

Le Nouvel Esprit:
A Video Series on the Theology of
the Body

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Appropriation

- “Your desire shall be for your husband, but he will dominate you”
- Man now relates to woman such that she is an object to appropriate and is no longer considered as gift
 - In relating to her in this manner, he too becomes an object to be appropriated
 - The reciprocal relationship between them is now reciprocal appropriation
 - In this reciprocal appropriation the structure of the communion of persons disappears
 - The heart is almost incapable of gift according to the spousal meaning of the body due to this desire for appropriation
- The text of Gen. 3:16 indicates that it is this domination and appropriation is more so at the woman’s expense, that she feels it more than man
- Appropriation, “the action of taking something for one’s own use, typically without the owner’s permission”, Oxford Dictionary

The Duty of Man

- Parallel between Gen. 3:16 and Matt. 5:27-28
 - Gen. 3:16, “he will dominate you”
 - Matt. 5:27-28, “whoever looks at a woman to desire her”
- Man has the duty from the “beginning”
 - To be the guardian of the reciprocal gift of self
 - To accept the woman in her femininity as a gift and receive it in reciprocal exchange
- Concupiscence threatens man by tempting him to take this gift away from woman
- Man and woman both have the duty to the reciprocal gift of self, but man more so
 - If the gift is violated, it must be reestablished
 - This is a truth independent of historical-sociocultural conditions
 - E.g. Independent of feminist critiques of gender representation in Scripture as being within a male-dominated patriarchal society

The Loss of Another Meaning

- Concupiscence
 - Renders the body into terrain for appropriation
 - Deprives the man and woman in relating to each other according to the spousal meaning of the body
- Concupiscence is a loss in another meaning related to “my”
- Love between a man and woman is expressed through “my”
- Material meaning: “my” is a relation of possession
 - In the context of love this is a **personal analogy** of such relation
 - Analogy indicates both similarity and a lack of identity

Two Meanings of “My”

- “Belonging” in its **original**, specific meaning is the relation of an object to a subject, a relation of possession and property, an object belonging to someone
- Two meanings of “my”

Positive Meaning		Negative Meaning
Belonging in terms of personal analogy	← negate →	Belonging in terms of original meaning
Reciprocal giving	← negate →	No reciprocal giving
Preservation of spousal meaning of the body	← negate →	Loss of spousal meaning of the body
In the dimension of love	← negate →	In the dimension of concupiscence
Possession as gift, law of gift	← negate →	Possession as property, law of property

Consequences of the Negative Meaning

- The possession of the other as property implies enjoyment
- Objects I own or possess are at my disposal to be used as I see fit
- Concupiscence pushes man towards enjoyment at the expense of personal analogy
 - The disinterested gift of self is excluded in essence by concupiscent-inspired egotistical enjoyment
- Concupiscence introduces a war between body and spirit
 - This places man within an almost constant danger of evaluating the other person in terms of a “desire of the body”, treating the other as an object to be possessed, used, and enjoyed according to his whims

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