

“BECAUSE OF THE ANGELS”: UNVEILING PAUL’S ANTHROPOLOGY IN 1 CORINTHIANS 11

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1 Corinthians 11:2–16 has been called “one of the most obscure passages in the Pauline letters,”¹ and “a linguistic labyrinth rivaling Daedalus’s and befuddling a host of would-be Theseuses,”² and has produced a plethora of imaginative interpretations. With some reluctance, I find myself wading into the turbulent and congested debate with a novel solution to Paul’s mysterious reference to angels that I believe also helps to clarify Paul’s thinking in the passage as a whole.³ My proposal, like those of many who have grappled with these words before me, looks to Paul’s cultural and religious context to flesh out the possibilities of his allusions. Like them, I trace the threads of Paul’s phrases to the Genesis creation accounts, as well as to the more general anthropology of the Mediterranean world. The only distinction I can claim for my interpretation is that it holds these threads together and does not leave the angels dangling by one of them.

The mainstream Christian tradition has produced a compelling reading of Paul, especially with respect to the central tenets of his theology and soteriology. A significant source of the debate regarding 1 Cor 11:2–16 is that we are on less familiar ground, involving none of these relatively secure central tenets of the faith. Instead, we are in the traditionally more hazy domain of Pauline anthropology, and the even more obscure territory of that awkward term

¹ Wayne Meeks, *The Writings of St. Paul* (New York: Norton, 1972) 38.

² Dennis MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 72. It will be readily apparent in the pages that follow that I owe a great deal to MacDonald’s thorough and insightful study.

³ My initial inspiration for this study came while I was teaching at Western Maryland College in the spring of 1996. I would like to thank my WMC colleagues Greg Alles and Richard Kortum for their encouragement. Thanks also go to David Brakke, Luke Johnson, and Elizabeth Ann Schechter for reading earlier drafts of this article and offering very helpful criticisms and advice. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the anonymous readers, whose astute criticisms helped me to bring this article to its final form.

anthropogony. In such areas, it is a bit more challenging to determine what exactly orthodoxy would be; it is a subject few of the notoriously contentious Christians have thought to debate. Nevertheless, in his anthropogony, Paul is outside what would become the Christian mainstream. The Paul that speaks in 1 Cor 11:2–16 retains his stature as a major source of the Christian tradition, but of the whole tradition, both within and without the later mainstream. For, as it turns out in the end, Paul's heterodox anthropogony is completely consistent with his very rich (and orthodox) concept of salvation in Christ.

I. The Issue

Assuming that Paul himself wrote (or, rather, dictated) 1 Cor 11:2–16,⁴ and that the passage belongs in the letter at the place where it is now found, what precisely is the issue Paul intends to address? 1 Cor 8:1ff. forms a unit, introduced by *περὶ δέ* and culminating in a sweeping conclusion at 11:34 ("But the rest I can set in order when I come"). The whole unit is devoted to regulating Christian cultic practices against the community's pre- and non-Christian background.⁵ I will leave aside the debate over whether the practices of women alone, or those of men as well, elicited Paul's response; the resolution of this question does not impact substantially on my interpretation.⁶ Paul's language in this passage, taken as a whole, suggests that he is not exclusively concerned with either women or men; rather, the question for him is whether one common or two distinct practices pertain to men and women. Paul gives slightly more attention to women in his reply because in Paul's culture, as in so many others, it is their difference from the male norm that must bear the burden of being marked. Moreover, while the key element I wish to explain in what follows does not depend on the issue being veils rather than hair, I assume, contrary arguments notwithstanding, that Paul is referring to the wearing of veils, not hair length.⁷

⁴ Several scholars have taken the position that Paul did not write this passage, or at least some parts of it: William Walker, Jr., "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and Paul's Views regarding Women," *JBL* 94 (1975) 94–110; Lamar Cope, "1 Cor 11:2–16: One Step Further," *JBL* 97 (1978) 435–36; G. W. Trompf, "On Attitudes Toward Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Corinthians 11:3–16 and Its Context," *CBQ* 42 (1980) 196–215. But see the counterarguments of Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16?" *JBL* 95 (1976) 615–21.

⁵ Richard Oster persuasively argues that the issue of veiling arose in part from the religious practices of non-Christian Corinthians ("When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Corinthians 11.4," *NTS* 34 [1988] 481–505).

⁶ The possibility that men's practices were as much a concern as women's has been suggested by Richard and Catherine Kroeger, "An Inquiry into Evidence of Maenadism in the Corinthian Congregation," in *SBL 1978 Seminar Papers* (ed. Paul J. Achtemeier; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978) 331–33; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *CBQ* 42 (1980) 483–84; idem, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Once Again," *CBQ* 50 (1988) 265–74.

⁷ Arguments for seeing hair length and style as the principal issue have been made by Abel Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1965) 166–85;

Prior interpretations vary slightly in how they understand the cultic situation vis-à-vis the social one. It is my impression that the way Paul argues on the basis of creation and nature, the order of relations generally pertaining between women and men, and general truths suggests that the issue is not particular cultic prescriptions for *putting on* a veil in worship, but rather circumstances within worship that, for one reason or another, prompt women to *take off* the head covering they usually wear in public.⁸ But this is only an impression based upon how Paul chooses to argue his position, and it is equally plausible that despite his approach to it, the question was merely one of cultic decorum, that is, whether or not veils were to be put on. Here too the ultimate resolution of this debate does not impact upon my central contribution to understanding 1 Cor 11:2–16.

II. Paul's Argument, 11:2–10

Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11 is unusually fractured and easily divisible into sense units whose relation to each other is problematic.⁹ Verses 11–16 are particularly problematic in their relation to each other and to what precedes them; but even vv. 2–9 are fraught with structural problems. 1 Cor 11:3–9 has some coherence, but is v. 2 contradicted by the effort Paul expends in his argu-

William Martin, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16: An Interpretation," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel* (ed. W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martyn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) 233–34; James B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor 11,2–16 and 1 Cor 14,33b–36," *WTJ* 35 (1973) 190–220; idem, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (London: InterVarsity, 1981) 168–71; Stephen Reynolds, "Colloquium," *WTJ* 36 (1973) 90–91; Murphy-O'Connor, "Non-Pauline Character?" 620–21; idem, "Sex and Logic," 482–500; idem, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Once Again," 265–74; Robert Banks, "Paul and Women's Liberation," *Interchange* 18 (1976) 81–104; Mary J. Evans, *Woman in the Bible* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983) 87–88; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 227–29; Alan Padgett, "Paul on Women in the Church: The Contradictions of Coiffure in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *JSNT* 20 (1984) 70; and apparently was already understood in this way by John Chrysostom, *In Ep. 1 ad Cor., Hom.* 26.1. When the passage is viewed as a whole, however, I believe that it becomes apparent that the relatively marginal comment about hair in vv. 14–15 is only an analogy, a proof from nature, which Paul adds to his argument as he draws it to a close. Indeed, the weakness (or even incoherence) of the analogy may be a factor prompting interpretations that credit greater significance to hair in the issues Paul addresses here.

⁸ The latter is also the situation confronted by Tertullian, *On Prayer* 22; *On the Veiling of Virgins* 13.

⁹ Paul Jewett regards the passage as "curious" and "contradictory" ("The Sexual Liberation of the Apostle Paul," *JAAR Supplement* 47,1 [1979] 67). Wayne Meeks opines that it "is not one of [Paul's] most lucid patterns of logic" ("The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *HR* 13 [1974] 200). Robin Scroggs's characterization is the most sweeping: "This is hardly one of Paul's happier compositions. The logic is obscure at best and contradictory at worst. The word choice is peculiar; the tone peevish" ("Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *JAAR* 40 [1972] 297).

ment? Should we read v. 10 as the culmination of Paul's subordination of women or as a major retraction?

Paul opens the passage with an affirming gesture:

Now I commend you because you have remembered me in all things and (because) you are keeping the traditions just as I delivered (them) to you.

In the setting of 1 Corinthians, where Paul often introduces a topic by quoting or alluding to the words of the Corinthians themselves, it seems likely that here too Paul is praising the Corinthians with their own characterization.¹⁰ By appealing in v. 2 to their self-image, Paul establishes a leverage on the continued obedience of the Corinthians; and he returns to this tactic in v. 16. His benevolent tone is noteworthy. "Considering the many rebukes Paul has to issue in 1 Corinthians, and considering especially the strong 'I do not praise [you]' in 11:17 and 22, we are struck by this upbeat beginning."¹¹ The irenic tone indicates that the Corinthians have placed a question before Paul, or have consulted him for judgment on a conclusion to which they have come, and that Paul's response is, at most, a mild rebuke.

In vv. 3–6, to give an exact exegesis we must determine Paul's use of κεφαλή, ἀνὴρ, and γυνή. κεφαλή has as many connotations in Greek as "head" has in English, and Paul seems to take advantage of that multivalence.¹² ἀνὴρ can be read both as "man" and as "husband," and likewise γυνή can mean both "woman" and "wife." With these terms, too, Paul makes full use of their semantic range. As he begins to spell out his position, Paul employs a hierarchical paradigm that would appear to be a part of the "tradition" he hopes the Corinthians maintain. To this tradition, Paul makes a slight addition.

Now I want you to know that "the head of every man is the Christ"—but the head of a (married) woman is the man [i.e., the husband]—"but the head of the Christ is God."

Paul appears to be quoting a stock piece of Christian tradition which puts "man," "Christ," and "God" in a hierarchy and inserts into that tradition a piece of cultural wisdom—possibly deriving from Genesis 2,¹³ perhaps a mundane

¹⁰ "One can imagine the Corinthians protesting that 'in all things we remember you and hold fast to the traditions, just as you handed them on to us'" (John P. Meier, "On the Veiling of Hermeneutics (1 Cor 11:2–16)," *CBQ* 40 [1978] 215). Cf. Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1949) 53; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (London: Oliphants, 1971) 102.

¹¹ Meier, "On the Veiling of Hermeneutics," 215.

¹² For the numerous positions on just what sense governs Paul's usage here, see the extensive references in MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, 73 nn. 19–21.

¹³ Among those who see Paul "telegraphing" his use of Genesis 2 later in the passage already here, see Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 300–301; Murphy-O'Connor, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Once Again," 270; L. Ann Jervis, "'But I want you to know . . .': Paul's Midrashic Inter-textual Response to the Corinthian Worshipers (1 Cor 11:2–16)," *JBL* 112 (1993) 239–40.

social maxim—about the subordination of woman (wife) to man (husband).¹⁴ The interruption of the hierarchical sequence and the lack of parallelism in the phrasing flag the insertion. “Head” serves to mark hierarchy, regardless of the exact nuance of the term,¹⁵ and it also sets up the running pun Paul will use in discussing his concerns about the Corinthians’ literal heads.¹⁶

Every man that prays or prophesies while having (something) on (his) head [literal] shames his “head” [figurative, i.e., Christ]; but every (married) woman that prays or prophesies with head [literal] uncovered (ἀκατακαλύπτῳ) shames her “head” [figurative, i.e., her husband], for it is the same thing as her being shaved.

Paul’s basic point is clear: men and women have distinct appearances appropriate to them in the setting of religious practice. To violate these norms is to bring disgrace to the person above one in the hierarchical scale of “headship.” The potential or actual problem in Corinth that Paul wants to correct may be one in which women who generally go about unveiled are remaining unveiled in the Christian assembly when they pray or prophesy, or one in which usually veiled women are unveiling during these acts of worship. Paul either wants habitually unveiled women to follow a different decorum in the Christian assembly, or else he does not agree with a cultic practice that undermines the established social norm of veiling. Correspondingly, attempts to understand Paul’s argument fall into either the “reasons for veiling” camp or the “reasons for not unveiling” camp, that is, interpretations that focus on the cultic or social environments, respectively. The exact significance of shaving a woman’s head has been the subject of considerable debate. Its connection here to shaming or breaking with the authority of the man suggests some disavowal of the husband, either as an adulteress or as a widow.¹⁷ It is reasonable to presume that a widow,

¹⁴ My understanding of what is traditional in this passage and what Paul contributes follows that of Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 184: “It is plain that Paul has altered the sense *ad hoc* (as compared with the view delivered to him), by classifying the world, i.e., mankind, as male and female.” Jervis argues to the contrary that the “Christ” phrase is the inserted element and that Paul has contributed the “head” vocabulary as well (“But I want you to know,” 239–40). The latter interpretation leaves very little to the original aphorism and seems motivated by a desire to ascribe the subordination of women to an earlier Jewish tradition that Paul here softens “in Christ.”

¹⁵ Attempts to find a very specific sense to κεφαλή in v. 3 (such as “source of being” [Murphy-O’Connor, “Sex and Logic,” 492; Jervis, “But I want you to know,” 240]) vitiate the polyvalence of the word necessary for Paul’s use of it in his argument and fail to take account of limits on the ability of the Corinthians to follow the subtlety of Paul’s language.

¹⁶ The position that Paul speaks throughout of literal heads (Gerhard Delling, *Paulus’ Stellung zu Frau und Ehe* [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1931] 104; Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 88–89) makes v. 3 pointless and can only be sustained by removing it as a gloss (so Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910] 270–71).

¹⁷ On contemporary veiling practice, see Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.* 267a; idem, *Apophth. Lac.* 232c; Virgil, *Aen.* 7.524–25; Clement of Alexandria, *Paid.* 3.11; *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felici-*

in shaving her head, publicly displays the termination of her married state, and so by analogy a woman who unveils is declaring her marriage null and void.

For if a (married) woman is not covered, let her also be shaved; but if it is unseemly for a (married?) woman to be shaved or shorn, let her be covered.

My understanding is that Paul moves from the specifics of the ritual situation to general truths in his argument.¹⁸ If that is so, he cannot be speaking of all women in these verses, since young, unmarried girls were allowed to go uncovered in the ethnic communities of the Mediterranean. He certainly does not intend to command these maidens to be shaved; his concern is solely with the propriety of married women. In v. 6, Paul may mean that it is “unseemly” for a married woman to be shaved because such an act infringes upon the husband’s authority,¹⁹ or he may be playing on the cultural norms of female appearance in general, and so slipping into the broader sense of γυνή. In fact, Paul’s introduction of the image of shaving may be nothing more than a *reductio ad absurdum* built on the pun of “un-covering” the head.²⁰ If the latter is the case, we can discern a consistency in Paul’s argument between this verse and his introduction of an “argument from nature” in vv. 14–15 to the effect that women’s naturally long hair demonstrates that they are meant to have a *covered* head.

To follow Paul’s argument through vv. 7–9 and on to v. 10, we need to keep a sharp eye on the slippage between the possible meanings of ἀνὴρ and γυνή, while adding to our vocabulary a new multivalent term, ὀφείλω. Based on Paul’s use of this verb elsewhere,²¹ it can mean one “must” do something, one “is obligated” to do something, or one “ought” to do something. To maintain this range of connotation, I have opted to translate the term as “obliged.”

For, on the one hand, a man is not obliged to cover up (his) head, since he is the image (εἰκὼν) and reflection (δόξα) of God; but, on the other hand, the woman (is obliged to cover up because she) is the reflection (δόξα) of the man.²²

tas 20; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 3.56; *b. Ket.* 72a; *b. Yoma* 47a; etc. On shaving the head of a woman as a mark of mourning and separation, see Deut 21:12.

¹⁸ There remains the slight possibility that Paul is alluding to some sort of cultic commitment of celibacy, in which dedicated women shaved their heads. In that case, he would be leaving it to the women to decide whether they intended such a commitment by unveiling; if they did not so intend, they should not unveil. Or perhaps Paul is playing on cultural traditions regarding the appearance of male and female temple personnel; cf. Apuleius, *Golden Ass* 11.10. These possibilities deserve further research.

¹⁹ See the discussion of women Nazirites in Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry*.

²⁰ I owe this suggestion to David Brakke (personal communication).

²¹ E.g., Rom 13:8; 15:1, 27; 1 Cor 5:10; 7:36; 9:10; 2 Cor 12:11, 14.

²² That Paul is speaking specifically about a husband here: Philipp Bachmann, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1905) 357; Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry*,

Paul clearly establishes the duty and obligation for the respective appearances of men and women as based in ontological relations. Since man is less than God, being the reflection of man is less than being the reflection of God. This implies that woman is obligated to cover up because of her less perfect form as much as it suggests that she somehow belongs to man as a dependent. Although the language of this passage is sometimes understood to mean that a wife is the "glory" of her husband (in the sense of property on display),²³ Paul's use of ἀνὴρ and γυνή seems to have slipped permanently from the specifics of husband and wife to the more general terrain of man and woman. We need to translate δόξα, therefore, in line with Paul's clarification of his thinking in the following verse.²⁴

For "man" is not from "woman," but "woman" from "man" . . .

Paul has moved in his argument from specific men and women, husbands and wives, to the original "man" and "woman," because obviously since that time "man" does come from "woman" in ordinary birth, a fact Paul brings into his argument in vv. 11–12. δόξα, then, would seem to carry the connotation of "dependently originated," "product," and "reflection." If man *was* from woman, Paul implies, *he* would be *her* reflection.²⁵

. . . also, "man" was not created for (διὰ) the "woman," but "woman" for (διὰ) the "man."

In vv. 7–9 Paul alludes to the biblical account of creation, and so in some sense to the "order of creation." Paul's views about the appropriate appearance distinctive to men and women in worship are based on a hierarchy of "headship," which in turn rests on created priority that subordinates women in origin ("from"), purpose, and status ("for") to men.²⁶ In other words, v. 8 serves Paul as an argument from procession, while v. 9 functions as an argument from subordination.

174–75; Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils?" 203; André Rose, "L'Épouse dans l'assemblée liturgique (I Cor. 11, 2–16)," *BVC* 34 (1960) 14; William F. Orr and James A. Walther, *I Corinthians* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976) 264; J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Religious Hair," in *Studies in the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 172.

²³ Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry*, 173–75.

²⁴ On δόξα, see A. Feuillet, "L'homme 'gloire de Dieu' et la femme 'gloire de l'homme' (I Cor. XI.7b)," *RB* 81 (1974) 161–82. I have adopted the translation "reflection," as the most germane to rhetoric of bearing another's "image," from Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, 186–87. This rendering is followed by Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 229–49; cf. the use of "manifestation" by Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 299.

²⁵ How, then, should we read Paul's affirmation of this condition in vv. 11–12?

²⁶ Cf. 1 Tim 2:13, which constitutes either a confirmation that Paul expressed this idea or evidence that others understood Paul this way, depending on one's view of the authorship of 1 Timothy. There remains the possibility that διὰ does not mean "for" but "through," in which case it is only a reduplication of the argument based on origin, and a particularly pointed one in that it flies in

The difficulties of v. 10 surpass those of all the other verses combined.²⁷ We must continue to keep track of Paul's use of κεφαλή and ὀφείλω, analyze the nuance of διὰ, and consider two new ambiguous referents, ἐξουσία and ἄγγελος.

Because of this (διὰ τοῦτο) the woman is obliged to possess authority over (her) head [literal], because of (διὰ) the angels.

Once again, Paul's basic point is clear: women must have, that is, *exercise* authority over their heads. ἐξουσία can only mean that the women themselves possess this power of authority.²⁸ The long-forwarded notion that it means that women's heads are under *someone else's* authority is linguistically unsubstantiated. ἐξουσία is otherwise unattested in Greek literature with the meaning "a sign of someone else's authority."²⁹ Paul *always* employs the term to mean

the face of ordinary birth "through" woman. Finally, we should not overlook the possibility that Paul's language is meant to convey that the separation of woman from man has meant the separation of the "glory" from the "image," and that humans are incomplete and defective since that separation. Man possesses the "glory," which he derives from God only insofar as he has been rejoined to woman. There is tension, of course, between such a view and Paul's promotion of celibacy; but Paul may be drawing on germane Jewish or Christian traditions, as he is prone to do, that found further development in the "bridal chamber" imagery of some Gnostic groups.

²⁷ The easy way out by declaring the verse to be an interpolation has been taken by A. Jirku, "Die 'Macht' auf dem Haupt," NKZ 32 (1921) 711; and Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1980) 174. A slightly more nuanced view of it as a gloss or corruption is held by R. Perdelwitz, "Die exousia auf dem Haupt der Frau," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 86 (1913) 611–13; and A. Feuillet, "Le signe de puissance sur la tête de la femme: 1 Cor. 11,10," *NRT* 95 (1973) 946.

²⁸ Among those who have affirmed this are Lietzmann, *An die Korinther*, 54–55; Padgett, "Paul on Women in the Church," 71–72; Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 228; Joël Delobel, "1 Cor 11:2–16: Towards a Coherent Explanation," in *L'apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère* (ed. A. Vanhoye; Leuven: Leuven University-Peeters, 1986) 387; Murphy-O'Connor, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Once Again," 271.

²⁹ See BAG, 278. Lietzmann accurately characterizes such readings as taking a sign of authority for its opposite, a sign of subordination (*An die Korinther*, 54–55); cf. the famous remark of W. Ramsay: "a preposterous idea which a Greek scholar would laugh at anywhere except in the New Testament" (quoted in M. D. Hooker, "Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor. XI.10," *NTS* 10 [1964] 413 n. 6). Among those maintaining this unsubstantiated reversal of meaning for ἐξουσία are Bachmann, *Der erste Brief*, 358–63; Str-B 3.435–36; P. Tischleder, *Wesen und Stellung der Frau nach der Lehre des heiligen Paulus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1923) 141–42; Delling, *Paulus' Stellung*, 101–3; Ludwig Hick, *Stellung des hl. Paulus zur Frau im Rahmen seiner Zeit* (Cologne: Amerikanisch-Ungarischer Verlag, 1957) 131–34; C. Spicq, "Encore la 'puissance sur la tête' (1 Cor XI,10)," *RB* 48 (1939) 557–62; Werner Foerster, "ἐξουσίαν," *TDNT* 2.574; Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ*, 170–71; Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 263–64; Lone Fatum, "Image of God and Glory of Man," in *Image of God and Gender Models* (ed. K. Børresen; Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1991) 109–10 n. 73. In most of these cases, the reversal of meaning for the term in 1 Corinthians 11 is considered dictated by the semantic environment of the passage. To my mind, however, such resolution of linguistic anomaly in a passage is simply a form of glossing.

authority held by the subject: the individual's right and freedom to act,³⁰ the individual's control over objects, persons, or situations,³¹ and by extension as a title of individuals who exercise such authority.³² In fact, Paul is concerned throughout 1 Corinthians with the issue of "authority" precisely in the sense of rights or freedoms claimed by his readers which he seeks to have them voluntarily subordinate to broader community values.³³ I must emphasize the absolutely clear linguistic force of this term, no matter what difficulty it gives us in understanding Paul at this point, because *most* interpretations of 1 Corinthians 11 are based on the reversal of that linguistic force and cannot be sustained without such a reversal.

This sense for ἐξουσία in 1 Cor 11:10 as one's own right and authority, not subjection to someone else's, is supported by Paul's use of ὀφείλω in the same verse, "for in Paul this does not imply external compulsion but obligation."³⁴ Paul *always* employs ὀφείλω with the sense of performing one's duty and acting upon one's own responsibility and commitment,³⁵ and the substantives based on the verb likewise all carry the meaning of a responsibility, obligation, or moral debt of the individual.³⁶ The language Paul chooses in v. 10, therefore, only could have been understood by his readers and hearers as referring to the responsibility women hold in the situation under discussion.

But confident as we may be about Paul's basic point here, we are left to puzzle at how such a statement could possibly follow the argument Paul just apparently has made in favor of women's subordination. If we abandon, as we must, the attempts to make Paul consistent by reversing the sense of ἐξουσία, we are forced to embrace the interpretation that the authority women have for Paul is the opportunity to exercise a right to veil themselves. By this reading, Paul is not attacking the Corinthian women's freedom to uncover, but affirming their independence as responsible agents, even if only as a rhetorical ploy in his argument that they *should* cover themselves.³⁷ Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul is able to affirm the Corinthians' claim to "authority" and "freedom" while carefully restraining it in light of what are to him greater issues. Perhaps we would best understand Paul's use of ἐξουσία here as turned in the direction of "control," that is, a woman's control over her own head, by which she demonstrates

³⁰ 1 Cor 8:9; 9:4–6, 12, 18; Rom 9:21.

³¹ 1 Cor 7:37; 15:24; Rom 9:21; 13:1–3; 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10.

³² Rom 13:1; Col 1:13, 16; 2:10, 15; Eph 1:21; 2:2; 3:10; 6:12.

³³ Cf. MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, 93.

³⁴ Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 574.

³⁵ Rom 13:8; 15:1, 27; 1 Cor 5:10; 7:36; 9:10; 11:7; 2 Cor 12:11, 14; Eph 5:28; 2 Thess 1:3; 2:13.

³⁶ Rom 1:14; 4:4; 8:12; 13:7; 15:27; 1 Cor 7:3; Gal 5:3.

³⁷ See D. R. Hall, "A Problem of Authority," *ExpTim* 102 (1990) 39–42; J. Winandy, "Un curieux casus pendens: 1 Corinthians 11.10 et son interprétation," *NTS* 38 (1992) 621–29.

her faithfulness to her husband or her acknowledgment of her status.³⁸ This fits with Paul's earlier reference to shaving: to unveil is to nullify one's marriage, so a woman should exercise control over her head by veiling as an affirmation of her commitment. If this is Paul's meaning, it foreshadows 12:1ff., where humans controlling themselves in spite of religious inspiration is precisely his point. It also shows Paul constructing a deliberately different relation of responsibility from that in 7:4, where spouses yield control (using the negation of ἐξουσιάζω) to the other, rather than retaining their own privilege of decision and self-restraint.

How are we to connect v. 10 to what precedes it? Paul's choice of διὰ τοῦτο must be decisive: he means to connect it very closely, and this fact has serious ramifications for many modern attempts to explain what Paul is saying in this verse.³⁹ When we look closer at Paul's language in v. 10, we see the burden that διὰ is made to carry. At the end of v. 9, Paul makes one of his characteristic repetitions that, by the change of one word (in this case, from ἐκ to διὰ), move the reader into position for what is to follow. True to form, Paul leads us in v. 10 through two διὰς, the first locking his conclusion in v. 10 to the preceding argument—at least to v. 9 and possibly to the whole of vv. 3–9—and the second equating that argument in some way with “angels.”

It is essential that we note Paul's tight construction here using διὰ, and how that makes διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους an integral part of his argument, because all alternative interpretations of 1 Corinthians 11 assume that Paul provides *no clue* in the passage as to what he means by διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους, and that we must provide meaning for this phrase from *outside* of the passage.⁴⁰ In fact, most attempts to explain the “angels” treat them as only loosely connected to Paul's main argument. This assumption has provided a license for speculation in support of the tendency of interpreters to gloss the text. In some way or other, the angels are seen to be a threat to the women that must be guarded against by the “authority” on a woman's head.⁴¹ I do not mean to dismiss the observation that

³⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 7:37: “But the one who has stood settled in his heart, not having necessity (or compulsion), but has *control* over (his) own will, and has judged this in (his) own heart . . . ,” where Paul employs the same construct of ἐξουσιάζω + ἔχω.

³⁹ “Thus v. 10, as may be seen already from the διὰ τοῦτο with which it opens . . . , presents no other standpoint than that of the preceding and the two following verses” (Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 573–74).

⁴⁰ I agree with Jerome Murphy-O'Connor that to date “the assumption that the reference is to heavenly beings has yielded no satisfactory interpretation” (“1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Once Again,” 271 n. 19); but I find the alternative suggestion that the “angels” are human “messengers” to be extremely unlikely and, once again, without any connection to what Paul says in the rest of the passage.

⁴¹ Martin Dibelius, *Die Geisterwelt in Glauben des Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909) 16–22; Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 273–75; Heinrich Weinel, *Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1915) 202; Lietzmann, *An die Korinther*, 54–55; Alfred Jeremias, “Der

Paul is elusively terse in his reference to angels. I share the common opinion that Paul is counting upon the Corinthians to fill in the gaps of what he says with knowledge he knows them to have, either from what he taught them, or from something mentioned in their correspondence with him. But to be at all comprehensible to his readers, Paul must do more than wave the "angelic phallus";⁴² he must establish the relevance of angels to the situation in question and to the argument he is making. In fact, he does so quite explicitly by means of διὰ τοῦτο. It is precisely the latter expression that indicates that Paul *does*, in fact, offer a clue in the preceding verses to what he means by διὰ τοῦς ἀγγέλους.

So we need to figure out how angels relate to women's authority over their heads, and how all of this follows from vv. 3–9. The situation in Corinth has been interpreted in a number of ways and has produced a variety of speculations on the role of angels in the decision of Corinthian women not to veil during prayer and prophecy. But we must bear in mind that whether or not the Corinthians introduced the angels as a reason for the practice of unveiling, it is Paul who introduces them here as a point in his argument in favor of veiling. So the angels serve Paul either as a reason for veiling or as a reason for not unveiling; that is, they play a role in the norms of either the cultic or social environments.

Since Paul is talking specifically about a cultic practice, one that occurs while praying or prophesying, we might look to cultic circumstances to explain these references. Fitzmyer has argued that the angels denote sacred presence, and that we can see from Qumran literature that this was a way to refer to being in the Temple (or its equivalent); that is, the divine presence of God in the Temple has been euphemized in this period by reference instead to the pres-

Schleier von Sumer bis Heute," *Der alte Orient* 31 (1931) 36; Werner Foerster, "Zu I Cor 11.10," *ZNW* 30 (1931) 185–86; M. Ginsburger, "La 'gloire' et l'autorité,' de la femme dans I Cor. 11,1–10," *RHPR* 12 (1932) 248; Franz Leenhardt, "La place de la femme dans l'Église d'après le Nouveau Testament," *ETR* 23 (1948) 33 n. 16; Johannes Leipoldt, *Die Frau in der antiken Welt und im Urchristentum* (2d ed.; Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1954) 173; G. B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956) 17–20; Jacob Jervell, *Imago Dei* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 305–6; Jean Héring, *First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Epworth, 1962) 107–8; John C. Hurd, Jr., *Origin of I Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1965) 184 n. 4; Walther Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971) 242–43; Constance Parvey, "Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament," in *Religion and Sexism* (ed. R. R. Ruether; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974) 136; Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 188–90; Christoph Senft, *La première épître de saint-Paul aux Corinthiens* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1979) 143–44. Dennis MacDonald's position ultimately comes down to an apotropaic function for the veil as well, although he understands Paul's view to be that the veil bestows on women authority over the angels, not just protection from them (*There Is No Male and Female*, 102–8).

⁴² The expression is that of Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 245.

ence of angels.⁴³ So Paul would be saying that women in Christian worship should heed rules of ritual purity, including their obligation to be veiled in the sacred precincts. It is odd that this even would be an issue in Corinth, though, since Roman practice also prescribed veils for cultic settings, for both men and women.⁴⁴ Perhaps there was a tension between Roman colonial practice and the indigenous Greek custom in the community. We would have yet another cultic explanation of the problem if women met separately from men in Corinth: just being among women, they may feel they can unveil, but the presence of (quasi-male) angels in the sacred assembly must preclude this (of course, we have no reason to think that women did meet separately). But we must be cautious in citing these cultural concepts as reasons to which Paul could allude so tersely, since an equal amount of testimony suggests that contact with angels in a ritual setting can also give grounds for unveiling. In the story of *Joseph and Aseneth* from this period, an angel commands Aseneth to take off her veil, for she is pure and her head is like that of a young man (15.1); when the angel departs, she puts her veil back on (18.6).⁴⁵ Or if the woman is a medium for an angel, she may unveil as a sign of desexing herself, or as a sign that her marriage to a human male is negated by her spiritual "marriage" to the angel.

Although the issue arises for the Corinthian Christians in their assembly, it may not have specifically cultic roots, but broader social ones. Paul has moved into very generic argumentation here and has made sweeping statements about the relation of woman to man as a means of justifying his specific position on the cultic practice. So many scholars have seen the angels as generally safeguarding the natural order,⁴⁶ or as easily tempted by the beauty of women,⁴⁷ or as envious of their freedom to display themselves as God's image (as a gesture of "realized eschatology"),⁴⁸ or even as malignant forces that could harm women if the protection of the veil were removed—interpretations that do not depend upon the cultic situation to provide the angelic threat, although that setting

⁴³ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the Angels of 1 Cor 11:10," *NTS* 4 (1957) 50–53. For angels present at worship, see Ps 137 (138):1 (LXX); 1QS a 2:8–10; 1QS b; 1QM 7:6; Rev 8:3.

⁴⁴ Cf. Oster, "When Men Wore Veils to Worship."

⁴⁵ Cf. MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, 96–97.

⁴⁶ See the extensive list of references in MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, 78 n. 38.

⁴⁷ Leenhardt, "La place de la femme," 33 n. 16; J. Kürzinger, *Die Briefe des Apostles Paulus: Die Briefe an die Korinther und Galater* (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1959) 28; Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 305–8; Meier, "On the Veiling of Hermeneutics," 220–21; Fatum, "Image of God," 111 n. 73. For the debate, see Tischleder, *Wesen und Stellung*, 159–63. Ancient references include T. Reuben 5:1–7; 1 Enoch 6–7; 19:1; Jub. 4:22; 5:1–2; 2 Apoc. Bar. 56:10–16; Tobit 6:14; 8:5; Tertullian, *On the Veiling of Virgins* 7.

⁴⁸ Fitzmyer, "A Feature of Qumran Angelology," 55–58; Henry J. Cadbury, "A Qumran Parallel to Paul," *HTR* 51 (1958) 1–2; Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 300 n. 46.

may provide the conditions for women unveiling in the (false) security of the Christian assembly. But Paul never uses the unqualified term "angel" for outright malevolent forces, so one would have to explain why the angels are hostile in order to interpret the veil as a protection against them.⁴⁹

The idea that angels are something that must be guarded against, in whatever capacity, usually is found in conjunction with two erroneous assumptions. The first is the misreading of ἐξουσία as a sign of someone else's protective authority over the woman's head. The second is the misconception reflected in the following quote from Dale Martin: "his statement that women should cover themselves 'because of the angels' suggests that angels constitute the force that threatens the exposed prophetesses."⁵⁰ But Paul does *not* say that women should cover themselves because of the angels; *he says they are obliged to exercise authority over their head because of the angels.*⁵¹ The latter, more general point serves Paul as part of a larger argument in favor of the specific exercise of veiling, but is not simply identical with that practice. Angels are relevant to the fact that women must be responsible for their own heads, but not necessarily relevant to the specific ordinance of veiling, which is a particular application of that responsibility. To argue that the angels play the role of a threat is to assert that v. 10 has little or nothing to do with vv. 3–9, that it is an additional reason which Paul's readers were to understand solely on the basis of the one word, "angels."

Paul certainly expects his readers to understand, perhaps from prior traditions he has delivered to them, what his reference to angels is all about.⁵² If we, so much farther removed from Paul, are to have any confidence that we have understood him, we must hope for some help from the surrounding verses. We can never rest easy with interpretations built on the word "angels" alone. Whether or not he is quoting back to the Corinthians an idea of their own, he draws the angels to his side, so to speak, and puts them in the service of his

⁴⁹ Paul consistently uses the term ἄγγελος to refer to a being belonging to a category more or less on a par with humans (1 Cor 4:9; 13:1; Gal 1:8), subject to some of the same moral ambivalence. They have the potential to become illegitimate obstacles to human commitment to God (Rom 8:38; Gal 1:8; 3:19; Col 2:18), but often this is due to human instigation rather than their own. Both views prevalent in modern scholarship—that angels are never evil in Paul (e.g., Fitzmyer, "A Feature of Qumran Angelology," 54), or that they are never good (e.g., Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958] 209)—overstate the case toward extremes.

⁵⁰ Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 242.

⁵¹ This important distinction of meaning also encourages us to set aside the interpretation that views women as the threat to angels, because of their beauty. Note too that such a view goes against the sense of the preceding verses: woman is an *inferior* form—why, then, are the angels not attracted to the superior form of man? An appeal to Genesis 6 is often made in this regard, but Paul's biblical allusions do not go beyond Genesis 2.

⁵² In 1 Cor 4:9 Paul refers to angels as observers of Christian behavior alongside human beings, an idea that could be cited in support of almost any of the prior interpretations of 11:10.

position. It is up to us to determine how he does so, based on the structure of his argument, the way he uses these terms in other places, and the range of possibilities available in his historical and cultural context.

III. Solution

Paul's redundancy in 11:8 and 9 flags that he wants to shift attention from "from" (ἐκ) to "because" (διὰ). Having brought this to our attention, he proceeds to say "because of this" (διὰ τοῦτο) and "because of the angels" (διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους). By saying "because of this," he connects the reasons of 11:7–9 precisely with "because of the angels"—the two reasons are identified in Paul's language.⁵³ So whatever the role of the angels, it must have something to do with woman being the reflection of man, from man, and for man, especially (in light of such clear allusions) the first "man" and "woman" of the Genesis account. This link is strengthened by Paul's parallel repetition of ὁφείλω: man is not obligated, or even ought not, to cover up, because he is "the image and reflection of God" (v. 7); woman is obligated to cover up (v. 7) and to exercise authority over her head (v. 10) because she is "the reflection of the man," "from the man," and "for the man." So the angels have something to do with this relation of woman to man.⁵⁴ What possible connection do angels have to the genesis of women that subordinates them to men? *Paul is attributing the separate formation of woman from man to a creative act of angels, not of God.*

According to Paul, the creation of gendered embodiment, of "male and female," is a work of angels. It is due to this separation of the one from the other that the woman has a distinctive head (literally), and hence "authority" or "responsibility" over it.⁵⁵ But the secondary, derivative character of the woman's form has produced the circumstances in which her responsibility is put to the test. Being from the man, she has an inferior ontological status that forces her

⁵³ So it is inaccurate to say of v. 10 that "Paul gives two reasons here for his statement that women must have 'authority' on their heads: the first—διὰ τοῦτο—refers back to his argument in the previous verses, while the second is an enigmatic reference to angels" (Hooker, "Authority on Her Head," 410). As Hooker recognizes, "the two explanatory phrases which we distinguished in fact belong together, and this explains why they have not been separated by καί but are linked together" (ibid., 412). Jarvis likewise, although speaking first of "another rationale," draws the following conclusion: "Since the subtexts of this passage are the creation stories, the mysterious angels of v. 10 should probably be understood in connection with these stories" ("But I want you to know," 243).

⁵⁴ The same conclusion is held by those who maintain that the angels have the role of safeguarding the order of creation. But, as we have seen, that interpretation assumes that ἐξουσία is an allusion to a veil as some sort of marker that a woman is under someone else's authority, a meaning ἐξουσία never has.

⁵⁵ On angels present at creation, see Lyder Brun, "'Um der Engel willen' 1 Kor 11,10," ZNW 14 (1913) 303–8; R. Parry, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916) 161.

to cover up, either cultically for the shame of her inferior form, or socially as a dependent of the male. The male is the original form, modeled directly on God, and therefore glorious, whereas the female is fashioned secondarily on the model of man, and so her glory is decidedly less.⁵⁶

What reason do we have to think that Paul held such an outlandish anthropogony? First of all, recall that, in Christ (and hence in the divine scheme of things) "there is no male and female" (Gal 3:28). So the separation of one from the other is somehow contrary to ultimate values. In 1 Corinthians, as in his letter to the Galatians, Paul takes the position that, "Where the image of God is restored, there, it seems, man is no longer divided—not even by the most fundamental division of all, male and female."⁵⁷ The creation of human beings as gendered and sexed is a rupture of unity to be overcome "in Christ."⁵⁸ In 1 Corinthians 11, attention is directed to woman as the derivative form, but Paul is really speaking about the creation of the differentiated man and woman. It would be going too far to suggest that Paul thought the angels to be responsible only for Eve's creation. The angels are not implicated in any particular creative blunder in the making of Eve per se; rather, "it is the separation of the human being into two that is the calamity."⁵⁹ The question for Paul is how much and how soon this rupture is healed. But precisely because he understands gender division as a rupture of a more perfect unity, Paul has sufficient motivation to ascribe the origin of this rupture to angels rather than to God.

Second, recall that the angels play such a mediating role in contemporary exegesis of the events of the Hebrew Bible, largely as a euphemistic develop-

⁵⁶ Several scholars have maintained that Paul asserts a more direct creation in *imago Dei* for man than for woman: Leopold Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau in den ersten Jahrhunderten der christlichen Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1902) 4; Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 272–73; Delling, *Paulus' Stellung*, 105–9; Leipoldt, *Die Frau*, 170–77; Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 296–301; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 182–88; Meier, "On the Veiling of Hermeneutics," 219; Klaus Thraede, "Äger mit der Freiheit," in K. Thraede and G. Scharffenorth, *Freunde in Christus werden . . .* (Gelnhausen: Burckhardt-Verlag, 1977) 105; Senft, *La première épître*, 142–43. Cf. Philo, *Quaest. in Gen.* 1.27: "Why, as other animals and as man also was made, the woman was not also made out of the earth, but out of the rib of man: This was so ordained in the first place, in order that the woman might not be of equal dignity with the man."

⁵⁷ Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne," 185. On this theme, see MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, passim.

⁵⁸ "Thus, when Gal. 3.28c speaks of the annulment of sexual differentiation, it must be taken to mean that . . . through Christ man has again become what he originally was, a unity and an entity in God's image" (Fatum, "Image of God," 67). This idea is not unique to the Christian tradition: cf. Philo, *Op.* 134: "There is a vast difference between man as generated now and the first man who was made according to the image of God. For man as formed now is perceptible to the external senses, partaking of qualities, consisting of body and soul, man or woman, by nature mortal. But man made according to the image of God was an idea, or a genus, or a seal, perceptible only to the intellect, incorporeal, neither male nor female, imperishable by nature."

⁵⁹ Jorunn Buckley, *Female Fault and Fulfilment in Gnosticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986) 95; see her discussion of this point, pp. 87–96, 128–31.

ment away from God's direct intervention in the world.⁶⁰ More specifically, angels participate in the creation of Adam and Eve in several accounts of the period.⁶¹ In Gal 3:19, Paul exhibits the same tendency to substitute angels as the agents of God's acts, in this case, giving the Law to Moses.⁶² Col 2:8–3:15 (which, besides invoking Gal 3:28, alludes to Christ as the "head" and to the ultimate value of a united body) appears, like 1 Corinthians 11, to contrast the angel-determined world to the "new creation" in Christ.⁶³ Similarly, in 1 Cor 6:2–3, Paul equates passing judgment on the temporal world with passing judgment on angels.⁶⁴ While in no passage does Paul explicitly say "angels created Adam and Eve," his willingness to so closely identify them with the order of the cosmos that Christ replaces would seem to lead to this implication. As the Manichaean Faustus argues, "the assertion that the new man is created by God implies that the old man is created neither by God nor according to God" (C. *Faustum* 24, citing Eph 4:22–24).⁶⁵

Third, recall that several early Christian groups held precisely such an anthropogony: it is characteristic of so-called Gnostic texts to attribute the formation of Adam and Eve to the act of angels, sometimes (but not always) fallen angels.⁶⁶ Several extracanonical dominical sayings promote a reversal of sexually differentiated creation.⁶⁷ The most programmatic statement of this view is found in the *Gospel of Philip* (NHC 2,3) 70.9ff.:

If the woman had not separated from the man, she would not die with the man. His separation became the beginning of death. Because of this Christ

⁶⁰ The Septuagint and the Targums are replete with such modifications; e.g., "The Lord met him" becomes "The angel of the Lord met him" in Exod 4:24 LXX.

⁶¹ The reports of Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 62) and the *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC 1,5: 112.35–113.1) that some Jews held this view find confirmation in Philo, *Op.* 72–75; *Conf.* 178–79; and *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 1:26: "And God said to the angels who minister before him, who were created on the second day of the creation of the world, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness'" (although this Targum is considerably later than Paul, it supports the testimony of the other sources cited).

⁶² S. Pétremont has argued persuasively that Paul, or the Pauline school, reasserts the idea of Gal 3:19 in Col 2:16–22, where the observance of Jewish sabbaths, festivals, and dietary laws is equated with "worship of the angels," and where the same note is struck of these things being ultimately overcome "in Christ" (*A Separate God: The Christian Origins of Gnosticism* [San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990] 61–62). The book of Acts exhibits the same tendency to substitute angels in the Sinai episode (Acts 7:30, 35, 38, 53).

⁶³ On Paul's ambivalence toward angels as powers governing the world, see the numerous examples cited by Pétremont, *A Separate God*, 52–54.

⁶⁴ I owe this point to Pétremont, *A Separate God*, 55.

⁶⁵ But even more pertinent is Col 3:9–10, where God's and/or Christ's creation of the "new human being" is made a point of contrast between it and the "old human being."

⁶⁶ E.g., *Apoc. John* (NHC 2,1) 15.1ff.; *Hyp. Arch.* (NHC 2,4) 87.23ff.

⁶⁷ E.g., Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.13.92; *Gos. Thom.* 11 and 106 (MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, 31, 46).

came to repair the separation which was from the beginning and again unite the two, and to give life to those who died as a result of the separation and unite them.⁶⁸

Paul is cited explicitly on the ultimate value of overcoming sexual differentiation.⁶⁹ The Manichaeans also understand Paul in this way, ascribe anthropogony to beings not in tune with God's values, and argue specifically that gender distinctions are not of God, and that the true human being is a reunified, sexless being.⁷⁰ The same anthropological corollaries Paul apparently associates with his angelic anthropogony also are found in diverse strands of early Christianity. Logion 114 of the *Gospel of Thomas*, like Paul, suggests that the female gender is defective and must be "made male" to be perfected.⁷¹ Paul's curious statement in 1 Cor 11:10 seems to share the same background as these passages, or to inhabit a common thought world with them. In some cases, Paul himself would appear to be the antecedent authority behind the later expressions. Indeed, we see in the earliest examples of so-called Gnosticism—Menander, Saturnilus, Valentinus—a conception of the angelic creation of human beings that is scarcely a baby-step beyond Paul's own in the direction of the fully-developed demiurgical mythology of classical Gnosticism.⁷²

The understanding of v. 10 that I am proposing draws our attention back to Paul's use of Genesis in 1 Corinthians 11. Perhaps most importantly, it allows us to see an underlying coherence in Paul's argument. Lone Fatum has remarked on the tight construction conveyed by Paul's use of $\delta\tau\iota$ in v. 3, followed by three successive $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ s in vv. 7–9, culminating in the $\delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron$ of

⁶⁸ Cf. 68.22–26: "When Eve was still in Adam death did not exist. When she was separated from him death came into being. If he again becomes complete and attains his former self, death will be no more." I owe both of these passages to MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, 53 and n. 119.

⁶⁹ E.g., *Tri. Trac.* (NHC 1,5) 132.16–28.

⁷⁰ E.g., Faustus *apud* Augustine, *C. Faustum* 24: "The birth by which we are made male and female, Greeks and Jews, Scythians and Barbarians, is not the birth in which God effects the formation of man; but . . . the birth with which God has to do, is that in which we lose the difference of nation and sex and condition, and become like him who is one, that is Christ. . . . Man, then, is made by God not when from one he is divided into many, but when from many he becomes one. The division is in the first birth, or that of the body; union comes by the second, which is immaterial and divine."

⁷¹ Cf. Buckley's discussion of this passage (*Female Fault and Fulfilment*, 87–96) and of the similar theme in the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (81–83). MacDonald comes to the same conclusion and cites additional examples from early Christianity and from Philo (*There Is No Male and Female*, 98–101). He points to Paul's use of the masculine $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ in Gal 3:28 as confirmation that in 1 Cor 11:2–16 Paul saw the perfected, unified human as male (p. 119). Buckley makes a strong case for understanding being "made male," at least some strands of the tradition, as only a step on the way to a genderless perfection as "living spirit" (pp. 99–104).

⁷² For a succinct treatment of the anthropogony of Menander, Saturnilus, and Valentinus, see Pétremont, *A Separate God*, 321–23, 329–35, 366–67.

v. 10.⁷³ This careful progression is punctuated by balanced ὁφείλως in vv. 7 and 10 and finally is equated with the διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους of v. 10. Hence, angels, creation, and obligation are closely linked in Paul's rhetoric. Fatum has also noted Paul's unusual reliance on "creation theology," rather than "christological or eschatological theology," in this passage.⁷⁴ Scholars disagree about precisely which passages of Genesis form the basis of this "creation theology."⁷⁵ I agree with L. Ann Jervis that to a certain degree Paul conflates the two creation accounts.⁷⁶ That is why a passage such as Gal 3:28 speaks of transcending the creation of Genesis 1 rather than conforming to a model that sees Genesis 2 alone as a "fall" for which Genesis 1 constitutes the counterpoint.⁷⁷ Dennis MacDonald's proposal that the Corinthians shared with Philo a sharp distinction of the two anthropogonies, if true, would give Paul a strategic reason to read Genesis 1 and 2 together.⁷⁸ But what should be clear from the totality of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11 is that the two creation accounts alone provide the rationale for Paul's argument. In vv. 2–10, Paul has not introduced woman's temptation or fall (Genesis 3), nor her allure to angels (Genesis 6), but has spoken exclusively of woman's "natural created condition and position in the cosmos."⁷⁹ In the words of MacDonald, "The veil is not the result of a curse on Eve, but is required by God's very act of creation."⁸⁰ In v. 11, Paul draws in "christological or eschatological theology," which relativizes, but does not negate, this condition and position of woman. For Paul, as for Philo, God temporarily sanctions, even if he does not personally produce, the gendered product of anthropogony.

The role of the angels in all of this is decidedly ambivalent: they have handicapped the human condition in the world, but the results of their handi-

⁷³ Fatum, "Image of God," 121 n. 89.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 72–73.

⁷⁵ Genesis 1: Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne," 201; P. Richardson, *Paul's Ethic of Freedom* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979) 64. Genesis 2: Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 298; Padgett, "Paul on Women in the Church," 81; Murphy-O'Connor, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Once Again," 270. Both Genesis 1 and 2: Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 292–309; Hooker, "Authority on Her Head," 493; Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 105; Feuillet, "L'homme 'gloire de Dieu,'" 182; Trompf, "On Attitudes Toward Women," 205; Jervis, "But I want you to know," *passim*.

⁷⁶ "[W]hat Paul wants his readers to know (v. 3) is that the second creation account elucidates the real meaning of the first and thereby clarifies what the Corinthians need to understand about the nature of their redemption" (Jervis, "But I want you to know," 235).

⁷⁷ Lone Fatum draws attention to the "apologetic interpretation" which takes Gen 1:27 "as a positive basis" for Gal 3:28, rather than as a negative background overcome "in Christ" ("Image of God," 96 n. 36); see n. 59 above.

⁷⁸ MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, 26–30, 68, 92. In this speculation, MacDonald builds on the work of Jervell, *Imago Dei*, and Thomas H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983).

⁷⁹ Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 189 n. 81.

⁸⁰ MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, 104.

work must be respected and maintained for the time being. Paul's use of *διὰ* with the accusative in v. 10 must be read in light of his use of the same construct elsewhere as well as general Greek usage. In general, *διὰ* with the accusative represents indirect and more remote cause and agency than *διὰ* with the genitive; the latter usage is employed by Paul in Gal 3:19 for angelic deliverance of the Law to its mediator, Moses. I am arguing for an equivalent direct agency by angels in 1 Corinthians 11. The shift from the more usual genitive to the accusative in this verse is dictated by the *διὰ τοῦτο* construct with which Paul begins his sentence; this grammatical construct will not allow a genitive. It is precisely because Paul is setting up an equation with *διὰ τοῦτο* that Paul works with the accusative in *διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους*. To use the genitive would be a non sequitur and would be incomprehensible to Paul's readers without more information about what "because of the angels" could refer to. But in the context, the accusative is perfectly satisfactory as an equation with *διὰ τοῦτο* as "because of," "due to," or even the unambivalent direct agency of "by" as in Rom 8:20: "Creation was subjected not voluntarily, but *by* the one who subjected (it)" (*διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα*). Paul uses *διὰ* + accusative in a way that shades into the more direct agency of the more usual *διὰ* + genitive quite regularly,⁸¹ and his freedom to do so finds parallels in other authors.⁸² We can even see that Paul wants to place emphasis on *διὰ* by his pointed repetition of it: "It is because of this . . . *because* of the angels." This stress suggests that Paul may be making an ironic reversal of a Corinthian argument, perhaps based on part of the Christian *kerygma* related to Gal 3:28 or Luke 20:34–36/Mark 12:25, in which angels serve as a model for transcending gender identity.⁸³

IV. Paul's Argument Continued, 11:11–16

Is this proposal consistent with the rest of Paul's argument? In v. 11 is Paul undercutting his apparent subordination of women or anchoring it? In v. 13 does Paul throw in the towel on the weakness of his argument when he tells the Corinthians to "judge for yourselves," or is this a rhetorical flourish leading to a new argument in the subsequent verses? If the subject has been veils up to this point, does Paul shift to a new concern over hair length in vv. 14–15, or is he only introducing this topic as an analogy? Finally, what are we to make of Paul's declaration in v. 16, not only in regard to its tone but also to its referent?

⁸¹ Rom 1:26; 2:24; 6:19; 8:10–11; 8:20; 15:15; 1 Cor 11:30; Gal 2:4; 4:13; Eph 4:18; 5:6; Phil 1:7; 1 Thess 2:13; 3:5; 2 Thess 2:11.

⁸² See BAG, 179a–181b.

⁸³ That the error of the Corinthians was prompted by Paul's own more radical teaching of dissolution of gender identities, as in Gal 3:19, is held by Meeks ("Image of the Androgyne"), Murphy-O'Connor ("Sex and Logic"), Hurd (*Origin of 1 Corinthians*), Schüssler Fiorenza ("Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 33 [1987] 397), MacDonald (*There Is No Male and Female*), and Jervis ("But I want you to know").

That Paul has in mind a distinction between the existing "order of creation" and the "new creation" in Christ,⁸⁴ as I have argued, can be seen in the next verse, in which the key words are *πλήν* and *χωρίς*.

Nonetheless there is neither woman without man nor man without woman in the Lord.

In drawing attention to the basic truth that governs the situation under discussion by means of *πλήν*, Paul affirms the ultimate valuation of transcending gender distinctions.⁸⁵ According to Paul, however, this soteriological harmony builds upon, rather than negates, creation.

For just as the woman is from (*ἐκ*) the man, so also is the man through (*διὰ*) the woman, but all things are from (*ἐκ*) God.

Even with the separate responsibility (*ἐξουσία*) of the woman deriving from her distinction from man through angelic agency, *all* creation is ultimately overseen and coordinated by God. So Paul takes us back from the precipice of total alienation that the tradition behind v. 10 might imply (a precipice over which some groups of Gnostics seem to have fallen), to a reintegration of male and female "in the Lord" and "from God."⁸⁶ The question has been raised how Paul's observation in v. 12 represents a condition found only "in the Lord," as v. 11 suggests. Certainly all reproduction occurs "through the woman," and not just reproduction "in the Lord." But one should not conflate the two verses. The condition in the Lord is not simply identical to the natural conditions of childbirth. Rather, v. 12 serves Paul as an argument from nature (hence the *γάρ*) in support of what he regards as a uniquely Christian recognition of the ultimate truth of v. 11.⁸⁷ In other words, nature itself shows that men cannot exist apart from women; the two genders constitute a greater and essential unity.

Several scholars see Paul as here correcting his sweeping remarks of vv.

⁸⁴ See Fatum, "Image of God," 104 n. 57.

⁸⁵ "Verse 11 is Paul's reiteration of his previous teaching that in the Lord men and women find harmonious unity. While Paul has had to recast his basic teaching because of his converts' offensive practices of disregarding gender-specific appearance at worship, he nevertheless (*πλήν*) affirms that teaching" (Jervis, "But I want you to know," 245).

⁸⁶ Cf. *Gen. Rab.* 8.9: R. Simlai said: "In the past Adam was created from dust and Eve was created from Adam; but henceforth it shall be 'In our image, after our likeness'; neither man without woman nor woman without man, and neither of them without the divine spirit."

⁸⁷ "The function of the causal particle (*gar*) introducing v12 is to be explained not in the order of efficient causality but in the order of knowledge. Priority in childbirth does not *make* woman the equal of man. Rather, it is only Christians who *perceive* childbirth as manifesting the divine intention regarding the equality of the man-woman relationship" (Murphy-O'Connor, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Once Again," 273).

3–10;⁸⁸ others see him as clarifying his position.⁸⁹ But note how the interpretation of v. 10 put forward above helps bridge the apparently awkward transition between vv. 3–10 and v. 11. The idea at work in the latter verse seems highly reminiscent of 1 Cor 7:4, where too Paul seeks to regulate ἐξουσία over the body. In some sense, God has corrected the separation of man and woman already in this world by making them socially or reproductively interdependent, and that interdependence has been put in order by God in line with a particular decorum Paul attempts to enunciate and defend. Recognition of the dependence of all things on God relativizes any social hierarchy, including the rank of men over women.⁹⁰ Christian women bear the responsibility to uphold their created persona by the voluntary display of symbols of self-control and commitment within a larger set of relationships regulated “in the Lord,” until the eschatological resolution of creation makes the maintenance of that distinct persona superfluous.

In light of my exegesis so far, v. 13 forms Paul's initial conclusion: he has made his case, now he asks for judgment. The world is in God's hands and has been ordered according to God's wishes, however temporarily or short of ultimate perfection. That is why Paul is able to move directly into an argument from nature in vv. 14–15. Already in the existing order of things, God has put in place necessary adaptations. These necessities are passing away, but not all at once. Nature reveals what is fitting, honorable, and glorifying. The naturally long hair of the woman, Paul reasons, is a marker, an antitype, of the area to be covered by a veil. The “coverage,” as it were, of both long hair and veil is a woman's “glory.” By implication, an uncovered head is as unseemly in a woman as one with short hair or shaven (recapitulating the ground covered in vv. 5–6).

I agree with the many exegetes who see in v. 16 a Paul very unsure of the success of his argument. Contrary to most of them, however, I do not regard his tone as peevish or tyrannical. Rather, I regard this verse as irenic and suggestive of the tone taken by the Corinthians in their inquiry to Paul. Note the elusive reference of Paul's “such a custom.” It reaches back to v. 13, where Paul has offered to the Corinthians the right to judge for themselves whether a woman praying uncovered is “suitable” in light of Paul's argument. As I have suggested above, Paul's approach scarcely sounds like polemic against an aggressively asserted Corinthian innovation. Rather, 1 Cor 11:2–16, from the so-called *cap-*

⁸⁸ E.g., James Moffat, *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper, 1938) 153; Else Kähler, *Die Frau in den paulinischen Briefen* (Zurich: Gotthelf-Verlag, 1960) 50–51; Scroggs, “Paul and the Eschatological Woman,” 302; Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, 240–43; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 190.

⁸⁹ E.g., Feuillet, “L'homme ‘gloire de Dieu,’” 175–82; Hick, *Stellung des hl. Paulus*, 126–29; Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 92.

⁹⁰ See Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 217–18.

tatio benevolentiae of its beginning to its irenic end, appears to be a response to a sincere question the Corinthians have concerning gender distinctions in ritual decorum. True, Paul focuses most directly on the possibility of women uncovering their heads; but the Corinthians perhaps asked simply whether men and women should maintain traditional distinctions in the assembly in light of the ultimate transcendence of gender “in Christ.” Paul commends them in v. 2 because they are asking for reasons, not asserting a difference. Paul obligingly provides them with reasons to the best of his ability. In the end, however, he acknowledges that whether or not his reasons are good enough (and the argument from nature by no measure is) for those who delight in debating such things (the φιλόνοικος of v. 16), he knows of no other custom in the Christian communities.

V. Conclusion

We can see, then, how what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11 fits the larger conflict with the Corinthians pointed to in previous scholarship.⁹¹ The Corinthians claim to have already transcended the limitations and distinctions of the body—a transcendence promised in the slogan “there is no male and female” or more generally in concepts of angelification of the saved.⁹² But Paul responds that those limitations and distinctions persist and require from Christians an ongoing responsibility to maintain suitable embodied decorum.⁹³

If Paul . . . in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is concerned to insist on the continuing validity of the *symbolic* distinctions belonging to the humanity of the old Adam, that is in harmony with the “eschatological reservation” which he expresses throughout this letter. The Corinthian pneumatics are not “already,” as they think, “enthroned” and “enriched,” not already resurrected in the spirit (4:8; chap. 15 *passim*) and therefore “equal to the angels” and thus beyond sexuality (cf. Luke 20:34–36).⁹⁴

⁹¹ The characterization of the situation at Corinth as one of overenthusiastic realized eschatology, to some degree proto-Gnostic, has become almost universally accepted, despite intense debate over the relative importance of specific features. Among those who helped to shape this compelling depiction of the Christians of Corinth are R. Horsley, W. Schmithals, and J. Robinson; see the discussion in MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, 65–69.

⁹² Cf. *Acts of Thomas* 14: “But that I do not veil myself is because the veil of shame is taken from me; and I am no longer ashamed or abashed, because the work of shame and bashfulness has been removed far from me.” Here too the Genesis account is in mind, and its reversal envisioned. Cf. the dominical saying preserved in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.13.92: “When you tread upon the garment of shame, and when the two become one, and the male with the female neither male nor female.”

⁹³ Fatum suggests that the tradition cited in Gal 3:28 implies an end to *sexual* maleness and femaleness, but not a dissolution of the socially differentiated man and woman (“Image of God,” 67–69). On this topic, see especially MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*, 65–111, 129–32.

⁹⁴ Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 202.

Ironically (and no doubt the irony is Paul's), it is the angels themselves—to the condition of which the “spiritual” Corinthians aspire—who played a decisive role in establishing bodily distinctions of gender that ultimately, *but not yet*, will be transcended in the unity of Christ.⁹⁵

Paul is willing to embrace the ultimate transcendence of the created order—indeed he may have introduced the concept to the Corinthians in the first place. He is ready to relegate God's angels to an ambivalent status and to make them agents of temporary and imperfect earthly arrangements. At the same time, however, he guards against the negation of God's creation as such. In the words of Wayne Meeks,

Paul recognized in the gnostic appropriation of the reunification symbols an implicit rejection of the *created* order and not only of its existing demonic distortion. Dissolving—or failing ever to understand—Paul's eschatological tension, the spirituals abandoned world and community for the sake of subjective transcendence. Against this “cosmic audacity,” Paul insists on the preservation of the *symbols* of the present, differentiated order.⁹⁶

In light of my analysis, I would refine Meeks's insights in the following ways. There exists a double layer of “distortion” in the created order for Paul: the more serious demonic one and the angelic one inherent in the mediation of God's will to material creation. We should not assume that the Corinthians were full-blown “Gnostics” who saw creation as *evil*; more likely they were earnest purveyors of a realized eschatology who saw creation as *imperfect* and were anxious to transcend its limitations. Paul shares their view to a certain degree, but resists the Gnostic trajectory by his steadfast allegiance to God's oversight of created order. Why then intrude the angels into his anthropogonical account? Perhaps precisely for the reason Philo does the same: to insulate God from human failing and to exonerate God of the imperfection of gendered existence.

When the angels of v. 10 are seen in their correct role—not as a distraction from Paul's argument from creation but as an essential part of it—we are able to see in vv. 10–11 the same basic thinking as Paul exhibits in Gal 3:19–28. The angels are the tradents of the transitory world order; Christ supplies the perfecting resolution of that order. Social norms of distinguishing genders, like the Law, are tutors (cf. Gal 3:23–25), opportunities for voluntary obedience over and above the state of nature. In Galatians, of course, Paul is concerned with the whole sweep of the Law, and the necessary conviction of sin that it provides.

⁹⁵ My reading agrees with those who see Paul exercising “eschatological reserve,” and differs only in focusing on Paul's angels as originators of the created order, rather than its guardians, although obviously one role shades into the other (see A. Thiselton, “Realized Eschatology at Corinth,” *NTS* 24 [1978] 521; Scroggs, “Paul and the Eschatological Woman,” 300 n. 46).

⁹⁶ Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 208.

In 1 Corinthians 11, the subject is much less theologically fraught, and Paul is correspondingly less anxious to declare the rules obsolete. Robin Scroggs has drawn attention to Paul's careful and systematic qualification of Gal 3:28 in 1 Cor 7:17–27.⁹⁷ For each of the three distinctions transcended “in Christ” by the former passage, Paul reaffirms in the latter passage their temporary maintenance until the end. “In all cases, Paul's answer is, in effect, that the distinctions should remain.”⁹⁸

There are still two different kinds of bodies; there is physical attraction between these bodies; there are various kinds of relationships possible between these bodies. To which world, old or new, do these bodies belong? Is there a “body” possible that expresses the intent of God in creation and thus is, although fleshly, an eschatological body, a body different from the body of sin and death? Is there a creational order in which body has a rightful place and is expressive of a right relationship between God and man, person and person, and male and female?⁹⁹

Paul's answer to these questions is no, or rather *not yet*, not in these terms or under these conditions.

How do we account for the continuing validity of veiling obligations, or for that matter gender distinctions, in light of the new order governed by Christ and characterized by faith? The answer must be sought in the eschatological anthropology Paul lays out in 1 Corinthians 15. Responding to the “realized eschatology” of the Corinthians, Paul stresses that bodily existence forms the basis for subsequent transformation (15:46), and can be neither simply negated nor unilaterally altered. Christians continue to be in the image of Adam (15:47–48) until the eschaton. Only in the end will they fully realize the perfected “image of Christ” (15:49), that is when the full potential of unity “in the Lord” (11:11) will be achieved. Throughout Paul's letters, the present participation with Jesus is an inner and spiritual one, with which the body can be seen to be still at odds. It is in the future transformed, spiritual body and not in the present physical one (15:50) that gender is transcended, just as it is only in that spiritual body that death is defeated (15:54–55).

My reconstruction sees the Corinthians sending an inquiry to Paul that asks, “Why do we maintain distinctions between the apparel of men and women

⁹⁷ Scroggs, “Paul and the Eschatological Woman,” 293. Because Paul's topic is regulation of relations between men and women, the third item of the three taken up in series, Scroggs suggests persuasively that the entire passage is a homily on the baptismal liturgy represented by Gal 3:28, which Paul employs here without deleting the portions not germane to his argument (p. 293 n. 31). The homily is constructed using three repetitions of the formula “in the condition each was called, so let that one remain”: Jew or Gentile (vv. 17–19), slave or free (vv. 20–23), single or married (vv. 24–27).

⁹⁸ Scroggs, “Paul and the Eschatological Woman,” 293.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 288.

in the assembly? Why should some pray and prophesy with head covered while others do not? Have we not lost gender distinctions in the Lord? Have we not become like the angels? Can you provide us with reasons for this custom? Or can we safely abandon it in light of our new identity in Christ?" To this inquiry, Paul replies, "It is good that you maintain the traditions and do not lightly toss them aside in light of your own reasonings. There are good reasons for maintaining this custom. We remain in the body; we remain men and women. In the body, there is distinction, rooted in how we came to be in the beginning. Men more directly reflect their creator; women do so in a mediated way. Hence the distinction with regard to veils. This created order establishes distinct responsibilities which the individual is obligated to observe. Do you aspire to be like angels? It is because of the angels that you find yourselves in this differentiated condition, because of their mediation of creation and the imperfection of their work. It is because of the angels that a woman must exercise responsibility over her head by keeping these traditional markers of her difference. We know these conditions will ultimately be transcended, but not yet. Given this state of things, do you not see the reasonableness of maintaining these traditions? Nature reveals God's intention for life in this age, while we wait for the life of the resurrection. This is my understanding of these things. Judge for yourselves. But you should know that no other assembly practices what you propose."

My reading lends no support to the idea that the veil is a liberating device that gives women an authority as part of the new order "in the Lord" which they did not formerly possess.¹⁰⁰ I agree with Lone Fatum that the latter interpretation amounts to "wishful thinking" that Paul is significantly advancing women's rights in the community.¹⁰¹ It should be noted, however, that v. 10 places responsibility squarely on women's shoulders—in fact assumes such responsibility rather than asserts it—and not on men as owners or supervisors of women. Paul does mean to affirm here the Christian woman's personal authority. Possibly Paul even wished it were not so. Paul's anthropogony means that he, like Philo, viewed female apart from male as dangerous and decidedly lesser, something to be overcome "in the Lord" (v. 11). Woman's authority over her own head was for Paul a problem, an unhappy state of affairs. But it was a situation he was willing to work with and one that he was not prepared to negate at the expense of the assumption that God knew the right course to take in this matter. God has provided compensations for the separation of man from woman, in sexuality, in the institution of marriage, in symbols expressing status and relation. All of these provisions, however, are voluntary norms which supplant the dictates of creation and supply human beings with opportunities to demon-

¹⁰⁰ See Hooker, "Authority on Her Head," 416; Barrett, *First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, 255; Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 301–2.

¹⁰¹ Fatum, "Image of God," 111 n. 73.

strate their commitment to God's will. They belong to an order that is passing away, but to that portion of the order which lingers longest, until the time when Christians no longer bear the image of "earthly" Adam and Eve, but that of the "heavenly" Christ.

Should my interpretation of Paul's anthropology be correct, would the discovery have any significance? If Paul failed to successfully communicate his ideas on the subject, recovery of them now would have only minor biographical import for the thought of Paul. It would have very little, if any, significance for the history of Christianity, for the very reason that the "lost" meaning of Paul's language would have made no impact on the course of Christian development. It is my contention, however, that my reading of Paul places him within a stream of early Christian reflection that included many other early Christians engaged in what Michael Williams has felicitously called "biblical demiurgical" exegesis.¹⁰² These "Gnostics," Marcionites, Manichaeans, and others (most of whom no doubt thought of themselves simply as "Christians") shared with Paul a turn of thought in relating the divine activities of the Jewish scriptures to the new divine acts embodied in Jesus. The old slipped in their estimation to a lower level that could no longer be associated unequivocally with God. These lesser deeds must be attributed to functionaries of God or to some other lesser beings; and among these deeds must be included the creation of the existing kind of human being, especially in its transitory and imperfect character.¹⁰³ The transcendent God, meanwhile, sets in motion a master plan that, in the fullness of time, brings to perfection the new, real human being, in comparison with which the old, broken, differentiated human will seem little more than a shadow.

¹⁰² Michael Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) 51–79.

¹⁰³ In fact, the anthropogonic "myth" envisioned in Paul's whole argument looks remarkably like the one familiar from the so-called Gnostic literature. The demiurgical angels fashion man in the image of God that they apparently see only fleetingly. For when it comes time to form woman, they have access no longer to this image, but only to the model of man. That is why woman is man's reflection and not, as he is, God's direct reflection (11:7–8).

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