LCL 384:375).

[20]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 11:40:4 (Cary, LCL 388:131); see also Plutarch, *Amat. narr.* 750C, 766E; *Cicero* 20:2; and Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 13:14:5.

[21]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 11:31:3.

the same Appius, "women and virgins ran out of their houses lamenting" the fate of a different young virgin.[22]

After γυνή, the second most frequently occurring feminine identity label we encountered in non-Jewish literature was μήτηρ (19x). In his biography of Alexander the Great, Plutarch writes that as Alexander "was sitting down to supper, someone told him that the mother, wife, and two virgin daughters of Dareius were among the prisoners."[23] Similarly, the various accounts of Theseus's capture of Helen relate that he left her in the company of his mother.[24]

The third most frequently occurring feminine identity, θυγατήρ (10x), also deserves special mention. It seems noteworthy that the top three feminine identity labels in non-Jewish literature are all associated with the theme of kinship. Furthermore, in several texts they all occur together.[25]

Masculine identity labels. As mentioned above, out of the 195 occurrences of παρθένος in this survey of Jewish literature, 52 of them occurred in contexts that also contained masculine identity labels. The most frequently occurring of those labels was νεανίσκος (17x). The overwhelming majority of these occur in poetic texts, and are located either in strophes that are parallel to lines containing the παρθένος label, or occur in the same strophe together with the παρθένος label. For example, in the book of Amos the prophet says, "In that day the lovely virgins and the young men shall faint for thirst"

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[22]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 11:396.

[23]Plutarch, *Alex*. 21:1 (Perrin, LCL 99:283).

[24]Cf. Plutarch, *Thes.* 31:3, and Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 4:63:3; see also Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 11:30:1 and Plutarch, *Rom.* 19:5.

[25]Cf. Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 301C; *Alex*. 21:11.

(Amos 8:13 ESV), and the prophet Zecharia says, "grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins" (Zech. 9:17 NASB).[26]

Other less frequently occurring labels include ἀνήρ (14x), πατήρ (8x), υἱός (7x), ἀδελφός (6x), νυμφίος (6x), ἄρσην (4x), νέος (4x), and παῖς (4x). The common parallel usage with νεανίσκος might perhaps suggest that a predominant usage pattern of the παρθένος label in Jewish contexts as an age designation, rather than simply as a reference to sexual purity and marriageability, or as a kinship term. Indeed, it seems somewhat significant that authors commonly chose the παρθένος label in these texts instead of another term such as κόρη, for example. The preponderance of these occurrences within poetic structures involving parallelism seems to further underscore the salience of age as a primary axis of gendered difference.

In non-Jewish literature, we noted above that the παρθένος label occurred a total of 125 times in texts containing masculine labels. We will provide example texts of the four most commonly occurring labels because they are prevalent in texts that contain thematic elements of kinship. The most commonly occurring masculine identity label was πατήρ (44x). As most would expect, this identity label is used without exception to refer to the father of the virgin mentioned in the text. Indeed, it seems somewhat significant that if a text contained both the παρθένος label and the word πατήρ, then the father that is mentioned is the father of the virgin and not some other individual mentioned in the narrative. Dionysius, for example, relates the story of the daugher of Lucius Virginius, "called Verginia after her father, who far surpassed all the Roman virgins in beauty."[27] Likewise, in his account of Herocles' rescue of the daughters of Atlas, Diodorus says that "after learning from the virgins what had happened, he slew the pirates to a man and

[26]Cf. 1 Macc 1:26 LXX; Isa 23:4 LXX; Jer LXX; and Ps 148:12 LXX.

[27]Dionysius, *Ant. Rom.* 11:28:2 (Cary, LCL 388:95).

brought the girls back to Atlas their father."[28]

The second most common label was ἀνήρ (35x). In most cases, this label referred to the husband whom a virgin had married. For example, Dionysius relates the story of the sister of Numitorius, "wife of Verginius . . ., who had as a virgin married a young man (νέῳ ἀνδρὶ) and had born a child not long after her marriage."[29]

The third most frequently occurring identity label was παῖς (25x), which, although not technically masculine, will be discussed in this section in those cases when contextual indicators point in the direction of a male referent. In most of the texts containing this label it functions as a contrast of sorts with the παρθένος label. This might suggest that non-Jewish authors preferred this word over νεανίσκος, which prevailed in Jewish texts. For example, Plutarch writes that Agesilaus "always attended the games . . ., and was absent from no contest in which either boys (παίδων) or virgins competed."[30]

The fourth most frequently occurring masculine identity label was υἱός (19x). In some texts, this label was used to denote the lineage of a significant individual in the narrative. For example, Plutarch relates the story of Eunostus, "the son of Elieus, who was the son of Cephisus, and Scias," and his cousin, the virgin Ochnê.[31] Other texts employ the label in contexts containing a high concentration of other kinship-related terms:

> They also wrote another decree, that the bodies of those who fell in the war should be given public burial and, further, that their parents and children should be maintained, receiving their support from the public treasury, that their virgins

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[28]Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 4:27:4 (Oldfather, LCL 303:431); see also Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 12:24:4, and Plutarch, *Pel.* 20:7.

[29]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 11:34:1 (Cary, LCL 388:113); see also Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 145E, and *Flam.* 16:2.

[30]Plutarch, *Age*. 21:3 (Perrin, LCL 87:59); see also *Quaest. conv*. 651B, Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 4:69:2, and Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 13:58:2 and 13:82:3.

[31]Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 300E (Babbitt, LCL 305:227); see also Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 4:47:1, 4:63:3, and 4:81:1.

> should be given dowries at the public cost, and that their sons on reaching manhood should be crowned in the theatre at the Dionysia and given a full suit of armour.[32]

This example also demonstrates the potential for the παρθένος label to function in a parallel manner to υἱός. This usage occurs several times in constructions containing the παρθένος label in which both terms describe a son/daughter pair. In his biography of Lucullus, Plutarch writes about a time when "families were forced to sell their handsome sons and virgin daughters, and cities their votive offerings, pictures, and sacred statues."[33] He also mentions in his biography of Timoleon that "he lived to see the violent deaths of his grown-up sons and the raping of his virgin daughters." [34]

Other less frequently occurring masculine identity labels we encountered in the non-Jewish texts we surveyed include ἀδελφός (14x), νέος (9x), νεανίσκος (7x), ἄρσην (5x), θεῖος and ἡίθεος (both 3x), νεανίας (2x), and νυμφίος (1x).

Non-gendered identity labels. As mentioned above, a total of 11 Jewish texts that mention παρθένος were tagged as also containing non-gendered identity labels. The most frequently occurring of these labels was **πρεσβύτος** (8x), followed by **νήπιος** (3x), **τέκνον** (2x), and **παῖς** (1x). In the non-Jewish literature, the **παρθένος** label occurred alongside non-gendered identity labels in a total of 13 texts. The most frequently occurring of these labels was **παῖς** (6x), followed by **τέκνον** (3x), **πρεσβύτερος** (2x), and **νήπιος** and **παιδίον** (both 1x). This seems to confirm the observation noted above, namely that in most cases, and particularly in Jewish literature, the **παρθένος** label was often used in contexts where age differences were a particularly salient feature in the literary context.

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[32]Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 20:84:3 (Geer, LCL 390:363).

[33]Plutarch, *Luc.* 20:1 (Perrin, LCL 47:533).

[34]Plutarch, *Tim.* 13:10 (Perrin, LCL 98:293); see also Plutarch, *Age*. 11:2 and Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 34/35:17:1.

Essence

The purpose of this next section is to explore aspects of the παρθένος social identity that might indicate various aspects of essentialist reasoning that may have been operative in the cultural consciousness of authors in antiquity. After surveying the texts in question, four different elements of essentialist reasoning seem to be at work in the cultural construction of the παρθένος social identity: entitativity, naturalness, emphasis on current state, and derivative lexemes. These four elements of essentialist reasoning were tagged in 97 out of the 195 Jewish texts we surveyed and in 157 out of the 334 non-Jewish texts we surveyed. The first two of these were the subject of discussion in an earlier chapter, and have been demonstrated to be constitutive of psychological essentialism in formal studies by social psychologists.[35]

The rationale behind the third element of essentialist reasoning we tracked stems from a recurring syntactical construction we encountered in many texts that contain the παρθένος label. In these texts, the author refers to a female individual as someone who is "still" (ἔτι) a virgin (παρθένος). We believe this occurred frequently enough to warrant inclusion in this section.

Finally, we sometimes encountered lemmas that were derived from the same root as the παρθένος label, particularly παρθενία ("virginity"), which denotes the quality or underlying essence of being a παρθένος. We decided to include these texts in this section because they explicitly emphasize a distinguishing feature of individuals identified by the παρθένος label.

Entitativity. As we conducted our survey of the παρθένος label, several indications of entitativity began to emerge, which correspond to important distinctions that were discussed in the previous chapter in our discussion about entitativity and social

[35]See corresponding section in the previous chapter.

categorizations.[36] First, we already noted above the function of the παρθένος label as a category marker when it was used predicatively. Right now, however, we are interested in those much more common instances when it was used referentially.[37] In particular, several significant patterns seemed to emerge when we noted the various referents of the παρθένος label. We noticed, for example, that the referent could be a specific, individual virgin or group of virgins, or it could be an indefinite reference to a particular subcategory of virgins that were not collected together, or even a reference to the category of virgins in general or an indefinite representative member of virgins as a class of people. The following discussion will briefly present three complementary patterns we noted while surveying the referential use of the παρθένος label, and relate each of these patterns to the concept of entitativity.

First, we noticed that when the syntactic function of the παρθένος label was referential in Jewish texts (170x), it was more likely to refer to virgins collectively as an indefinite group or class of individuals (54x) than to an individual, generalized representative of 'virgin' as a class (46x). In these texts, authors typically used plural forms of the παρθένος label, such as in 2 Maccabees 5:13 RSV—"Then there were massacres of young and old, destruction of women and children, slayings of virgins and infants." Likewise, Josephus writes that the Hebrews should marry "virgins who are free and from good parents" (Josephus, *A.J.* 4:244).[38] In each of these cases, the authors refer to 'virgins' as a class of individuals in an indefinite, indistinct manner.[39]

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[36]Entitativity was present in 63 of the 97 Jewish texts and 136 of the 157 non-Jewish texts that contained elements of essentialism.

[37]In twenty-first-century Western culture, it seems somewhat noteworthy to mention that the English word "virgin" almost exclusively occurs in the predicate position, i.e., when one wishes to state explicitly that a specific person "is/was a virgin." In the background literature of the New Testament, however, the pattern of usage is reversed. Referential use of the label noticeably predominates over predicative use.

[38]See also Josephus, *A.J.* 1:249; T. Lev. 14:6; and Philo, *Cher.* 50, *Spec.* 2:24, and *Flaccum* 89.

[39]Cf. a sample text that contains a singular form of the παρθένος label referring to an indefinite virgin, such as Sir 9:5 ("Do not ogle a virgin, lest you be made to stumble in her rebukes.") See

In non-Jewish literature this pattern was even more pronounced. Among the 309 referential uses of the παρθένος label we surveyed in non-Jewish literature, when the παρθένος label was used as an indirect reference marker it denoted an indefinite *group* or *class* of individuals more than 4 times as often as a single, unspecified member of the class (89x and 21x, respectively). For example, in his biography of Lycurgus Plutarch records that "he made the virgins exercise their bodies in running, wrestling, casting the discus, and hurling the javelin."[40] Likewise, Strabo records that some Indian tribes "propose virgins as prizes to the conquerors in a trial of skill in boxing."[41] An example of a singular form of the παρθένος label, by contrast, can be observed in Plutarch: "But if someone sitting near at hand narrates the seduction of a maiden or the adultery of a wife or the framing of a law-suit or a quarrel of brothers, the busybody neither dozes off to sleep nor pleads an engagement."[42]

These observations seem to suggest that in both Jewish and non-Jewish ancient contexts, the παρθένος label circumscribed a robust social identity that was particularly salient at the group level. This group-level identity is also a factor in the second and third patterns of usage. The second pattern we noticed of the use of the παρθένος label as a referential category marker was its occurrence in lists along with other identities or groups of individuals.[43] This pattern was present in 28 Jewish texts and 45 non-Jewish texts, including several we have already examined in previous sections. For example, Philo describes the Arabs as "great breeders of cattle" who "all feed their flocks together,

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also Josephus, *A.J.* 3:277, 4:252 and Philo, *Somn.* 2:185 and *Spec.* 4:178.

[40]Plutarch, *Lyc.* 14:2 (Perrin, LCL 46:245).

[41]Strabo, *Geogr.* 15:1:66 (Jones, LCL 241:115); see also Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 2:30:2; Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 20:71:5; and Plutarch, *Comp. Lyc. et Num.* 3:3 and *De Lib. Ed.* 12B.

[42]Plutarch, *Curios.* 518A (Helmbold, LCL 337:489).

[43]As we saw in the use of masculine identity labels in poetics texts, the παρθένος label often occurs as a category reference in parallel lines in texts within the poetic genre.

not just men, but also women, and youths, and virgins with them" (*Mos* 1:51). Likewise, several non-Jewish texts illustrate the usage of the παρθένος label in lists.[44]

At the very least, this usage of the παρθένος label suggests that the boundaries of the παρθένος social identity were sufficiently stable and fixed to meaningfully distinguish members of that social identity from members of other social categories. We will refer to this particular use of the παρθένος label as 'soft entitativity' because it seems to be prerequisite for more concrete occurrences of entitativity.[45] As an example, consider the well-established practice of age-divided Bible study groups in many North American churches. A standard, Sunday morning announcement will list the various Bible studies that meet during the week, whether during an official "Announcements" portion of the worship service or simply printed out in the weekly church bulletin. The list of groups in the announcement represent actual individuals who might reasonably be expected either to gather together or to act collectively for a specific reason. This is precisely the kind of usage we noted in texts that made use of the παρθένος label in lists. Indeed, it is, perhaps, not difficult to imagine a 1st-century church that might schedule a weekly "virgins-only" Bible study.

A third feature of the referential function of the παρθένος label that we will point out is that it provides us with an additional method of discerning entitativity in texts containing the παρθένος label, namely, by noting those occasions in which it refers to a grouping of actual individuals. In Jewish texts, when the παρθένος label functioned in this manner it was more likely to refer to a grouping of virgins (40x) than to a specific individual (30x). In the book of Esther, for example, the author writes that "the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more

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[44]See Plutarch, *Pyrrh.* 27:6, *Ages.* 21:3, *Amat.* 775D, *Curios.* 516E; see also Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 4:69:2.

[45]See the discussion above in the first section of chap. 3 about "naturalness" and entitativity.

than all the virgins" (Esth 2:17, ESV). On the other hand, non-Jewish texts demonstrated almost exact parity between the use of the παρθένος label to refer to a specific, concrete group of virgins and to a specific, individual virgin (102x and 98x, respectively).

The tendency of the παρθένος label to refer to specific groups of virgins is all the more striking when we note those occasions when it denotes discrete, physical groupings of virgins who were proximally gathered together or who act together as a group. We will refer to this particular use of the παρθένος label as 'hard entitativity.' The chief difference between hard entitativity and simple group identity reference that we just discussed is that sometimes a text will refer to a group of virgins that either are not physically located together as a group in the same place, or are mentioned together with other groups of individuals who are located in the same area. In other words, in many cases the παρθένος label refers to more than one actual, concrete virgins, but the individuals themselves do not act together as a group. For example, a text in Philo describes the capture of Phoenicia by the Jews, saying that "they were divided into six companies, old men, young men, boys, and again in their turn old women, grown women, maidens."[46] Furthermore, several texts in Josephus mention a group of virgins who were gathered at a well to draw water. In his account of the journey of Abraham's servant to find a wife for Isaac, for example, Josephus says that he "encountered a large number of virgins in the outskirts of Haran going to draw water" (Josephus, *A.J.* 1:244). In other texts, however, Josephus describes a grouping of virgins that is less defined. For example, when Jacob arrives at a well in Haran, he encounters some shepherds "along with some young men and virgins sitting around" (Josephus, *A.J.* 1:285). The virgins in this text are presumably interspersed with the young men, and are not referred to in the text as a physically discrete group.[47]

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[46]Philo, *Legat.*221 (Colson, LCL 379:119); see also Philo, *Spec.* 3:26 and 1 Esd 1:53.

[47]Other examples of texts that refer to a definite group of virgins, but do not exhibit hard entitativity are Josephus, *A.J.* 5:165, 168; 6:193; Philo, *Virt.* 43; Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 2:32:2, 7:72:9;

In Jewish texts, the παρθένος label reflects hard entitativity by referring to a specific, discrete group of virgins a total of 36 times. In his account of the life of Moses, for example, Philo describes the time he encountered the daughters of Zelophehad, and noted that "Moses admired the good sense of the virgins and their loyalty to their parent."[48] Likewise, Josephus frequently referred to actual groups of virgins, in addition to texts we have already examined centering on the activity of drawing water from wells. In his account of the Benjamites who attacked a festival at Silo, Josephus describes how they "waited in ambush before the city for the coming of the virgins, in the vineyards and other places where they would escape their eye."[49] In a different text, Josephus relates a story in which Hyrcanus "brought the hundred boys and hundred virgins whom he had purchased, and giving each of them a talent to carry, presented them, the boys to the king, and the girls to Cleopatra."[50]

In the non-Jewish texts we surveyed, the παρθένος label was used 95 times in reference to a specific, discrete group of virgins. In a description of the activity that took place in the temple of Juno at Falerii, Dionysius mentions that "there were choruses of virgins who praised the goddess in the songs of their country."[51] Also, Plutarch describes the widely-recounted and somewhat humorous events surrounding a tribute of ten young men and ten virgins that was given by the Romans to the Etruscans: "The virgins went down to the river as if to bathe, a short distance away from the camp. At the instigation of one of them, Cloelia, they fastened their clothes to their heads . . . and by swimming close

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Strabo, *Geogr*. 5:3:7 (although *Geogr*. 5:3:2 refers to the same group of virgins as being "assembled together," so this occurrence is marked for hard entitativity); Plutarch, *Rom*. 15:1, 17:2; *Quaest. rom*. 289B; *Publ.* 18:3; *Thes*. 15:1; and Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 17:98:1.

[48]Philo, *Mos.* 2:236 (Colson, LCL 289:567).

[49]Josephus, *A.J.* 5:172 (Thackeray, LCL 490:239).

[50]Josephus, *A.J.* 12:217 (Marcus, LCL 365:111).

[51]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 1:21:2

together they [escaped to] the other side."[52] In a different text Plutarch describes a scheme in which Theseus privately appointed two men to pose as women before enrolling "them among the virgins who were going to Crete" for a festival."[53]

A few texts contained elements of both soft and hard entitativity. We already mentioned the text in Philo, *Legatio Ad Gaium*, which mentioned that the Jewish multitude who are fleeing to Phoenicia were divided into six groups: "one of old men, one of young men, one of boys; and again in their turn one band of aged women, one of women in the prime of life, and one of virgins" (Philo, *Legat.* 227). Likewise, Strabo describes a Samnite law in which "ten of the most virtuous virgins and ten of the most virtuous young men are selected every year" to be married to each other.[54]

Naturalness The second essentialist element we noted corresponds to the "naturalness" component mentioned above. In general, texts were tagged for naturalness if they attempted to substantiate an individual's "virginness," whether hypothetical or actual, or if they contained a reference to something that might have been perceived as the essence of the actual virginity of the individual associated with the παρθένος label. In our survey, we noted 23 such texts out of the 97 total Jewish texts that were tagged with this particular element of essentialism. For example, in a discussion about the Mosaic Law Josephus explains that if anyone, "having betrothed a bride in the belief that she is a virgin, thereafter find that she is not so, let him bring a suit and make his own accusation, relying upon what evidence he may have to prove it."[55] Likewise, the V manuscript tradition of Judges LXX states that "everything male and every woman who has had

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[52]Plutarch, *Mulier. Virt.* 250C (Babbitt, LCL 245:515).

[53]Plutarch, *Thes.* 23:3 (Perrin, LCL 46:51); see also Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 2:30:5; Plutarch, *Cam.* 21:2, *Cic.* 20:2, *Num.* 10:4, *Adol. poet. aud.* 34D, and Strabo, *Geogr*. 10:5:2.

[54]Strabo, *Geogr*. 5:4:12 (Jones, LCL 50:467).

[55]Josephus, *A.J.* (Thackeray, LCL 490:119).

intercourse with a male you shall anathematize, but keep the virgins for yourselves" (Judg 21:11 LXX, V only).

References to the "naturalness" of virginity in non-Jewish literature were, however, much less common and explicit. Although we surveyed almost twice as many non-Jewish texts as Jewish texts, references to "naturalness" occurred only five times in non-Jewish texts. In a discussion about the laws drawn up by the Greek statesman Solon, Plutarch describes one stating that "no man is allowed to sell a daughter or a sister, unless he finds that she is no longer a virgin, having consorted with a man" (Plutarch, *Sol.* 23:2). This text needs no comment, since the euphemism "to consort with" (ἀνδρὶ συγγεγενημένην) is a transparent reference to sexual intercourse.

Two other texts, however, invite further discussion. In his biography of Romulus, Plutarch states that Amulius made his brother's daughter "a priestess of Vesta, bound to live unwedded and a virgin all her days."[56] In this text it seems somewhat significant that the παρθένος label occurs parallel with the adjective ἄγαμος. We saw above that authors often used the παρθένος label as an age and marriageability indicator. Here, however, it cannot be an age indicator because the individual cannot stay a particular age "all her days." Furthermore, it cannot be an indicator of marriageability or simple marital status because the virgin is not actually marriageable because Vestal Virgins never married. Indeed, it appears as though the παρθένος label here must be functioning as a technical reference to sexual purity.

A text from the ancient physician Philoxenus, however, complicates this picture. According to Philoxenus, a virgin is "one who, at about this stage of life, has at this moment breasts to rear up children and be ready to use, which nature has ordered. We do not call the small children, then, virgins, but only the ones who are already at womanhood" (Philoxenus, *Fragmenta* 158). As a first-century medical dictionary, this

[56]Plutarch, *Rom.* 3:3 (Perrin, LCL 46:97).

text represents an authentic, technical definition of the παρθένος label as an actual first-century author would have defined the term. Yet, one looks in vain for a single reference to sexual purity in this definition. Instead, the author's central goal seems to be discerning the point at which a younger girl becomes a virgin.

With these two texts in mind, we can now turn our attention to several others that reinforce this ambiguity of reference. In Genesis 24 LXX, the author uses both a referential label and a predicate construction to identify a young lady as a virgin. Indeed, Moses describes Rebekah, the future wife of Isaac, as a virgin twice, and explicitly states after the predicate construction that she was sexually pure:

> Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. The virgin (παρθένος) was very beautiful; she was a virgin (παρθένος ἦν); no man had ever slept with her. (Gen 24:15-16 NIV)

It seems possible that Moses simply follows convention in the first occurrence of the παρθένος label in applying the appropriate age designation to Rebekah, but then uses the additional predicate construction to emphasize her actual virginity.

In another interesting text, a hypothetical woman is referred to as a virgin on grounds entirely apart from sexual purity. Philo discusses the special case of a daughter of a priest who marries a man who is not himself a priest. If her husband dies and she has no children, "she is still in a sense virtually a virgin, destitute as she is of both husband and children and with no refuge except her father."[57] This suggests that custodianship was, at least in some contexts, equally as central to virginity as sexual purity. In any event, it is almost impossible to imagine a scenario in which such a statement would be comprehensible in a modern, Western social context.

This raises an interesting question, however, namely whether authors ever employ the παρθένος label as an explicit reference to individuals who were known to

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[57]Philo, *Spec.* 1:129 (Colson, LCL 320:173).

not, in fact, be sexually pure. Such a use of the παρθένος label would not in itself dislodge sexual purity from its role as a denoting factor of the identity of first-century virgins, although it would be a striking illustration of the difference between sense and reference that we mentioned earlier. And, in fact, such a usage as this does exist. In Gen 34:3, the LXX continues to refer to Dinah as a virgin even after she was raped by Shechem. In a similar text, Plutarch describes the plaintive pleas of the now-grown Sabine women who were seized by the Romans when they were young, marriageable women, and who years later beseeched the Sabine army to cease fighting the Romans: "For you did not come to avenge us for our ravishers while we were still virgins, but now you would tear wives from their husbands and mothers from their children."[58] Although it is technically possible that the phrase "while we were still virgins" (παρθένοις οὔσαις) refers to the time between their seizure and their first sexual encounter with a Roman man, this seems to stretch the sense of the text beyond its surface meaning. Indeed, the basis of their appeal (i.e. that they did not want to leave their husbands and children) suggests that the women were likely referring to the period of young adulthood during which a woman would still have been considered marriageable.[59]

Derivative lexeme. The third element of essentialism we noted was the presence of other lemmas derived from the same root as παρθένος, specifically the term παρθενία ("virginity"). Despite our recent discussion above, this close contextual association between a social identity label and a term denoting its underlying character seems to reinforce the centrality of sexual purity in some texts to the social identity of

[58]Plutarch, *Rom.* 19:5 (Perrin, LCL 46:149).

[59]Another possibility is that a virgin who was raped was still regarded as sexually pure, and therefore marriageable, on the grounds that the sexual activity in question was not consensual. This potential distinction notwithstanding, one wonders when exactly the women in *Rom.* 19:5 ceased to think of themselves as 'virgins.' Was it sometime between their first violent sexual encounter and their entrance into the household of a new, Roman husband? Was it after they began bearing children? Was it after they resigned themselves to their new identity as Roman wives?

virgins. In five of the 195 Jewish texts we surveyed, the παρθένος label occurred in close proximity to the term παρθενία. For example, 4 Maccabees records the following words of the mother of the seven martyred sons:

> I was a pure virgin and did not go outside my father's house; but I guarded the rib from which woman was made. No seducer corrupted me on a desert plain, nor did the destroyer, the deceitful serpent, defile the purity of my virginity. (4 Macc 18:7-8 NSRV)

Josephus also relates words of Rebecca when she encountered the servant of Abraham outside Haran: "I am called Rebecca, and my father was Bathuel, but he is now dead, and our brother Laban directs the whole household, with my mother, and is guardian of my virginity."[60]

Likewise, in the non-Jewish literature, παρθενία was used in the same context as the παρθένος label a total of 15 times. References to virginity abound in particular in narratives about the Vestal Virgins. Dionysius relates an incident in which a Vestal Virgin was blamed for a particular calamity that had befallen Rome: "Thereupon strict inquiry was made by everyone, and at last information was given to the pontiffs that one of the virgins who guarded the sacred fire, Opimia by name, had lost her virginity and was polluting the holy rites."[61] Also, Plutarch relates the tragic tale of a virgin who was assaulted by a local ruler in the presence of her parents: "The girl was noble and high-minded, and begged her father, embracing and beseeching him, that he would rather bear to see her dead than robbed of her virginity in such a shameful and lawless way."[62]

As with the previous section, however, in some texts it is uncertain that the derivative lexeme actually reinforces sexual purity as the essence or core of the παρθένος secondary gender identity. In one text, Plutarch describes the marriage of Pompey to

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[60]Josephus, *A.J.* 1:248 (Thackeray, LCL 242:123); see also *A.J.* 7:163.

[61]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 8:89:4 (Cary, LCL 372:277).

[62]Plutarch, *Mulier. virt.* 251A (Babbitt, LCL 245:519).

Cornelia, who was not a virgin anymore, but "who had been left a widow by Publius, the son of Crassus, with whom she had dwelled from the time of her virginity (ᾧ συνῴκησεν ἐκ παρθενίας) before his death in Parthia."[63] Although it is possible to interpret this as a reference to sexual purity, this is technically impossible, unless she lived in the house of her future husband from the time she was born. Instead, it is more likely that the text is simply stating that Publius took her as his wife as soon as she became a marriageable virgin.

In another interesting text, Diodorus employs a different lexeme derived from the παρθένος label, namely the adjective παρθενικός, meaning "virginal," or perhaps we might say more colloquially, *virginish*. In this text, the historian describes a Delphian law which stipulated "that in the future a virgin should no longer prophesy but that an elderly woman of fifty should declare the oracles, and that she should be dressed in a virginal garment (κοσμεῖσθαι δ' . . . παρθενικῇ σκευῇ) as a sort of reminder of the prophetess of olden times."[64] Again, it is unlikely that the special garment was believed to explicitly denote the sexual purity of the wearer, given that the women in question were over 50 years old, and presumably widows; young marriageable ladies were, rather, expected to follow certain cultural practices regarding their garments.

Current state. The final element of essentialism we noted in our primary source survey was a syntactical construction involving the word ἔτι (still) in which an author refers to an individual woman as "still a virgin." We observed this lexicosyntactic pattern in six of the 195 Jewish texts we surveyed, five of which occur in Josephus. In his account of the flight of Lot and his family from the city of Sodom, Josephus informs us that "both of his daughters were still virgins" (Josephus , *A.J.* 1:202). In recounting the

[63]Plutarch, *Pomp.* 55:1.

[64]Diodorus, *Bib. hist*. 16:26:6 (Sherman, LCL 389:313).

events of Joseph, he mentions that Joseph betrothed "a daughter of Pentephres (one of the priests of Heliopolis) named Asenethis, who was still a virgin" (Josephus , *A.J.* 2:91).[65] The same lexicosyntactic pattern was present in a total of 7 of the 334 non-Jewish texts we surveyed. In his account of Basileia, the eldest daughter of Uranus, Diodorus relates that she succeeded to the throne "though she was still a virgin and, because of her exceedingly great chastity, had been unwilling to unite in marriage with any man."[66]

Our examination of these texts that explicitly draw attention to the current state of an individual as a 'virgin' brings a particular question into focus: What, exactly, prompts an author to state that the individual is "still a virgin"? Two options come to mind. First, we already noted that sometimes authors chose to draw attention to the sexual purity of the virgin mentioned in the text, and could do so through the use of the term παρθενία. That may be the case in these texts, but another option seems at least as likely, particularly in texts that lack any other references to sexuality. Indeed, the παρθένος label seems in many cases to function primarily as an age marker, and potentially secondarily as an indicator of marital status. In other words, by stating that a young woman was "still a virgin," perhaps an author is simply stating that she was still a young, marriageable woman.

An interesting text in Dionysius might corroborate this claim. The Roman historian relates the events that took place during the consulship of Aulus Sempronius Atratinus and Marcus Minucius, including a decree they ushered through the senate that allowed women in mixed-nationality marriages to return to the household of their fathers. Roman wives living with their Latin husbands in the surrounding countryside could return to Rome, and Latin wives living with their Roman husbands in Rome could return

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[65]See also Josephus , *A.J.* 5:264, 6:196, and 8:6, and Philo, *Mos.* 1:12.

[66]Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 3:573 (Oldfather, LCL 303:267); see also Plutarch, *Mulier. virt.* 253, *Frag.* 157, and Apollonius, *Lex. hom.* 128.

to their Latin village. The decree also stated that the women's male children would stay with their fathers, but that "the female children who were still unmarried" (τὰς δὲ θηλείας καὶ ἔτι ἀγάμους) should follow their mothers.[67] Unlike the usual pattern we just observed in which the individual is said to be "still a virgin," this text substitutes the adjective ἄγαμος after ἔτι in the place of the παρθένος label.

Two additional details, however, might complicate efforts to draw any overly strong conclusions based on a comparison between this Dionysius text and other texts already discussed. First, in every other construction involving the particle ἔτι, the παρθένος label refers to a specific individual and not to a category or indefinite group of individuals. Second, the Dionysius text somewhat strangely employs sex categories (i.e., 'male' and 'female') rather than kinship categories (i.e., 'son' and 'daughter'). Moreover, only the category of female children is further restricted by the phrase "still unmarried," while the category of male children is unqualified.

These complications notwithstanding, a few reflections and observations might prove to be fruitful when viewed against the backdrop of our previous discussion. The most pressing of these observations, perhaps, is that the παρθένος label would be quite inappropriate in the context of the Dionysius text if we keep in mind the cultural expectation that a 'virgin' was a marriageable young woman, that is, she was an individual who had arrived at a recognizably mature stage of physical development and who was therefore ready to marry and bear children.[68] The phrase "female children and still virgin" would possibly have seemed jarring to the first-century reader, as it juxtaposes two categories that seem incommensurate in this context; the first half is a statement about sex difference, while the second half is a statement about developmental maturity. Instead, the author substitutes the adjective ἄγαμος, not only because it reflects

[67]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 6:1:2

[68]See our discussion in the previous section under the 'Naturalness' heading.

most adequately the contextually salient categorization of marital status without overly restricting the age of the potential referents (i.e., the female children), but also because the categorical intersection of sexual difference and marital status itself is coherent in this context and therefore designates a meaningful set of individuals.

At the same time, one is perhaps justified for wondering why the female children in particular bear the additional designation at all. Indeed, the author seems to expect the reader to assume that the law encompasses only male children who are unmarried without designating them as such. One possible solution is that the law explicitly mentioned female marital status in order to prevent a married daughter from leaving the household of her new husband in order to follow her mother. This seems somewhat unlikely, however, if only because this is precisely what the law allows for the mothers themselves.

Although certainty is impossible, perhaps the best explanation is simply that the category "unmarried" represents a generalization one step broader than the "virgin" social identity itself. In other words, we have already seen that "current state" and "virgin" often go together. In this context, however, since the term παρθένος is not adequate (for reasons we have already discussed), the author generalizes from a contextually salient locus of meaning within the 'virgin' social identity, namely that of marital status.

Contextual Elements

This section will attempt to summarize the various contextual markers that were present in texts containing the παρθένος label. Unlike the previous sections, we will base the order of the presentation of these contextual indicators on their combined prevalence in both Jewish and non-Jewish texts, noting, however, those cases in which a sharp discrepency might exist between the two. For example, we will explore contextual markers connoting kinship first because they were the most commonly occurring

indicators in our combined study of both Jewish and non-Jewish texts containing the παρθένος label, occurring in 195 out of the total 529 Jewish and non-Jewish texts we examined (66 Jewish texts and 129 non-Jewish texts). In the case of Jewish texts specifically, however, kinship indicators were the second most frequently tagged contextual element behind marriage (85 texts).

Kinship. As we just noted, 66 Jewish texts—or roughly one-third of the 195 Jewish texts we surveyed—contained references to kinship. Many of these elements of kinship were in the form of labels that indicated a particular kinship relationship, such as 'father' and 'mother,' but references to marriage, a family lineage, or even an abstract reference to kinship itself were present as well. For example, in Josephus' account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, he writes that "Lot fled the place, taking his wife and two daughters who were both still virgins" (Josephus , *A.J.* 1:202). Likewise, the mother of the seven martyrs mentioned in 4 Maccabees claimed that she was "a pure virgin and never stepped outside [her] father's house" (4 Macc 18:7). We encountered these kinds of kinship elements frequently in Non-Jewish texts, as well, where they occurred in 129 out of the 334 texts we examined. In an account about the competition between Strato and Callisthenes for the love of a young virgin, for example, Plutarch tells us that "Callisthenes had the advantage, for he was a blood-relation of the girl."[69] Likewise, Diodorus relate an account in which the Syracusan ruler Dionysius sent envoys to the Rhegians to arrange for a marriage between himself and one of their young virgins, which they rejected in no uncertain terms. Diodorus writes that Dionysius "studied revenge upon the Rhegians for their affront with respect to the offer of kinship."[70]

[69]Plutarch, *Amat. narr*. 772A (Fowler, LCL 321:5).

[70]Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 14:107:3 (Oldfather, LCL 399:291).

Violence and suffering. The second-highest occurring contextual element we encountered in our survey were references to violence and war, which we found in 188 out of the 529 occurrences of the παρθένος label we examined. Although this was the second most frequently occurring contextual element overall, in non-Jewish literature is was the most commonly encountered element, occurring in 137 out of the total 334 texts we examined. References to violence and war took a variety of forms. One common theme in Jewish literature was the mass slaying of people, including virgins. In 1 Esd 1:50 the author writes that "the Lord ordered the kings of the Chaldeans to go up against them. These killed their young men by the sword all around their holy temple, and did not spare either young men or virgins, elder or youth. Instead, he handed everybody into their hands." In 2 Macc 5:13 the author recounts the story of a Judean revolt in which "there were massacres of young and old, destruction of women and children, slayings of virgins and infants." In a similar vein, several texts mention sexual assault as a type of violence that virgins often suffered. In *Contra Apionem*, Josephus claims that sexual assault of a virgin who was betrothed was punishable by death.[71] In other texts, however, the form of violence was less extreme. For example, in his description of Moses' first encounter with the daughters of Jethro, Josephus writes that a group of "shepherds attacked the maidens and drove them away so that they kept the water for themselves" (Josephus , *A.J.* 2:260).

A common event that several non-Jewish texts recount involving violence suffered by virgins was the seizure of the Sabine virgins by the Romans.[72] Other texts recounted events in which a specific virgin, or smaller group of virgins, had been violated or otherwise been made to suffer. For example, Diodorus relates the story of a man who killed his virgin daughter with a butcher's knife so that she would not suffer an imminent

[71]Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2:201.

[72]See Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 2:30-2:32; cf. Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 289B.

violation at the hands of a local ruler.[73] Another text from Diodorus provides even more anguishing details about the atrocities that often awaited virgins during seasons of violence:

> Some were obliged to see their daughters of marriageable age suffering treatment improper for their years. For the savagery of the barbarians spared neither free-born youths nor virgins, but exposed these unfortunates to dreadful disasters. Consequently, as the women reflected upon the slavery that would be their lot in Libya, as they saw themselves together with their children in a condition in which they possessed no legal rights and were subject to insolent treatment and thus compelled to obey masters, and as they noted that these masters used an unintelligible speech and had a bestial character, they mourned for their living children as dead, and receiving into their souls as a piercing wound each and every outrage committed against them, they became frantic with suffering and vehemently deplored their own fate.[74]

Marriage. The third most commonly occurring contextual element in the 529 texts we surveyed were themes related to marriage and courtship. We encountered these elements in 183 of the 529 occurrences of the παρθένος label that we studied. These contextual indicators were present in 85 out of the 195 Jewish texts and 98 out of the 334 non-Jewish texts. Furthermore, among the various themes we tracked related to marriage were a few subthemes, in particular betrothal and marriageability, that occurred with sufficient frequency to warrant special attention.

The most common reference to marriage in these texts involves some form of the Greek verb γαμέω or noun γάμος. For example, in a discussion about specific provisions of the Mosaic Law about priests Philo says "let a priest's daughter who is married to a man who wasn't himself a priest, and then subsequently widowed . . . return to the house of her father" (Philo, *Spec.* 1:129).

In addition to the general them of marriage, we noted above that we also tracked the subthemes of betrothal and marriageability. Texts containing references to

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[73]Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 12:24:4.

[74]Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 13:58:2 (Oldfather, LCL 384:285).

betrothal in the context surrounding occurrences of the παρθένος label made use of three different lexicosyntactic constructions to denote the social action of betrothal itself. The most common of these constructions in Jewish literature was some form of the Greek verb μνηστεύω.[75] Josephus uses this verb three times in conjunction with the παρθένος label, and in a fourth text he uses the noun form οἱ μνηστῆρες.[76] The verb also occurs in three Greco-Roman texts in conjunction with the παρθένος label; Diodorus uses it twice and Dionysius once.[77]

The second lexicosyntactic pattern we observed involves the Greek verb ὁμολογέω and its compounds. Philo refers to virgins "betrothed a long time ago" (ταῖς ὁμολογηθείσαις ἔκπαλαι παρθένοις), while Josephus uses compound forms of the verb to communicate the same idea.[78] This particular pattern of constructions did not occur in any of the Jewish texts we surveyed.

The third lexicosyntactic pattern we noted centers on the technical term ἐγγυάω. Two texts in the Philo corpus use this word in conjunction with the παρθένος label, while Josephus uses a compound form in one text.[79] The term occurs in four Greco-Roman texts in both simple and compound forms. Plutarch, for example, writes that when a virgin of Ceos became engaged (ἐγγυηθείσης) to one of the men of Ceos, all other men immediately ceased pursuing her.[80] In his account of Virginia, the daughter of Lucius Virginius, Dionysius tells us that "she was betrothed to Lucius, one of the tribunes" (ἣν ἐνεγγυήσατο Λεύκιος), while also describing Lucius later as "the one who had been

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[75]This is the preferred usage in the LXX and the New Testament.

[76]Josephus , *A.J.* 1:244, 4:246, 5:286, and 1:202 (respectively); see also Deut 22:23, 28 and Luke 1:27.

[77]Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 4:54:3 and 14:44:7, Dionysius, *Ant. rom*. 11:46:5.

[78]Philo, *Agr*. 152; cf. Josephus , *A.J.* 19:355 and *C. Ap.* 2:201.

[79]Philo, *Virt.* 28, 114; Josephus , *A.J.* 4:252.

[80]Plutarch, *Mulier. virt.* 249C.

betrothed to the girl by her father" (ὁ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐνεγγυημένος τὴν κόρην).[81]

If references to betrothal signaled an impending marriage, it seems important to note that we also encountered references to the possibility of marriage, or *marriageability*. These references occurred predominantly in Greco-Roman texts, although we will also examine two Jewish texts that employ terminology that seem to refer to marriageability. One of the most commonly occurring references to marriageability in Greco-Roman texts is the compound noun ἐπίγαμος. This word occurred five times in conjunction with the παρθένος label, and can be translated euphemistically as "at the time of marriage." In the same text we examined immediately above, Dionysius states that Virginia "was already at the time of marriage" (Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 11:28:3). Diodorus employs the same term twice, referring to women who "were forced to watch their daughters at the age of marriage experience suffering not proper for their age, for the violence of the barbarians did not spare either young free men nor virgins" (Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 13:58:2).[82]

A second manner of referring to marriageability is the use of the term ἡλικία. It occurs once in conjunction with the preposition ἐν, twice as the object of a participial form of ἔχω, and once as an accusative of reference. Aside from a single occurrence in Plutarch, the other three uses of ἡλικία that occur in conjunction with the παρθένος label are found in Diodorus. For example, Diordorus relates the story of Semiramis, the daughter of Simmas who, "when she had achieved the age of maturity (ἤδη δ' αὐτῆς ἡλικίαν ἐχούσης γάμου), was already more beautiful than all the other virgins" (Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 2:5:1). In a different text, Diodorus describes a Sicilian girl who was the daughter of Damophilus as "a virgin with respect to maturity (παρθένος μὲν τὴν ἡλικίαν)" (Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 34/35:2:39).

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[81]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 11:28:2, 7 (respectively).

[82]See also Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 3:21:2, 11:40:4; and Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 13:111:6.

A third lexicosyntactic construction that authors often used to refer to marriageability was a form of the verb ἔχω combined with the phrase ὥραν γάμων. This particular pattern occurs most frequently in Plutarch, but Diodorus employs it once in conjunction with the παρθένος label. At a later point in his account of the events surrounding Virginia, the daughter of Verginius, Diodorus describes her as "having the time of marriage (γάμων . . . ἔσχεν ὥραν)" (*Bib. hist.* 11:30:2). Likewise, Plutarch describes the death by suicide of the two virgin daughters of the tyrant Aristotimus, who "were already having the time of marriage (ἤδη γάμων ὥραν ἔχουσαι)" (*Mulier. virt.* 253C).

The final term we encountered in conjunction with the παρθένος label that connoted marriageability is the word ἀκμή. Unlike the previous three constructions, we encountered this term in both Greco-Roman and Jewish texts. Dionysius describes the *Partheniae* as the offspring of Spartan warriors and Lacedaemonian women and virgins "who were at the height of maturity (ταῖς ἐν ἀκμῇ παρθένοις)" (Dionysius, *Ant. rom*. 19:1:2). Likewise, Philo refers to the charge against the guardians of virgins who "fail to watch over them at their peak time (τῆς ἀκμῆς καιρὸν)" (Philo, *Spec.* 3:81). Finally, Diodorus employs this term together with the term ἡλικία in his description of Cylebê as one "who had arrived at the peak of maturity (εἰς ἀκμὴν ἡλικίας ἐλθοῦσαν)" (Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 3:58:4).

Other contextual indicators. Other contextual elements will be discussed in the following chapter, so a brief summary will be sufficient for now. After kinship, violence, and marriage, the most frequently occurring themes were honor/shame (140x), religion (116x), sexuality (101x), legal issues (88x), purity (77x), royalty (66x), custom/tradition (64x), beauty (62x), domestic life (55x), holiday/celebration (48x), custody (42x), and love (36x). Some of these themes—such as sexuality, purity, and

custody—will figure prominently in our discussion on 1 Corinthians 7 in the following chapter.

Conclusion

Our survey of texts in the Jewish and Greco-Roman background literature of the New Testament indicates that the social identity circumscribed and indexed by the παρθένος label was both concrete and flexible, both rich in meaning as well as simple and commonplace. We discovered that authors referred to specific individuals as virgins, but more commonly referred to actual groupings of virgins, or to the collective action of a specific group of virgins. We discovered that a degree of conceptual overlap existed between the words "virgin" and "daughter," and that virgins were distinguishable from a variety of other words containing a gendered and/or age component. We also explored several contextual elements that contributed an element of essentialism to the social identity of virgins. And finally, we explored the three most common types of contextual elements that were present in texts containing the παρθένος label— the themes of violence, kinship, and marriage.

CHAPTER 5

SECONDARY GENDER IDENTITIES AND THE PROBLEM AT CORINTH

My particular goal in this chapter is quite narrow: to examine Paul's use of both social categories and secondary gender identities in his paraenesis on marriage and sexuality. In particular, we will examine how the social category of marital status functions in one way, while the use of secondary gender identities functions in a different way. A study of this type is warranted for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the widespread recognition among scholars that the apostle addresses matters involving specific groups and categories of individuals throughout the chapter.[1] In 7:8-9 he addresses those who are unmarried and widows; in 7:10-11 he addresses those who have already gotten married; and in 7:12-16 he addresses Christians who have unbelieving spouses.

The need for a study such as this one is highlighted still further by our study of the παρθένος label in the previous chapter, which also figures prominently in 1 Corinthians 7. As just noted, Paul directs his instruction explicitly towards widows in 7:8. Moreover, Paul initiates an entire literary unit beginning in verse 25 that centers on the

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[1]E.g. Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, translated by James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 114, Joseph Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, ABC (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 283, Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, PTNC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 271; cf. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2014), 298, whose division of the text according to the group or category of people involved seems to suggest that Paul directly addresses virgins in vv. 25-38, when, in fact, he introduces his comments with the simple literary marker περὶ δέ ("*concerning* the virgins"). See also Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914), 130: "Then (8-40) [Paul] gives advice to different classes."

subject of virgins. And finally, unmarried female sexuality is mentioned again at the conclusion of the chapter in 7:39-40.

Unfortunately, the history of interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7 is a long and winding road.[2] Despite numerous claims that a "consensus" has been reached regarding the final destination of this road, enough dissenting voices exist today to render these claims problematic.[3] Over the past several decades, debate has crystalized around the specific problem of identifying both the ideological perspective of the letter's intended audience, as well as the source and shape of Paul's theoretical motivation for attempting to correct it. And the crux of this debate centers on 7:1b and the murky statement, "it is good for a man not to touch a woman" (καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἅπτεσθαι).[4] Traditionally, interpreters have claimed that the statement reflects Paul's own beliefs about sexuality and/or marriage.[5] In recent years, however, it has become much more common to interpret the statement as a quote of sorts from a letter the Corinthians had previously sent to Paul. A widely recognized corollary of this position) is that the church at Corinth had somehow become influenced by ascetic ideology. Disagreement regarding the source of an ascendant asceticism in the otherwise worldly setting of first-century

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[2]Numerous summaries of this history exist in commentaries, monographs, and journal articles, but the most thorough is Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1-46. See also the extended comments in Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 487-97.

[3]E.g. Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 125: "[In the church at Corinth] we have an undoubtedly eschatological enthusiasm unambiguously distinct not only from apocalyptic expectation of an imminent End but also from any theologically relevant future hope. *Today we may take it for granted* that the dominant group in Corinth believed themselves to have reached the goal of salvation already—in the shape of baptism—and Christian existence here on earth meant for them solely the temporal representation of heavenly being" (emphasis added).

[4]Cf. David D. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 247: "How one understands the first verse of this section lays the foundation for understanding the rest of Paul's discussion." Fee makes similar remarks (*First Epistle*, 303).

[5]Most recently Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 115, n. 10; but also Weiss, 170; Robertson and Plummer, *First Epistle*, 132; Kurt Niederwimmer, *Askese Und Mysterium: Über Ehe, Ehescheidung Und Eheverzicht in Den Anfängen Des Christlichen Glaubens*, FRLANT 113 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1975), 81; and John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 134.

Corinth have spawned a broad variety of theories among scholars. Indeed, the current state of affairs resembles anything but a consensus.

Our purpose here, however, is not to solve the many interpretive dilemmas of 1 Corinthians 7. This current chapter will instead adhere to the following circumscribed outline. First, we will briefly present the major background reconstructions scholars have proposed regarding the ideology of the Corinthian church and Paul's aim in responding to it. We will suggest that the apostle's paraenesis throughout the chapter reflects his own pastoral and theological convictions, even as it also reflects the unique circumstances faced by the Corinthian church.[6] Second, we will examine the extent to which thematic elements within Paul's paraenesis might signal the potentially heightened salience of unmarried female sexuality with regard to gendered social categories and identities.[7] We will suggest that an adequate understanding of these thematic elements and their function in his argument, as well as an understanding of the semantic function of the παρθένος label in 1 Corinthians 7:25-40 both together point to an elevated emphasis on unmarried female gender identity and its social significance in relation to Paul's argument. Finally, we will examine the purpose and function of Paul's use of gendered social categories and identities themselves within the context of his argument. Indeed, the overall goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that maintaining a distinction between social categories and secondary gender identities will yield a heightened understanding of the apostle's teaching on marriage and sexuality in 1 Corinthians 7 and even perhaps solve some particularly thorny exegetical dilemmas.

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[6]So Fitzmyer, *1 Corinthians*, 277.

[7]Our grounds for identifying these thematic elements will stem from the discussion in the previous chapter about the contextual factors that are often salient in texts also containing references to unmarried female sexuality.

The Corinthian Problem and Paul's Response

Perhaps the most vexing aspect of the debate about 1 Corinthians 7 is determining the answer to the question, "What was the nature of the problem at Corinth that Paul addressed in 7:1ff?" Traditionally, interpreters of Paul have tried to answer this question by investigating the relationship between issues raised in chapter seven and the problems related to sexual immorality that were mentioned in the previous chapter. According to many of these interpreters, for example, Paul has not changed topics, but has merely shifted the focus of the topic in order to address the specific issue that the Corinthians brought up in their letter to him.[8] Others highlight the centrality of the marriage topos in 1 Corinthians 7, and suggest that sexuality specifically as it relates to marriage may have been a problematic concept for the Corinthians, perhaps particularly as a result of Paul's statements about the nature of sexual immorality in the previous chapter.

Discussion in this first section of the chapter will unfold in two main steps. First, we will survey the various major attempts to reconstruct the historical and philosophical background of Paul's paraenesis and exhortation in 1 Corinthians 7. Second, we will summarize the reconstruction recently proposed by Barry Danylak and suggest that it comes closest to accounting for the various details of the text.[9]

Background Reconstruction Theories

The purpose of this first section of our exploration of the Corinthian problem and Paul's response is to present and adjudicate between the various reconstruction theories that have been promoted among interpreters of Paul that attempt to account for

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[8]E.g., see Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5-7* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 147; Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 235-7; Fee, *The First Epistle*, 297-300.

[9]Barry Nicholas Danylak, "Secular Singleness and Paul's Response in 1 Corinthians 7" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2011).

the background of the apostle's interaction with the Corinthians. Indeed, the need for these theories becomes immediately apparent in verse 1, when Paul says "concerning the things you wrote about" (περὶ δὲ ὧν εγράψατε), and grows exponentially when the interpreter encounters seemingly contradictory perspectives on marriage, sexuality, and what is "good" (καλός). The impetus for many of these reconstructions can invariably be traced back to the first of these statements, namely, the notoriously ambiguous statement in 7:1b, "it is good for a man not to touch a woman." Whether the statement is actually Paul's or is merely a quotation or reference of some sort to the Corinthians' original letter to Paul, its ostensibly anti-sex tone has led a wide variety of Pauline scholars throughout the past two millennia to interpret it as a reference to asceticism that was either ascendant within the church at Corinth or central in some way to the teaching of Paul.

The traditional interpretation. Traditionally, scholars have interpreted the statement in verse 1b as reflecting Paul's own perspective, along with the commitment to ascesis that seems to accompany it.[10] According to this perspective, Paul views celibacy as a higher calling, but recognizes that the real danger of sexual immorality requires him to accommodate individuals who do not have the gift of celibacy. Conzelmann, for example, describes the statement in verse 1b as Paul's "general thesis," which is followed by a point-by-point assessment of its relevance in concrete cases.[11]

Alistair Scott May argues a particularly unique version of this thesis, claiming that verse 1b represents a Corinthian reframing of a statement Paul himself had originally

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[10]Danylak (*Secular Singleness*, 148n1040) cites the following: J. B. Lightfoot, *Notes on Epistles of St. Paul from Unpublished Commentaries* (London: Macmillan, 1895), 217-23; Robertson and Plummer, *First Epistle*, 130-36; James Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938), 73-78; F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 154-59; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 115-18; Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., TNTC (Leicester: IVP, 1985), 101-4; Dieter Zeller, "Der Vorrand der Ehelosigkeit in 1 Kor. 7," *ZNW*: 96, nos. 1-2 (2005): 61-65.

[11]Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 115 n. 12. Calvin also adopts this basic perspective, although by means of a tortuous panoply of qualifications (223). Kurt Niederwimmer (*Askese*, 67-74, 113, 122) is another representative of this approach, although he also claims that the Corinthians were also motivated by asceticism.

coined "as a commendation of the single (thus celibate) life."[12] May claims, however, that Paul believes on the basis of the Corinthians' letter to him that they have misunderstood this particular aspect of his teaching. The meaning of the statement as it is phrased in verse 1b is itself, therefore, contested. Paul means one thing by it, while the Corinthians mistakenly think he means something else. Instead of functioning as a self-interpreting slogan that elevated single status over married status, the Corinthians were using it as a tool in order to caricature and misrepresent the teaching of the apostle.

The consensus view. In recent years, however, a majority of scholars have been unwilling to attribute an apparently blatantly anti-sex outlook to the apostle Paul. Although the popular 1984 NIV translation side-stepped the doctrinal and exegetical difficulties of this phrase by translating it as a statement about marriage (i.e., "It is good for a man not to marry."), Gordon Fee has convincingly demonstrated that the statement was a common euphemism with decisive sexual overtones.**[13]** For this reason, scholars today generally gather around the consensus that verse 1b is a quote from, or at the very least an oblique reference to, the Corinthians' original letter to Paul.**[14]** Part of the appeal

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[12]Alistair May, *The Body for the Lord: Sex and Identity in 1 Corinthians 5-7* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 217.

[13]Cf. Gordon D. Fee, "1 Corinthians 7:1 in the Niv," *JETS* 23, no. 4 (1980): 307–14.; see also a more developed version of his argument in "1 Corinthians 7:1 Revisited," in *Paul and the Corinthians: studies on a community in conflict*, eds. Trevor J. Burke and John K. Elliott (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 197-213.

[14]The view that v. 1b is a quote from the Corinthians' letter to Paul goes all the way back to Origen (*1 Cor, Fragment 33*, in *JTS* 9 (1908): 500-5001; see also Paul Charles Siebenmann, "The Question of Slogans in 1 Corinthians," PhD diss., Baylor University, [1997]), and modern scholarship, beginning with the influential commentaries of Weiss and J. C. Hurd, *The Origin of I Corinthians* (London: S.P.C.K., 1965), has followed suit. Danylak cites the following as adhering to the quotation interpretation: Hays, 1997: 117; Brian Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5-7*. Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums, vol. 22 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 150-3; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinter 2. Teilband 1Kor 6,12-11,16*, EKK (Düsseldorf: Benziger Verlag, 1995), 59-72; G. J. Laughery, "Paul: Anti-marriage? Anti-sex? Ascetic? A Dialogue with 1 Corinthians 7:1-40," *EQ*, 69 (1997): 119-21; Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 252-60; Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 498-512; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 247-63.

of this interpretation is that it does not ascribe beliefs to the apostle Paul that seem out-of-step with other doctrinal priorities found within the Hebrew scriptures.

Unfortunately, this consensus is also not without its difficulties, foremost among which is, perhaps, the challenge of determining the actual source of asceticism within the Corinthian church. To put a finer point on the question, what outside source could possibly have influenced the church of Corinth to adopt an asceticism so stringent that it would draw the apostolic attention of Paul?

Scholars have resorted to several types of proposals to account for this alleged infiltration of asceticism from outside the church. The first set of proposals claims that sufficient precedent for this ascesis exists within the religious traditions of Hellenistic Judaism. David Balch, to cite one example, highlights ascetic themes within Philo's *Life of Moses* that depict Moses abstaining from sexual activity during the days leading up to his reception of divine revelation.[15] Balch claims that Philo's comments about this event in the history of Israel provide the backdrop for Paul's discussion about Moses in 2 Corinthians 3, and suggests that a desire to receive divine revelation in a manner similar to Moses might have motivated the Corinthians to entertain the kind of ascetic tendencies that are ostensibly addressed in 1 Corinthians 7.

In a different attempt to establish a connection to Hellenistic Judaism, Richard Horsley suggests that the motivation behind the Corinthians' asceticism stemmed from their pursuit of "spiritual marriage" to Sophia—a common personification of divine wisdom in Hellenistic Jewish wisdom traditions—in lieu of actual physical marriage.[16] Horsley highlights statements in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon that depict a marriage

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[15]David L. Balch, "Background of I Cor. vii: Sayings of the Lord in Q; Moses as an Ascetic ΘΕΙΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ in II Cor. iii," *NTS*, 18 (1971/72): 351-64.

[16]Richard A. Horsley, "Spiritual Marriage with Sophia," *VC* 33 (1979): 32-7; see also "Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos: Distinctions of Spiritual Status Among the Corinthians," *HTR* 69 (1976): 269-88; "Wisdom of Word and Words of Wisdom in Corinth," *CBQ* 39 (1977): 224-39; "'How Can Some of You Say That There Is No Resurrection of the Dead?': Spiritual Elitism in Corinth," *NovT* 20 (1978): 203-31; and "Gnosis in Corinth: I Corinthians 8.1-6," *NTS* 27 (1980/81): 32-51.

of sorts between Sophia and the souls of those who pursue wisdom. Texts like these, when considered alongside the existence of actual ascetic communities such as the Therapeutae, lead Horsley to believe that the Corinthians were perhaps not the first religious community to adopt ascetic practices as a means of pursuing spiritual union with the divine.

A second set of proposals points to the various philosophical and ideological movements from the surrounding Greco-Roman culture as the source of the alleged Corinthian asceticism. Although modern interest in parallels between Paul and Greco-Roman philosophy first emerged in the work of Hugo Grotius, a similar impulse can be seen as far back as Clement of Alexandria.[17] The seminal study of Will Deming brought the question of Greco-Roman ideology explicitly to the forefront, however, and moved past the simple observation of conceptual parallels.[18] In particular, Deming conjectured that the Corinthians' questions and Paul's response made most sense when placed against the backdrop of the Cynic-Stoic debate about the purpose and function of marriage in society.

In Deming's own words, his goal is to explore "the way in which Paul reconciles Stoic and Cynic tenets with his own distinctive theological agenda, while at the same time melding them with other Judeo-Christian perspectives—specifically, sapiential and apocalyptic world views."[19] For example, a common Cynic argument against marriage at that time reasoned that it reduced the amount of "free time" (σχολή) that would-be philosophers would have for the important task of pursuing wisdom and virtue.[20] Deming, however, suggests that Paul's response, particularly in 7:5, amounts to a

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[17]Hugo Grotius, *Annotations in Novum Testament* (Paris: Pelé, 1646), 2.377-8.

[18]Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[19]Deming, *Paul on Marriage*, 109.

[20]E.g., Cyn. Ep. of Diogn. 44 (174.7–14), cited in Deming, *Paul on Marriage*, 112n12.

modification of this Cynic case against marriage. In 7:5, Paul allows for periods of sexual abstinence within marriage, but only so that the partners might "have free time" (σχολάσητε) for prayer. And yet, not only must the husband and wife be in mutual agreement regarding the decision to embark upon a period of abstinence, but the length of the period of abstinence must also be brief so that neither partner is unduly tempted by porneia (an ostensibly Judeo-Christian concern, Deming notes).[21]

The 'new' consensus view. Despite the modern consensus surrounding the basic observations that undergird the ascetic hypothesis, many have noted the presence of conflicting elements within the surrounding context of chapter 7—and, indeed, even within chapter 7 itself—that point to an opposite problem in Corinth, namely a tendency towards overindulgence. The entirety of chapter five, in fact, suggests that the believers in Corinth were far more likely to tolerate sexual vice than they were to promote ascesis. Furthermore, it is difficult to account for Paul's reference to multiple cases of sexual immorality (τὰς πορνείας) in 7:2 if he was addressing a church that was more prone to promote sexual abstinence than to tolerate sexual vice.[22]

The first scholar to take this difficulty seriously was Wilhelm Lütgert, who claimed that the Corinthian church had been influenced by "enthusiasts" who overemphasized certain aspects of Paul's own theology, particularly his teaching about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.[23] According to Lütgert, this lead the Corinthians to believe that they had special access to "knowledge," which predisposed them to the wide variety of problems we see Paul addressing through his letter to them. In particular, however, Lütgert claimed that the "pneumatic excesses" of this faction paradoxically

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[21]Deming, *Paul on Marriage*, 115-6.

[22]Danylak, "Secular Singleness," 1.

[23]Wilhelm Lütgert, *Freiheitspredigt Und Schwarmgeister in Korinth : Ein Beitrag zur Charakteristik Der Christuspartei* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1908).

yielded both libertinism and asceticism.[24]

Perhaps not surprisingly, Lütgert's thesis was quickly adapted by scholars who claimed that Paul's argument contained traces of debates found in 2nd-century Gnosticism.[25] Scholars such as Walter Schmithals and Wolfgang Schrage, for example, have both claimed that proto-Gnostic ideology influenced the church at Corinth, although they sharply disagree on how this influence is manifest in the epistle itself.[26] As Deming and others note, however, the most problematic complication for both Schmithals and Schrage is that there is no precedent for both Gnostic libertinism and Gnostic asceticism to exist in the same community.[27]

A much more mainstream and widespread adaptation of the Lütgert thesis is reflected in contemporary work of scholars who claim that the dual presence of both libertinism and asceticism is simply a misapplication of inaugurated eschatology.[28] For example, Fee states

> What would seem to lie behind this position is once again their present pneumatic existence, which had Hellenistic dualism at its roots and their own brand of "spiritualized eschatology" as its repeated expression. As those who are "spiritual" they are above the merely earthly existence of others; marriage belongs to this age that is passing away.[29]

According to Fee, an over-spiritualized eschatology that was present in the church at

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[24]Lütgert states that "pneumatics must at the same time be gnostic" (105); cited by Deming, *Paul on Marriage*, 22.

[25]See discussion in Deming, *Paul on Marriage*, 35-40.

[26]See Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), and Wolfgang Schrage, "Die Stellung zur Welt bei Paulus, Epiktet Und in Der Apokalyptik: Ein Beitrag zu 1 kor 7, 29-31," *zeittheokirc Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 61, no. 2 (1964). Schmithals denies that any evidence of gnostic asceticism exists in 1 Cor 7, while arguing vigorously in favor of interpreting chap. 6 as evidence of gnostic libertinism. Schrage, on the other hand, insists that both existed side-by-side in Corinth, which is what prompted the apostle to address them in adjacent chapters.

[27]Deming, *Paul on Marriage*, 38.

[28]Cf. C. H. Dodd *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments: Three Lectures*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton Limited, 1944), 79-96, and Käsemann, *New Testament Questions*, 130-1.

[29]Fee, *First Epistle*, 299. See also Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology at Corinth," *NTS* 24 (1977/78): 510-26.

Corinth caused believers there both to care *too* much about their bodies (i.e., they were ascetic) and not to care *enough* (i.e., they were libertine).

Problems with the ascetic hypothesis. In recent years a few scholars have begun questioning the veracity of fundamental tenets of the ascetic hypothesis. This challenge to the status quo has taken place on a variety of fronts. Some have examined literary sources from the same era and determined that the problematic statement in 7:1b is unlikely to be a quote from prior Corinthian correspondence. In his 2011 dissertation, for example, Barry Danylak examines ten examples of letters containing constructions parallel to the structure of 7:1, namely the use of περί with a relative pronoun, a verb indicating some activity of written correspondence in the second person and with the antecedent of the relative pronoun as its object, and no explicit prior reference to the subject matter of a previous correspondence before the περί construction. In none of these texts does the author of the letter quote from the previous correspondence mentioned, but instead continues with his own response.[30] Among other things, this might also suggest that the περὶ δέ construction in 7:1 is perhaps qualitatively different from subsequent occurrences of the phrase in the epistle, which are followed not by a relative pronoun, but by a specific topic.[31]

Danylak also notes that the grammatical and syntactical features of the text itself simply do not support an interpretation that renders 7:1b as a quote from prior correspondence from the Corinthian church. First of all, the phrase lacks a ὅτι indirect discourse marker such as we find in citation formulae elsewhere in the book (cf. 7:26;

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[30] Danylak, *Secular Singleness*, 101-2. Moreover, Danylak identified one text in which the author did quote from previous correspondence: περί δὲ Ξύστου μοι γράφεις ὅτι ἔξω καχεκτεύεται, εἴ τι μὲν ὁ σύνδουσλος αὐτὸν δυνήσεται συστῆσαι ἐγὼ οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι (BGU 4.1141.31-33). Danylak notes, however, that this text differs markedly from the pattern we find in 7:1b. First, the περί construction contains an explicit object instead of a relative pronoun. Second, the quote is clearly marked as such by a recitative ὅτι.

[31] See Margaret M. Mitchell, "Concerning περὶ δέ in 1 Corinthians," *NovT* 31, no. 3 (1989): 229-56, for a comprehensive survey of the use of περὶ δέ in the literary background of the New Testament.

8:1; and 15:12). Additionally, Danylak suggests that the syntax of 8:1 is a contraindication that 7:1b is a quotation from prior Corinthian correspondence.[32] In the same vein, Alistair Scott May also makes the rather bald statement that "there is no grammatical reason to suppose that 7.1b should be read as other than part of Paul's discussion of the topic."[33]

In addition to advancing grammatical and literary arguments against the consensus view that 7:1b is a quotation from prior Corinthian correspondence that reflects an ascetic ideology, others have simply proposed alternative interpretations of the meaning of the statement in 7:1b itself. Until very recently, few questioned the consensus view that 7:1b was an unvarnished and transparently simple anti-sex statement. In a 2009 JSNT article, however, Roy Ciampa surveyed a larger sample of occurrences of the "touching" euphemism than the eight texts examined by Fee in his 1980 and 2003 studies.[34] Based on the findings of Ciampa's study, it seems that the euphemism in 7:1b is more likely to be a reference to a specific kind of sexual contact than to sexual activity of a generalized nature. In particular, Ciampa claims that the "touching" euphemism is used when the speaker wants to emphasize the element of sensual pleasure as a motivating factor for the pursuit of sexual activity.[35] According to Ciampa, the statement in 7:1b might be translated as "it is good for a man not to use a woman for sexual gratification," and therefore can quite easily be attributed to Paul.[36] If this is the case, then the utility of the ascetic hypothesis evaporates.

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[32]Arguing against both Thiselton (*First Epistle*, 498) and Schrage ("Zur Frontstellung," 215-6), Danylak argues that Paul's use of οἴδαμεν in 8:1 is more typical of the way a writer would introduce a quotation (*Secular Singleness*, 166).

[33]May, *The Body for the Lord*, 217.

[34]Roy Ciampa, "Revisiting the Euphemism in 1 Corinthians 7.1," *JSNT* 31, no. 3 (2009): 325-38.

[35]Ibid., 336.

[36]Ciampa notes that in every text he surveyed, the individual performing the "touching" was always a man ("Revisiting," 327).

Besides these considerations, May presents five additional reasons to reject the ascetic hypothesis in his published dissertation, *The Body for the Lord: Sex and Identity in 1 Corinthians 5-7*. The first is directly related to the central claim of his project, namely that there is no indication in the rest of the letter that a wholesale rejection of marriage was compatible with the social ethos of the Corinthian church. Second, May points out that the clear emphasis in 1 Corinthians 7 is on his preference for the single state, a posture that is difficult to account for if Paul is countering a perspective that also promoted an anti-sex sentiment.[37]

Third, May claims that proponents of the ascetic hypothesis are required to posit a problematic disjunction between chapters six and seven.[38] Not only does such a sharp division obscure the common theme that pervades the apostle's discussion throughout 5:1–7:40, namely the theme of sexual ethics, but it is also only accomplished through exegetically faulty means. First, proponents of the ascetic hypothesis attribute a problematic force to the περὶ δέ clause in 7:1. Second, as proponents of the new consensus admit, it must posit two separate backgrounds and audiences behind the text. Instead, according to Wimbush, the text

> supplies us with neither the undiluted language nor the pure sentiment of the Corinthians. And it is very plausible that in this chapter we have to do as much with radical interpretations—literalist or spiritualized—of Paul's teaching as with any external influences or "backgrounds." Thus, it is Paul's sentiments and teaching that should first be the subject of interest.[39]

The tendency to extract chapter 7 from its context reflects a fourth objection to the ascetic hypothesis, namely that it inevitably can be traced back to weak

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[37]May, *Body for the Lord*, 148-9.

[38]Ibid., 149-50.

[39]Vincent L. Wimbush, *Paul, the Worldly Ascetic: Response to the World and Self-Understanding According to 1 Corinthians 7* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 6, quoted in May, *The Body for the Lord*, 150n14.

methodology.[40] Although neither controversial nor entirely unavoidable in itself, the practice of mirror reading is nonetheless a shaky foundation upon which to construct a theory as elaborate as the ascetic hypothesis. In the case of 1 Corinthians 7, proponents of the ascetic hypothesis claim that 7:1b and 7:34 must reflect the Corinthians' belief structure on the basis of the assumption that they cannot possibly reflect the apostle's own beliefs. Similarly, when they read about Paul's reminder to the Corinthians that individual spouses do not have authority over their own bodies (7:4), they claim that the Corinthians must have believed the opposite.[41] As we will see below, reconstructions that lean on questionable theories derived from mirror reading often collapse under their own weight.

Fifth, May points to the obvious problem of the proliferation of theories that has occurred over the past century of New Testament scholarship, each providing a conflicting account for the emergence of asceticism in the church at Corinth. Furthermore, these accounts often involve conjectures about other communities governed by a parallel ascetic ideology. May raises the important issue of whether or not the text contains sufficient "fixed evidence for the either the defense or the falsification of any possible suggestion" if it "can be made to fit such a large number of possible reconstructions."[42]

When we look at the actual text of 1 Corinthians 7, the ascetic hypothesis becomes even more untenable. Indeed, Ciampa and Rosner list no less than seven difficulties for the ascetic hypothesis that stem directly from Paul's comments about sexuality and marriage in chapter 7.[43] First, the statement in 7:4 ("the husband does not

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[40]May, *Body for the Lord*, 150-51.

[41]May cites Gundry-Volf, "Controlling the Bodies: A Theological Profile of the Corinthian Sexual Ascetics," in *The Corinthian Correspondance*, ed. R. Bieringer (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 522, as particularly illustrative of the excesses of mirror reading.

[42]May, *The Body for the Lord*, 152.

[43]Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter*, 268-9.

have authority over his own body, but the wife does") is most naturally interpreted as a pointed reminder to men who thought they could have sexual liaisons with anybody they wished. Second, Paul would not have been concerned about a potential lack of self-control (ἀκρασία) in 7:5 if he were addressing people who wanted to avoid sexual activity. Third, Paul acknowledges in 7:9 that unmarried people and widows might not be able to "control themselves" (ἐγκρατεύονται) if they follow his preference and remain single. Fourth, Paul's insistence in 7:11 that a divorced woman must remain single or be reconciled to her husband makes little sense if he were addressing people whose primary goal was remaining celibate in the first place. Fifth, the discussion in 7:25-35 seems to be conducted with individuals in mind who would like assurance from Paul that the married state is not sinful. Sixth, the infamous "man and his virgin" text in 7:36-38 seems to indicate that at least the young woman desires to marry. And finally, Paul's comments in 7:39-40 about women whose husbands have died do not appear to be directed towards individuals who are already committed to celibacy.

An Alternate Path

If Paul's nuanced instructions for the Corinthians were neither influenced by asceticism within his own theology, nor directed against a form of ascetic ideology active within the church at Corinth, then an alternate reconstruction of their background is necessary. Furthermore, such a reconstruction will need to account for the shift in topic in verse 25 to virgins.

Ethics *and* social status. Besides arguing against the consensus ascetic theory, Barry Danylak also proposes in his 2011 dissertation an alternate reconstruction of the original question posed to Paul by the Corinthians in their prior correspondence with him. After faulting Deming and others for excluding other Greco-Roman philosophical traditions besides Stoic and Cynic perspectives, Danylak explores the topic of secular singleness from both a demographical perspective and from the ideological perspective of

Epicurean philosophy. Significantly, Danylak demonstrates that the urban setting of the Corinthian church, together with the cultural acceptability of a lengthened non-married state for men presented a unique ethical dilemma that Paul needed to address.[44]

After highlighting these important demographical and ideological facets of Corinthian culture, Danylak examines the data of 1 Corinthians 7 from this fresh perspective. In doing so, he suggests that the interpretive dilemmas posed by 1 Corinthians 7 can be distilled into two major cruces: the nature of the original question posed by the Corinthians to Paul, and the relationship between the two major stages of his response, each beginning with the common περὶ δέ epistolary device (7:1-24 and 7:25-40). In particular, he draws the significant conclusion that the καλόν statement found in verse 26b ("it is good for a man to be thus," καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ οὕτως εἶναι) likely reflects the original wording of the Corinthians in their letter to him, while the other statements (verses 1b, 8, and 40) are merely adaptations of this statement whose wording is altered to suite Paul's rhetorical purposes.[45] If this is true, then it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the entire chapter is primarily Paul's response to a question about *status*, and not simply about the ethical implications of a libertine or ascetic—or both—approach to Christian obedience. Indeed, Danylak's central thesis is that the overall thrust of Paul's argument is to inform them that *the decision to remain single had ethical implications.*

Social status and the virgins. While some of his minor conclusions seem a bit questionable from the perspective of this project, the overall shape of Danylak's argument is not only sound, but also highly relevant to our current study. If Paul's

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[44]According to Danylak, his "study will expand the range of evidence to examine the Greek marriage debate beyond a strictly Stoic-Cynic caricature, and will explore non-literary evidence in support of the likelihood of a non-trivial unmarried population within Corinth" (*Secular Singleness*, 13).

[45]See *Secular* Singleness, 132-5. This mirrors Danylak's argument that 1 Cor 8:1 and 8:4 were also derived from the same statement and that Paul adapts the Corinthian quotation in 6:12 again in 10:23 for his own purposes.

teaching about sex and marriage in chapter 7 was in response to a question about status (i.e., the decision to remain single), and if the closest reference to the Corinthians' original question is contained in verse 26, then determining the identity of τῶν παρθένων in *the immediately preceding verse* is of critical importance. Without an adequate knowledge of the subject matter that Paul is addressing, scholars risk misinterpreting the thrust of the apostle's message.

Unfortunately, the identity of the virgins in 1 Corinthians 7, and verses 36-38 in particular, is a notorious conundrum in the field of Pauline studies. Thiselton describes it as "an unusual lexicographical problem [that] is tied up with exegetical and contextual judgments."[46] Virtually every commentary written in the past 100 years conveys a similar sentiment. Indeed, Conzelmann is quite alone in asserting that the debate is "superfluous" because (in his opinion) the meaning of the term is obvious: "it means virgins,"[47] which Conzelmann interprets as a transparent reference to "unmarried men and women."[48] In an ironic twist, however, Thiselton ultimately draws the same conclusion, translating the first few words of verse 25 as "Concerning those who have not yet married."[49]

But this is surely a step in the wrong direction. The survey conducted in the previous chapter revealed that the παρθένος label almost universally referred to marriageable young women, who were typically presumed to be sexually pure.[50]

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[46]Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 593.

[47]Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 131.

[48]Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 131n7.

[49]Thiselton qualifies this somewhat in his discussion on vv. 25-38, which is beneath the heading "Issues for Those Not Yet Married, Especially Unmarried Women" (*First Epistle*, 565; so also Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 314). He is representative of a broad spectrum of scholars who hold to some version of the view that Paul has both men and women in mind when he uses the παρθένος label in v. 25. Schrage, for example, claims that Paul has engaged couples in mind (*erste Brief*, 2:155-6; so also Fee, *First Epistle*, 326-7 and Deming, *Paul on Marriage*, 173-7), while Hurd believes Paul is referring to individuals in a "spiritual marriage" (*Origin*, 177).

[50]The only significant exception to this is the Vestal Virgins, who were not technically marriageable since they were required to take a lifetime vow of chastity.

Thiselton cites the entry for παρθένος in BAGD to support his decision, but this seems to be a clear case of special pleading. Although some authors used the word as a technical reference to sexual purity, it was not at all common to do so when the referent included men.[51] Indeed, interpreting Paul's use of the παρθένος label here as a reference to celibate individuals of either sex is quite idiosyncratic.[52]

A much more likely interpretation is that Paul is referring to marriageable young women in general in verse 25, and to a special case scenario later in verse 36.[53] Although it is impossible to know for sure, the apostle might be responding to a question posed to him in the Corinthians' original letter.[54] This makes the most sense of his words in the rest of verse 25. It is hard to understand why the apostle would bother to give advice that needed qualification—"I have no command from the Lord, but I give an opinion" (v. 25)—unless the Corinthians had explicitly asked him something about virgins in their original letter to him.

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[51]The definition provided in the current edition of BDAG—"one who has never engaged in sexual intercourse"—is likewise misleading and overly broad (BDAG, 777). Furthermore, this also rules out the possibility that Paul was referring to single, celibate men (contra J. F. Bound, "Who Are the 'Virgins' Discussed in 1 Cor 7:25-38?" *EJ* 2 (1984): 3-15 and M. Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (London: SCM, 1961), 85. The only occurrences of the παρθένος label in the New Testament era that refer to men are found in the Pseudepigraphal text Joseph and Aseneth (4:9, 8:1) and in Rev. 14:4. In the case of the former, the label refers to a single individual, and not a group. In the Revelation text, it isn't clear that the author has literal virginity in mind, or whether virginity is simply functioning as a metaphor for religious purity. Furthermore, in all three texts the label is in the predicate position, which might have been intentional if the author wanted to ensure that readers interpreted the referent as male. There are zero instances of the παρθένος label in the New Testament era being used referentially in a sex-inclusive sense. Cf. discussion in previous chapter on entitativity.

[52]Thiselton goes so far as to say that "it is entirely convincing to follow Schrage in insisting that παρθένος applies to the celibate of either or both sexes from verse to verse" (*First Epistle*, 571).

[53]The interpretation proposed by J. K. Elliott, "Paul's Teaching on Marriage in 1 Cor: Some Problems Considered," *NTS* 19 (1973): 219-25 and adopted by Garland (*1 Corinthians*, 320) that Paul is referring to *betrothed* young women is entirely unsubstantiated by the usage of the παρθένος label. See discussion in Danylak, *Secular Singleness*, 138-40.

[54]This need not be inconsistent with the exhaustive study in Mitchell, "Concerning περῖ δέ," which primarily demonstrated that the phrase περῖ δέ *itself* did not suggest that Paul was responding to specific questions the Corinthians had posed to him in their original letter.

‘Virgin’ as Secondary Gender Identity in 1 Corinthians 7

It is not necessary to be aware of the concept of a ‘secondary gender identity’ in order to understand Paul’s recommendations in 1 Corinthians 7:25-40. It does seem rather obvious, however, that good interpreters must have a variety of tools at their disposal to aid them in understanding ancient texts. A framework with a hybrid of emic and etic components such as the one provided in the previous chapter can be useful to the extent that it provides interpreters with a set of data to look for in texts containing the παρθένος label. Interpreters have warrant for paying special attention to these details in the text because the survey in the previous chapter highlighted their association with the παρθένος label and the secondary gender identity that it indexes. For this reason, the following discussion will apply this framework to the problem of identifying the virgins in 1 Corinthians 7.

On the Semantic Usage of Labels

In this section we will apply our understanding of the semantic usage of the παρθένος label as it is used in the background literature of the New Testament to Paul's discussion here in 1 Corinthians 7. In particular, we will highlight specific features of the semantic usage of the παρθένος label that shed light on the identity of the virgins in 1 Corinthians 7.

Label and head noun. The background literature survey in the previous chapter uncovered a variety of texts in which the παρθένος label was used in conjunction with a head noun. This survey indicated that the most commonly occurring of these head nouns in both Jewish and non-Jewish texts was θυγατήρ. Indeed, the παρθένος label occurs with θυγατήρ a total of seven times in Jewish texts and six times in non-Jewish texts. Moreover, six of these texts are also listed below in Table 5.1, which seems to suggest that it was common for authors to use possessive pronouns to refer to virgin daughters.

Identity and semantic equivalence. A similar conclusion also drawn from the section of the previous chapter that explored the terms used in texts to refer to individuals who were also identified with the παρθένος label. That survey noted that the most commonly occurring of these words in Jewish literature was κόρη (22x), but that the second most common word was θυγατήρ (20x). Moreover, in non-Jewish literature, θυγατήρ occurred 33 percent more often than κόρη (64x and 48x, respectively).

Entitativity and group identity. The survey in the previous chapter also noted that the παρθένος label was much more commonly used in both Jewish and non-Jewish literature to refer to young ladies together as an indefinite, standalone class of individuals who possessed the same secondary gender identity, than to refer to an indefinite individual who was a virgin. This is important because 1 Corinthians 7:25 begins with a topic marking discursive device followed by a plural indefinite reference to virgins (περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων).

Another factor that an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:25 must account for is the possibility that Paul is referring to a specific group of virgins, perhaps the ones who belonged to families within the church at Corinth. If Paul is replying to a question the Corinthians had posed to him in their original letter, the likelihood that he is referring to a specific group of virgins increases. Indeed, the group identity of these individuals would seem to be further magnified by the possibility that they might all know each other, might have played together, or might have engaged in other activities together as a group.

Salient Thematic Elements

Textual elements that are fundamental to understanding Paul's argument are also elements of the cultural construction of gender identity as it relates to unmarried female sexuality. In 1 Corinthians 7, we will examine seven of these textual elements: marriage, custody, kinship, legal issues, purity/impurity, sexuality, and violence/suffering.

Marriage. Not surprisingly, the most pervasive theme throughout the chapter is the theme of marriage. First, the chapter contains explicit, verbal references to the act of marrying an individual using the verb γαμέω. In verse 9, Paul says that if single people are unable to control themselves they ought "to marry" (γαμησάτωσαν). In the next verse, Paul speaks directly to "those who have married" (γεγαμηκόσιν). Later in the chapter, Paul offers the reassurance that "if you marry (γαμήσῃς), you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries (γήμῃ), she has not sinned" (v. 28). Paul uses an adjectival participle in verse 33 to refer to a married man (γαμήσας) and in the next verse does the same to refer to a married woman (γαμήσασα). In the following paragraph (verses 36-38), Paul urges the parties involved to get married (γαμείτωσαν, v. 36), and in the final paragraph of the chapter he says that a woman whose husband has died is "free to be married to anybody she wants" (γαμηθήναι).

Aside from explicit verbal references to the act of marrying, 1 Corinthians 7 contains a wide array of auxiliary terms that are often used in contexts containing direct references to marriage. In verses 1-7 alone, the terms 'man/husband' (ἀνήρ) and 'woman/wife' (γυνή) occur 5x and 6x, respectively. Aside from the reference to a general "woman" in verse 1b, each of these other occurrences in verses 1-7 is probably best understood as referring to gender-specific marital statuses, i.e. to 'husband' or 'wife.'[55] Similarly, ἀνήρ and γυνή both occur 8x in verses 10-16 and clearly refer to marital status and not simple gender identity. Finally, the same pattern can be observed in verses 27, 29, 33, and 39 in which γυνή is used exclusively as an indicator of marital status, and verses 34 and 39, in which ἀνήρ functions in a parallel manner.

This emphasis on marital status is further reinforced by the presence of the

[55]Although Greek does not have formal equivalents of the English words 'husband' and 'wife,' the words ἀνήρ and γυνή were commonly used as gendered designations of marital status. See BDAG, 79-80, 208-9.

adjective ἄγαμος scattered throughout the chapter (vv. 8, 11, 32, 34).[56] In verse 8, Paul addresses "those who are unmarried" (τοῖς ἀγάμοις) in the first of three applications of the general teaching found in verses 1-7. Although several scholars entertain the possibility that this is a reference to widowers, this seems to be a clear example of over-interpretation.[57] Although by no means common, the word ἄγαμος is well-attested in Greco-Roman background literature from the New Testament era.[58] As the following brief survey will demonstrate, the word ἄγαμος never occurs in texts that either implicitly or explicitly restrict its sense to "widower." In other words, none of the occurrences of ἄγαμος are in contexts that require the gloss "widower." Finally, we will see that in at least one text where ἄγαμος seems to refer to men, it cannot be interpreted as "widower."

First, ἄγαμος can denote a general state of unmarriedness, regardless of the gender of the individual. Towards the end of Plutarch's creative retelling of an ancient Greek legend, one of the characters mentions a common saying ("Give a pledge, and mischief attends.") and suggests that it "has kept many individuals unwed (ἀγάμους) and many untrusting, and some even from speaking."[59] Likewise, in *On Tranquility of Mind*, Plutarch discusses how vicissitudinous temperaments are character defects that "torment both the rich and the poor, that afflict both those who have been married as well as the unmarried (καὶ γεγαμηκότας ἀνιᾷ καὶ ἀγάμους)."[60]

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[56] Fitzmyer notes that the word ἄγαμος occurs in the NT only in this chapter, and that it variously denotes a divorced woman, an unmarried man, and an unmarried, "virgin" woman (*1 Corinthians*, 283).

[57]Fee cites Paul's pattern of alternating comments between men and women as evidence that τοῖς ἀγάμοις was a reference to widowers (319n90); cf. J. Ford, *A Trilogy on Wisdom and Celibacy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967). and J. Moiser, "A Reassessment of Paul's View of Marriage With Reference to 1 Cor. 7," *JSNT* 5, no. 18 (1983): 103-22.

[58]We limited this brief survey of occurrences of ἄγαμος to major texts written between the translation of the Septuagint and the New Testament era. Within these parameters, ἄγαμος was used a total of 20 times in the LXX, Clement of Rome, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch.

[59]Plutarch, *Sept. sap. conv.* 163B.

[60]Plutarch, *Tranq. an.* 466C.

More often, however, it is at least somewhat clear that ἄγαμος refers to a specific individual or group of individuals whose gender is readily discerned from the context. In his Roman Antiquities, Dionysius relates the tale of how Romulus achieved the intermarriage of several hundred virgins that had been seized during a festival with "an equal number of men from among the unmarried" (ἐκ τῶν ἀγάμων ἄνδρας ἰσαρίθμους) who lived in Rome.[61] Plutarch gives a truncated description of the same event in his comparison of the lives of Theseus and Romulus, but adds the additional detail that Romulus took one of the virgins for himself before distributing the others "to the unmarried of the citizens (τοῖς ἀγάμοις τῶν πολιτῶν)."[62] It is worth pointing out that in both of these cases it is possible that ἄγαμος refers to a subcategory of men (i.e. those who are unmarried) and not to a subcategory of the population at large which would presumably include female individuals. That the context specifically refers to the subject matter of marriage implicitly limits the referent to the male members of the category, but one cannot rule out the possibility on the basis of these texts that it could never refer to women.

Several other texts we surveyed contain elements that more clearly indicate that the referent of ἄγαμος was a man. In his biography of Camillus, Plutarch describes his efforts to persuade "unmarried men (τοὺς ἀγάμους) . . . to marry women who were living in widowhood, who were numerous on account of the wars."[63] Although we cannot know for sure, it seems at least somewhat noteworthy that the author is unconcerned about the prior marital status of the unmarried men, but explicitly states that the women were widows. Likewise, it is impossible to discern the prior marital status of the "unmarried" Spartan men who were excluded from the ritual festivities in which the

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[61]Dionysius, *Antiquitates Romanae* 2:30.

[62]Plutarch, *Comparison of Thesius and Romulus* 6:2.

[63]Plutarch, *Camillus* 2:4

youth, both boys and girls, would complete their physical exercises naked.[64] Finally, in the only Jewish text we discovered containing ἄγαμος, it is safe to assume that the unmarried individuals it describes are male youth, and unlikely to have ever been married.[65]

An interesting set of examples in which the referent of ἄγαμος is clearly feminine seems to demonstrate that the word can also be used as a chronological reference, similar to what we saw in our survey of the παρθένος label in the previous chapter. In these instances, the word ἔτι is used in close conjunction with the modifier ἄγαμος, indicating that the female individual was likely young and had never been married. In the first example, Dionysius describes a decree passed by the Roman senate allowing intermarriages between Roman and Latin husbands and wives to be unilaterally dissolved if either of them wishes to move back to their homeland, with the sole stipulation that male children stay with the fathers and that "females who were still unmarried (τὰς δὲ θηλείας καὶ ἔτι ἀγάμους)" stay with their mothers.[66] In a similar text, Plutarch describes the plight of Cimon after his father died in prison, saying that he was "barely a man, with a sister who was still a young girl and unmarried (ἔτι κόρης οὔσης καὶ ἀγάμου)."[67] This usage seems to suggest that ἄγαμος could at least sometimes be used interchangeably with παρθένος.

Other texts in which ἄγαμος refers to women include the oft-cited description of Dionysius of the impregnation of Lacedaemonian women by young men sent home during the war by the Lacedaemonian warriors in order that the women would not remain "unmarried and childless (τὰς μὲν ἀγάμους, τὰς δὲ ἀτέκνους)" and Plutarch's description

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[64]See Plutarch *Apophthegmata Laconica* 227E, *Lycurgus* 15:1.

[65]4 Macc 16:9.

[66]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 6:1:2.

[67]Plutarch, *Cimon* 4:4.

of a Spartan law that prohibited the giving of dowries when a girl was married, so that "some of them shall not be left unwedded (ἄγαμοί τινες) because of lack of means."[68] These texts, combined with the considerations noted above all mitigate against the possibility of translating τοῖς δὲ ἀγάμοις in verse 8 as "to the widowers."

In addition to the direct references to marriage in this text, we now turn our attention towards two sub-themes that we encountered in our survey of the New Testament background literature: marriageability and betrothal. As we noted in the previous chapter, marriageability was on occasion a culturally significant element of the παρθένος identity label. Authors could utilize a variety of lexical conventions to indicate that a virgin was ready, and hence available, for marriage. Several of the most common of these constructions contain some form of the noun γάμος: the noun ἡλικία combined with γάμος in the genitive ("the maturity of marriage"),[69] the adjective ἐπιγάμος ("marriageable"),[70] and the verb ἔχω with ὥρα in the accusative and γάμος in the genitive plural ("having the time of marriage").[71] One text in our survey, however, contained the noun ἀκμή in addition to the noun ἡλικία,[72] and in two texts the noun ἀκμή is used *simpliciter* as a reference to marriageability.[73] Furthermore, most scholars

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[68]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 19:1:2 and Plutarch, *Apoph. lac*. 227F; see also Plutarch, *Lucullus* 18:8, *Septem*. 164B, *Quaestiones Romanae* 288F, *Consulatio ad uxorem* 611C, *Ro.ulus* 3:3.

[69]cf. Plutarch's reference to a young lady who was "a virgin at the mature time of marriage" (παρθένον ἐν ἡλικίᾳ γάμου, *Agesilaus* 11:2) or Diodorus' statement about "virgins having the maturity of marriage" (παρθένοι τὴν ἡλικίαν ἔχουσαι γάμου, Diodorus, *Biblioteca Histiorica* 16:55:4).

[70]Dionysius refers to a girl who was "already marriageable" (ταύτην τὴν κόρην ἐπίγαμον οὖσαν ἤδη θεασάμενος, *Ant. rom.* 11:28:2); likewise, Diodorus refers to "marriageable virgins" (παρθένους ἐπιγάμους, *Bib. hist.* 13:111:6).

[71]Plutarch describes virgins who "already attained the time of marriage" (ἤδη γάμων ὥραν ἔχουσαι, *Mulierum Virtutes* 253E); Dionysius uses an almost identical construction to refer to a young girl who "attained the time of marriage" (γάμων ἡ παῖς ἔσχεν ὥραν, *Ant. rom.* 11:30:2).

[72]Diodorus refers to an individual virgin as "having come to the height of maturity" (εἰς ἀκμὴν ἡλικίας ἐλθοῦσαν, *Bib. hist.* 3:58:4)

[73]Dionysius describes the plight of the Lacedaemonian women and "virgins at their peak" (ταῖς ἐν ἀκμῇ παρθένοις, *Ant. rom.* 19:1:2); likewise Philo refers to virgins who are guarded until they achieve "the time of their peak" (τῆς ἀκμῆς καιρὸν, *De specialis legibus* 3:81).

acknowledge that the adjective παρακμός—a cognate of the noun ἀκμή—was commonly used to refer to something that was "past its prime."[74]

This background is relevant to our examination of 1 Corinthians 7 due to the presence of ὑπέρακμος in verse 36, itself a cognate of ἀκμή. Although awe will discuss this word at greater length below in the section on sexuality, an initial glimpse at the cultural background of the topic of marriageability can shed light on the exegetical ambiguities of ὑπέρακμος in this text. As we will discover below, scholars have not achieved a consensus on the identity of the personal referent of ὑπέρακμος in verse 36; it could the unspecified male individual designated by the indefinite pronoun τις, or it could be "his virgin" (τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ). At the very least, the texts mentioned above that contain references to marriageability ought to figure prominently in attempts to resolve the grammatical ambiguity of determining the referent of ὑπέρακμος.

Finally, references to betrothal are noticeably absent from Paul's discussion about marriage and virgins. As we saw in the previous chapter of this study, authors in the first century had at least three lexicosyntactic conventions at his disposal to refer to the relationship between a man and his fiancée. The absence of any of these three widely used constructions seems noteworthy if Paul is truly referring in verses 36-38 (or perhaps even, for that matter, in v. 27) to a betrothed couple.

Custody. The theme of 'custody' or guardianship is subtle, but noticeable, in 1 Corinthians 7. First, Paul urges an unspecified individual to "keep his own virgin" (τοῦ τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον) in verse 37 if he is under no external constraint and is convinced that it is the right thing to do. As we saw in our background literature survey in the previous chapter, several terms with overlapping semantic domains were used in both Jewish and non-Jewish literature to refer to the protection of young ladies in order to

[74]See the various examples cited by Bruce Winter in his extensive survey, "Puberty or Passion? The Referent of ΥΠΕΡΑΚΜΟΣ in 1 Corinthians 7:36," *TynBul* 49 (1998): 77.

maintain their purity and marriageability. Nouns such as ἐπιμελητής, ἐπιτρόπος, were used to refer to the individual responsible for providing protection for the virgin. Other nouns, such as φυλακή, ἐπιμέλεια, and προστασία, referred to the actual practice of guarding the purity of virgins. And finally, verbs such as ἐπιμέλομαι, φυλάσσω, φρουρέω, τηρέω, and παρατηρέω were used to refer to the protecting activity itself. In addition to these explicit semantic references, authors described other practices whose purpose was the protection of marriageable young ladies.[75]

And yet, the particular construction at the end of verse 37 is somewhat opaque due to the semantic range of τηρέω. According to BDAG, the verb τηρέω can be used in three different ways: "to retain in custody" (e.g., Matt 28:4, Acts 12:5), "to cause a state, activity, or condition to continue" (cf. John 2:10, Eph 4:3), and "to persist in obedience" (cf. Mark 7:9, Jas 2:10).[76] Although the third meaning is obviously not a relevant option here, it is unclear whether the first or second option is best in this context. Namely, is the individual supposed to "watch over his own virgin" or is he supposed to "keep her as his own virgin" (i.e. keep her a virgin)?

Gordon Fee opts for the second interpretation, citing two Achilles Tatius texts in which Callisthenes speaks of his commitment to respect the virginity of his love interest Calligone: "I will keep you a virgin as long as might seem good to you" (τηρήσω δέ σε παρθένον μέχρι περ ἂν σοὶ δοκῇ); "Up to this moment I have kept the girl a virgin" (παρθένον γὰρ τὴν κόρην μέχρι τούτου τετήρηκα).[77] Likewise, two adjacent texts from the Parallela Minora of Pseudo-Plutarch express a similar sentiment, but from the perspective of the virgin's father: "Evenus . . . married Alcippe, the daughter of

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[75]3 Macc. 1:18 refers to "cloistered virgins" (αἵ τε κατάκλειστοι παρθένοι); Philo says that virgins' apartments were in the center of the house (Philo, *Spec.* 3:169); also, they were "shut away" (θαλαμευόμεναι) from the outside world (Philo, *In Flaccum* 89).

[77]Fee, *The First Epistle*, 389; Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 8.17.3, 8.18.2.

[77]Fee, *The First Epistle*, 389; Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 8.17.3, 8.18.2.

Oenomaüs, and begat a daughter Marpessa, whom he was keeping as a virgin" (ἣν παρθένον ἐφρούρει); "Annius, king of the Etruscans, having a beautiful daughter named Salia, was keeping a virgin" (παρθένον ἐτήρει).[78]

First, we should observe that the two Achilles Tatius texts and the first Pseudo-Plutarch text all make use of a predicate accusative construction to communicate the state in which the object of the verb is preserved. In the first Achilles Tatius text and the first Pseudo-Plutarch text the direct object of the verb is a relative pronoun, and in the second Achilles Tatius text it is the noun κόρη. In other words, an explicitly specified individual is "kept" (as) a virgin. The second Pseudo-Plutarch text, however, does not contain a predicate accusative construction.

Second, we should further observe that the predicate accusative construction in the first Pseudo-Plutarch text contains a different verb, φρουρέω, from the other texts. According to BDAG, this verb always has the connotation of guardianship, which is a noticeably more narrow range of meaning than τηρέω.[79] This suggests that the emphasis is not likely on the virginity of the young lady, but on her status or identity. In other words, perhaps the father is not "keeping her a virgin" but is instead "watching over her as a virgin." And this might explain why, a few lines later, the next Pseudo-Plutarch text contains τηρέω, but without a predicate accusative construction. Considered in conjunction with each other, these two adjacent texts seem to emphasize the role of guardianship in ways that cannot be said of the Achilles Tatius texts.

More study is surely necessary, because it is quite possible that this fluidity in vocabulary and syntax is the result of an interdependence between secondary gender identity regimes and the cultural context of the ancient Greco-Roman world. In other words, in some contexts being a 'virgin' was as much a matter of being the object of

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[78]Pseudo-Plutarch, *Parallela Minora* 315E.

[79]BDAG, 1066-7.

guardianship as it was of continuing to possess the presumably prototypical quality of virginity (i.e. sexual purity). If this is true, then Fee and others seem to overstate their case when they claim that 1 Corinthians 7:37 is a transparent statement about maintaining the virginity of the young lady (i.e., "keeping her a virgin"). Not only does the statement lack a predicate accusative construction, but it also contains an additional qualifier, a genitive form of the reflexive pronoun, ἑαυτοῦ. These considerations seem consistent with the first definition found in BDAG, and result in the following reading: "to watch over his own virgin."

The second signal in 1 Corinthians 7 that points to the theme of custody is the use of ἐλεύθερος in verse 39.[80] Although it is not semantically related to any of the terms mentioned above, it is conceptually related to the idea of custodianship. As such, it connotes a state of being in which an individual is not only free to do something, but also free *from* something.[81] The kind of freedom communicated by this term is not an existential, voluntaristic freedom, but a social and political status. Indeed, it is striking that Paul would not only use the same term to describe the status of a former virgin as he does in verses 21-22 to discuss the emancipation of slaves, but also that he would place it in an emphatic position in the sentence.[82] The net effect is to state that a woman whose husband has died is no longer under custodianship or protectorship of any kind.

The final element of custodianship in 1 Corinthians 7 is found in verse 28b and verse 35, in which Paul claims that his instructions are motivated by his care and concern for the Corinthians' well-being. These indications of personal interest raise the immediate issue of the nature of the apostle's personal relationship to the Corinthians, a relationship,

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[80]If verses 39-40 addresses a different topic, as most scholars believe, then the use of ἐλεύθερος would seem to be less significant. See below on why it is most natural to see a high degree of continuity between v. 38 and v. 39.

[81]BDAG, 316-7.

[82]Virtually no major commentary reflects on the significance of ἐλεύθερος here.

in fact, which he describes elsewhere in the epistle as that of a father towards his children (4:14-21).[83] In 2 Corinthians this paternal sentiment is also manifest in particularly striking language, such as in Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to open their heart to him as children (6:13), as well as his stated desire to not be a burden to the Corinthians ("for children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children," 12:14c).[84] Moreover, in a particularly noteworthy example Paul utilizes betrothal language to portray his relationship to the Corinthian church as that of a father and his daughter: "I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ" (11:2b). These considerations potentially indicate a subtle, but unmistakable, context of Paul's statements of care and concern for the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 7:28b and 7:35 is the paternal relationship he had cultivated with them through the course of his ministry to the church at Corinth. It is true that this paternal concern could compel the apostle to demonstrate concern for an engaged. If this is the case, then it is possible that this same concern motivated the apostle to address the particular case of a father's decision to give his daughter in marriage in verses 36ff.

Kinship. The theme of kinship is salient throughout 1 Corinthians 7. Besides the many references to husbands, wives, and marriage throughout Paul's discussion that I mentioned above, as well as the spiritual kinship bonds that existed between the apostle and the Corinthian church, the theme of kinship emerges in at least two other ways. First,

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[83]Ciampa and Rosner note this connection (*The First Epistle*, 342), although they do not tie it to the theme of custody; likewise, Garland describes this as a "fatherly concern" (*1 Corinthians*, 327). To be clear, I am not suggesting here that the custodial attitude of the apostle towards the Corinthians *requires* interpreters to understand it as a reflection of the custodial posture of a father towards "his virgin." I am simply stating that the attitude Paul demonstrates towards the Corinthians might seem to evoke the kinds of concerns that a father would have had towards a virgin daughter.

[84]Although these statements in 2 Corinthians were obviously penned after the epistle of 1 Corinthians, they nonetheless corroborate the claim that Paul forged a uniquely intimate relationship with the Corinthian church during his time in Corinth, which is reflected in the sentiment of the statements themselves.

Paul mentions children (τὰ τέκνα, v. 14) in his discussion about unbelieving spouses who decide to continue living with a believing husband and wife.

Second, the use of possessive pronouns with παρθένος in verses 36-38 (αὐτοῦ in v. 36 and ἑαυτοῦ in vv. 37 and 38) indicates that the young lady belongs to a particular family unit. As mentioned earlier, of course, debate rages over the question of whose family unit this is: her father's, or the family of her fiancé. In order to shed some light on this debate, we created Table 1 which is a record of every text in the background literature surveyed in the previous chapter in which the παρθένος label occurs with a possessive pronoun.

We can make three general observations from this chart. First, none of these texts refers to a man/woman couple, whether engaged or not. The only text written any time near the era of the New Testament that uses the παρθένος label and a possessive pronoun to refer to a man/woman couple is *Aethiopica*, a 3rd century romance story by Heliodorus. While alone in her room, the female protagonist, Charliclea, refers to herself as "your virgin" during a dramatic monologue in which she has an imaginary conversation with her beloved.[85] It seems notable that even in this specific text, Charliclea is *not* betrothed to her beloved when she is speaking.

Second, in exactly half of these texts, the παρθένος label occurs in conjunction with θυγατήρ, as a head noun. Furthermore, in five of the six texts, the virgin daughters are specific individuals. Moreover, in each of the texts that lack the head noun θυγατήρ, the virgins are not literal daughters. In three texts they are the figurative daughters of either Jerusalem, Israel, or the southern kingdom of Judah, and in the other three texts they are the figurative daughters of an individual who represents the nation of Israel (Jeremiah or Judith). This seems to establish a pattern in which authors rely on θυγατήρ as a head noun to further designate a parental kinship relationship between a specific

[85]Heliodorus, *Aeth.* 6:8:6, cited in Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Epistle*, 357n414.

Table 1. Texts containing the παρθένος label with a possessive pronoun

Source	*Text*	*Identity of παρθένος*
Bib. Hist. 20:21:2	τὰς μὲν θυγατέρας τὰς ἑαυτῆς παρθένους οὔσας ἀπέσφαξεν	A woman's virgin daughter
Jud. 16:4	τὰς παρθένους μου	Judith's (figurative for Israel) virgins
Judg. 19:24	ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἡ παρθένος	The innkeeper's virgin daughter
Ps. 77:63 (LXX)	αἱ παρθένοι αὐτῶν	The virgins of God's people
Lam. 1:4 (LXX)	αἱ παρθένοι αὐτῆς	The virgins of Zion
Lam. 1:18 (LXX)	παρθένοι μου	Jeremiah's (figurative for Israel) virgins
Lam. 2:21 (LXX)	παρθένοι μου	Jeremiah's (figurative for Israel) virgins
2 Chron. 36:17 (LXX)	τὰς παρθένους αὐτῶν	Judah's virgins
Ant. 17:34	θυγατέρων αὐτοῦ παρθένων	Pheroas's virgin daughters
Ant. 17:322	θυγατέρων αὐτοῦ παρθένων	Herod's virgin daughters
De Bel. 2:99	δυσὶ δ' αὐτοῦ θυγατράσι παρθένοις	Herod's virgin daughters
Mig. Abr. 31	τῶν παρθένων αὐτοῦ θυγατέρων	God's virgin daughters (figurative for His graces)

virgin and a parent.[86]

A closer examination of texts containing the παρθένος label, however, demonstrates that a θυγατήρ head noun construction was not a necessary means of communicating that a particular virgin was a daughter. Indeed, several texts illustrate the

[86]It is worth noting that Greek authors had other semantic and syntactic options at their disposal for indicating possession of offspring, such as the dative of possession seen in Acts 21:9 ("This man had four virgin daughters who prophesied," τούτῳ δὲ ἦσαν θυγατέρες τέσσαρες παρθένοι προφητεύουσαι), Plutarch, *Mulier. virt.* 253C ("He had two daughters, still virgin and beautiful to behold," δύο δ' ἦσαν αὐτῷ θυγατέρες, παρθένοι μὲν ἔτι), and Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 11:28:2. If this table included texts containing those additional constructions it would be much larger.

semantic flexibility of the παρθένος label by substituting it in places one would expect θυγατήρ. Josephus, for example, records the various grievances the Jews suffered under the rule of Herod, including "the corruption of the chastity of virgins (παρθένων) and the reproach laid on their wives for incontinency."[87] Likewise, Philo describes the dismay of the Jews when their homes were searched by soldiers, who saw "wives who were confined inside and did not leave their inner chambers, and virgins (παρθένοι) who were kept in the strictest privacy, shunning the eyes of men."[88]

This semantic flexibility of the παρθένος label can be observed in Greco-Roman texts, as well. Dionysius, for example, tells the story of the commander Decius who stayed as a guest of prominent leaders of the wealthy city of Rhegium, but who then incited his soldiers to plunder it. After killing the men of the city in their own homes, they then proceeded to rape "the wives and virgins of their hosts [τάς τε γὰρ γυναῖκας τῶν ἰδίων ξένων καὶ τὰς παρθένους] whose fathers and husbands they had just killed in their presence."[89] Four separate Diodorus texts also demonstrate this flexibility. In the first, the Greek historian describes the Alexander's promise "to provide for the marriage of the virgins [of Darius] even more generously than Darius himself had promised, and to bring up the boy as his own son" (τῆς μὲν τῶν παρθένων . . . , τὸν παῖδα δὲ . . .).[90] In the second, he notes that husbands and fathers would suffer more if they knew about the "violence committed against their wives and the shame against their virgins" (γυναικῶν ὕβρεις καὶ παρθένων αἰσχύνας).[91] And finally, Diodorus describes the steps the Rhodians took in preparation for war, including passing a law that provided for the care

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[87]Josephus, *A.J.* 17:309.

[88]Philo, *Flacc*. 89.

[89]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 20:4:7.

[90]Diodorus, *Bib*. *hist.* 17:38:1.

[91]Diodorus, *Bib*. *hist.* 19:8:3.

of family members of soldiers who died in battle. The law stated that "the virgins would be given dowries out of the public treasury, and the sons would be crowned in the theatre of Dionysia and given a full suit of armor upon reaching manhood" (τὰς μὲν παρθένους . . . , τοὺς δ' υἱοὺς . . .).[92] Indeed, the juxtaposition of παρθένος and υἱός and the μέν/δέ construction in this final example are of particular interest to us, and seem to indicate a degree of overlap in semantic domain between παρθένος and θυγατήρ.

A fourth text in Diodorus seems to confirm this overlap. The actor Satyrus asks King Philip to free "two virgins of a friend of his (ξένου τινὸς ἑαυτοῦ δύο παρθένοι)" who were among the women that the king had taken captive.[93] There is no indication in the surrounding context that the virgins are the daughters of the friend, but it does not at all seem unwarranted to draw this conclusion.

Legal issues. Law-related concepts play an intriguing, if somewhat vexing role in Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 7. First, the topic of slavery in verses 21-24 was a transparently legal issue in Greco-Roman society. Second, we already mentioned the legal connotations of being "free" (ἐλεύθερος) above in our discussion about custody, but it seems worthwhile to state again that the double-salience of this textual feature rests on the legal connotations of being "free" as it relates to marital status. In other words, the "freedom" of a woman to marry whomever she wants is fundamentally a legal freedom before it becomes a domestic matter.

Third, the topic of marriage and divorce itself was a legal issue in Greco-Roman society. We have already discussed the topic of marriage, so the following examination will focus on Paul's various references to the practice of divorce as it relates to his argument. In verses 10-11 and verses 12-16, Paul uses two words to refer to the act

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[92]Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 20:84:3.

[93]Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 16:44:3.

of ending a marriage, χωρίζω and ἀφίημι. Although χωρίζω does not technically mean "to divorce," in Greco-Roman law a man or woman could initiate a divorce simply by "leaving" the household of his or her spouse.[94]

In verse 27, however, Paul uses a different verb (λύω) to refer to the end of a relationship between a man and the woman/wife (γυνή) to whom he has been "bound" (δέω). Unfortunately, it is difficult to discern here whether Paul is referring to an actual marriage, an engagement, or is being intentionally vague in order to signal that individuals in either scenario are equally in view. Virtually every major English translation except the NIV reflects the perspective that Paul's instructions here are directed towards married couples, although the consensus among scholars is less united.[95] Indeed, most scholars seem to think that Paul has a betrothed couple in mind in these verses, although this seems unlikely. First, although the word γυνή can very naturally be rendered as either woman or wife, we have already noted that in the context of 1 Corinthians 7 it is generally a reference to marital status (with the sole exception of v. 1b). Second, we also already observed the notable absence of any conventional term denoting betrothal in 1 Corinthians 7. Third, although Fee and others are right to highlight the legal associations of the word λύσις, it not clear that the use of this word here is *ipso facto* a reference to the dissolving of a betrothal agreement.[96] Fourth, Paul uses another perfect passive form of δέω in conjunction with γυνή again in verse 39 in a context where it clearly refers to marriage, and not merely betrothal.

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[94]See Susan Treggiari, "Divorce Roman Style: How Easy and how Frequent was it?" in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*, ed. Beryl Rawson (New York: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[95]Both the NASB and ESV translate 27a as "Are you bound to a wife?"; cf. Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter*, 338.

[96]Fee (*The First Epistle*, 366) and Thiselton (*The First Epistle*, 576) both cite the extensive data surveyed by J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 382 detailing the legal associations of λύσις, but have no warrant to restrict the relevance of this data to a betrothal agreement when it can just as easily refer to a marriage contract or the death of a spouse. Fee, in particular, draws the further unwarranted inference that v. 27 is addressed to a hypothetical male virgin who is betrothed to a woman.

Indeed, the key to achieving resolution seems to lie in the perfect tense and passive voice of λέλυσαι in verse 27c.[97] Immediately after prohibiting married individuals from actively pursuing a "loosing" of their marriage bond, Paul acknowledges that some of them may already "*have been* loosed," whether through death or through a scenario such as he already described in verse 15.[98] In other words, Paul is not discussing the initiation or cessation of the marriage bond from the legal perspective of divorce in verses 25-31. Instead, he is discussing the social issue of changing your marital status from de-married back to married. First, he does not use any of the above terms commonly used to refer to divorce. Indeed, Thiselton is right to insist that λύσις is "otherwise unknown to denote divorce."[99] Second, the opening phrase of verse 28a indicates that marriage, and not betrothal, is the central topic.[100]

Finally, a minor difficulty seems to arise if Paul's advice in verse 27 centers on the question of marriage in general and not specifically on betrothal: how does this advice relate to virgins, who are presumably the subject of the paragraph? In other words, why give advice about whether to marry, or not, in a discussion about virgins?

Purity/Impurity. As indicated in the previous chapter, references to purity and holiness abound in texts about virgins. Although the word denoting purity that is mostly

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[97]In Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 12:9:3, a perfect passive form of λύω refers to slaves who "have been freed." The most common use of perfect passive constructions of λύω is to refer to the dissolution of treaties (e.g., Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 14:3:6, 15:29:7; Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 3:3:1, 5:40:3, 8:2:3).

[98]Thiselton acknowledges this, but draws the unwarranted conclusion that the verses must therefore refer to betrothal and not marriage (*The First Epistle*, 577); contra Joseph Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 315-6. See also BDAG, 607.

[99]Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 576.

[100]Cf. Danylak, *Secular Singleness*, 138-40, who seems to hold a similar position, but suggests the following opaque translation of v. 27c: "Have you *been free of any bond* to a wife?" (emphasis original). Citing Xenophon, *Cyr.*, 1.1.4 and Ignatius, *Magn.*, 12.1, Danylak claims that this is an example of λύσις being used in a manner that does not assume "a previous state of being 'bound'" (BDAG, 607). From the standpoint of lexicography this may be the case, but` the grammatical form (perfect passive) itself seems to require a previous state that has become nullified.

commonly associated with virgins in Greco-Roman literature, ἁγνός,[101] is not found in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul uses the much more common (in the NT) term ἅγιος.[102] Furthermore, the phrase "in order that she might be holy in both body and spirit" (ἵνα ᾖ ἁγία καὶ τῷ σώματι καὶ τῷ πνεύματι, v. 34a, b) appears to be an intentional variation from the pattern found in the surrounding context:

The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord
how to please the Lord. (v. 32)
But the married man is anxious about worldly things,
how to please his wife . . . (v. 33)
And the unmarried woman or virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord,
in order that she might be holy in both body and spirit. (v. 34a, b)
But the married woman is anxious about worldly things,
how to please her husband. (v. 34c, d)

The break from the pattern displayed in the parallel statements is significant not only because it is somewhat jarring, but also because it appears to be a transparent adaptation of a purity/impurity motif that was commonly associated with virgins in that culture.

Sexuality. Although the theme of sexuality lurks in the background at various junctures in Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians 7, it only explicitly surfaces during the opening paragraphs in verses 1-7, and briefly again in verse 9. We already explored the meaning of the euphemism in verse 1b, so the following brief discussion will examine the other references to sexuality in verses 1-7.

The plural reference to sexual immoralities (τὰς πορνείας) in verse 2 suggests that Paul's statements about marital sex are in response to the specific cases of sexual immorality he had already mentioned (which were themselves, perhaps, only the tip of

[101]Cf. Comp. Lyc. Num.

[102]Cf. the exhortation of Polycarp in *Ad Philippenses* 5:3 to "the virgins" that they "walk in a pure and blameless conscience" (ἐν ἀμώμῳ καὶ ἁγνῇ συνειδήσει περιπατεῖν). Earlier in the same verse, Polycarp quotes a section of 1 Cor. 6:9, which might suggest that his exhortation about virgins is likewise related to the text of 1 Cor 7.

the iceberg).[103] And yet its placement directly after Paul's statement in verse 1b ("it is good for a man not to use a woman for sexual gratification") suggests that he doubted the Corinthians' awareness of the ethical implications of their situation.[104] The following verses, therefore, constitute a nuanced response in which Paul upholds the legitimate ideal of celibate singleness as his own personal preference, while implicitly suggesting that it is probably an unrealistic ideal for all to pursue given the prevalence of sexual immorality (i.e., "touching") in Corinth.

Paul's first statement to the Corinthians is primarily directed toward single individuals who were failing to achieve sexual abstinence.[105] His instruction to these individuals in verse 2 is that "each man should have his own wife and each woman should have her own husband" (ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἐχέτω, καὶ ἑκάστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἐχέτω). Although certainty is elusive here, this is probably a subtle command to single people who were unable to abstain from sexual immorality to find a spouse with whom they could engage in regular marital sex.[106] The present tense imperatives in both this verse and in verse 3 suggest that Paul does not have a one-time event (i.e., "taking a wife") in mind here, but is rather referring to the state of having a spouse and the subsequent ongoing maintenance of marital sexuality.[107] Not only is this confirmed by the explicit command in verse 3 to both husbands and wives that each

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[103]So Fee, *The First Epistle*, 309; Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 501; Ciampa and Rosner, 276; contra the AV/NKJV ("to avoid fornication"). See discussion in Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 501n99.

[104]Pace Thiselton (*The First Epistle*, 501), δέ is probably not functioning as a strong adversative here, but simply initiates the next step in the development of the apostle's discourse. Cf. Stephen Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and* Exegesis, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010), 28-36.

[105]This is based on our agreement with the Danylak thesis that the Corinthians' original question to Paul was about marital status and not ethics ("Secular Singleness," 153).

[106]So Ciampa and Rosner (*The First Epistle*, 277), Fee (*The First Epistle*, 310), Garland (*1 Corinthians*, 256); contra Danylak ("Secular Singleness," 152), who overstates his case by claiming that this view "requires reading ἔχω in the more obscure sense of 'having sexually' rather than the more obvious sense of 'possessing'" ("Secular Singleness," 152).

[107]See the extensive discussion in Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 501, and Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 149-61.

fulfill their duty to their spouse, but it is further reinforced by the next statement in verse 4 that husbands and wives exercise mutual authority over the bodies of their spouses.

The shift from 3rd person imperative forms to 2nd person imperative forms in verse 5 further sharpens the focus of Paul's instructions to married individuals in order to address a different group of individuals who might potentially be guilty of sexual immorality for other reasons. After denying the possibility that couples were abstaining from sex because of ascetic tendencies, Danylak reflects on the probability that husbands were having sexual encounters with prostitutes instead of with their wives.[108] The verb (μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε) Paul uses to proscribe sexual abstinence in marriage has strong legal connotations and point to the possibility that husbands were neglecting the marital obligations to their wives, and were instead giving them to prostitutes.

Finally, two terms in verse 36 that might have sexual connotations are notoriously problematic for contemporary interpreters: ἀσχημονεῖν and ὑπέρακμος. Indeed, the following representative sampling of English translations reflects the variety of ways scholars render these two words and how they are implicated in the larger problem of determining the identity of the individual and "his virgin":

> If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably (ἀσχημονεῖν) toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if his passions are too strong (ὑπέρακμος) and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. (NIV 1984)
>
> If anyone thinks he is acting improperly (ἀσχημονεῖν) toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years (ὑπέρακμος) and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. (NIV 2011)
>
> If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly (ἀσχημονεῖν) toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong (ὑπέρακμος), and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. (ESV)

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[108] "[We] may presume that some Corinthians were not having marital relations. Though traditionally such reluctance has been attributed to ascetic motivations, it is more likely that Paul is simply reacting against a culture in which sustained marital relations were not the norm and prostitutes rather than wives were the culturally recommended prophylactic for adultery" (Danylak, "Secular Singleness," 154). Contra the vast majority of scholars, who attribute the lack of marital sex to asceticism.

> But if a man has a partner in celibacy and feels that he is not behaving properly (ἀσχημονεῖν) towards her, if, that is, his instincts are too strong (ὑπέρακμος) for him, and something must be done, he may do as he pleases; there is nothing in it; let them marry. (NEB)
>
> But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly (ἀσχημονεῖν) toward his virgin daughter, if she is past her youth (ὑπέρακμος), and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry. (NASB95)

The differences in translating ἀσχημονεῖν can be illustrated in the shift between the 1984 and 2011 translations of the NIV. In the 1984 translation, it is rendered as "not acting honorably," while the NIV (2011), ESV, and NEB use the somewhat less-loaded term "(im)proper" to communicate the negative connotation associated with the verb. Furthermore, the different translations of ὑπέρακμος can be readily discerned from the quotes above; the NIV (2011) and NASB both translate it as a chronological reference to the virgin's advancing age, while the NIV (1984), ESV, and NEB translate it as a reference to the "over-the-top" passions of a hypothetical engaged man.

In order to shed light on the difficulties in this text, we will first highlight the specific exegetical cruces involved before summarizing the major approaches to resolving them. In brief, the following questions summarize the primary points of contention:

1. What is the subject of the verb ᾖ in verse 36?

2. Does the verb ἀσχημονεῖν in verse 36 have a sexual connotation?

3. Does the adjective ὑπέρακμος in verse 36 have a sexual connotation?

4. What is the nature of the "necessity" (ἀνάγκην) in verse 37?

5. Does the noun θελήματος in verse 37 have a sexual connotation?

Rather than examining these questions one by one, we will instead summarize the two major attempts to reconstruct the scenario that the apostle is addressing in these verses.[109]

[109]Several minor interpretations can be dismissed as overly idiosyncratic, and will not inform the following discussion. For example, H. Achelis, *Virgines Subintroductae: ein Beitrag zum VII. Kapitel des I. Korintherbriefs* (Leipzip: J. C. Hinrichs, 1902) proposed the view that Paul is referring to a "spiritual

The majority of scholars today claim that Paul is referring to a man who is having difficulty maintaining a chaste relationship with his fiancée, but who is also, presumably, concerned that pursuing marriage would be incompatible with Paul's preference for the single state. Scholars arrive at this consensus scenario, however, via two different routes, which can be observed in the differences between the 1984 and 2011 versions of the NIV. Some scholars claim that the subject of ᾖ in verse 36 is the young man (τις), and that both ἀσχημονεῖν and ὑπέρακμος have sexual connotations and paint the picture of a youth who is acting in an unseemly manner towards his fiancée, perhaps even to the point of being overcome with passion towards her. Winter makes the additional claim that both ἀνάγκην and θελήματος in verse 37 also have sexual connotations, and refer to compulsive desires stemming from an uncontrollable sexual appetite, but most scholars do not press the matter this far.[110] Other scholars believe that the subject of ᾖ is the virgin, and that ἀσχημονεῖν may have sexual overtones, but could also reflect a concern on the part of the man that he not do anything socially inappropriate (i.e., hold off on marriage too long). In this scenario, ὑπέρακμος is usually understood as a chronological reference to the advancing age of the virgin.[111]

The second route to the consensus scenario is a step in the right direction, although we will see that it, too, is ultimately prone to the same difficulties as the first route. Furthermore, have already noted that if Paul had intended to state that the virgin was "beyond the age of marriage" (as in the NIV 2011 and NASB), the Greek word παρακμός would have been a more apposite choice of terms, and not of ὑπέρακμος.[112] In

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marriage" of sorts. Other scholars who adopt this view include Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 171-80), and Weiss, *Der erste Korinterbrief*, 206-9. Cf. the discussion in Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 569 and 594-8; Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Epistle*, 355-9.

[110]Winter, "Puberty or Passion," 85; *After Paul Left Corinth*, 251-2; Ciampa and Rosner disagree, however (360-1).

[111]Ciampa and Rosner go so far as to state that there "is no clear evidence that the word [ὑπέρακμος] ever meant, or was thought to mean, 'full of sexual passion'" (*The First Epistle*, 358-9n424).

[112]Winter, "Puberty or Passion," 77; see also E. Bernard Allo, *Saint Paul: Première épître aux*

his exhaustive survey of ὑπέρακμος, Winter states that it was most likely used "to refer either to a woman who has reached puberty and therefore could engage in intercourse and safely conceive, or to the sexual drives or passions notionally of either sex."[113] In other words, if the subject of ᾖ is the virgin, then it could be a reference to either her age or her sexual appetite.

Despite enjoying a broad consensus of support among contemporary New Testament scholars, a number of difficulties attend this reconstruction. First, it is difficult to see how this scenario differs substantially from Paul's earlier instructions to "the unmarried and widows" in verses 8-9. In both cases Paul addresses single individuals and states, in effect, that marriage is a valid and appropriate action to take if they are unable to control themselves. Furthermore, we have already noted the complete absence of betrothal language in this text. If the only material difference between verses 8-9 and verses 36-38 is that the single individual in the latter text is actually engaged to a virgin, then why does Paul not state this explicitly?

Second, in our discussion above about references to marriage in this text we alluded to the troublesome lack of consensus surrounding the subject of the verb ᾖ, but noted that the grammatical ambiguity could potentially be resolved by noting the salience of marriageability in texts about virgins. To state the matter baldly, it is difficult to imagine that the original recipients of Paul's epistle would have associated an adjective such as ὑπέρακμος with an unspecified subject (τις) instead of the much closer in proximity παρθένην, particularly when the cognate noun from which the adjective is derived is so closely associated with a contextually salient concept, namely the

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Corinthiens (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956), 191-4; Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinter I-II*.9 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [P. Siebeck], 1949), 35-37, and Schrage (*Der Erste*, 2:197-9).

[113]Winter, "Puberty or Passion," 77; Winter cites the first-century Ephesian doctor Soranus who used the term ὑπέρακμος to refer to the optimal time for marriage, that is, after the onset of puberty and the menstrual cycle (75). Ciampa and Rosner are in partial agreement, suggesting that ὑπέρακμος means "to have passed through puberty, that is, to have arrived at full adulthood" (*The First Epistle*, 358).

marriageability of virgins.

Third, the consensus interpretation is confronted with a lexical difficulty in verse 38, where Paul uses the rare verb γαμίζω instead of γαμέω. Scholars usually suggest that Paul switches to this verb for stylistic purposes due to the presence of a direct object (τὴν παρθένον ἑαυτοῦ), despite the fact that the verb occurs in the Synoptics with a seemingly clear causative force: Matt 22:30, Mark 12:25, and Luke 20:34, 35 in the common tradition, and Matt 24:38 and Luke 17:27 in the parallel tradition.

Most scholars dispute the causative force of γαμίζω in these verses, however, noting that this distinguishing feature of -ιζω verbs had almost entirely disappeared from Koine Greek by the New Testament era.[114] Furthermore, some scholars also note that each occurrence of γαμίζω in the Synoptic texts is in the passive voice; this suggests, some claim, that they might be close enough to the semantic domain of passive constructions of γαμέω, and therefore conceptually synonymous.[115] This, however, fails to account for the slight break in literary convention represented by the use of γαμίζω in these verses. In fact, we can readily discern a pattern often found in texts that refer to both men and women who entered into marital relationships, a pattern that involves both active and passive forms of the verb γαμέω.

The basic pattern is quite simple. In general, men marry, while women are married. In other words, authors typically used γαμέω in the active voice when men were the subject of the verb, but the passive voice when women were the subject.[116] Moreover,

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[114]See discussion in J. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. II (London: T&T Clark, 1963), 383, 409.

[115]E.g., see R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 839.

[116]Some texts refer specifically to men (e.g. see Plutarch, *Conjugalia Praecepta* 142F, *Quaestiones Convivales* 654C), other texts refer specifically to women (e.g. see Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 303A; Strabo, *Geographica* 10:4:20), and still other texts explicitly contrast "those who marry" and "those who are married" (e.g. see Diodorus, *Bibliotheca Historia* 1:27:2, 19:33:2).

this pattern was widely adapted depending on the particular circumstance an author was describing. For example, Josephus contemplates the legal outcome regarding the inheritance of a woman who "is married to a man from another tribe."[117]

As noted above, the traditional interpretation of this passage is that Paul is addressing the situation of a father who is unsure about his decision to prevent his virgin daughter from marrying. The father likely shares the same concerns of the apostle Paul regarding the "present distress" (see the section "Violence and Suffering" immediately below) and desires to continue watching over his virgin daughters himself, instead of marrying them off. Although the plural imperative verbal form at the end of verse 36 poses a difficulty for this view, it is not insurmountable (see "On the Semantic Usage of Labels" below). Indeed, a variety of elements in the text fall into place once this interpretive lens is adopted.

First, it is unlikely that ἀσχημονεῖν has sexual connotations in this verse. Not only does it occur elsewhere in 1 Corinthians without sexual connotations (13:5), but it is quite likely that Paul chose it for rhetorical purposes because of its semantic relationship to terms he has already used in his argument. After introducing the subject matter in verse 25 and discussing its implications in verses 26-28, Paul develops two related supporting arguments in verses 29-31 and verses 32-35. Both of these supporting paragraphs end with statements that contain a cognate of ἀσχημονεῖν. In verse 31, Paul concludes his first supporting argument by stating that the "form (σκῆμα) of this world is passing away." Likewise, at the end of verse 35 Paul explains that the goal of his instruction is to promote "good order" (εὐσκήμων). Indeed, these considerations point to the possibility that verses 36-38 is directed towards individuals who would be most impacted by Paul's recommendation in verses 25-35, namely fathers of young marriageable ladies. In verses

[117]Josephus, *A.J.* 4:175. Cf. Diodorus, *Bib. hist*. 1:80:3, 22:1:3; Josephus, *A.J.* 1:151, 4:244; Strabo, *Greogr*. 3:3:7, 15:1:54, 15:3:17; Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 265D, 285B, 289A, 289D; *Am. prol.* 493E; *E. Delph.* 386C; *Lyc.* 15:3:1.

36-38, therefore, Paul acknowledges that some might find his advice to work in the opposite direction, against "good order," and assures these individuals that it is not sin(ful) for their daughters to marry.

This brings us to a second element of the text that supports the traditional interpretation. We noted above that if the subject of ᾖ in verse 36 was the virgin, then it could be interpreted as a reference to either her age or her sexual appetite. Dale Martin, however, claims that this dichotomy between age and sexual passions may be a false one. He notes that the same medical texts that pinpoint the age of those designated as ὑπέρακμαι also portray female sexuality at that age as characterized by extreme passion.[118] If this is the case, then this impacts our understanding of at least two phrases in verses 36-37.

Immediately following the second conditional statement in verse 36 ("if she is at the age of marriage," ἐὰν ᾖ ὑπέρακμος) is the phrase "and it ought to be thus" (καὶ οὕτως ὀφείλει γίνεσθαι). It seems as though the scenario Paul envisions is one in which a father is uncertain of his ability to restrain the desires of his marriageable daughter; in at least some of these cases Paul urges the father to let these daughters marry. A second element in verse 37 supports this reading of verse 36. One of the conditions mentioned in verse 37 under which a man might continue to "keep his own virgin" is that he not have any "restraint" (ἀνάγκην). Although it is difficult to be certain, it seems at the very least possible that Paul has in mind the situation of pregnancy, which would certainly constitute a restraint on the father's desire to continue exercising custody over his daughter.[119]

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[118]Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 219-28.

[119]Thiselton dispenses with the possibility that Paul is referring to pregnancy in this verse on the grounds that the text would not have referred to the young lady as a virgin since she clearly would not be one if she were pregnant (*The First Epistle*, 599). This inference is unwarranted, however, and fails to consider the 'thick' social identity of virgins in Paul's cultural context. See also the discussion above in chap. 4 about the story of Shechem and Dinah in Gen. 34.

Violence and suffering. The two references to violence and suffering in 1 Corinthians 7 are found in one phrase in verse 26, "on account of the present distress" (διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην), and another in verse 28c: "Such will have trouble in this life" (θλῖψιν δὲ τῇ σαρκὶ). Bruce Winter has demonstrated quite convincingly that the phrase ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην is a reference to a famine or series of famines that ravaged much of the Roman Empire during the period in which Paul wrote his epistle to the church at Corinth.[120] This, together with the additional statement in verse 28c, is an important, but easily overlooked detail to note in our attempt to illuminate the facets in this text that contribute to the salience of secondary gender identities in Paul's discussion. We discovered in the previous chapter that violence and suffering were the largest contextual elements in both Jewish and non-Jewish texts containing the παρθένος label. Taken as a whole, each of these texts painted a picture depicting the disproportionate effect of suffering on young ladies in comparison with other groups of people.

Recognizing this particular textual element sheds light on a somewhat troublesome problem of the father/daughter interpretation of verses 36-38, namely why Paul would frame the alternative to "marrying off" his virgin daughter as "keeping his own virgin."[121] If, however, we remember that it was widely recognized that fathers bore the responsibility of "keeping/guarding" their own virgin daughters, particularly in the face of imminent suffering, then Paul's response is precisely what we might expect. Furthermore, it is consistent with sentiments expressed in verses 28 and 32, in which Paul explicitly states that his instruction is motivated by his desire that the Corinthians minimize their exposure to needless suffering.

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[120]See Bruce W. Winter, "Secular and Christian Responses to Corinthian Famines," *TynBul* 40, (1989): 86-106; see also Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 216-25. This is in stark contrast to the strong preference of many for an eschatological interpretation (see Danylak, "Secular Singleness," 121n890). While we do believe that eschatological concerns do play a role in Paul's argument, they do not, in fact, surface until the next paragraph.

[121]Cf. Fee (*The First Epistle*, 389), who claims that "this . . . is a very unusual way for Paul to speak of a father not letting his daughter marry!"

Analysis

Our discussion up to this point seems to leave us with two exegetical options for the meaning of the phrase "his virgin" (τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ) in verse 36. The first option could be framed as a variant of the betrothal view, insofar as the phrase is a shorthand reference to a hypothetical romantic relationship and not a custody relationship between a father and his daughter. This is the usage we noted above in Heliodorus's Aethiopica, and could be rendered roughly as "his girl."[122] This view can be distinguished from the engaged couple view, however, because it stops short of claiming that the couple are actually parties in a formal betrothal agreement.

Both advantages and disadvantages are associated with this interpretation. Of course, the major advantage of this view is that it retains the most important benefits of the engaged couple view without the troublesome difficulty of discerning actual references to a betrothal agreement. Additional contextual elements provide further warrant for this view, including the prominence of sexuality, love/desire, and marriage topoi within the argument. Such textual indicators increase the salience of components within the παρθένος social identity that would be implicated in a romantic/love relationship with a man. Finally, this also retains the seemingly satisfying construal of the 3rd person present imperative γαμείτωσαν at the end of verse 36 as "let them marry [each other]," which seems to be a quite natural rendering of the verb.

These benefits notwithstanding, a few difficulties still attend this approach. First, the circumlocution "his virgin/girl" seems somewhat unexpected, and even colloquial; moreover, it requires ignoring the clear pattern of usage discussed above in which possessive pronouns juxtaposed with the παρθένος label denoted a parental relationship. Second, the viability of this approach also depends on its compatibility with

[122]So C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 184.

the phrase τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον in verse 38. Although it is possible that the apostle is addressing a community that contains a significant number of men who have "girlfriends," this seems unlikely.

Third, the prima facie rendering "let them marry [each other]" of the verbal form γαμείτωσαν represents, upon closer examination, a somewhat idiosyncratic use of γαμέω when compared with other contemporary texts. Indeed, a quick TLG search uncovered at least 22 occurrences of plural finite verbal forms of γαμέω in the background literature of the New Testament era. In each occurrence, the plural subject of the verb was an entire class of individuals, not two individuals who had married each other. For example, the present 3rd person plural form γαμοῦσι occurs three times in Strabo, each time with an implied collective subject, and each time with reference to the men who lived in the region the historian was describing.[123] Roughly half of the plural verb forms were accompanied by a plural direct object that specified the individuals whom the men married, while the rest functioned intransitively. For example, Plutarch describes the motives of those who inquired of the Oracle at Delphi, conjecturing that some wanted to know "if they will marry."[124]

The verb γαμέω was used as a plural participle at least 50 times in the background literature of the NT era. In the overwhelming majority of these occurrences, the antecedent of the participle was a collective class of individuals who had married someone else, and not two individuals who were marrying, or had married, each other.

If this is the case, then "let them marry" (γαμείτωσαν[125], verse 36) might have

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[123]E.g., "They marry many wives." (*Geography* 3.3.7; cf. 15.1.54, 15.3.17; Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 265D)

[124]Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos*, 386C; cf. *De amore prolis* 493C, E; *Quaest. rom.* 285B; *Lyc*. 15.3; Epictetus, *Diss. Arr*. 1.11.3, 2.20.27; Arrianus, *Hist. Ind.* 17.4; Aristonicus, *De* Il. 11.226; and Strabo, *Geogr*. 3.3.7.

[125]The singlular translation "let her marry" (NASB) is based on the weakly attested variant γαμείτω found in D, G, and L, and can be readily dismissed as a harmonization.

been understood by the Corinthians as "let the virgins marry," not only because virgins possessed a relatively stable group identity, but also because a variety of elements that shaped the contours of the "virgin" secondary gender identity are present in this text.[126] Furthermore, relatively few texts contain a plural form of the verb γαμέω that clearly refers to women, and those that do are almost all in the passive voice. Of course, we just observed that γαμέω typically occurs in the passive voice when its subject is feminine. In other words, translating γαμείτωσαν as "let the virgins marry" exchanges one atypical usage (a non-collective subject with a plural form) for another (the active voice with a feminine subject). Despite this ambiguity, it seems nonetheless possible that Paul would perhaps want to avoid a rather unwieldy aorist passive 3rd person imperative form when an active form would be adequate.

Secondary Gender Identities and Paul's Argument in 1 Corinthians 7

The final major section of this chapter will summarize the function of Paul's references to secondary gender identities in his argument, particularly as they relate to the social category of "unmarriedness." This goal of this discussion is to highlight how a distinction between "unmarriedness" and actual secondary gender identities (such as "virgin" and "widow") might impact our interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7.

Social Category vs. Secondary Gender Identity

If a difference is to be maintained between social categories and secondary gender identities, then it seems reasonable to expect these differences to be observable in Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 7. The following brief discussion identifies these differences and explores their function in Paul's argument.

[126]This is also consistent with the other third person imperatival form of γαμέω in v. 9a, in which classes of individuals are commanded to marry (and not, presumably, to marry each other).

Social category and secondary gender identity (v. 8). First, for reasons we made clear above in chapter 3, it is clear that a gendered social category in itself is not a secondary gender identity. Moreover, we saw in our discussion of the Greek word ἄγαμος that it was used to refer to men and women alike, so it cannot be construed here as an indirect reference to widowers.[127] In fact, if one assumes a 'thick' definition of "widower" that contains all the cultural associations and accretions that accompany the Greek word χήρα, one could argue that "widowers" did not even exist in Greco-Roman culture in the first century. Indeed, there is little solid evidence that unmarried male sexuality was a meaningful social category capable of indexing secondary gender identities parallel to either παρθένος or χήρα.[128]

Second, this verse demonstrates that social categories and secondary gender identities can, however, function together quite naturally side by side. Indeed, χήρα seems to function in a manner similar to παρθένος, that is, as a label that indexes another secondary gender identity. In other words, in verse 8 we encounter both a social category, the "unmarried," and a specific type of unmarried person, namely widows.

Social category, not secondary gender identity (v. 10). When Greek authors wish to distinguish the married state from something else (either the unmarried state in general, or a secondary gender identity), they seem to use verbs in the perfect tense. When they are simply referring to someone according to their marital status, they use the aorist tense.[129] Dionysius illustrates this tendency when he relates the story of Hersilia, a Sabine woman who was mistaken for a virgin, but who had actually already been married (γεγαμημένην ἤδη) when she was taken with her daughter and the other Sabine

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[127]Contra Fee, *The First Epistle*, 319.

[128]The noun χήρος was rarely used.

[129]E.g. γαμήσας and γαμήσασα, both substantive participles in v. 33 and v. 34, respectively. Contra Fee, who claims that Paul chose the perfect tense in v. 10 simply because he had no other option (*The First Epistle*, 323n103).

virgins.[130] Likewise, Josephus explicitly contrasts a "virgin" (παρθένος) with "one who has been married" (γεγαμημένην).[131]

Finally, in our exploration of ἄγαμος above, we noted the Plutarch text that discussed character defects that affect "both those who have been married as well as the unmarried (καὶ γεγαμηκότας ἀνιᾷ καὶ ἀγάμους)."[132] Since the terms are not exact linguistic parallels (ἀγάμους is an adjective proper, while γεγαμηκότας is a participle), this final text in particular is illustrative of the preference for the perfect tense when the purpose of the proposition is to highlight the distinction between different marital statuses.[133] Therefore, it seems as though Paul's use of a substantive perfect participle in verse 10 reinforces his intention to provide instruction that is unique to specific, differentiated groups of people.

Secondary gender identity, not social category (v. 25). The striking combination of the περὶ δέ discourse feature and the παρθένος label in verse 25 would likely have commanded the attention of the original recipients. First, as we noted above, the use of περὶ δέ as a literary device was widely recognized as a topic marker in Greco-Roman literary convention.[134] This elevates the rhetorical significance of the following paragraphs above his instruction to the differentiated groups of individuals in verses 8-16. In other words, the περὶ δέ construction signals a shift in which Paul does not merely

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[130]Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 2:45:2. The actual sense of the sentence would change very little if the participle were in the aorist tense instead of the perfect, which suggests that the perfect tense was chosen intentionally as an additional means of emphasizing marital status.

[131]Josephus, *A.J.* 4:257

[132]Plutarch, *De Tranq.* 466C.

[133]Pace Moiser, "A Reassessment of Paul's View of Marriage with Reference to 1 Corinthians 7," *JSNT* 5, 15 (1983): 108-9, it is not necessary to speculate about the marital history of the Corinthians in order to account for the perfect tense of γεγαμηκόσιν in v. 10.

[134]Mitchell, "Concerning περὶ δέ"

address a specific social category (as in vv. 8, 10, and 12), but instead focuses on individuals with a specific identity.

Second, the use of the παρθένος label triggers a plethora of cultural associations that would have flooded the subconscious of the original recipients. This is in stark contrast to twenty-first-century readers, whose cultural encyclopedia contains little resources for understanding "virginness" beyond a crass movie ("The 40-Year-Old Virgin") and a trendy "True Love Waits" bracelet. Furthermore, if Danylak is correct and the statement in verse 26b is the closest approximation to, if not an exact quote from, the Corinthians' original letter to Paul ("it is good for a man to be thus," καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ οὕτως εἶναι), the original recipients would likely have recognized that this entire paragraph and its subject matter constituted Paul's response to their original question.

Third, the gender of the virgins would have been entirely unambiguous to the original readers: the virgins were female. Interpretations that construe the referent as even potentially including men are idiosyncratic when compared to the overall pattern of usage of the παρθένος label in antiquity.[135] When Paul began verse 25 with the words, "Now, concerning the virgins," it was likely because he was responding to a question the Corinthians had posed to him that concerned virgins.

Neither social category nor secondary gender identity (v. 39). Although virtually every commentary author places a division between verse 38 and verse 39, it is not clear that this accurately reflects the shape of the apostle's argument.[136] To be specific, it seems unlikely that verses 25-38 constitute Paul's teaching about virgins, and,

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[135]Contra Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 131-2; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 568; Fee, *First Epistle*, 361n261.

[136]Those who place a division between v. 38 and v. 39 include Thiselton (*First Epistle*, 602), Hays (*First Corinthians*, 129), and Fitzmyer (*First Corinthians*, 328). According to Robertson and Plummer, "a few words are added about the remarriage of widows (*First Epistle*, 160). Fee at least acknowledges that vv. 39-40 constitute "something of a puzzle," and that "this final word to the women comes as something of a surprise" (*First Epistle*, 386, 390).

consequently, that verses 39-40 represent a second "special case" situation of widows. Instead, it appears more likely that verses 39-40 are a continuation of Paul's discussion about the virgin in verses 36-38. First, he already spoke about widows in verses 8-9, so it makes little sense to interpret verses 39-40 as circling back to that subject, only to add nothing substantial to the previous discussion. (In point of fact, the word χήρα does not occur anywhere in vv. 39-40.) Second, the asyndeton at the beginning of verse 39 leaves open the possibility that it might actually be materially connected to the previous verse. Third, Paul signals quite clearly in verse 25 that the fundamental issue he intends to address centers on virgins. The περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων statement functions as a structural marker that governs the entire section. Fourth, the prevailing pattern in in the entire chapter when Paul changes the subject matter of his teaching is the use of either a περὶ δέ construction or a noun or substantival adjective with the connective δέ.

If verses 39-40 do not constitute a separate paragraph, the problem of its relationship with Paul's discussion about a father and his virgin daughter remains to be resolved. First, as we noted above, it is possible to interpret the asyndeton at the beginning of verse 39 as a signal that Paul is continuing his previous discussion. Second, we may note the ὥστε in the previous verse (v. 38), which Paul uses to introduce an inference in his argument. If verse 39 is a continuation of previous Paul's discussion, then it most likely functions as a reinforcement of the inference drawn in the previous verse. In other words, Paul first draws the inference, and then provides support for the inference with a discussion about the options available to a woman whose husband has died. Since Paul bases, in part, his appeal to the father to "guard his own virgin" on his desire for all involved to be spared heartache, it is reasonable to read verses 39-40 as a further development of this appeal. Once the virgin is married, if her husband dies, she is no longer under custody and therefore without protection and "free" (ἐλευθέρα, v. 39) to

marry anybody she wants (presumably without the approval of her father).[137] Paul's reflections to this effect might sway hesitant fathers who perhaps doubted that it was "best" (κρεῖσσον, v. 38) to not marry off their daughters.

The Function of the Virgin Identity in 1 Corinthians 7

One facet of gender identity that is important to highlight is its capacity to be used in ways that exert power or influence in social contexts. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul appears to deploy the παρθένος label as a means of reinforcing a specific pattern of living for marriageable young ladies. Furthermore, it seems significant that he emphasizes in verse 25 that his instructions are not a command, but simply an opinion.

Conclusion

Despite the increased volume of evidence from the cultural background for the traditional father-daughter interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:36-38—evidence that we set forth after our study of the παρθένος label in the previous chapter, and then applied to the text of 1 Corinthians 7:25-40 in the current chapter—the strength of this position must ultimately be judged according to the degree to which it makes sense of the actual text itself. Within these very particular, but necessary constraints it still does not seem to be clear that the father-daughter position is the unambiguous front-runner. At the same time, our research into the social identity of virgins, together with the claim that acknowledging the function of secondary gender identities in the argument of Paul both seem to provide warrant to reconsider the traditional view, and to raise the possibility that Paul might have encouraged fathers to withhold their daughters from marriage in an effort to protect them from suffering,

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[137]Regardless of the position one takes on the identity of the "man and his virgin" in these verses, one must reckon with the likelihood that by the time the apostle Paul wrote his epistles, marriage *sine manus* had largely replaced the practice of marriage *cum manus*. See Geoffrey S. Nathan, *The Family in Late Antiquity: The Rise of Christianity and the Endurance of Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2000), 17.

What might this have looked like? In the final chapter of his epistle to the church at Smyrna, the early Church Father Ignatius concludes his letter by sending the following greeting: "I greet the households of my brothers, together with their wives and children and the virgins who are called widows" (καὶ τὰς παρθένους τὰς λεγομένας χήρας).[138] It seems somewhat noteworthy that few commentaries note this juxtaposition of virgins and widows at any point in their exegesis of 1 Corinthians 7, despite the fact that both virgins and widows are present in both texts, as well as the fact that the theme of kinship figures prominently in both texts.

Although there does not seem to be a consensus on the matter, some scholars suggest that the term "widow" in the Ignatius text is evidence of a formal office in the early church.[139] This suggestion, however, fails to explain why *virgins in particular* were called widows. The interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:36-38 proposed above accounts for the peculiar juxtaposition of these two secondary gender identities. In particular, it seems possible that Ignatius is addressing a Pauline community that included fathers who had followed the apostle's personal advice to them to refrain from giving their daughters in marriage for at least a season of time. Since these young women likely remained in the household of their father, as they grew older it seems possible that they were eventually not regarded as particularly marriageable. If this is the case, then perhaps they were regarded as similar to widows, that is, as women living apart from a husband.

[138]Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 13:1.

[139]See Thurston, *The Widows*, 36-55, 63-5.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This project has attempted to cover an ambitious amount of ground in order to focus on the function of a specific identity label in the argument of Paul in 1 Cor. 7.

Overview

We began with a survey of feminist and contemporary gender theory in order to discern the kinds of answers that theorists have provided to the question, "What is gender identity?" We observed that responses to this question followed several discernable patterns, and that each of them might inform a Christian doctrine of gender that began from a supernatural framework.

We then turned our attention to gender theories that tackled the thorny problem of secondary particularity among members of the same gender. We discovered that the problem that secondary gender particularity posed to a theological anthropology of gender might be mitigated by incorporating insights from social identity and self-categorization theory. The resulting theoretical framework is capable of supporting both a firm commitment to a gender binary that reflects the divine creative intent, but that is sufficiently responsive to a wide variety of contextual factors that further categorize men and women along myriad types of culturally salient axes of gender difference. We concluded this chapter by noting that cultures tend to use linguistic labels to index these *secondary gender identities* and that the Greek word παρθένος seemed to be one such label.

In the following chapter we embarked on a deep-dive exploration of the Jewish and Greco-Roman background literature of the New Testament. The purpose of this

portion of our study was to gain a familiarity with the shape and contours of the social identity that was indexed by the παρθένος label. We surveyed a variety of texts written between 100 BC and 100 AD and isolated 529 occurrences of the παρθένος label. In the course of our survey, we noted several features of the usage of this label and concluded that it was commonly used as a group identity marker and that is was particularly salient in contexts characterized by kinship, violence, and marriage-related themes.

Finally, we turned our attention back to 1 Cor. 7 and the problem posed by the identity of the virgins in verse 25. We first explored attempts to reconstruct the ideological background of Paul and the nature of the problem he was addressing in Corinth. After determining that it was not likely that the church at Corinth was characterized by asceticism, we presented the alternate perspective of Barry Danylak as a more probable account of the problem at Corinth. With this reconstruction of the ideological background of 1 Cor. 7 in mind, we examined several contextual themes in the chapter that were also salient features of the παρθένος identity. We concluded by exploring the function of the παρθένος label in Paul's argument, in contrast to the simple social category of "unmarriedness."

Possibilities for Further Development

If this project succeeds, it would seem to open up a wide vista of possibilities for further development and expansion. The marriage of contemporary gender theory and the social identity approach seems ripe for additional development. Accounts of gender that begin from a critical realist epistemology would, in particular, benefit from the incorporation of social scientific frameworks that have been the subject of empirical research for literally decades.

Accounts of gender identity and gender difference within theological anthropology can also benefit from the primary/secondary gender identity framework proposed in this project. These accounts might find this framework to be a useful

heuristic in conceptualizing the relationship between first- and second-order gender differences and their theological implications. This might provide fresh avenues for the development of the Christian doctrine of gender, particularly because it signals a retreat (if only temporarily) from divisive debates about the regulative function of biblical teaching about gender roles.

The tentative conclusions of this study can be further tested and perhaps expanded in the field of biblical studies. This study focused on texts written in Greek, but scholars might engage in similar studies of texts written in other languages, such as Hebrew, Aramaic, or Latin. Furthermore, scholars might explore other axes of difference in addition to marriageability in order to uncover other kinds of secondary gender identities that were in use in antiquity.

Finally, we can discern within our own twenty-first-century context examples of second-order gender particularity that are both culturally meaningful theologically significant. In some cases, these examples of second-order particularity function as axes of difference along which modern-day secondary gender identities can be indexed by linguistic labels currently in use in communities of practice.[1] These anthropological phenomena call Christian practitioners to theological precision and doctrinal fidelity as we live out and hand over to the following generation "the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

[1]E.g., Nate Collins, *All But Invisible: Exploring Identity Questions at the Intersection of Faith, Gender, and Sexuality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2017), in which I explore the modern-day function of sexual orientation as an axis of difference along which linguistic labels might index secondary gender identities.

APPENDIX 1

TABLES

Table 1. Jewish and Greco-Roman Texts Surveyed in Chapter Four

Text	**Reference**	**Author**
Gen	24:14	LXX
Gen	24:16(1)	LXX
Gen	24:16(2)	LXX
Gen	24:43	LXX
Gen	24:55	LXX
Gen	34:3(1)	LXX
Gen	34:3(2)	LXX
Exod	22:15	LXX
Exod	22:16	LXX
Lev	21:3	LXX
Lev	21:13	LXX
Lev	21:14	LXX
Deut	22:19	LXX
Deut	22:23	LXX
Deut	22:28	LXX
Deut	32:25	LXX
Judg	19:24	LXX
Judg	21:11 (Vulg.)	LXX
Judg	21:12	LXX

2 Kgdms	13:2	LXX
2 Kgdms	13:18	LXX
3 Kgdms	1:2	LXX
1 Esd	1:50	LXX
Jdt	9:2	LXX
Jdt	16:4	LXX
Esth	2:17	LXX
1 Macc	1:26	LXX
2 Macc	3:19	LXX
2 Macc	5:13	LXX
3 Macc	1:18	LXX
Ps	44:15	LXX
Ps	77:63	LXX
Ps	148:12	LXX
Job	31:1	LXX
Wis	9:5	LXX
Wis	30:20	LXX
Amos	8:13	LXX
Zech	9:17	LXX
Isa	7:14	LXX
Isa	23:4	LXX
Isa	62:5	LXX
Jer	2:32	LXX
Jer	28:22	LXX
Jer	38:13	LXX
Lam	1:4	LXX

Lam	1:18	LXX
Lam	2:10	LXX
Lam	2:21	LXX
Lam	5:11	LXX
Ep Jer	8:1	LXX
Ezek	9:6	LXX
Ezek	44:22	LXX
2 Para. 2 Chron.	36:17	Pseudepigrapha
1 En.	98:2	Pseudepigrapha
Ezek. Trag.	1:59	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	1:6(1)	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	1:6(2)	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	2:10	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	7:8	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	7:10	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	8:10	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	10:6(1)	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	10:6(2)	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	10:6(3)	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	15:1	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	15:7	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	17:4	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	19:1	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	19:2	Pseudepigrapha
Jos. Asen.	20:2	Pseudepigrapha

Liv. Pro.	2:7	Pseudepigrapha
Liv. Pro.	2:8	Pseudepigrapha
4 Macc.	18:7	Pseudepigrapha
T. Jos.	19:8	Pseudepigrapha
T. Levi	14:6	Pseudepigrapha
Theod.	4:1	Pseudepigrapha
Agr.	152	Philo
Cher.	50	Philo
Contempl.	68	Philo
Flacc.	89	Philo
Fug.	114	Philo
Ios.	43	Philo
Legat.	228	Philo
Migr.	224	Philo
Mos.	1.12	Philo
Mos.	1.51	Philo
Mos.	1.53	Philo
Mos.	1.57	Philo
Mos.	1.311	Philo
Mos.	2.236	Philo
Mos.	2.239	Philo
Mos.	2.242	Philo
Mos.	2.243	Philo
Mut.	194(1)	Philo
Mut.	194(2)	Philo
Post.	132(1)	Philo

Post.	132(2)	Philo
Post.	133(1)	Philo
Post.	133(2)	Philo
QE	3b(1)	Philo
Somn.	2.185	Philo
Spec.	1.101	Philo
Spec.	1.105	Philo
Spec.	1.107(1)	Philo
Spec.	1.108	Philo
Spec.	1.110	Philo
Spec.	1.113	Philo
Spec.	1.129(1)	Philo
Spec.	1.129(2)	Philo
Spec.	2.24(1)	Philo
Spec.	2.24(2)	Philo
Spec.	2.30(1)	Philo
Spec.	2.30(2)	Philo
Spec.	2.125	Philo
Spec.	3.25	Philo
Spec.	3.26	Philo
Spec.	3.66	Philo
Spec.	3.80	Philo
Spec.	3.81	Philo
Spec.	3.169	Philo
Spec.	4.179	Philo
Spec.	4.223	Philo

Virt.	28	Philo
Virt.	sec. 37	Philo
Virt.	sec. 43	Philo
Virt.	sec. 114	Philo
A.J.	1.202	Josephus
A.J.	1.205	Josephus
A.J.	1.244	Josephus
A.J.	1.246	Josephus
A.J.	1.249	Josephus
A.J.	1.250	Josephus
A.J.	1.254	Josephus
A.J.	1.285	Josephus
A.J.	2.91	Josephus
A.J.	2.258	Josephus
A.J.	2.260(1)	Josephus
A.J.	2.260(2)	Josephus
A.J.	3.277	Josephus
A.J.	4.163(1)	Josephus
A.J.	4.163(2)	Josephus
A.J.	4.244(1)	Josephus
A.J.	4.244(2)	Josephus
A.J.	4.246	Josephus
A.J.	4.252	Josephus
A.J.	4.257	Josephus
A.J.	5.165	Josephus
A.J.	5.168	Josephus

A.J.	5.172	Josephus
A.J.	5.264	Josephus
A.J.	5.286(1)	Josephus
A.J.	5.286(2)	Josephus
A.J.	6.48	Josephus
A.J.	6.193	Josephus
A.J.	6.196	Josephus
A.J.	6.197	Josephus
A.J.	6.354	Josephus
A.J.	7.162	Josephus
A.J.	7.171	Josephus
A.J.	7.343	Josephus
A.J.	7.344	Josephus
A.J.	8.6	Josephus
A.J.	8.8	Josephus
A.J.	11.196	Josephus
A.J.	11.197	Josephus
A.J.	11.201	Josephus
A.J.	12.210	Josephus
A.J.	12.217	Josephus
A.J.	13.20	Josephus
A.J.	17.34	Josephus
A.J.	17.46	Josephus
A.J.	17.309	Josephus
A.J.	17.322	Josephus
A.J.	17.349	Josephus

A.J.	17.352	Josephus
A.J.	19.277	Josephus
A.J.	19.354	Josephus
B.J.	2.99	Josephus
C. Ap.	2.201	Josephus
Vita	414	Josephus
Lex. hom.	24	Apollonius of Sophista
Lex. hom.	121	Apollonius of Sophista
Lex. hom.	126	Apollonius of Sophista
Lex. hom.	128(1)	Apollonius of Sophista
Lex. hom.	128(2)	Apollonius of Sophista
Bibl. hist.	1.12.7	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	1.18.4	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	2.5.1(1)	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	2.5.1(2)	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	2.43.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	2.46.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	3.57.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	3.59.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	3.68.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.2.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.3.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.4.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.7.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.16.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.27.2	Diodorus Siculus

Bibl. hist.	4.27.4	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.31.5	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.42.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.42.4	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.46.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.47.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.51.5(1)	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.51.5(2)	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.51.7	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.52.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.52.2	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.52.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.54.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.61.5	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.63.3(1)	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.63.3(2)	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.63.5	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.68.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.73.2	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	4.81.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	5.5.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	5.56.5	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	5.62.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	5.73.2	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	8.8.2	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	9.13.1	Diodorus Siculus

Bibl. hist.	9.37.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	12.24.2	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	12.24.4	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	13.14.5	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	13.58.2	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	13.82.6	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	13.89.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	13.111.6	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	14.44.4	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	14.44.7	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	14.107.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	16.26.6(1)	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	16.26.6(2)	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	16.26.6(3)	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	16.55.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	16.55.4	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	17.13.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	17.38.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	17.50.7	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	17.98.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	17.107.6	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	19.8.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	19.8.5	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	19.25.5	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	19.25.6	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	19.33.2	Diodorus Siculus

Bibl. hist.	20.21.2	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	20.71.5	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	20.84.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	20.104.3	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	26.12.4	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	29.2.1	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	33.7.2	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	34/35.2.39	Diodorus Siculus
Bibl. hist.	34/35.17.1	Diodorus Siculus
Ant. rom.	1.21.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	1.38.3	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	1.52.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	1.69.4	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	1.76.3	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	1.77.4	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.30.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.30.4	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.30.5(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.30.5(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.32.1	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.32.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.38.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.38.4	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.45.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.48.1	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.64.5(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis

Ant. rom.	2.64.5(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.65.3(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.65.3(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.65.4	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.66.1	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.66.2(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.66.2(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.66.2(3)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.66.3	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.66.4(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.66.4(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.66.6	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.67.1	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.67.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.68.1	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.68.3(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.68.3(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.69.1(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	2.69.1(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	3.21.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	3.67.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	4.36.1	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	4.69.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	5.33.1	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	5.33.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	5.33.3(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis

Ant. rom.	5.33.3(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	5.33.3(3)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	5.34.3(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	5.34.3(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	5.35.2(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	5.35.2(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	7.9.4	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	7.72.9(1)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	7.72.9(2)	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	8.89.4	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	9.40.3	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.1.6	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.28.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.28.6	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.28.7	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.30.1	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.30.5	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.31.3	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.31.4	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.32.3	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.33.1	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.34.1	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.35.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.39.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.39.6	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.40.4	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis

Ant. rom.	11.41.4	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.46.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	11.46.5	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	19.1.2	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ant. rom.	20.4.7	Dionysius of Halicarnassensis
Ign. *Smyrn.*	1:1	Ignatius
Ign. *Smyrn.*	13:1	Ignatius
Matt	1:23	NT
Matt	25:1	NT
Matt	25:7	NT
Matt	25:11	NT
Luke	1:27(1)	NT
Luke	1:27(2)	NT
Acts	21:9	NT
1 Cor	7:25	NT
1 Cor	7:28	NT
1 Cor	7:34	NT
1 Cor	7:36	NT
1 Cor	7:37	NT
1 Cor	7:38	NT
Fr.	frag. 158(1)	Philoxenus
Fr.	frag. 158(2)	Philoxenus
Fr.	frag. 158(3)	Philoxenus
Adol. poet. aud.	34D	Plutarch
Ages.	11.2	Plutarch
Ages.	21.3	Plutarch

Alex.	9.6	Plutarch
Alex.	21.1	Plutarch
Amat.	750C	Plutarch
Amat.	766E	Plutarch
Amat. narr.	771F	Plutarch
Amat. narr.	772A	Plutarch
Amat. narr.	772C(1)	Plutarch
Amat. narr.	772C(2)	Plutarch
Amat. narr.	773C	Plutarch
Amat. narr.	774D	Plutarch
Amat. narr.	775C	Plutarch
Amat. narr.	775D	Plutarch
An seni	789A	Plutarch
An seni	795D	Plutarch
Ant.	21.4	Plutarch
Ant.	58.5	Plutarch
Apoph. lac.	227D	Plutarch
Apoph. lac.	227E	Plutarch
Apoph. lac.	242B	Plutarch
Arist.	20.7	Plutarch
Art.	23.4	Plutarch
Cam.	20.3	Plutarch
Cam.	20.5	Plutarch
Cam.	20.8	Plutarch
Cam.	21.2	Plutarch
Cam.	31.4	Plutarch

Cam.	33.3	Plutarch
Cat. maj.	20.7	Plutarch
Cat. maj.	24.6	Plutarch
Cic.	10.3	Plutarch
Cic.	19.5	Plutarch
Cic.	20.2	Plutarch
Cic.	41.4	Plutarch
Cim.	6.4	Plutarch
Cim.	6.5	Plutarch
Cohib. ira	454D	Plutarch
Comp. Lyc. Num.	3.3	Plutarch
Comp. Lyc. Num.	4.1	Plutarch
Comp. Thes. Rom.	1.5	Plutarch
Conj. praec.	138E	Plutarch
Conj. praec.	145E	Plutarch
Crass.	1.4	Plutarch
Curios.	516E	Plutarch
Curios.	518A	Plutarch
Def. orac.	417D	Plutarch
Demetr.	23.6	Plutarch
Demetr.	26.5	Plutarch
Fab.	18.3	Plutarch
Flam.	16.2	Plutarch
Fort. Rom.	323A	Plutarch
Fort. Rom.	323B	Plutarch
Fr.	157	Plutarch

Her. mal.	867F	Plutarch
Inim. util.	89E	Plutarch
Is. Os.	381E	Plutarch
Lib. ed.	12B	Plutarch
Luc.	20.1	Plutarch
Lyc.	14.2	Plutarch
Lyc.	14.3	Plutarch
Lyc.	14.4	Plutarch
Lyc.	15.1	Plutarch
Lyc.	18.4	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	246E	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	249B	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	249C	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	249D	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	250C	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	250D	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	251A	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	251C	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	253C	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	253D	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	253E	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	254C	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	255C	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	257E	Plutarch
Mulier. virt.	258D	Plutarch
Num.	9.5(1)	Plutarch

Num.	9.5(2)	Plutarch
Num.	9.5(3)	Plutarch
Num.	9.8	Plutarch
Num.	10.1	Plutarch
Num.	10.3	Plutarch
Num.	10.4	Plutarch
Num.	13.2	Plutarch
Par. min.	309B(1)	Plutarch
Par. min.	309B(2)	Plutarch
Par. min.	311A(1)	Plutarch
Par. min.	311A(2)	Plutarch
Par. min.	314C	Plutarch
Par. min.	314D(1)	Plutarch
Par. min.	314D(2)	Plutarch
Par. min.	315E(1)	Plutarch
Par. min.	315E(2)	Plutarch
Par. min.	315E(3)	Plutarch
Pel.	20.7	Plutarch
Pel.	21.1	Plutarch
Pel.	22.3	Plutarch
Pel.	22.4	Plutarch
Phil.	17.1	Plutarch
Pomp.	55.1	Plutarch
Prov. Alex.	9	Plutarch
Publ.	8.8	Plutarch
Publ.	18.3	Plutarch

Publ.	19.1	Plutarch
Publ.	19.3	Plutarch
Publ.	19.7	Plutarch
Pyrrh.	27.6	Plutarch
Pyth. orac.	405C	Plutarch
Quaest. conv.	619A	Plutarch
Quaest. conv.	645D	Plutarch
Quaest. conv.	651B	Plutarch
Quaest. conv.	712C	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	272A	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	284A	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	284B(1)	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	284B(2)	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	286E	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	289A(1)	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	289A(2)	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	289B(1)	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	289B(2)	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	289B(3)	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	293E	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	297B	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	300E	Plutarch
Quaest. rom.	301C	Plutarch
Reg. imp. apophth.	189C	Plutarch
Reg. imp. apophth.	196B	Plutarch
Rom.	2.4	Plutarch

Rom.	3.3	Plutarch
Rom.	14.1	Plutarch
Rom.	14.7	Plutarch
Rom.	15.1	Plutarch
Rom.	15.4	Plutarch
Rom.	17.2(1)	Plutarch
Rom.	17.2(2)	Plutarch
Rom.	19.5	Plutarch
Rom.	22.1	Plutarch
Rom.	29.6	Plutarch
Sept. sap. conv.	163B	Plutarch
Sept. sap. conv.	163C	Plutarch
Sera	555C	Plutarch
Sera	557C	Plutarch
Sol.	20.8	Plutarch
Sol.	23.2	Plutarch
Them.	8.5	Plutarch
Thes.	15.1	Plutarch
Thes.	23.3(1)	Plutarch
Thes.	23.3(2)	Plutarch
Thes.	23.3(3)	Plutarch
Thes.	31.3	Plutarch
Tib. C. Gracch.	15.6	Plutarch
Tim.	13.10	Plutarch
Pol. *Phil.*	5:3	Polycarp
Geogr.	1.3.20	Strabo

Geogr.	5.3.2	Strabo
Geogr.	5.3.7	Strabo
Geogr.	5.4.12	Strabo
Geogr.	6.1.6	Strabo
Geogr.	6.1.8	Strabo
Geogr.	6.3.3	Strabo
Geogr.	8.4.9	Strabo
Geogr.	9.1.19	Strabo
Geogr.	10.5.2	Strabo
Geogr.	11.14.16	Strabo
Geogr.	13.1.40(1)	Strabo
Geogr.	13.1.40(2)	Strabo
Geogr.	14.1.23	Strabo
Geogr.	14.1.40	Strabo
Geogr.	15.1.66	Strabo
Geogr.	16.1.20	Strabo
Geogr.	17.1.46	Strabo

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ABSTRACT

"VIRGIN" AS SECONDARY GENDER IDENTITY IN
1 CORINTHIANS 7 AND ITS JEWISH AND
GRECO-ROMAN BACKGROUND

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The first chapter of this project outlines the background of studies about the Bible, gender, and social theory.

The second chapter of this project surveys the landscape of contemporary feminist theory and gender studies, with particular focus on approaches that theorize feminine identity as a relatively stable and intact cultural category. The purpose of this first chapter is to highlight possible points of contact between theological priorities concerning gender in Christian doctrine and humanistic approaches to theorizing gender.

The third chapter of this project focuses on attempts to theorize the significance of secondary gender differences between men and between women. It begins with a survey of theories about how categories function as markers of identity, and then explores accounts of secondary gender difference within feminist theory and gender studies. It concludes with an examination of social identity theory, and suggests that incorporating this approach from social psychology can be a helpful heuristic device in a Christian understanding of secondary gender identity.

The fourth chapter examines the manner in which a specific identity label—virgin (παρθένος)— circumscribes a gendered social identity with respect to unmarried female sexuality. It does this through the presentation of an exhaustive survey of the lexical, semantic, and syntactic function of the label across 529 uses in the Jewish and

Greco-Roman background literature of the New Testament, as well as the contextual associations surrounding its use in these texts.

The fifth chapter examines 1 Corinthians 7 in light of the previous chapter's findings, highlighting any additional significance they might add to Paul's statements about virgins in his paraenesis. It proposes a newer, alternative approach that is not beset with the weaknesses of prior approaches, and suggests that the perspective on the identity of virgins gained from the previous chapter resolves some well-known tensions in interpretations of 1 Corinthians 7.

The sixth and final chapter explores potential lines of scholastic inquiry that might surface as a result of this study, as well as the various conversations in our culture about gender-related issues that might be implicated by the conclusions drawn about the nature of gender identity.

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