

194. 384-322, Aristotle's Theory of Rational Male Dominance

*ReGenesis* is the first open-access encyclopedia to  
liberate pre-colonial research  
to its rightful 3,000,000 BCE origins  
- and -  
liberate female spirituality.  
(RGS.)

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*Mothers Are Merely Nursemaids.*

It is not the mother who is the parent of the child,  
although she is so called;  
she is merely nursemaid of the newly planted fetus.  
He who mounts is the one who gives birth;  
she, a stranger to a stranger,  
merely preserves the seed if god does not destroy it.  
And I'll give you proof of my argument:  
there can be fatherhood without a mother.  
(Aeschylus, *Eumenides*. 658-663.)  
(TROP: 33.)

*Aristotle's Life Focus.*

The question of whether a social system might itself be unjust  
could never arise if one began from Aristotle's assumptions.  
To the extent that Aristotle's focus is on this life,  
it is on this life as experienced by privileged males like himself.  
... The ultimate good, even for the privileged male,  
is contemplation with its ideal of immortality.  
The male mind considers itself god-like,  
above ordinary earthly life.  
(FV: 244.)

*Anima Theory.*

All women are deviants from the male norm of humanity  
(a point emphasized by the 'misbegotten male'  
theory of Aristotle and Aquinas,  
the 'penis-envy' dogma of the Freudians,  
and other psychological theories  
such as the 'inner space' doctrine of Erikson  
and the 'anima' theory of Jung).  
(BGTF: 64.)

*He Was Active, She Was Passive.*

It is useful above all as a way of seeing  
what Roman men thought they themselves were *not*  
(but what women should be). ...  
Roman writers were saturated,  
that to a considerable extent Roman literary representations  
of womanhood set women opposite and inferior to men:  
one need only recall Pythagoras' table of opposites or  
Aristotle's description of women as misbegotten males. ...  
As the manly man held power and autonomy,  
the womanly woman was submissive and obedient.  
As he was active, she was passive. And above all,  
as he penetrated, she was penetrated.  
(FV: 275.)

*Aquinas, according to 13 c. Natural Law.*

Women may not be ordained priests  
since priesthood signifies the eminence of Christ and  
women do not signify what pertains to eminence;  
women should not preach  
since this is an exercise of wisdom and authority  
of which they are not capable; and so on.  
(SWI: 25.)

*Pope John Paul, 20 c.*

Vatican Declaration Affirming  
Prohibition on Women Priests.  
1976 CE.

*Genesis.*

In Aristotle's *Politics*,  
the male is superior to the female  
and therefore, her ruler,  
as illustrated in *Genesis*.  
(MHE: 175.)

*Monotheistic Religions.*

With the continued dominion  
of patristic lordships,  
"women were eventually marginalized and  
excluded from all leadership."  
(EAC: 62-63.)

*Pope Francis, 21 c.*

The exclusion of females from the priesthood  
includes the issue of the rib:  
'women were taken from a rib.'  
(A21.)

*Rabbinic to Roman to Aristotle to Victorian Era.*

Indeed, it was not until the nineteenth century [CE] that the legal systems of Europe began to recognize the legal rights of a mother to her children.

(OM: 41, n. 65.)

Aristotle's theory in *Metaphysics* proposes symbolic oppositions "that divides the world and sexes into opposite pairs." (MHE: 175.) Selected examples of this classical dualistic theory of natural dichotomized and hierarchical pairs includes; upper/lower; male/female; and active/passive. Aristotle based his political views on his metaphysical theory that the soul is by nature irrational. Given that men are rational, then it is rational men who rule over that which is not rational.

Aristotle, whose philosophy was accepted by the church and all teaching of a contrary character declared heretical, maintained that nature did not form women except when, reason of imperfection of matter, she could not obtain the sex which is perfect (WCS: 38, n. 51 and 54).

Rational men therefore rule: the body, the female, the emotional, and also the animals, the earth, and the slave. Lerner says that the very foundation of Aristotle's philosophy is that "sex dominance antedates class dominance." (TCOP: 209.)

The doctrine of male procreativity reappears in its most (TCOP: 205) developed form in the work of Aristotle. ... Aristotle considers matter of lower importance than spirit. ... It is worth noting how at every point in his explanatory system it so happens that the female's endowment or contribution is inferior to that of the male. He further postulates that the male is active and the female is passive (TCOP: 206). ... This is so because of what he sees as natural dichotomy; the soul is by nature the ruler, the body the subject. Similarly, the mind rules the appetites. ... Aristotle's world-view is both hierarchical and dichotomized. Soul rules over body; rational thought over emotion; humans over animals; male over female; masters over slaves; and Greeks over barbarians. All the philosopher need do to justify the existing class relations within his society is to show how each of the subordinate groups is by 'nature' designed to occupy its appropriate rank in the hierarchy. He has some difficulty doing this in the case of slaves (TCOP: 208). ...

But there is no difference of opinion regarding the inferiority of women. ... Human society is divided into two sexes; the male-rational ... the female passionate. ... Thus, Aristotle justifies class dominance logically from his gender definitions. The fact that sex dominance antedates class dominance and lies at its foundation is both implicit and explicit in Aristotle's philosophy (TCOP: 209).

Summarizing philosophy and biology according to Aristotle, "the male seed carried all the potency for new life." (SWI: 24, n. 18.)

In theology, androcentrism ensures that ruling men will be the norm for language not only about human nature but also about God, sin and redemption, the church and its mission. One of the most influential androcentric syntheses in the Catholic tradition is that of Aquinas, which

may serve as an illustration of how such a pattern of thinking works. Aquinas accepted as part of the Aristotelian heritage that he was shaping into Christian language, the notion of ancient Greek biology that the male seed carried all the potency for new life. He furthermore figured that under optimum conditions men, who are the pinnacle of creation would reproduce their own perfection and create sons. The fact is, however, that they do not, for at least half of the time they generate daughters who fall short of the perfection of the male sex. This indicates that the man was not up to par at the time of intercourse. Perhaps his seed was damaged, or he was short on energy due to hot, humid weather. In Aquinas' words:

*Only as regards nature in the individual is the female something defective and misbegotten. For the active power in the seed of the male tends to produce something like itself, perfect in masculinity; but the procreation of a female is the result either of the debility of the active power, of some unsuitability of the material, or of some change effected by external influences, like the south wind, for example, which is damp, as we are told by Aristotle (SWI: 24, n. 18).*

Woman's defective nature and the further fact that woman in the garden of paradise and elsewhere is an occasion of sin for man do not indicate, however, that it would have been better had god never created woman at all. Woman is created by God for a very definite purpose, namely, reproduction, which is the only thing that man cannot do better without her help. As for her being a temptress to man, Aquinas argues, the perfection of the universe depends on shadow as well as light, and in any event God can bring good out of any evil (SWI: 24).

Since the soul informs the body, woman's defective physical state leads Aquinas to the conclusion that woman's soul is likewise deficient, her mind weak in reasoning and her will fragile in choosing the good (SWI: 24). For her own good she needs to be governed by others wiser than herself; by such a kind of subjection woman is naturally subject to man, because in man the discretion of reason predominates (SWI: 25, n.19). From woman's natural inferiority in the order of creation, Aquinas reasonably deduces a host of consequences, such as that children should love their fathers more than their mothers since the father is more eminent; women may not be ordained priests since priesthood signifies the eminence of Christ and women do not signify what pertains to eminence; women should not preach since this is an exercise of wisdom and authority of which they are not capable; and so on (SWI: 25).

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Vatican Declaration Affirming Prohibition on Women Priests.

In the 1976 *Declaration of the Question of Admitting Women to the Priesthood*, the Vatican officially spoke to the question of women and the priesthood. This declaration attempted to justify the long-standing position of refusing women the opportunity to serve as priests in the Catholic church on the grounds that 'the female body does not resemble the male body of Christ. It is therefore impossible for women to perform the sacramental functions of priests' (WWW: 3). The question that arises out of this declaration is just what is it about the 'sacramental functions of priests' that would present an impossible challenge for women? What do priests do that a woman couldn't? Discussion to follow including the religious controversy around this question, the ancient and contemporary history of this question, plus previous arguments proposed by St. Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle and in *Genesis*. (RG: 1976 CE, Vatican Declaration Affirming Prohibition on Women Priests.)

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German Reformation; 1945, Nag Hammadi Manuscript; 1952, Women and Catholic Theology; 1972, First Woman Rabbi Ordained, United States; 1992, Ordination of Women Priests; and 1999, Rebecca Cohen, Second Generation Female Minister.

CLASSICAL IMAGE: ARISTOTLE.

PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: ARISTOTLE, GREECE.

SLIDE LOCATION , SHEET , ROW , SLEEVE, SLIDE # , BCE.

ON LOCATION.

NOTE 1: THE 4<sup>th</sup> CENTURY INTRODUCED ARISTOTLE AND PLATO AND THE CONTINUATION OF HIERARCHICAL DUALIST THOUGHT AND SUBSEQUENT PLATONIC WORLD-VIEWS. (SOURCE: RGS.)

NOTE 2: FIELDWORK PROJECT.

PHOTO NOTE: ILLUSTRATION TBD, CHRISI KARVONIDES' TEAM.