

Patriarchal Sexual Strategies in the Bible

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Contents

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| I. Introduction |
| II. Dangers of Female Sexuality |
| III. Virginity and Motherhood For Patriarchal Values |
| IV. Double Standard in Terms of Female Traits |
| V. Conclusion: "YOU SHALL BE FREE INDEED." |

I. Introduction

"...the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "where are you?..."[*Genesis*3:9-10]. Yahweh's search for Adam reminds us of that of a father who is longing to know where the son is. In the dialogue between Yahweh and His son, Adam, we can guess what the biblical writer's perspective aims at. Most of the books in the Bible are unfolded in men's relationship with Yahweh. The focus of the biblical narrative is mostly male-centered, ignoring the female as a being. At a first glance at *Genesis*, it appears that woman

was created unequal and inferior from the start. Furthermore, Eve's fall into temptation has been considered as a factor which causes Adam's alienation from his father, God. That is, the story of woman's creation from man and his subsequent victimization by her is unquestionably one of the most influential stories in western literary tradition.

Many books of the Bible are directly attributed to men in their titles. In fact, only two of the sixty six books in the Bible bear women's names in their titles. Clearly, woman has been either hindered from writing or forced to write anonymously or under a man's name. Given this historical circumstance, it is not surprising that the actual content of the Bible is itself largely male-oriented and male-dominated. It is primarily the stories of men and largely records of socio-historic events which men had come to dominate and direct. In this male-oriented perspective, patriarchy and andro-centrism are not seen as sinful but as necessary for maintaining order. The male scribes in the Bible are ultimately expressing God's authority, to which all human inquiring must submit. God's words spoken through a male author should be believed as the

truth without any doubt or inquiring on them. Accordingly, the male authorship forced women in biblical times to obey God's words to promote the patriarchal ideology.

As implied in *Mappings of the Biblical Terrain: The Bible as Text* by Vincent T. Tollers and John Maier, a new reading of the Bible from the new perspective toward women have been called for by multiple feminist scholars, and been still thriving. The feminist readings focus on the hidden or overlooked female stories behind the Bible, such as the woman's role as a leading part or as an equal partner with man, and women's roles distinct from men's. However, in spite of the impact of the Hebrew Bible on the present state of sexual politics, "nevertheless, few of them [feminist critics] have not yet produced a single consistent analysis of the literary strategies deployed by the biblical narrative to promote its patriarchal ideology"(Fuchs 117). Unlike the recent feminist movement toward discovery of the blank pages hidden or overlooked by the biased male perspective on women, the aim of this paper is to find the suppressed evidences of women mirrored in the Bible by the male scribes' literary

strategies. The primary interest of this essay is to shed light on how female figures are prejudicially reflected in the Bible according to the male-centered, patriarchal sexual politics which sought to universalize men's dominance of women, in particular, daughters and mothers.

II. Dangers of Female Sexuality

The passive role and silence, or the trickery adopted by both named and unnamed female characters in the Bible, should be seen both as the man's attempt to suppress women's voice and as women's own strategy of survival in hard reality. Whereas male role models are mostly judged in terms of their relationship with Yahweh, which is symbolically expressed in the beginning of this paper, female role models are mostly evaluated in terms of their relationship with men. They cannot exist alone with their own identity or selfhood. The vast majority of female stories do not focus on women but rather on what men think about women. The roles of the Israelite women ARE defined through their relations to men: "wife," "daughter," "sister," and "mother." Kevin Harris

divides the biblical women into five groups(33-34). To summarize Harris's categorization, there seems to be no positive figure who can play a biblical model on the modern feminists, except few distinctive figures. Women are either absent altogether or else do little more than fill in the background or the biblical events, usually as the man's appendage or possession. Moreover, "good" women are characterized as such by their faithfulness, obedience, and ability and willingness to sustain the patriarchal ideology and the patrilineal solidarity and stability.

The ancient tale that has exerted the greatest influence on the literary treatment of women in earlier times is undoubtedly the story of Eve's transgression in *Genesis*. The first female has become the prototype of all women and her story serves as a paradigm of female existence. As Nehama Aschkenasy points out, three main interpretations are deeply embedded in Eve's story(39-40). In sum, Eve's traits assumed to prefigure the essence of womanhood are listed as strong proclivity for evil, destructive sexuality, and demonic-deadly power. These distorted notions deeply seated in male's mind must have driven the

writers of the Bible to lay great emphases upon the importance of virginity of women, while no equal expectation of chastity is demanded to men. In case of David, only an unnamed child born of the adulterous relationship with Bathsheba is taken as a scapegoat of exempting the father from his violation of God's command: "You shall not commit adultery"v[*Exodus* 20:14; *Deuteronomy* 5:18]. The divine punishment that should have fallen upon him allegedly falls upon the child born of the adulterous union. Nor is Bathsheba punished for her part in the adulterous relationship, perhaps because of David's status and of Yahweh's intention to preserve the Israelite male lineage. Above all, owing to Eve's irrecoverable transgression, woman's sexuality is regarded as the exclusive property of her husband, just as woman's virginity is jealously guarded by men like her father and brothers prior to her marriage[*Deuteronomy* 22: 13-21]. To keeping the woman's virginity by curbing the woman's carnal desires inherited from Eve was in effect a social instrument required by men to maintain the patriarchal order and eventually to preserve the purity of male kinship line.

Accordingly, it is not surprising that male's control and guidance of feminine sexuality were emphasized in biblical times. The woman without a male guardian or protector for her sexuality is shameful and even dangerous, as reflected in the event of the woman of Samaria (*John* 4:16). According to the Bible, this is because a daughter's sexuality belongs to her father and a married woman's sexuality belongs to her husband [*Numbers* 30:3–9]. The woman's sexuality in John's gospel does not satisfy the patriarchal values, because of the absence of her relationship with man.

Descriptions of female sexual activity outside of marriage take two forms in the Bible: adultery and "zenut." Biblical narratives that deal with rape or potential rape often discuss woman as man's property. Adultery is, therefore, the act of violating the property of a man. The biblical scenes concerning adultery can be epitomized in two ways from a male narrator's perspective: women's degeneration into the sexual desire incarnate [Potiphar's wife's temptation, *Genesis* 39], warning men to beware women. The male narrator, hiding man's inherent lust for female

body, describes woman's nudity as the only factor which causes man to commit sin [Bathsheba, 2 *Samuel* 11–12:55, Susannah, *Daniel* 13]. The second category of non-marital female sexual activity is "zenut" which can be translated as "prostitution" or "harlotry." "Prostitution" is described as a illicit, immoral activity against Yahweh's command, and it belongs to the intrinsic property of women in the Bible. The pornographic features make the scribe's intention to reveal the dangers of female sexuality clearly. Women are degraded and publicly humiliated, and female sexuality is ultimately portrayed as an object of male possession and control.

The function of maintaining male domination through the distortion or denial of female experience is presented in *Hosea*. The prophet Hosea employs the imagery of female sexuality as a central theme. A primary means, by which the prophet conveys his perception of the relationship between Israel and God, is the metaphor of his own marriage. Hosea's metaphors are employed not as a random representation of but as a reflection and reinforcement of cultural perceptions. Throughout the book, his underlying concern is to

contrast Yahweh's positive(male) fidelity with Israel's negative(female) harlotry. In summarizing Hosea's use of female sexual imagery, it can be noted that indications of an objectified view of female experience are expressed as separate from male experience and as negative, unlike male experience. The sense of separation from the social stability and solidarity is regarded as closely related with woman's sexual misconduct reminiscent of Eve's transgression. Woman's sexual wantonness in the descriptions of Hosea must be so carefully contrived by the male prophet that the right order of patriarchy as well as men's personal and collective dignity against women can be restored.

In addition to Hosea's carefully contrived scheme to reveal the significance of female sexuality, the other universalized and objectified negative aspect of female sexuality is clearly represented in *Proverbs 7:6-27*. These passages not only sermonize about the dangers of a "strange woman," but actually create dramatic scenes, in which the stereotypical image of the woman is materialized into an individual one in which a woman tries to entrap the gullible young

man. In *Proverbs*, a woman offers a young man food and luxuries and then sexual favors; the young man does not resist this enticement, and he accepts the woman's invitation and inevitably meets his doom. The similarity between the scene of the "strange woman" in *Proverbs* and the Jael and Sisera episode is significant, in that both capture all the elements of the archetypal male experience that warns man of the "fear of women."

While, chronologically considered, the tale of *Judges* is put in the concrete form of characters living in an earlier time and place, the scene from *Proverbs* has the impact of a primal, archetypal experience, in that it is not anchored in any specific place or time. A male scribe's literary strategy employed in *Proverbs* aims not to reveal the subjective and distinctive applied to limited women, but to reveal the universal and objective applied to most women. The young man of *Proverbs* is "everyman," and the woman stands for "eternal womanhood." The Jael story is a concrete example of this universal experience, as it fleshes out the general lines of the primary story by naming its main actors and giving it a

historical and geographical particularity. Though Jael's story is frequently quoted as an example of the positive and distinctive role model by the feminists and the biblical scribes, the underlying context shares the same vein with the stories mentioned above, stories of woman's dangerous sexuality of luring man and woman's sexual strength as a means of overpowering man.

The core of the tale of Jael and Sisera and the story about the "strange woman" leads women to believe that using the female sexuality as a bait to gain male's trust and then ruin him originates from Eve's Original Sin. The biblical narrator uses this kind of familiar technique to reveal the seduction of an unsuspecting man at the hands of a treacherous female. The narrator's aim rests in arousing the danger of being exposed to woman's sexuality and in emphasizing the necessity of controlling woman's sexuality.

III. Virginity and Motherhood as Patriarchal Values

It is consistently testified in the Bible that male

dominance over female sexuality—virginity before marriage, and fidelity afterwards—is a kind of natural norm to be perceived and even admired in women themselves, and that promiscuity or playing a whore at any time is to be abhorred. Behind this, there exists the male narrator's intention of preserving the purity of male lineage. "The tokens of virginity" referring to the bloodstains on the bed cover are symbolic of the safety measure of securing that his wife's offspring should legitimately continue his name.

Female sexuality before marriage, which can be regarded as a dangerous factor and motherhood go hand in hand for woman's subordination to man because of Eve's transgression in *Genesis* 4:1. In spite of a feministic approach to motherhood reflected in *Genesis*, the male narrator aims at imbuing both male and female with a certain didactic meaning suitable for maintaining the male-marked order. A feminist argues, with regard to the control of female virginity, that "the institution of motherhood is a powerful patriarchal mechanism"(Fuchs 129). Male control of female reproductive powers in conjunction with female virginity and monogamous marriage secures wife

as her husband's exclusive property and also ensures the continuity of his name and family possessions through patrimonial customs and patrilineal inheritance patterns.

Furthermore, as implicit in Yahweh's promise of multiplying the Israelite's siblings, God is believed to curse a barren woman as punishment for impiety. Reproduction is also clearly the province of Yahweh or that of man in relation with Yahweh, divorced from any control of power on the part of women. The prophet, Hosea, also emphasizes Yahweh's control of fertility in general and female reproductive capability in particular [*Hosea* 9:12, 14]. In a word, motherhood in the biblical narrative is largely restricted to reproductive and protective functions; mother may be an important instrument in giving birth to children and in preserving the life of the children for the succession of the patrilineal line. As female virginity is evaluated in terms of male's property value in a marriage transaction [*Deuteronomy* 22: 13–21], so can motherhood be valued only as woman's accomplishment of continuing man's family lineage.

When one focuses upon the importance of the

interrelations of power and naming, there can exist only minor differences among the miraculous conceptions of the women in *Genesis*, as is apparent in the cases of Abraham and Sarah(17), Isaac and Rebekah(24,25) and Rachel, Leah and Jacob(29). Obviously, the motif of the miraculous conception by a barren woman in the Bible is so carefully designed that the narrator repetitively shows that Yahweh is the sole proprietor and master of human life. The fact is clearly stated in Jacob's remark: "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you [Rachel] the fruit of the womb?"(*Genesis* 30:2). And becoming a mother shares the common aspects, as Robert Alter points out, that "the biblical annunciation type-scene consists of three major thematic components: the initial barrenness of the wife, a divine promise of future conception, and the birth of a son"(47-52). These common aspects in the biblical annunciation scenes meet in a single focus, namely the increased patriarchal interests and women's thorough sacrifice. That is, the annunciation scenes clearly define motherhood as one of the patriarchal institutions, not as distinctive property of women.

Yahweh restricts his interests in the barren women to the married women and to the situations that leave no doubt about the identity of the potential father. Yahweh's violation of nature's rules and of giving the barren women a son must be a carefully constructed story to promote His mystic power and His relationship with men. As an example of the miraculous conception, Sarah's annunciation is made by Yahweh's direct address to Abraham without getting Sara involved in the event: "And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day"[*Genesis*18:1]. This line, together with the scene of the three messengers' arrival, implicitly defines the strict role division between male and female. Abraham's central role in his "outside" world is sharply contrasted with Sarah's eavesdropping on her husband and guests "at the tent door behind him." On the whole, Sarah's primary status as a means of reproduction, the instrument through which God will keep his promise to Abraham, cannot be gainsaid. She is mostly instrumental and passive, in that the happy transition from barrenness to fullness is made not by Sarah's relation with Yahweh, but by

Abraham's relation with Yahweh. In a word, Sarah is considered one of chattels which belong to her male owner Abraham.

The contrast between man's activity and woman's passivity in the next annunciation is repetitively used. Though Fuchs points out Yahweh's direct response to Rebekah's complaint about her painful pregnancy as a different aspect, comparing this annunciation type with the first one, there are no distinctive features in the second annunciation type. Once again, the wife's conception is attributed to the good relation of her husband with Yahweh. In addition, the narrator's intent is underscored in God's sharing His prescience with the mother, which, Fuchs points out, is different from Sarah's case(119). For God's order is pre-issued to the mother, instead of Isaac, in order to secure His chosen son Jacob as a future patriarch. Seen from a feminist perspective, Rebekah's role of protecting her son can be another scheme desirable to women in biblical times. In other words, although, unlike the marginal role of Sarah, Rebekah appears as a central figure of the story, alongside with Isaac, such as her participation in naming her sons and

her securing of the legitimate son, beyond giving birth to a son, this is all predestined by the order of Yahweh who is often andromorphized in the Old Testament. As Adrienne Rich puts motherhood in terms of modern feminine viewpoint, Rebekah's role as a mother cannot move beyond "the personal and psychological aspect of motherhood which refers to the potential relationship of any women to her powers of reproduction and to children." Rebekah falls into the social and legal institution of motherhood aimed at "ensuring that all women shall remain under male control"(XV).

From an androcentric perspective, the biblical narrator seems to give more emphasis on the third annunciation related with Rachel, Leah, and Jacob than on the first two annunciations mentioned above. First of all, as Alter argues that "the distress of the barren wife is accented by the presence of a fertile, less loved co-wife"(119), the motif of sibling rivalry blends with a recurrent element in the annunciation: the struggle between the loved barren one and the less loved fertile co-wife. This motif of female rivalry is intertwined with the motif of motherhood in the story of Sarah[*Genesis*21:9-10]. But this motif in

the first annunciation is not more impressively revealed than in the third one. The narrator's aims at employing the motif in the story can be summarized in two ways. The first is women's common properties of jealousy and competitiveness against other women who mother children. It seems that the narrator's focus is implicitly given on the maternal instinct to give birth to a baby. The second one is related with the continuation of the patriarchal lineage. Giving birth to a son means women's elevation of social status, as is evidenced in Sarah's complaint and Leah's exultation. That is, her success as a mother of a legitimate son plays a role of contributor to the solidarity and stability of the family and, by extension, of Israel.

The narrator's androcentric intention reaches its climax when Rachel's jealousy seems to express itself from Leah's first childbirth to the next. Rachel's voice finally bursts out in a bold and painful tone: "Give me children, or else I die." Her desperate longing for offspring is inflamed by envy. In these few words, the narrator conveys the general attitude toward motherhood in the biblical times. As mentioned before, the life of a

barren woman was a sort of death in life. The biblical narrative is consistent in positing a child as the woman's greatest desire. This is the most prominent trait of the biblical mother figures. Fuchs explains this fact as the narrator's ingenious literary strategy in the service of biblical sexual politics(132). The image of the childless woman, who evolves from vulnerability and emptiness to security and pride by giving birth to sons, offers a lesson for all women. It should be ascribed to the imaginative and artistic ingenuity of the biblical narrators that one of the most vital patriarchal concerns is repeatedly presented not as an imposition on woman but as something she herself desires more than anything else.

As clearly revealed in the annunciation scenes, in spite of the minor differences between the annunciations, they have in common that Yahweh, as the ultimate origin and destination of order and a patriarchal father, holds control of women's fertility. In addition, women's role as mother in the male-oriented genealogy is strictly biological without the personal and psychological aspect of motherhood. Male control over female sexuality and over woman's motherhood is to make it

conform to the patriarchal values: the stability and solidarity of the family. Maintaining the purity of the male lineage is the ultimate goal of the patriarchal society, whose ideology is grounded on the development of the biblical stories. As the state of childlessness was considered a curse for impiety, so was the production of daughters thought to be a misfortune, not simply for mother, but for the female children themselves. Fortunately, the three annunciations suggest the birth of the future fathers of the Israelite people. The children born to previously barren mothers are all male, and they become the leaders of the nation. When the biblical narrative mentions birth, it almost exclusively refers to a boy. The motif of mother–daughter relationship is practically non-existent in the biblical narrative. Not only is motherhood defined in relation to a lawful husband–father, it is also determined by the male gender of the child.

IV. Double Standard in Terms of Female Traits

As clearly evidenced in man's control of female sexuality, both daughter and wife are regarded as man's property which can be thus disposed at the mercy of his decision. Husband or father is the master of the wife and the daughter, because he activates her to bear children, and he had absolute authority over his children, including the power of life and death. Tamar [2 *Samuel* 13-14], the Levite's Daughter [*Judges* 19-20:11], and the daughter of Jephthar [*Judges* 10-11] serve as the main examples which reflect the dichotomy between male and female for the patriarchal values. David, Tamar's father, hesitates to reprimand or even to say Amnon's sinful act because of Amnon's role of being a potential inheritor of David's lineage. David's anger signifies complete sympathy for Amnon and total disregard for Tamar. Though David's silence and lack of active reaction is due to the erosion of his own moral stature after his adultery with Bathsheba, his attitude toward the importance of the patriarchal generation is much like God's application of the double standard to man's commitment to sin. Lot's story [*Genesis* 19:1-29] and that of the old man in Gibeah also clearly

reveal how the value of continuing the male line is expressed in their dealing with women as the sacrifices for men's lives. No man and patriarchal value is sacrificed. Conflict among men can be solved by female scapegoats. The two stories show that rules of hospitality in Israel protect only men and their interests, in order to maintain the patriarchal ideology. In a word, 'she' is simply a property, object, tool, and literary device without name, speech, or power.

God's double standard in valuing male over female for the continuation of male lineage is much more clearly shown in the contrast between the story of Jephthah's only daughter and that of Abraham's only son Isaac. The scribe narrates on the situation: "She was his one and only child, besides her he had neither son nor daughter" [*Judges* 11:34]. This makes the comparable poignancy with Yahweh's command: "Abraham,... take your son, your only one whom you love, Isaac... and offer him as a burnt offering" [*Genesis* 22:2]. However, there are differences between the stories: sexual difference and existence of name. In Abraham's case, the angel of the Lord negates the divine imperative at

the crucial moment, "kill your child," by another command, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him" [*Genesis* 22:12]. In the story of the daughter of Jephthah, however, no angel intervenes to save the child, and she is only sacrificed without any trace.

Men's control over both women's sexuality and reproduction to maintain the masculine ideology has driven women to remain inferior socially and to become powerless politically. It is through the way of keeping silence or using deceptiveness that women can survive in the male-ruling culture. Deceptiveness is universalized as one of the weapons to overcome female inferiority and powerlessness in the Bible. Deceptiveness is characterized as an inescapable feature of femininity. As Ann W. Engar classifies, however, female deceptiveness can be positive only when it contributes to maintaining the patriarchal values and continuing male lineage, and so on (143-57). In these cases, it is hard to find male figures condemned or cursed by their use of deceptiveness. This is because their acts are previously manipulated by God's value or the patriarchal value of preserving the solidarity of the

patrilineal line. As for women, the use of deceptiveness in male-related context or on the national level is acceptable and even recommended, only when their motives are selfless or when their attempts are to promote the ideological values of the patriarchal society.

The discriminatory treatment of deceptive women is reflected in two major strategies manipulated by the biblical narrators: suppression of motivation and negative presentation of women. In other words, the biased depictions produces female portraits intended to validate the suspicion that women's apparent impotence is nothing but a deceptive disguise and that underneath their vulnerable coyness lurks a dangerously calculating mind. Generally, the biblical text dramatizes female deceptiveness as their most lethal and effective weapon against men. One of the narrator's intentions seems to give us the lesson: "Do not trust women, or "... he who pleases God escapes her"[*Ecclesiastes*7:26].

Before getting into the concrete instances of the female figures who use deceptiveness either for their selfish need or for the patriarchal values, keeping silence to survive in the male-dominant

culture is sharply contrasted with the case of using deceptiveness. The comparison between the two aspects must be the key to understanding the narrator's intention to foreground his androcentric perspective. Women's passivity to suppress their own voice is adopted by most of unnamed female characters as their own strategy of survival in a potentially dangerous reality. The majority of women in the ancient documents remain anonymous. Even those who are named, like Susannah and Bathsheba, are not given an opportunity to make their voice. Of all the women in the Old Testament, important enough to be named and described, Bathsheba comes nearest to being a nonentity. She never performs a single action under the thrust of her own impulse, and she never utters a word. And she achieves all only by being beautiful, pliant and obedient. The placid, compliant, and unperceptive puppet nature Bathsheba reveals is supposedly female virtues forced to be observed by most women.

The virtues represented by Bathsheba are natural and desirable for both man and woman, as implied in God's intervention in Susannah's story. As Margaret Miles examines Susannah's passive

and helpless situation in a world of men(122-24), the male narrator seems to give focus on her reticent and puppet-like acts as female virtues. However, it is only through these female attributes imposed on women by the male-oriented culture that God's deliverance as a reward can be made. On the other hand, it seems to be intended that the guilt of utilizing male lust should be redeemed by bearing shame and humiliation.

In contrast with the biblical women whose voice is abnegated, other female figures in the Bible who use deceptiveness either to open their own life or to live against the female standard forced by the male ideology are frequently noticed. Though the names of the female figures are distinctively revealed from the start of the story till the moment of their downfall, they are destined to die or to be cursed. Especially, in the case of Jezebel, as an outsider and a product of a foreign culture, though she is portrayed as an evil woman who ruins the royalship by her violation of God's command, her certain traits in personality are so strong that all other characteristics that she has are obscured. Her whole being is focused on will, and she is a bottomless well of aggression and

strength, single-mindedly convinced of the justice of her acts. In her accounts, to borrow Steinsaltz's words, she sees herself not as "mother in Israel" but as a "queen in Israel"(183). She wishes to give the country a new character and to tear out the roots of inhibition and restraint that stand in her way. In a word, she, independent of men, has enormous will power and self-confidence in building something new, a new ideal of absolute monarchy. However, her self-identity is to be judged and then to be destined under the standard of God's value. The male ideology measures it against a different scale of values and rejects her only as the personification of evil.

Common aspects are witnessed between the queen Jezebel and Delilah whose account is also against the patriarchal value. Both of them are described not as the Israelite women but as the foreigners. Furthermore, the narrators commonly bring focus on their physical beauty. Unlike the biblical women who are described as ideal and natural by the male narrators, Delilah's personality, in particular, in the course of realizing her goal of finding the secret of Samson's strength for her nation is consistently and distinctively developed.

Though she is not a respectable wife and she does not have a specified social status, the biblical narrator brings in relief Delilah's wickedness and unreliability together with her sexual beauty as a bait to attract man's desire (Bal 49–63). The masculine narrator's perspective here again corresponds to the dichotomy between male and female in light of patriarchal ideology and, by implication, between the Israelites and the foreigners.

Together with the above examples which extend the purity of the male lineage to the that of nation, the Jael and Sisera story also strengthens the narrator's device to promote the patriarchal ideology not only for individual men but for the whole Israelites. Jael's story repeats the contradictory and discriminatory treatment of women's deceptiveness. Jael's story is full of symbolic and ironic gestures. Her story clearly fits into the trickster pattern of both early and later Old Testament stories, in which the supreme value lies in social preservation and the community. Jael's use of her beauty and eloquence shows the contrast with the above mentioned women who employ their physical beauty and eloquence against

God's intent on putting value on the chosen male line of the Israelites.

Moreover, unlike Jezebel and Delilah who reveal the personality and self-confidence, Jael's intelligence or craftiness is hardly revealed. Only her physical instincts which are tantamount to her sexual lust are expressed. In spite of Jael's sexual tactic of luring the man and then killing him, unlike the negative description of women's use of the most lethal and effective weapons like sexual strength and deceptiveness, this is all valued from the perspective of protecting the nation against the foreign enemies. Jael's blow with a tent peg, which may symbolize home and the family life, and her feeding milk--woman's life-source--to a strange man, and her sexual acts implied in the symbols such as water, milk, and the blanket, are exonerated and even extolled under God's name by the Israelites.

V. Conclusion: "YOU SHALL BE FREE INDEED."

As examined so far, sexual strategies employed

by the male scribes of the Bible are shown to reflect the masculine thought and the patriarchal ideology. They were valorized as natural and normal. The double standard in application of law and order, by which man and woman are measured differently and unfairly, was deeply rooted in the minds of the male scribes. In effect, from a modern feminist perspective, the Bible may be regarded not as a symbol of goodness, but of evil which has hindered development of woman's selfhood. However, the Bible, which has been believed to be a canon of patriarchal ideology, presents to women not only the problems but the solutions to women in role models between man and woman.

As Greene and Kahn point out, "the meaning of gender in patriarchal ideology is not simply 'different,' but...division, oppression, inequality, interiorized inferiority for women," the meaning of gender, except for the biological aspect, cannot be fixed from the moment of one's birth(4). Similarly, women's roles cannot be fixed primarily because they are in constant flux to conform to a society's immediate cultural values. The change of the woman's social roles implies that authority, truth,

and value etc, that seem to be absolute and natural, are in fact changeable and thus can serve the needs of their present experiences.

Whatever the male authors' intentions in relation to women may be, the meaning of the Bible are supposed to be revalued according to what women of different time and culture are facing and in need. That is, it is not through keeping silence or using deceptiveness but through re-reading the Bible that women can (re-)gain their suppressed selfhood in the Bible and confirm it. Women who can reread God's words of deconstructing the patriarchal ideology shall not walk in "darkness," but they shall find themselves the light of life, that is, woman's own life without subordination to man: "YOU SHALL BE FREE INDEED"(John 8:36).

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Abstract

Patriarchal Sexual Strategies in the Bible

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The sexual strategies in the Bible employed by the male scribes can be interpreted as reflections of the man's thought and the patriarchal ideology which were valorized as natural and normal. The female figures are prejudicially depicted in the Bible, according to the patriarchal sexual politics which seek to universalize men's dominance of women, in particular, daughters and mothers. Furthermore, the double standard in application of law and order, by which man and woman are measured differently and unfairly, is shown to be

deeply rooted in the male scribes' mind. The descriptions of the women in the Bible are the ultimate expression of God's authority, to which all humans must submit. God's words spoken through the male scribes should be believed as the truth without any doubt or inquiring on them. The male authorship forced women in biblical times to obey the patriarchal didacticism to promote the patriarchal ideology and values.

Key words: Old Testament, sexual politics, patriarchal ideology, virginity, motherhood

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