

Human Creativity in the Context of Creativity of God in Gen 1–2

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ABSTRACT: In the biblical perspective, stories about the creation of the world in Gen 1–2 remain to be the basis to a discussion about human creativity. The premise of the text – creation of man “in the image of God” – makes us assume that, according to the Bible, creativity of man is to be the image of God’s creativity. Verification of this thesis goes from presenting history of interpretation of the biblical idea, namely creation of man “in the image of God,” then points to the need of analyzing the narrative of this phrase. Since the image of God presented in Gen 1 is not descriptive, the second part of the paper examines the way God reveals himself in this text through his creative action. The key to God’s creativity is his word of creation which he uses to differentiate created beings and establish relationships among them in order to build harmony in the newly founded world. The final part of the paper focuses on the analysis of verbs which in Gen 1–2 refer to human creativity; those verbs also point to their possible association with words as instruments for creating, organizing and arranging reality shaped by man. Following that comes the conclusion that God’s creativity is extended into creativity of man who was made “in the image of God.”

KEYWORDS: Gen 1–2, creation, creativity, image of God

Creativity is “the ability to produce original and unusual ideas or to make something new or imaginative.”¹ We say that a person is creative when he/she is imaginative, resourceful, capable of creating something new and original. Where does this ability come from in a man? Is it innate or has it been acquired through learning, practice and development? For the people of the Bible, creativity is associated with God’s work of creation. Without this ingenuity of the Creator there would be no cosmos, no earth, animals nor people. Without God’s creativity, there would also be no creativity in a man. One can draw such analogy based on the first chapter of Genesis, which presents creation of man in the image of God. Thus, man’s creativity is to be the image of God’s creativity. But does every human creativity deserve to be called that? When is man’s creativity truly in the image of God’s creativity? What is common to God’s and man’s creativity?²

¹ Cf. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/pl/dictionary/english/creativity> [access: 25.07.2021].

² The above questions can be brought to just one: “On what basis can an interface between human and divine creativity be established in Sacred Scripture?” (B.W. Liesch – T.J. Finley, “The Biblical Concept of Creativity: Scope, Definition, Criteria,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 12 [1984] 194).

The answer to these questions will be sought in a key statement to the whole Bible, namely that man is created “in our image, according to our likeness” (Gen 1:26). Analysis of this phrase will allow to discover the specifics of the Hebrew look onto human creativity. To this end, the classic interpretations of the statement about the creation of man in the image of God will be recalled first. In the second part of this study, the phrase in question will be reviewed from a perspective of the narrative hymn of creation in Gen 1. In the last part, the “image” of God in man will be confronted with the story of creation of man in Gen 2, which for the first time mentions fruit of creativity of man following creativity of the Creator.

1. Theological Take on Truth about the Creation of Man in the Image of God

The analysis of the phrase “in the image of God” cannot be detached from the whole hymn of creation in Gen 1:1–2:4a. The way the creation of man (1:26–30) compares to the narrative of the preceding works of creation stands out in both form and content. God’s earlier creative activity was described using the same or similar formulas that built parallels between the days of creation. While referring to the creation of man, there is a considerable difference in the length of God’s addressing the creation of man and describing this very act, for God speaks as many as three times on the creation of man; this takes three quarters of the text in the narrative of Gen 1:26–30. Unlike other God’s works, man is not created at God’s behest (the word that is the command), although God’s words play an important role in the process of calling man to exist. First, these words emphasize God’s direct commitment to the act of creation: the narrative proceeds from the earlier impersonal imperative form to the verb in first person plural, which shifts attention to the speaker. Secondly, God’s words there is some sort of recapitulation of the works of creation to date, which makes the creating of man a culmination of the whole process.

The text Gen 1:26–27, which is the subject of direct analysis, is translated as follows:

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, to rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, and over all the earth itself and every creature that crawls upon it.” ²⁷So God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them.

There are few philological problems with the interpretation of the above text: (1) why God, creating a man, speaks of himself in first person plural (“let us make”, “in our image”, “according to our likeness”); (2) how to translate the Hebrew prepositions *bə* (“in, at”) and *kə* (“like, according to”); (3) are the *bəšalmēnū* (“in our image”) and *kidmūtēnū* (“according to our likeness”) synonymous or do they have different meanings?

As for the puzzling phrase “let us make” in 1:26 and two successive expressions: “in our image” and “according to our likeness,” polytheistic view should be excluded in this

interpretation – the text is based on a Priestly tradition which was the center for renewal of religious life in Israel after Babylonian exile, and it rigorously advocated the concept of monotheism. In this context, leaving the plural form in 1:26 in relation to God is not an omission but an intentional literary procedure of the author. From narrative point of view, this biblical formula “let us make” means God’s self-reflection. In the Bible this is a rare example of a plural thought (*pluralis deliberationis*) that expresses an internal monologue³. Such a technique of direct presentation of someone’s thoughts, deliberation, discussion with self before making a decision is used not only in modern literature, but also in ancient texts.⁴ The purpose of this formula in 1:26 is to put a stop to all action so that the act of creating a man is not part of a repetitive scheme of earlier works. Instead of the sequence “order – execution – effect,” there is “thought – decision – effect” that emphasizes God’s personal and direct action to man.

In the case of semantic relationship in 1:26 between the phrases *bəṣalmēnū* (“in our image”) and *kidmūtēnū* (“according to our likeness”) we should recall their parallel use in Gen 5:1.3. On the one hand, it refers to the creation of man in the likeness of God (5:1), and on the other, to Seth who, as Adam’s son is according to his image, in his own likeness (5:3). Just as there is no semantic difference between the prepositions *bə* and *kə*, neither is there between the nouns *ṣelem* (image) and *dəməūt* (likeness). Etymologically, the first term derives from the root *šlm*, meaning the act of cutting, splitting, slicing or drilling, and is used when referring to statues or other material depictions (cf. 2 Kgs 11:18; Ezek 16:17; 23:14). The second term, *dəməūt*, has an ending typical for nouns of abstract meaning and comes from the core of “to be like something, to resemble something.” It defines not so much the identity as the analogy and similarity between the original and its image. Thus, the second term (“similarity”) is more than just adding something new, it serves to correct the possibility of understanding of the noun “image” too literally.⁵ Both of these terms

3 In this formulation some commentators might hope to see vestige of popular in religions of ancient Near East concept of the heavenly court that surrounded God (this concept is also reflected in 1 Kgs 22:19–22; Job 1:6–2:7; Isa 6:1–8), or an example *pluralis majestaticus* – the form used in the past for monarchs who were referred to per “Thou” to emphasize respect and reverence towards them. The first solution is at odds with the concept of monotheism adopted by the Priestly tradition, which supports not only the uniqueness of YHWH, but also impossibility for other celestial beings to coexist with YHWH (eg. angels), even if they acted as intermediaries (cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* [CC; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 1994] 144–145). *Pluralis majestaticus* is a calque of modern languages but remains foreign to the language of the Hebrew Bible (or even the courts of the ancient Near East); it is difficult to find there such courtesy formulas (some exegesis experts are looking for such formulations in Ezra 4:18, but the closest context of this phrase proves that when the King Artaxerxes speaks in 1 person plural, he means his royal court as such).

4 Such examples are given in Zdzisław Pawłowski’s, *Opowiadanie, Bóg i początek. Teologia narracyjna Rdz 1–3* (RSBib 13; Warszawa: Vocatio 2003) 334. On the other hand, in the Hebrew Bible they can be identified in three places: Gen 11:7; 2 Sam 24:14; Isa 6:8.

5 Cf. E. van Wolde, *Racconti dell’Inizio. Genesi 1–11 e altri racconti di creazione* (Biblioteca biblica 24; Brescia: Queriniana 1999) 30.

describe how man relates to God. However, biblical scholars have not agreed on how to understand God's "image and likeness" in man among.⁶

In the Christian tradition, beginning with Irenaeus, the image and likeness were considered to be two different aspects of the nature: the "image" would be the innate ability (eg. thinking, feeling, etc.), and "likeness" would refer to the supernatural gifts and graces that man receives directly from the Creator and which make him like Him (eg. ethical discernment, capability of heroic love, to sacrifice). Such distinction, however, is based on the achievements of Christian theology and not on the message of biblical description of creation.⁷ Additionally, when one refers to the text Gen 5:3, where discussed terms define the relationship between Adam and his son Seth, it becomes clear that for the biblical author there are no two different orders (natural and supernatural) in human nature.

Another direction to interpretation was given by Philo of Alexandria in "On the Creation of the World" (*De opificio mundi*, 69), according to which the likeness of man to God is encapsulated in powers and spiritual abilities (followed by Augustine). Based on the biblical text, however, there is no way to determine what spiritual power they might be: the ability to think, free will, intelligence, self-awareness, or other qualities.

In the history of exegesis there was also a solution assuming that the likeness to God refers to the external appearance of man, as would indicate the use of the term *šelem*, used to describe specific images, figures or likenesses. Doubts about such an interpretation arise primarily from the conviction of the authors of the Hebrew Bible about the inertia and invisibility of God. Moreover, the Hebrew school of thought, until the Book of Wisdom appeared, did not know Hellenistic dualism, but it looked at man as fully integral psycho-physical being.

This "duality" of man is missing in the interpretation that the image of God in man comprises the ability to enter a personal relationship with God, in a partnership in which God speaks to man, and he can respond to him.⁸ This interpretation also reveals the uniqueness of human beings, who are the only creatures to have a privilege of having relationship with YHWH. However, following this thought, the "image of God" is not part of human constitution but is a description of the process of creation that makes man different from other creatures.⁹

6 Opinions on this subject are compiled and critically reviewed: Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 147–155; D. Dziedosz, *Tak było na początku... Izrael opowiada swoje dzieje. Literacka i teologiczna analiza wiodących tradycji Księgi Rodzaju* (Przemyśl: Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Przemyskiej 2011) 63–71; D. Simango, "The *Imago Dei* (Gen 1:26–27). A History of Interpretation from Philo to the Present," *SHE* 42 (2016) 173–187.

7 This restriction generally applies to all subsequent interpretations of the image of God identified with an individual cognitive, spiritual or moral faculty (all compared in: Simango, "The *Imago Dei*," 178–180). Contemporary attempts to associate *imago Dei* with human rationality do not come so much from the biblical text, but rather are conditioned by data derived from neuroscience (cf. D. Fergusson, "Humans Created according to the *Imago Dei*. An Alternative Proposal," *Zygon* 48 [2013] 440–443; O.-P. Vainio, "*Imago Dei* and Human Rationality," *Zygon* 49 [2014] 126–130).

8 Cf. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 157–158.

9 K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*. III/1. *The Doctrine of Creation* (Edinburgh: Clark 1958) 184–187; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 10; Waco, TX: Word Books 1987) 31.

The most common suggestion in the commentaries is that man, as the only being in semblance to God, is his exclusive representative on earth and represents him to all other creatures.¹⁰ This concept of God's image in man is derived from the royal ideologies in the ancient Near East, according to which a king was the representative of the world of gods, thus receiving an absolute power over a nation or even the world. Such a view of man as a figure of an ancient king wielding power over creation can be mainly found in Ps 8. One should note that for the ancient effigies of gods and kings were considered real and reliable representations of same. Insulting or destroying the image of a deity or a king was synonymous with an actual insult. In the Hebrew Bible there is a kind of democratization of this idea, because not only the ruler, but every man is the image of God, representing him, as well as showing his greatness to the world. Claus Westermann however notes in this context,¹¹ that in the royal ideology a monarch was a representative of the deity as an individual, which is difficult to transfer to a "man" understood as a human race or as a human community. Besides, in the Priestly tradition the manifestation of God is the Glory of YHWH which appears "before" man, not "in" man (cf. Ezek 1:28).

The above-mentioned proposals for the interpretation of Gen 1:26–28 are not entirely satisfactory, although each of them points to some aspect of the truth concerning human existence, albeit not always directly sourced in Genesis. In this context, two solutions more clearly embedded in the narrative of Genesis deserve special attention: (1) man, against the other creatures, has a direct relationship with God, who (2) entrusts him with world domination. When asking about the "image of God" in man as a source of human creativity, one must first go from analyzing God's relationship to creation, and then look at the way God reigns in the world.

2. Narrative Reading of the "image of God" in Man

What is the image of God emerging from the story of the world's creation in Gen 1? One can look in vain for some descriptive elements of God as a person. The story has nothing in common with some systematic theological or philosophical treatise. The truth about God is discovered in his works. If we were to recall stories from the ancient Near East about the creation of the world, the main difference we notice, compared to the biblical narrative, are images full of violence, destruction and, paradoxically death. It is difficult to call these texts "cosmogonies" – these are rather "theogonies". From the existing *materia prima* emerge gods fighting among themselves which leads to formation of the universe.

¹⁰ This opinion is particularly popular among Polish biblical scholars, cf. S. Łach, *Księga Rodzaju. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz* (PST 1/1; Poznań: Pallottinum 1962) 193; T. Brzegowy, *Pięcioksiąg Mojżesza. Wprowadzenie, egzegeza, teologia* (Academica 27; Tarnów: Biblos 2010) 210–211; Dziadosz, *Tak było na początku*, 72–74; J. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju. Rozdziały 1–11. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz* (NKB.ST 1/1; Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła 2013) 167–168.

¹¹ Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 153–154.

The classic text is the Akkadian poem *Enuma Elish*, which follows the conflict between gods leading to the final battle between Marduk and Tiamat. The victorious Marduk uses the body of defeated Tiamat to give the world its final geomorphological shape. Such images will not appear “in Gen 1 – no death, no destruction, no negation.”¹² Even if there are elements of primal chaos (formless earth, darkness, and abyss of water in Gen 1:2), they are eliminated by the creative word of God, which puts order in place of chaos. God’s creative action is not about destruction, which is clear when one looks holistically at the process of creating the world described in Gen 1.

In Gen 1, the work of creation is carried out – following the thought of Thomas of Aquinas – by the act of separation (*opus distinctionis*) and the following act of decorating (*opus ornatus*).¹³ The Lord God first establishes relationships in the cosmic dimension, separating light and darkness (day one), upper and lower waters (day two), and finally the sea from the mainland (day three). Within the designated limits, the relationship between the sun, the moon and stars (day four), between birds and fish (day five) and finally between terrestrial animals, vegetation and man (day six) are established. The art of organization of time plays a part in the spatial organization of cosmos and also plays a key role on the fourth day, when God places lights on the dome which are to separate day from night, determine the seasons, days and years. The work of creation is thus presented as an event in which God gives a certain meaning and function to every living and inanimate being.¹⁴ “To exist” means to be in relationship; the ability to enter into relationship constitutes existence. God, therefore, not only does not destroy, but leads every creature into life. In a mosaic of the universe there is a place for all, God sees every mutual relationship with and among all creatures as “good” (1:4.10.12.18.21.25), beneficial to lives of every being. The principle of creation is diversity, which is included by God in a relationship that ultimately constitutes the unity and harmony of the cosmos, which as a whole is assessed as “very good” (1:31).

God looking seven times at the work of his creation (“he saw it was good”) is not just an ordinary repetition. It conveys the message of the Creator’s looking at and contemplating a very important work that comes from him but is not him.¹⁵ This amazement on God’s part makes it clear that creation is not just transformation, production, action. It is also about looking and seeing, which requires God to withhold his own creative power.¹⁶ It is in seeing others, in focusing attention on them that their dignity and their place in the world

12 A. Wénin, *Non di solo pane... Violenza e alleanza nella Bibbia* (Epifania della Parola ns 6; Bologna: EDB 2004) 29.

13 Thomas Aquinatus, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 70, a. 1c; Cf. P. Roszak, “Creación como relatio, assimilatio y processio. En torno a la exégesis de santo Tomás de Aquino al Gen 1,1–2,3,” *BPTH* 4 (2011) 192–197.

14 Cf. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 85.

15 Wénin, *Non di solo pane*, 29. In this evaluation of God’s view on the created world one can see a kind of wisdom reflection, which is also present in the inner dialogue that God engages in before creating man (cf. K. Napora, “«Aby służył i strzegł» [Rdz 2,15]. Praca jako powołanie człowieka w świetle Rdz 1–2,” *VV* 25 [2014] 21–22).

16 A. Wénin, *Da Adamo ad Abramo o l’errare dell’uomo. Lettura narrativa e antropologica della Genesi*. I. *Gen 1,1–12,4* (Testi e commenti; Bologna: EDB 2008) 25.

is affirmed. This very look expresses God's consent for man to exist and develop, to his well-being and independence.

The work of creation is also comprised in the seventh day, when God "rested from all the work that he had done" (2:2). The verb *šāḥaṭ* used here indicates predominantly the act of refraining from further action. It is not about resting after the earlier work that would cause fatigue. There is not even a slightest suggestion in the text that God, by creating, may have got tired. God creates by the power of his word without any effort. God's Sabbath is in pausing, in imposing certain constraints to his own creative power in the process of creation. In this way, God takes control over his own powers.

In God's rest some commentators see evidence for perfection of creation; its fullness and completeness does not need any further divine intervention.¹⁷ It is possible, however, that God's self-constrain is an expression of his desire to leave space for the autonomy of the world, especially man.¹⁸ To complete creation, we need man who, as the "image" of God, will undertake the work of dominion entrusted to him by God in the world. Thus, God's creativity will have its extension and continuation in man's creativity.

The fundamental question yet remains – how does God rule in the world? This aspect of God's action toward creation is already indicated at the very beginning of Gen 1:2. This verse consists of nominal sentences describing the static and almost inert state of things; then the dynamically evolving action of creation begins to emerge.¹⁹ This initial state of earth invokes the image of original chaos that remains under God's control through the *rû^{aḥ} ʾēlōhîm* hovering over the waters (1:2). The phrase *rû^{aḥ} ʾēlōhîm* can be translated in several ways: God's spirit, breath of God, strong wind.²⁰ Commentators tend to lean toward the first term, seeing in the Spirit, "the dynamic image of divine omnipotence exercising his indivisible power over" darkness and waters (the initial state of the earth²¹). However, a different interpretation is possible, following the understanding of *rû^{aḥ} ʾēlōhîm* as God's breath. André Wénin points out that further on in the narrative, all the elements that make up the earth's beginning are mentioned in a description of the following days of creation, except for one element – *rû^{aḥ} ʾēlōhîm*. However, this absence of "God's breath" is only apparent, since in fact *rû^{aḥ} ʾēlōhîm* accompanies each consecutive work of creation thus subjecting it, like all the other initial elements (darkness, waters) – to the dominion of God. God rules with his breath, turning it into a creative word.²² God creates, by speaking the word, that is, by modulating his own breath, the life-giving energy *par excellence* in such a way that it is no longer a destructive hurricane, but a force of life expressed by the word,

¹⁷ For example, Pawłowski, *Opowiadanie, Bóg i początek*, 346.

¹⁸ The analogical situation occurred after the flood, when God restrained his own anger allowing the harmonious functioning of the world in its diversity of time-determining phenomena (Gen 8:21–22).

¹⁹ Cf. Pawłowski, *Opowiadanie, Bóg i początek*, 300–304.

²⁰ Cf. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju*, 151.

²¹ Cf. Pawłowski, *Opowiadanie, Bóg i początek*, 304.

²² Cf. Wénin, *Non di solo pane*, 32–33.

calling other beings to existence. God's omnipotence and power are entirely subordinate to God's word. This is the interpretation of *rû^{ah} ʾēlōhîm* found in Ps 33:6:

By the word of YHWH the heavens were made,
by the breath of his mouth (*bərû^{ah} pîw*) all their host.

The act of creation as a process of differentiating and relating with one another all beings called to existence is done by the word of the Lord. Thanks to God, elements of chaos can coexist in harmony, finding their own place and positive function in the world. The word expresses the Creator's desire to organize space and time, and serves as further reference points for building cosmic order (cf. 1:3–10.14–18). The word of God induces fertility of the earth and waters (cf. 1:11–12.20.24), thus giving the beings the capacity to be a source of fertility on their own accord (1:11–12.22.28a). By his word, God allocates food to each creature, so that there is no conflict and fighting over it (1:29–30). When he utters words while creating a man and a woman, God perceives them as his interlocutors, persons capable of dialogue, he makes them into beings able to speak through the very fact, that he "said to them" (1:28). On the seventh day, God also refrains from speaking. He blesses and sanctifies the Sabbath in silence, as if he wants to leave room for the word of man, for the human response; the word by which man will continue the work of creating and dominating in the world. This word is an expression of God's creativity as well as man's, whose vocation is to continue God's work of creation.

3. A Word That Builds Relationships as an Expression of Human Creativity

Although all creation remains in a relationship with God, it is only man, as the "image of God," who is granted status of a partner to the Creator. This reference of man to the person of God in Gen 1 cannot be interpreted either in terms of physicality, as semblance in external (material) sense, or ontologically as spiritual kinship, nor in a functional sense – unlike God, man cannot be the master of all creation. From the narrative point of view, this similarity must be sought on the level of creative action of God, who, through his word differentiates the world, and at the same time builds unity among all beings created by him. Human creativity must follow the same direction.

Paul Beauchamp notes that "in creating the world God established a status for mankind that remains incomplete today."²³ In a sense, man remains an infinite work. We discover the meaning of this statement in the narrative of the seventh day of creation. In the literal translation, God's activity on this day is as follows:

²³ P. Beauchamp, *Testamento biblico* (Magnano: Qiqajon – Comunità di Bose 2007) 21.

God completed	<i>on the seventh day</i>	his work that he had done
and he rested	<i>on the seventh day</i>	from all his work he had done (2:2).

Respecting the parallel structure of this sentence, the verbs “complete” and “rest” are synonymous. From a narrative point of view, the completeness of the world created by God is not about its perfection. The completeness of the world comes from the fact that God stopped working; God paused thus setting limits to His own creative power.²⁴ God did not enclose the created world in some perfect sterility but made it autonomous. This autonomy is especially shared with man, who is created in the image of God. Through the prism of the seventh day, we can look at the earlier account of man’s creation with different eyes.

While in Gen 1 after each piece of creation God states that it was good, there is no such concluding statement following creation of man (cf. 1:27). Some differences too ought to be noted between God’s inner dialogue at the intention to create man (1:26) and the narration of this very act in 1:27. In the latter, the verb *bārāʾ* comes up three times to describe the “creation” of man (man and woman) by God, while in the former, in which God announces his idea to create man (1:26), there is only the verb “let us make” (*naʿāśeh*). From a narrative point of view, this *cohortativus* can be read differently than the aforementioned *pluralis deliberationis*. Instead of an internal monologue, the *pluralis* points us to see beginning of a dialogue between God and man, in this case the reader of this text, where God encourages him to complete creative work of God with their “makings.”²⁵ This clue is confirmed in 1:27 by the absence of the term “likeness,” previously used by God in the phrase “in our image according to our likeness.” Doubling the term “image” in 1:27 (“So God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him, male and female created them”) emphasizes that the task of men is to “make” themselves in the “likeness” of the “image” of God which they carry in themselves. Man is not likeness of God, because he also bears the likeness to animals with whom he shares sexuality as male and female. Man remains somewhat between animality and divinity. The change of personal pronouns in 1:27 – from singular to plural – does not seem to be accidental either. In the image of God, humanity is one (“created him”), but together with animal kingdom it is also plural (“created them”).²⁶

Man’s searching for the likeness of God happens through actions which, assisted by the word, would build communion in unity.²⁷ The Priestly relationship in Gen 1 sees this notion in the “dominion” of man (*rādāh* in 1:26.28) and in the “subduing” of creatures (*kābaš* in 1:28). Gerard von Rad calls these two verbs “extremely strong expressions.”²⁸

²⁴ Cf. Wénin, *Da Adamo ad Abramo*, 24.

²⁵ Cf. E. Bianchi, *Adamo, dove sei?*, 149; P. Beauchamp, *All’inizio Dio parla. Itinerari biblici* (Bibbia e Preghiera 14; Roma: ADP 1992) 67; Wénin, *Non di solo pane*, 25.

²⁶ Cf. Beauchamp, *All’inizio Dio parla*, 68; Wénin, *Da Adamo ad Abramo*, 29.

²⁷ Cf. P. Beauchamp, *Leggere la sacra Scrittura oggi. Con quale spirito accostarsi alla Bibbia* (Milano: Massimo 1990) 69.

²⁸ G. von Rad, *Das 1. Buch Mose*. Genesis, 12 ed. (ATD 2/4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1987) 123.

Hans Wildberger's analysis, however, shows that the first verb is rooted in a monarchic ideology of Egypt and Babylon, where it served primarily to emphasize the hierarchy in social relations.²⁹ In this sense, the verb *rāḏā^h* appears in the Hebrew Bible to describe subjection of various social groups to royal authority (cf. 1 Kgs 5:30; 9:23; 2 Chr 8:10).³⁰ It can therefore be assumed that the verb *rāḏā^h* in Gen 1:26.28 expresses the act of domination that is in managing, leading, and perhaps even more so, in shepherding of God-created animals.³¹ The dominion entrusted to man over the world of creatures has nothing of ruthlessness or aggression – animals are not part of man's diet and they do not fear him. The second verb, *kābaš*, in its basic sense means "to dominate, to tread down, to make subservient." However, in terms of this verb appearing in the texts about Priestly tradition (Num 32:22.29; Josh 18:1), it points more to management and distribution of earthly goods rather than violence against it.³² Reading the two verbs together, one can conclude that man's creativity must be inscribed in a hierarchical order established by God, the order where a person, such as king, cares for the wellbeing and welfare of his subjects (*rāḏā^h*), keeping and using them within the limits outlined by God (*kābaš*). "To rule over" and "to fill the earth and subdue it" means above all "to duplicate the order on earth established by God in cosmos."³³ However, the text in Gen 1 does not specify how man should imitate and continue God's work of creation.

The answer is in a Yahvistic story in Gen 2.³⁴ This narration asserts the principle of unity in diversity, despite a different perspective on the story of creation, in particular regarding man. The world created and defined as unity of "the heavens and the earth" (2:4b), will only be further diversified when it includes the relationship with man (2:5). God's subsequent interventions fill the horizon with these creatures (trees – 2:9; rivers – 2:10–17; animals – 2:18–20); towards them all Adam – already bound by his name (*ʾādām*) to

29 Cf. H. Wildberger, "Das Abbild Gottes. Gen 1,26–27," *TZ* 21 (1965) 481–483.

30 Cf. J. Blenkinsopp, *Creazione, de-creazione, nuova creazione. Introduzione e commento, a Genesi 1–11* (Epifania della Parola ns 5; Bologna: EDB 2013) 44.

31 Cf. S. Szymik, "«Czyńcie sobie ziemię poddaną»" (Rdz 1,28). Cywilizacyjny postęp ludzkości w świetle Rdz 1–11," *WV* 31 (2017) 27.

32 H. Seebass, *Genesis. I. Urgeschichte (1,1–11,16)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1996) 84; cf. S. Wagner, "kābaš," *TDOT* VII, 53–54.

33 J. Blenkinsopp, *Pentateuco. Introduzione ai primi cinque libri della Bibbia* (Biblioteca Biblica 21; Brescia: Queriniana 1996) 78.

34 From the historical criticism point of view, Gen 1 and Gen 2 are two separate and independent creation stories that vary in both literary style and theological premise. When we look into the narration, however, these two stories constitute a narrative unity. Robert Alter (*The Art of Biblical Narrative* [New York: Basic Books 2011] 174–175) remarks that to some extent Gen 1–2 is composed in the way that resembles the technique of film editing, when by juxtaposing two independent takes of an event, one obtains not the total of individual takes, but a qualitatively new dynamic image of reality. Gen 1–2 shows two episodes that represent a single narrative event (beginning of the world and humanity) but from two different perspectives. Gen 1:1–2:4a develops the picture of the whole of creation, while Gen 2:4b–25 shows once again the sixth day of creation. To continue with the film metaphor, in Gen 2 this one day of creation is shown not only up close, with an eye on details, but also narration (dialogue) are in a slow motion and show another angle (with the narrator's "camera" on the ground, and not high above the sky as in Gen 1); cf. Pawłowski, *Opowiadanie, Bóg i początek*, 279–281.

the soil (ʿāḏāmā^h, cf. 2:7) – is to adopt an attitude of service (ʿāḇad in 2:5.15) aimed at guarding (šāmar in 2:15) the principle of unity in these diverse creations. This service is carried first with word. God creates animals, but he leaves definitions of their relationship to man. Adam’s word is now needed for the work of creation to be called good. His word, through naming the animals (2:19–20), organizes, assigns and reorganizes their living space. By naming individual creatures, man acts like a Creator in Gen 1:5.8.10.³⁵ Much like the Creator, man naming various beings does not just assign a name to individual creatures. In this case, the word not only has a communicative function but becomes a real instrument for creating, shaping and organizing reality. Thus, God’s creativity finds its extension in creativity of man who was made “in the image of God.”

We began reading of Gen 1–2 with a question about the relationship between God’s creativity and creativity of man. According to Gen 1:26–27, this connection stems directly from man being created in the image of God. In the history of exegesis, various interpretations of the expression “in the image of God” have been proposed and seen as particular cognitive and spiritual faculties, or a role of man as God’s representative on earth, or relational nature of human existence. Narrative analysis allows for yet another interpretation of the image of God in man. In Genesis 1, the work of creation is depicted as an event in which God creates by speaking the word. The principle of creation that emerges is the relationship between all creatures and harmony in their diversity. God’s creativity is manifested in words that distinguish but also connect individual beings with one another. Similarly, creativity based on word is a human vocation, as the narrative in Gen 2 asserts. As in the creative action of God, man is to differentiate the world through the word, while building unity among created beings. Only in this way will man be able to live and realize the truth about himself as the “image of God.”

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³⁵ Cf. G.A. Klingbeil, “‘He Spoke and It Was.’ Human Language, Divine Creation, and the *imago dei*,” *HBT* 36 (2014) 47.

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