

UNVEILING PAUL: GENDERING *ETHOS* IN 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

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The problems with interpreting the Pauline prohibition against the uncovered head of women in 1 Cor 11:2-16 have been long standing, but significant shifts in modern gender awareness make this statement of Paul look even more out of place. Especially since the middle of the twentieth century efforts have been made to reinterpret this as well as other texts about women in Pauline literature. The changing role of women in society and church as well as the discussions about women's ordination in which these texts were a hot topic, played an important role in that. Moreover, women themselves became increasingly active as theologians and biblical scholars and fueled the discussion about the role of women in the Bible. In this discussion, 1 Cor 11:2-16 was considered to be one of the more troublesome passages. Interpretations were mostly focused on its content on the one hand and on its context on the other. Central in the interpretation of its content was the meaning of the arguments Paul used, evaluated in terms of their implications for women, more specifically whether or not they favored a hierarchical or a more egalitarian view of the relation between women and men. As for the context in question, the discussion centered on defining the problem at stake in Corinth in order to achieve a fuller grasp of what Paul was arguing for or against.¹

Judith M. Gundry-Volf's recent treatment of the text evinces some of these long standing problems in interpreting this troublesome Pauline material. In her article "Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,"² she advances a reading that tries to affirm on the one hand the culturally specific features of the text that do indicate gender differentiation, while affirming at the same time that Paul was after something more, something grander, something theological. Her basic point is that while Paul seeks to promote the avoidance of culturally shameful activities (and grounds these ontologically in nature), he nonetheless at the same

¹ A much more positive assessment of the women in Corinth than was the case in earlier studies was advanced, for e.g., by E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her. A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 226-233; and Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

time affirms egalitarian notions both in the arguments from creation and the christologically grounded principles of Christian existence—in the Lord.³

It is striking, however, that Gundry-Volf's study focuses on the interpretation of vv. 3, 7-12, leaving vv. 4-6, 14-15 for the first footnote, and not dealing with vv. 13 and 16 at all. This can hardly be accidental because in so doing Gundry-Volf omits precisely the most obviously culturally inscribed features of Paul's argument in this unit, which allows her to emphasize Paul's "theological" formulations. But by focusing only on these features, Gundry-Volf avoids the argumentative force and structure of Paul's discourse altogether. And this, as we will demonstrate in this paper, is a critical misstep—for the rhetorical goal of argumentation and the embedded socio-cultural structures of ancient discourse readily call into question the endeavor of the modern interpreter to isolate a pristine Pauline "theological" expression. And while one cannot deny that in 1 Cor 11:2-16 Paul appeals to "creation," it is also important that attention is paid to Paul's argument as *argumentation*. It is in this nexus of Pauline persuasion that one also comes into closest contact with the patterns of power and dominance that pervade all texts, ancient and modern. Our early Christian texts are, as we will argue, truly incarnational, taking on the form of all modes of ancient discourse, manifesting all the power plays, all the value-laden agenda, the vying for dominance at the expense of others, and the gendered nature of the language and concepts utilized to meet these various ends.

Pauline argumentation and character take on a very different light when one approaches his corpus from this framework, because these two interrelated aspects, argument and *ethos*, shift our attention away from historical issues at stake or theological formula, to the engagement of the fundamental issues of identity that are central to ancient rhetorical theories of proper comportment and oratorical display. It is thus worth devoting space to the exploration of both of these features. This particular study seeks to focus more squarely on the argumentative logic and function of the Pauline text. This shift moves in the direction of examining the way in which the discourse operates both to secure the "assent" of the audience and, in the process, to reflect the character of Paul. We will first begin with the study of the argumentative texture of the text, exploring both the progression of the argument and the specific appeal to "ontology" with its attendant rhetorical effect. This is followed by an assessment of the role of ontological arguments in the larger Greco-Roman literary

² Judith M. Gundry-Volf, "Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. A Study in Paul's Theological Method," in J. Ådna et al. (eds.), *Evangelium, Schriftauslegung, Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 151-71.

³ Gundry-Volf, "Gender and Creation," 163.

environment. Finally, then, we examine the role and function of *ethos* argumentation in this same text, exploring the construction of Paul's presentation of his character. 1 Cor 11:2-16 is not just about the rhetorical enforcement of a particular gender-distinctive form of community interaction, but it is also fundamentally tied to Paul's own "understanding" of himself as it is projected outward in his argument. Indeed, one cannot in fact separate one element from the other: the goal to persuade the audience in a particular direction necessitates a particular self-presentation of Paul, and, vice-versa, Paul's own literary construction of his *ethos* demands a particular kind of argument in which this character is to be manifested. As we will see, Paul's language and argument take on a completely different shade when they are placed within the larger "rhetorical culture" of the ancient world. As a result, what we observe is a much more "natural" Paul, looking very much at home in his gendered world.

I. Pauline Argumentation in 1 Cor 11:2-16

1. The Crux of the Matter

Since Gundry-Volf reduces the discussion of the problem at stake in this passage to a footnote, vv. 4-6 as well as 13-15 receive only scant attention. They are only discussed insofar as they contribute to an understanding of the wider social context of vv. 3, 7-12 (considered more theologically relevant), while their function in and contribution to Paul's argumentation remains largely unengaged. According to Gundry-Volf, shame is "the governing motif" in vv. 4-6, where Paul provides a reason drawn from culture. These verses are contrasted with vv. 7-9, where a reason from creation is given and where the governing motif is that of "glory." In her presentation, these contrasting motifs more specifically reflect the honor-shame system in antiquity and thus the social context of the passage under discussion.⁴ However, in thus reducing the relevance of vv. 4-6 as well as 13-15 (including also v.16) for understanding Paul's argument in this passage, at the very least it is implied that they are less essential, *because* they are contextual, which apparently is not considered to be the case with respect to Paul's more explicitly theological arguments. Although Gundry-Volf admits that "culture plays a significant role in Paul's thinking on gender in this text" and that Paul's theology of gender is "informed by that context,"⁵ in the end it is not seen as actually shaping in any serious way Paul's perception of gender. We will argue, by way of contrast,

⁴ Gundry-Volf, "Gender and Creation," 153.

⁵ Gundry-Volf, "Gender and Creation," 169.

that Paul's cultural context has had a formative influence on this perception and that his arguments about hair in 1 Cor 11:5-6, 14-15 reveal precisely the ways in which this is manifested in Pauline discourse.

In vv. 4-5a Paul first declares that every male (*aner*) praying or prophesying with a covered head⁶ shames his head (v. 4) and next that every woman (*gune*) praying or prophesying with an uncovered head,⁷ likewise shames hers (v. 5a). These two statements are clearly value judgements, because Paul disapproves of the practices thus described as his use of the verb *kataischuno* makes clear—men are not to pray covered, nor women uncovered. Whatever type of headcovering is referred to here, opposite practices for men and women are advocated. But the very fact that Paul refrains from being specific about how they cover their heads (he does not mention any particular kind of headcovering, such as a veil) is important because it seems intentional. It suggests that what matters to him is not so much the *type* of covering, but the (*f*)*act* of covering the head. It is easy to get stuck on the contextual issue precisely at this point. The focus has tended to be on the precise nature of the practice in the Corinthian community, determining whether or not the issue at stake was one of hairstyle or haircovering. In our estimation, however, it is more critical to ask how these elements—hair and covering/veiling—further Paul's larger argumentative aims, and, even more so, what they reveal about the guiding framework that is reflected in Paul's statements here.⁸ This

⁶ *Kata kephales* in v. 4 more likely means "down on the head" than "down from the head." The same expression *kata kephales echon* (v. 4) with a specific object (*to imation*) can be found in Plutarch (see for instance: *Regum et imperatorum* 200F and *Pompeius* 640C). See further, R. Oster, "When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Corinthians 11,4," *NTS* 34 (1988): 481-505. Oster argues elsewhere that archeological evidence "patently demonstrates that the practice of men covering their heads in the context of prayer and prophecy was a common pattern of Roman piety and widespread during the late Republic and early Empire. Since Corinth was itself a Roman colony, there should be little doubt that this aspect of Roman religious practice deserves greater attention by commentators than it has received" (R. Oster, "Use, Misuse and Neglect of Archeological Evidence in Some Modern Works on 1 Corinthians [1 Cor 7,1-5; 8,10; 11,2-16; 12,14-26]," *ZNW* 83 [1992], 69).

⁷ Most authors presume that Paul has some kind of headcovering in mind. The traditional view is that reference is made here to a veil: "Man disgraces his head by wearing a veil, women disgraces hers by not wearing one;" C..K. Barrett, *A Commentary on First Corinthians* (London: Blackwell, 1968), 251. Others think Paul refers to a particular hairstyle in this passage and see him opposing long hair with men and arguing that women should keep their hair orderly rather than loose; so, for instance, A. Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple. A Study with Special Reference to Mt 19.13-12 (sic) and 1 Cor 11.3-16* (Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis 24; Lund, 1965); J.B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of I Cor 11:2-16 and I Cor 14:33b-36," *WTJ* 35 (1973): 190-220; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Cor 11:2-16," *CBQ* 42 (1980), 489; Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 227; W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (1 Korinther 6,12-11,16) (EKK VII/2; Düsseldorf/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1995), 492-494; and Gundry-Volf, "Gender and Creation," 151. More recently Marlis Gielen has suggested that Paul opposes short hair for women, rather than orderly hair (M. Gielen, "Beten und Prophezeien mit unverhülltem Kopf? Die Kontroverse zwischen Paulus und der korinthischen Gemeinde um die Wahrung der Geschlechtsrollensymbolik," *ZNW* 90 [1999]: 220-249).

⁸ Cf. R. Shepard Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 147: "...whether this passages pertains to head coverings or hairstyles is probably irrelevant: control and release are really what is at issue."

redefinition of the question implies a double shift in focus. On the one hand, it moves the attention away from a (largely hypothetical) reconstruction of the situation in the Corinthian community to Paul's argumentation. On the other hand, it also shifts the focus away from the traditional image of Paul as pastor, who offers sublime guidance to his struggling communities, to a Paul seeking to shape, maintain, and, if necessary, enforce a strongly boundaried Christian identity. This becomes more evident as one moves through Paul's argument.

Perhaps the critical lynchpin in Paul's argument in 1 Cor 11 can be found in verse 5b, where two different situations—to be uncovered and to be shaved—are identified with each other (*hen gar estin kai to auto*) in order to transfer the scandalous character of the one to the (disputed) other. Paul formulates his argument in vv. 5b-6 as follows: “for it is one and the same thing as being shaved. For if a woman will not cover herself, let her cut off, but if it is shameful for a woman to cut off or to be shaved, let her cover.” Paul does not use a word for hair (*thrix* or *kome*) here and his reasoning seems obscure, but a closer look at Paul's argumentation reveals both its logic as well as its persuasive character.⁹ In particular, Paul makes use of two essential argumentative features: an analogy and a *permissio*. First, an analogy is made in v. 5b, namely between a headcovering on the one hand and hair on the other. Then, another rhetorical tool is used in v.6, more specifically a *permissio* or “irony of false advice.”¹⁰ Paul seems to advise women to cut off their hair (*keirastho*), but this is clearly not his true intention. We can schematically present his reasoning in vv. 5-6 as follows:

v.5a: uncovered [-a] is a shame [-x]

v.5b: uncovered [-a] equals being shaved [b]

v.6a: if uncovered [-a], then cut off too [c]

v.6b: but if to cut or shave is a shame [c/b=-x], then cover [a]

⁹ Much has been suggested with respect to the rhetorical character of Paul's reasoning here. According to Lösch these verses function as a *refutatio* (S. Lösch, “Christliche Frauen in Corinth [1 Cor 11,2-16]: Ein neuer Lösungsversuch,” *TQ* 127 [1947], 254). Van de Sandt sees in these verses a rhetorical or shortened syllogism (H. van de Sandt, “1 Kor 11,2-16 als rhetorische eenheid,” *Bijdragen* 49 [1988], 413). Kuchler thinks that all Paul does in vv. 5b-6 is “mit rein rhetorischen Mitteln einzuhämmern, dass für eine christliche Frau unverhülltes Beten soviel ist wie sich selbst scheren, dass also ‘die Beschämung ihres Kopfes’ (5a) der Schande des Geschorens (6c) gleichkommt.” The comparison made by Paul is thus sarcastic (M. Kuchler, *Schweigen, Schmuck und Schleier* [NTOA, 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986], 79). According to Lowrie the comparison is a *reductio ad absurdum* (S. T. Lowrie, “1 Corinthians XI and the Ordination of Women as Ruling Elders,” *PTR* 19 [1921], 116). Meeks considers it to be “an *ad hominem* argument by analogy” (W. A. Meeks, “The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity,” *HistRel* 13 [1974], 200).

¹⁰ Plett defines *permissio* as follows: “Ironie des falschen Rates: scheinbare Aufforderung zu allen möglichen (auch für den Angeredeten schädlichen) Handlungen, obgleich diese dem Willen des Sprechers entschieden widersprechen” (H. F. Plett, *Einführung in die rhetorische Textanalyse* [7th edn; Hamburg, 1989], 65).

This final element in the progression reveals where Paul is ultimately heading: ‘let her cover’ (*katakalyptestho*). The logic behind his reasoning can then be reconstructed as follows:

Major premise: to cut or shave is a shame (v.6b) [c/b=-x]

Minor premise: an uncovered head is one and the same as being shaved (v.5b) [-a=b]

Conclusion: therefore: to be uncovered is a shame (v.5a) [-a=-x]

Paul presumes, so it seems, that his audience will subscribe to the major premise: for a woman to cut or shave is a shame. He then uses the analogy between hair and headcovering to persuade his readers that to be uncovered is equally shameful. But this analogy can only work if his readers indeed accept both premises, namely, that cutting or shaving is a shame and that an uncovered head equals shaving, which is the most drastic practice of the two since it implies that all hair is removed.¹¹ This is the critical lynchpin of Paul’s entire argument. While he will go on immediately to bolster the “conclusion” with further argumentation, the fact that Paul can assume this framework implies, at the very least, that from his perspective these are part of the shared cultural values and assumptions of his “world.”¹² Paul is thus advancing from the shared beliefs (common topics) of his audience to the goal of his, in this case, deliberative argumentative end.¹³

¹¹ As Gielen points out Paul aims at “die Gleichsetzung einer (Männern vorbehaltenen) Kurzhaarfrisur von Frauen mit der entehrenden Totalentfernung der Haare (Glatze) durch eine Kahlrasur.” (Gielen, “Betan,” 232 n. 37). Küchler gives examples from contemporary literature which show that being shaved was considered both a mutilation and indecent (Küchler, *Schweigen, Schmuck und Schleier*, 79-82).

¹² Paul’s position on hair here is very much in line with the broader cultural patterns of the Greco-Roman world (there are of course exceptions to these prevailing patterns; cf. R. M. Grant, *Paul in the Roman World: The Conflict at Corinth* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001], 38). In the ancient context female hair is almost always eroticized in the literature. Indeed, a woman’s beauty is wrapped up with her outward manifestation of hair (cf. Ovid, *Arm.* 1.14; *Ars.* 3.136; Apuleius, *Meta* 2.8-9). Ovid suggests that while some aspects of female “grooming” ought to be behind closed doors, the grooming of the hair ought to be done before the men: “I forbid you not to let your locks be combed before them, so that they lie rippling adown your back...” (*Ars.* 3.235; unless otherwise noted, all translations from classical authors are from the Loeb Classical Library). Here the brushing of the hair is something to display before men, an object of desire. Of course, the reverse is also true: “Let her who has poor hair set a guard at her door, or always be tired in the temple of the Good Goddess. My arrival was suddenly announced to a woman once; in confusion she put her hair on all awry. Let my foes endure a cause of shame so fearful! Upon Parthian women let that dishonour fall! Ugly is a bull without horns; ugly is a field without grass, a plant without leaves, or a head without hair” (*Ars.* 3.240). The appearance of feminine beauty is intimately tied in here with the presentation of their hair; a true reflection of their “glory.” By contrast, men are to “take no pleasure in curling [their] hair with the iron, or in scraping [their] legs with biting pumicestone” (*Ars.* 1.505). Ovid states that “an uncared-for beauty is becoming to men.” On the other hand, there is some basic degree of grooming required, for Ovid believes that men should not let their “stubborn locks be spoilt by bad cutting; let hair and beard be dressed by a practised hand” (*Ars.* 1.515). Thus, men’s hair is also a reflection of their gendered role, and the display of their hair ought to reflect something fitting and proper to them. See further the excellent assessment of the use of hair in ancient literature by M. Myerowitz Levine, “The Gendered Grammar of Ancient Mediterranean Hair,” in W. Eilberg-Schwartz & W. Doniger (eds.), *Off with Her Head: The Denial of Women’s Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1995), 76-130.

¹³ The use of *kanoi topoi* is in line with standard ancient rhetorical procedure, as expressed in Theon’s *Progymnasmata*: the *topos* is an “amplifying speech about a commonly accepted subject, either about a wrong or

Before moving to Paul's further elaboration of his essential premise, it is worth turning first to the end of the textual unit, where Paul returns to the practical issue at stake (v. 13). Here he addresses his audience directly with an appeal to their own sound judgement: "judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray for God uncovered?" This question reveals that the behavior of women, already mentioned in v. 5, is Paul's major concern. The question partially repeats elements already mentioned in v. 5 (*akatakaluptos* and *proseuchomai*), but there are some interesting differences as well. With the use of *prepon estin* Paul seems to refer to a general sense (but also consensus) of what can be considered proper behavior.¹⁴ The references to what is shameful in vv. 4-6 had a similar function and already made the same point in a more negative way. What Paul considers proper in v. 13 is that which is not shameful. Verse 13b is formulated in the form of a rhetorical question, to which Paul clearly expects a negative answer. Particularly relevant in this respect is the addition of *to theo*, which further stresses the improper character of such behavior.¹⁵

In emphasizing what is "suitable" for a particular group of people, Paul is fully participating in the rhetorical culture of his time. His appeal to what is proper is very much in line with Aristotle's principle of suitability (*to prepon*), which denotes particular actions and attributes that naturally apply to specific individuals depending on their social/cultural standing.¹⁶ We see Paul engaged here in some of the most explicit levels of cultural communication. And in this case he seems more specifically focused on establishing the boundaries of gender identity and activity within the Corinthian community.

The final verses further support this particular focus. In vv. 14-15 Paul introduces a new argument, which to modern ears hardly sounds convincing: "Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For hair is given her for a wrapper." As in the previous vv. 5b-6, Paul uses the

a brave act...it is called a "commonplace" because by starting out from it, as from a familiar place, we readily argue against those who are widely regarded as acting unjustly" (6.1-5, 11-13; cf. Cicero, *de Or.* 3.27.106; Quintilian 2.4.22; trans. of Theon from J. R. Butts, "The Progymnasmata of Theon: A New Text with Translation and Commentary" [Ph.D. diss.; Claremont Graduate School, 1986]). Theon goes on to provide a most excellent example for antiquity: the premise that tyrants are evil. This is not something that has to be proved, it is a cultural "given" and hence an important starting point for invective against an opponent.

¹⁴ Some authors see a relation here with contemporary moral philosophy (H.-J. Klauck, *1. Korintherbrief* [Neue Echter Bibel Neues Testament 7; Würzburg, 1984], 80). Conzelmann refers more specifically to the Stoa (H. Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* [KEK 5; 12th edn; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981], 224).

¹⁵ Beet points out that the place of *to theo* before *proseuchesthai* and after *akatakaluptos* is not accidental. Paul strengthens his appeal to what is proper with a reference to God, to whom one prays in worship (J. A. Beet, "Because of the Angels," *The Expositor* 1st Series 11 [1880], 32).

¹⁶ Aristotle states, "... he that entertains suitably and as reason directs is magnificent, for the fitting is the suitable...But it must be fitting in each particular, that is, suitability to the agent and to the recipient and to the

analogy with hair again to support his case for a headcovering. But a shift has taken place, because he no longer speaks here of “cutting off” or “shaving” but of “wearing long hair” (*komao*). Suggesting that a clear distinction is required in the appearance of men and women, he repeats now in vv. 14-15 for long hair what he already declared in vv. 4-5 with respect to covering the head.¹⁷ What is degrading (*atimia*) for a man, is a woman’s glory (*doxa*). As he did in vv. 5-6, Paul argues his case in v. 15b specifically for women: “for (*hoti*) long hair is given her as a wrapper” (*anti peribolaion*).¹⁸ An analogy is established here between hair and a particular kind of headcovering, more specifically a wrapper. It is remarkable that only here, at the very end of his argument, a word for hair (*kome*) and a term denoting a specific type of headcovering (*peribolaion*) occur, because in the previous verses Paul always referred to the act of covering or uncovering the head without specifying how it was to be done.

If in vv. 4-6 as well as in vv. 13-15 the analogy with hair is used to settle the issue about covering the head, the argumentation shows that Paul considers hair to be a highly gendered matter. Men and women are supposed to wear their hair differently. Being uncovered is as shameful for a woman as cutting or shaving her hair. Long hair is her glory. Yet, as we will demonstrate, there is a lot more at stake for Paul in this than simply a matter of how women and men wear their hair or posture themselves in prayer, because such issues are in many respects part of Paul’s larger concern to draw up and promote a particular ethos of Christian identity in 1 Corinthians. For the moment, however, it is significant to note that the covering of the head is Paul’s immediate argumentative goal in this passage. Gundry-Volf’s emphasis on shame and its avoidance in Paul misses precisely this point: that an argument from shame is used in service of promoting proper female comportment in worship. The *entire* text is about the avoidance of shame—and that shame is that a woman be “revealed” in unfitting ways and places. Any attempt, therefore, to isolate Paul’s argument in vv. 7-11 from the framing premise simply skirts around the issue at hand: Paul’s construction of proper female conduct. In the end, however, female comportment is not the “real” issue Paul wants

occasion—for example, what is fitting at the wedding of a servant is not what is fitting at that of a favorite; and it is fitting for the agent himself, if it is of an amount or quality suitable to him...” (*Eudemian Ethics* 3.6.4).

¹⁷ Similar statements can for instance be found in Plutarch and Pseudo-Phocylides. Plutarch, *Moralia*, 267B: *tois men to keiresthai, tais de to koman sunethes estin* (“it is usual for men to have their hair cut and for women to let it grow”); Pseudo-Phocylides, Sentences 212: *arsesin ouk epeoike koman* (“long hair is not fit for men”). Cf. P. W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides with Introduction and Commentary* (SVTP, 4; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 249.

¹⁸ The interpretation of ἀοὐτὶ / is a point of discussion and can be interpreted either in the sense of “by way of” or “instead of.” It is, however, hard to explain why Paul refers here to a type of headcovering to explain why long hair is a glory for a woman (v. 14), if his argument is about hairstyle. As Fee points out the argument only makes sense if read as an analogy between hairstyle and headcovering: “since women have by ‘nature’ been given long hair as a covering, that in itself points to their need to be ‘covered’ when praying or prophesying” (G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [NIC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 529).

to address, but only one facet of his construction of the “character” of the *ekklesia*, which is, as we will argue, a gendered/bounded phenomenon for Paul. Isolating and amputating any elements of the argument from this larger persuasive end does very little to reveal what is really at stake in 1 Cor 11, which is not so much the fundamental Corinthian context, but, in fact, the fundamental Paul.

2. Paul’s Ontological Move

A further point that can be made with respect to Gundry-Volf’s analysis is that, in limiting her analysis to the theological argumentation in 1 Cor 11:2-16, she also fails to notice that Paul’s reference to creation is part of a larger ontological argument. Verses 7-12 indeed offer a specifically ontological foundation based on Genesis 1 and 2, insofar as the difference between man and woman finds its origin, quite literally, in creation and thus in God. The statement in v. 7 that man is the image (and glory) of God is based on Gen 1:26-27, the supportive arguments in vv. 8-9 on Genesis 2.¹⁹ The ontological difference between man and woman is first founded on the chronological priority of man (she was created *from* him; v. 8) and then further elaborated upon in the following verse (she was created *for* him; v. 9). In both cases a preposition forms the pivotal element in the statements made. In v. 8 the preposition used is *ek*, in v. 9 *dia*. Both prepositions are again used in v. 12, where Paul declares that just as woman came from (*ek*) man, so man comes through (*dia*) woman.²⁰ If woman finds her origin in man this is balanced by his being born from her.

Paul goes on to use a second ontological argument to support his case in favor of women covering their heads (v.14), where he introduces his reference to long hair with an appeal to “nature” (*phusis*): “does not nature itself teach you...?” A similar appeal to nature personified as “teacher” does not occur elsewhere in Paul’s letters, but two additional

¹⁹ It goes too far to state that Paul denies in v. 7 that women are created in the image of God (W. F. Orr & J. A. Walther, *1 Corinthians* [AB; New York: Doubleday, 1976], 264). He may leave the reference out, because it does not serve his argument (G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle*, 516; M.D. Hooker, “Authority on her Head. An Examination of I Cor XI.10,” *NTS* 10 [1963-64], 411). It is more likely, however, that Paul simply identifies the first created human being of Gen 1:27 with the male Adam (cf. 1 Cor 15:45). See also E. Lohse, “Imago Dei bei Paulus,” in *Libertas Christiana* (Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie 26; München, 1957), 124-125.

²⁰ Verses 11-12 are often considered more egalitarian and in line with Gal 3:28. It is possible that Paul here balances off his previous statements for the sake of his argument. He has been arguing in favor of difference, but does not want to go so far as to negate women’s right to pray and prophecy (Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings*, 147). Yet, although Paul suggests in this instance a particular “interdependence” between man and woman, he is quick to assert that “all things come from God.” This last statement balances the “in the Lord” clause in v. 11. Thus, when focusing on the relationship of women and men, Paul is content to make distinctions, but, since the larger context relates to the character of the *ekklesia*, there is an added emphasis in vv.

references to *phusis* are interesting because they also relate to the issue of gender. The first one occurs in Rom 1:26-27, the second in Rom 2:27. In both cases reference is made to nature regarding issues directly or indirectly related to gender. In 1:26-27 Paul argues: “For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions (*pathe atimias*). Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural (*ten phusiken chresin eis ten para phusin*), and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse (*ten phusiken chresin*) with women, were consumed with passion for one another.” As in 1 Cor 11:14, Paul here labels the blurring of what is natural as *atimia*: long hair on men in 1 Corinthians and sexual relations between persons of the same sex in Romans. He condemns certain behavior as *atimia* (dishonor) because, according to him, it is not in accordance with nature. Bernadette Brooten notes that such terminology also occurs in Philo of Alexandria, who similarly condemns same-sex love as contrary to nature. That Paul explicitly uses the expression *para phusin* with respect to female homoeroticism may not be accidental. As Brooten observes: “The most common motif in the condemnation of female homoeroticism in the Roman world is that the woman has become masculine, which in cultural terms means that she has tried to go beyond the passive role accorded to her by nature and rise to the social level of a man.”²¹ Although in both cases of same-sex love the boundaries between male and female behavior are crossed, female conduct may have been (more) unacceptable because it is more threatening for the culturally established male norm. As Moore remarks: “In principle, the thought of a woman *gaining* status was more worrying for elite males than the thought of a man *losing* status.”²²

Yet, 1 Cor 11:2-16 and Rom 1:26-27 also have one other fundamental concern in common: their respective contexts relate to the appropriate worship of God. There persists, throughout Paul’s rather slanderous (today libelous) assessment of Gentile behavior, the thread of the rejection of the worship of the “Creator” (Rom 1:25). Moore points out that the relationship between homoeroticism and idolatry is not accidental here. In both cases the underlying idea is that a divinely instituted hierarchy was not respected. In the case of

3, 11-12 on how men and women relate to their Lord and Creator. From that perspective, both women and men are “submissive” (v. 3) and neither has an advantage (vv. 11-12).

²¹ Bernadette Brooten, “Paul and the Law: How Complete was the Departure?,” *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*. Suppl.1 (1990), 84; and her *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996), 235-37. The portrayal of Sappho in Ovid is instructive in this respect, as he gives her an overt male identity (P. Gorden, “The Lover’s Voice in *Heroides* 15: Or, Why Is Sappho a Man?,” in J. P. Hallett & M. B. Skinner [eds.], *Roman Sexualities* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997], esp. 280-86). Moore provides a lengthy list of ancient writers who regarded sexual relations between women as “unnatural.” “Plato, Seneca the Elder, Martial, Ovid, Ptolemy, Dorotheos of Sidon, Manetho, Pseudo-Phocylides, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, John Chrysostom—and Artemidoros” (Stephen D. Moore, *God’s Beauty Parlor and Other Queer Spaces in and around the Bible* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001], 143-44).

²² Moore, *God’s Beauty Parlor*, 150.

idolatry, the creature rather than the Creator is worshipped, in the case of homoeroticism, the hierarchy between men and women is overturned. In this analogy the presumed superiority of God and that of the male correspond to each other. Essentially the same hierarchy between God and man, with the inclusion of Christ, reoccurs more explicitly in 1 Cor 11:3 where the body metaphor “head” is used to establish a hierarchical order between God-Christ-man-woman.²³ It can thus be noted that a similar connection to nature and creation exists in Rom 1 and 1 Cor 11 and that in both cases the appeal is made to bolster a particular gendered order and relationship in the context of proper worship.

The second text in which an appeal to nature is made is Rom 2:27. Here the issue under discussion is the difference between Gentiles and Jews. The issue of gender is present too insofar as Paul refers to the presence of the foreskin as the natural condition compared with circumcision. He states: “Then those who are physically uncircumcised (lit. uncircumcision by nature: *he ek phuseos akrobustia*) but keep the law will condemn you that have the written code and circumcision but break the law.” Although gender is not the focus here, Paul describes a certain condition of the male body as “natural.” The reference to nature with respect to physical characteristics related to gender is what this text has in common with 1 Cor 11:14. But the relevance of this passage for our discussion goes further than that. In vv. 28-29 Paul goes on to explain the difference between circumcision and uncircumcision with another binary opposition, more specifically between “physical circumcision” (v. 28: *en sarki peritome*) and “circumcision of the heart” (v. 29: *peritome kardias*). This latter notion is further qualified as “spiritual not literal.” In *A Radical Jew*, Daniel Boyarin has stressed the importance of this distinction between spiritual and literal for understanding Paul’s hermeneutics of the body. For Paul the body represents the literal over against the spiritual, the particular over against the universal. Since the universal subject in Paul’s letters is a Christian male, Jews and women embody particularity or as Boyarin states: “The quintessentially ‘different’ people for Paul were Jews and women.”²⁴ In spiritualizing circumcision in Rom 2,29, Paul has in a way reasoned it out of existence. As a result, it also

²³ Different interpretations have been advanced with respect to the metaphorical meaning of *kephale*. The first interpretation is that *kephale* means “chief” or “ruler;” the second suggestion (advanced by Schlier and Bedale) is that it means “source;” the third that *kephale* should be understood in terms of “preeminence” (thus Cervin). H. Schlier, “*kephale*,” *TWNT* 3 (1938): 672-681; S. Bedale, “The Meaning of *kephale* in the Pauline Epistles,” *JTS* 5 (1954): 211-215; R. Cervin, “Does *kephale* Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority Over’ in Greek Literature? A Rebuttal,” *TrinJ* ns 10 (1989): 85-112. The meaning “preeminence” is also favored by Gundry-Volf, “Gender and Creation,” 158-159. It seems, however, difficult to avoid a hierarchical connotation. For a more in-depth discussion, see C. Vander Stichele, *Authenticiteit en integriteit van 1 Kor 11,2-16. Een bijdrage tot de discussie omtrent Paulus’ visie op de vrouw* (unpublished dissertation; Leuven, 1992), 281-336.

²⁴ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 17.

loses its *raison d'être* and as such it has become irrelevant “in Christ.” Or as Paul states elsewhere “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation is everything” (Gal 6:15).

If, however, ethnicity is thus erased in Christ, so also is gender (in a sense). “Femaleness” may lose its meaning when women are incorporated in the spiritual body of Christ, but gender does not therefore stop to exist “in the flesh” nor for that matter does ethics as a form of body politics. It is precisely this distinction which makes it possible for Paul to affirm both universality in the spiritual realm and difference when it comes to ethics. Both tendencies are present in 1 Cor 11 as well. Women can indeed pray and prophecy just as men do, but such “egalitarianism” (if that indeed is an appropriate term for what is manifested therein) has its limits. Freedom in the spirit does not imply freedom *from* the body. It does not erase difference on the level of the body, especially not the female body. Paul’s arguments reveal his interest: to keep the boundaries between male and female in check. As Gail Paterson Corrington notes (quoting Mary Douglas): “bodily control is an expression of social control,”²⁵ and such control is by far the interest of upper-class males in the ancient world.²⁶ In this light, we should note that even when women become incorporated within the “spiritual body,” this does not yet imply that this is a non-gendered zone. In fact, the “spiritual body” in Paul is defined in predominantly masculine terms.²⁷ The “natural” world thus infuses the spiritual as well and consequently one can only speak of a relative eradication of gender identity in this realm.²⁸

If in Rom 1 and 1 Cor 11 Paul uses “nature” as the sure ground for how things ought to proceed in worshipping the Creator, in Rom 2 he turns the tables on his use of what is “natural,” as he relativizes the “natural” condition of the male body, while at the same time spiritualizing what is, from the Greek and Roman perspective, “unnatural.” As we may presume, a circumcised male himself, Paul not only does not want to normativize the

²⁵ Gail Paterson Corrington, “The ‘Headless Woman’: Paul and the Language of the Body in 1 Cor 11:2-16,” *PRS* 18 (1991), 224, quote from Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), 79.

²⁶ D. G. Horrell, “The Development of Theological Ideology in Pauline Christianity,” in P. Esler (ed.), *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 235-36, has argued, with respect to the Pauline corpus, that one can perceive a clear development in the social legitimation of the interests of the male “heads of households.”

²⁷ Moore, *God’s Beauty Parlor*, 170-71.

²⁸ This is particularly the case with respect to women, since there existed a strong tradition in ancient Christianity that women in fact achieved their spiritual status by “becoming male.” For instance, E. Castelli observes that, in the case of Perpetua, her “spiritual progress is marked by the social movement away from conventional female roles and by the physical movement from a female to a male body; these processes of transformation signify her increasingly holy status” (“I Will Make Mary Male’: Pieties of the Body and Gender

“natural” state of the male member, but even more so, he is also concerned to spiritualize “deformity” of the same. This fluctuation is a deliberate negotiation on Paul’s part, and evinces the flexibility that such ontological arguments have in Paul’s thinking, but with the result, we have argued, that masculine identity is affirmed over against the female “other” in whatever (argumentative) focus Paul has at the time.²⁹ Thus, whether the natural order is affirmed or relativized, masculinity as the defining norm is firm. This leaves us, finally, with a very different framework for understanding 1 Cor 11, especially in terms of the overarching cultural framework that guides Paul’s argument and the precise nature of the persuasive aim of the text.

3. The Nature of Hair in Greco-Roman Moral Philosophers

Before assessing the rhetorical function of all of this for Paul, it is illuminating to examine at this point some parallels in other ancient writers. The most interesting is a series of comments in Epictetus’s *Discourses*, which correspond closely with the way in which Paul refers to nature in relationship to hair. The first relates to the discussion of providence:

Come, let us leave the chief works of nature (*ta erga tes phuseos*), and consider merely what she does in passing. Can anything be more useless than the hairs on a chin? Well, what then? Has not nature used even these in the most suitable (*prepontos*) way possible? Has she not by these means distinguished between the male and the female? Does not the nature of each one among us cry aloud forthwith from afar, “I am a man; on this understanding approach me, on this understanding talk with me; ask for nothing further; behold the signs?”... Wherefore, we ought to preserve the signs which God has given; we ought not to throw them away; we ought not, so far as in us lies, to confuse the sexes which have been distinguished in this fashion (1.16.9-12, 14).

There are several striking parallels between this passage and the Pauline texts under discussion. First, as in 1 Cor 11:14, nature is also personified here.³⁰ She distinguishes between male and female—hairs on the chin are a sign (*symbolon*) of sexual difference. This

Transformation of Christian Women in Late Antiquity,” in J. Epstein & K. Straub [eds.], *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* [Routledge: New York/London, 1991], 35).

²⁹ A similar situation can be observed in Paul’s use of *kosmos* and *ktisis* in Romans and 1 Corinthians. As Edward Adams has noted, in the former Paul has a rather positive assessment of the world and creation (“God’s good and well-ordered creation, destined to be redeemed”), whereas in the latter it is much more negative (“alienated from God and doomed to perish”). Adams, however, fails to accent the rhetorical use of these terms, and focuses rather on the differing “theological frameworks” and “situational contexts” of the respective texts (*Constructing the World: A Study in Paul’s Cosmological Language* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000], 242-43).

³⁰ In Stoic thought there exists a close connection between “nature” and “god” (T. Engberg-Pedersen, *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis: Moral Development and Social Interaction in Early Stoic Philosophy* [Aarhus Univ. Press,

is not just considered as a fact, but also as an indication for human behavior: this distinction should be preserved and not confused. Second, as is the case with Paul in Rom 1, Epictetus is concerned with the proper recognition of God: "...by Zeus and the gods, one single gift of nature would suffice to make a man who is reverent and grateful perceive the providence of God" (1.16.7). He then goes on to suggest that anyone not recognizing God's providence, even in the smaller workings of nature, is truly "stupid" and "shameless" (1.16.8). The reference to shamelessness (*anaischuntia*) in this context represents another element of correspondence with 1 Cor 11:4-6 (cf. Rom 1:27), where Paul uses similar terminology to express his depreciation for the practices he opposes.

Further, Epictetus ends this discourse with reference to singing hymns to this "great" God (1.16.16), which for him is also a sign of human rationality: "...to sing the greatest and divinest hymn, [for the reason that] God has given us the faculty to comprehend these things and to follow the path of reason" (1.16.18). The opposite idea is present in Rom 1, where God in fact gives the Gentiles over to a debased mind, which itself is manifested in vile behaviors (1:28). Overall, then, in this first parallel the suggested order in nature is itself presented as a "witness" to an "ordered" (gendered?) deity, and recognizing this hierarchy of nature in principle reflects the recognition (and worship) of this Creator. Those "irrational" entities who do not recognize the ordered universe will do more than just be "stupid"—they will also be "shameless." This is one of the critical lynchpins clearly present in Rom 1 and Epictetus (but probably also implied in 1 Cor 11): the first step beyond the "natural" ordered world is the first step towards chaos and moral depravity—a true harmony of *logos* and *ergon*.

That human interference should not blur the difference between the sexes becomes even clearer in the second passage from Epictetus, where he is concerned with the presence or absence of hair on the body:

Woman is born smooth and dainty by nature, and if she is very hairy, she is a prodigy, and is exhibited at Rome among the prodigies. But for a man not to be hairy is the same thing, and if by nature he has no hair he is a prodigy, but if he cuts it out and plucks it out of himself, what shall we make of him? Where shall we exhibit him, and what notice shall we post? "I will show you," we say to the audience, "a man who wishes to be a woman rather than a man." What a dreadful spectacle!...Man, what reason have you to complain against your nature?...Your paltry body doesn't please you, eh? Make a clean sweep of the whole matter; eradicate your—what shall I call it?—the cause of your hairiness; make yourself a woman all over, so as not to deceive us, half-man and half-woman.... Shall we make a man like you a citizen of Corinth, and perchance a warden of the city, or a superintendent of ephebi, or general, or superintendent of the games? Well, and when you have married are you going to

1990], 59-60). Paul, however, considers nature to be God's creation (F. Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* [NTD 7; Göttingen/Zürich, 1986], 143; M. Pohlenz, "Paulus und die Stoa," *ZNW* 42 [1949], 77).

pluck out your hairs? For whom and to what end? And when you have begotten boys, are you going to introduce them into the body of citizens as plucked creatures too? A fine citizen and senator and orator! (3.1.27-35).

In this second passage Epictetus objects to the removal of hair that is there by nature and that is, according to him, a characteristic of sexual difference. By removing hair men obscure the difference between the sexes. Epictetus goes even further and suggests it reveals a wish to be a woman. This is a fascinating reference because it delves into several interrelated aspects of gender in the ancient world. Here Epictetus challenges a male who clearly appears and presents himself (“cuts” and “plucks” out his hair) as effeminate. The contrast between male and female body types demonstrates the firm boundaries that he favors, and in particular his perception that “nature” witnesses to the “type” each sex should embody. The appeal to nature underscores the emphasis on what the true male will look and act like. Those who “cut” and “pluck” their hair, evincing feminine qualities, undermine their masculine identity.³¹ It is not surprising, then, that Epictetus is quick to draw associations between the effeminate male and his role in civic life, the primary manifestation of male identity in the ancient world. In an interesting reference to Corinth, Epictetus questions the suitability of such a “plucked” male for political service. Leadership and pedagogical positions require the demonstration of manly qualities, of which hair is here seen as a visible sign.³² In other words, the “male” of

³¹ Or, more precisely, their outward appearance reveals their “inner” lack of such masculine identity. There is a close connection here with physiognomic speculation, in which, for example, there are allegedly clear signs of those features that signal an effeminate male (a *kinaidos* or *androgynē*) (T.S. Barton, *Power and Knowledge: Astrology, Physiognomics, and Medicine Under the Roman Empire* [Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1994], 116-17). The outward appearances were thought to indicate clearly (and scientifically!) the inner character and disposition of the male. When, for instance, the philosopher Philiscus appears before the Emperor in Philostratus’s *Lives of the Sophists*, the Emperor, who had already taken a disliking to Philiscus, declared, based on the observation of the latter’s mannerisms, “his hair shows what sort of man he is, his voice what sort of orator!” (622-23). Dio Chrysostom suggests that while many who do “forbidden things” (“in violation of Nature’s laws” [*para phusin*]), do so in relative secret, “yet such symptoms of their incontinence as the following reveal their true character and disposition: voice, glance, posture; yes, and the following also, which are thought to be petty and insignificant details: style of haircut, mode of walking, elevation of the eye, inclination of the neck, the trick of conversing with upturned palms” (33.52). Hair thus forms an integral part of this self-portrayal. See further the fine discussion by M. W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995], 67-70; and her “The Semiotics of Gender: Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.E.,” in David M. Halperin et al. [eds.], *Before Sexuality. The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990], 399-402, 406-411). On the rhetoric of masculinity and physiognomy, see J. A. Harrill, “Invective Against Paul (2 Cor 10:10), the Physiognomics of the Ancient Slave Body, and the Greco-Roman Rhetoric of Manhood,” in A. Yarbro Collins & M. M. Mitchell (eds.), *Antiquity and Humanity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 201-209; and A. Corbeill, “Dining Deviants in Roman Political Activity,” in *Roman Sexualities*, esp. 118-22.

³² The reason for this connection rests in Aristotelian science, wherein hairiness was understood to be grounded in the very essence of male identity: the production of sperm (which Epictetus explicitly acknowledges in the text, since he suggests eradicating the “source” [= male genitals] of hairiness). Women were thought to have sperm as well, so this accounted for the presence of their hair, although they neither had as much nor was it agitated so as to spread throughout their bodies. In this framework, the greater hairiness of males was seen as a

this passage will only manage to reproduce citizens in his own image, which, from Epictetus's standpoint, would damage the reputation of the *polis*. Hair, or lack of it, is presented as an outward symbol of not only the inner character (i.e., manliness) of the adult male, but also is taken, as a consequence, as a sign of his potential contribution (or lack of it) in the body politic.

Although Epictetus does not refer in these passages to hair growing on the head as Paul does, their argumentation has much in common. Nature indicates what type of human behavior is appropriate. Both appeal to nature when speaking about hair and both consider hair to be an important feature of sexual difference. According to Epictetus, the presence of hair on man and its absence on woman is "natural," while, for Paul, long hair is natural on a woman, not on a man. The situations of men and women are thus presented as each others' opposite. The difference is clear and that is how it is supposed to be—nature shows the way. But there is one further element that becomes particularly evident: gender distinction is critical for the proper functioning of the divine and human realms. Thus, in the same way that proper ("natural") comportment of the body in the first example from Epictetus suggests something about one's relationship to God, in the second case suitable comportment says something about the body politic, particularly the role one plays in the civic life of the city. And one can probably go one step further to suggest that in this particular construction the body becomes the mediating locus of the ordered universe: maintenance of gendered/bounded identity demonstrates a recognition of God as Creator, which in turn saves one from vice and evinces itself in virtue in community life.³³ A similar concern for gender distinction and identity in relation to both the divine and human order is also present in Rom 1 and 1 Cor 11. Not surprisingly, then, for both Paul and Epictetus the *vir bonus* is the truest reflection of the divine.

The appeal of Paul and Epictetus to nature should be understood against the background of popular Greek ideas (not excluding the elaboration of these notions in philosophical frameworks such as Stoicism),³⁴ which were also taken up in Hellenistic

sign of their superiority over females (L. A. Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1994], 83-85).

³³ This connection between the divine and human realms is not accidental, of course, since it stems in part from Epictetus's Stoic philosophy, in which harmony between the realms was quintessential (A. F. Bonhöffer, *The Ethics of the Stoic Epictetus* [trans. W. O. Stephens; New York: Peter Lang, 1996], 140). In this respect, it is interesting to note that in Epictetus's reflections on bodily cleanliness, the legitimation is dual: the gods are immaculate and that ought to be imitated, but at the same time there is a benefit for fellow humans as well (Bonhöffer, *The Ethics*, 86-87).

³⁴ The stoic character of Paul's reference to nature in 1 Cor 11:14 has been assessed differently. See for instance Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (KEK 5; 9th edn; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 276: "Diese Argumentationsweise, schon bei Plato vorgebildet (...) is echt stoisch." More skeptical is Conzelmann

Judaism, as we can catch a glimpse of it in Josephus and Philo. In this Hellenistic framework, *physis* appears as the antipode of *nomos*, namely that which comes about by convention. Hair readily serves as an interesting example, since it can be viewed as both nature (as part of the body) and as convention (the styling and preening of the hair).³⁵ Yet, the difference between “nature” and “convention” in all of this is less clear than might at first be evident. As classicist John Winkler points out, the contrast of *physis* and *nomos* “is itself a cultural item, a habit of thought once discovered, promoted, and eventually adopted as convention.”³⁶ We are thus dealing with a highly flexible category, which is all the more convenient for the elaboration of arguments.³⁷ Most determinative in this respect is the argumentative use made of the distinction between *physis* and *nomos*.³⁸ In fact, as Winkler argues elsewhere, we cannot even equate “against nature” with “abnormal” or something that was in fact bad.³⁹ For instance, when women acted nobly, they were in essence acting contrary to their “own” natures—they were being like men.⁴⁰

This last point finds particular emphasis in an example of a similar discussion of hair in Plutarch. In his “Roman Questions,” Plutarch queries the following:

Why do sons cover their head when they escort their parents to the grave, while daughters go with uncovered heads and hair unbound? Is it because fathers should be honoured as gods by their male offspring, but mourned as dead by their daughters, that custom (*ho nomos*) has assigned to each sex its proper part and has produced a fitting

who notes that nature is not an object of systematic reflection for Paul, but only serves here as an additional argument (Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief*, 224). Fee argues that “Paul makes no theological significance of the idea as one finds it in Stoicism. For him this is not an appeal to Nature, or to ‘natural law’, or to ‘natural endowment’; nor is Nature to be understood as pedagogic (actually ‘teaching’ these ‘laws’)” (Fee, *The First Epistle*, 526-527).

³⁵ Levine, “The Gendered Grammar,” 88-89.

³⁶ John J. Winkler, “Laying Down the Law: The Oversight of Men’s Sexual Behavior in Classical Athens,” in *Before Sexuality*, 172. Not surprisingly, in this light, T. Engberg-Pedersen, with reference to Rom 1:24-27, refers to Paul’s “naïve use of ‘nature’ in support of traditional and social normative perceptions” (*Paul and the Stoics* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000], 209).

³⁷ Depending on the specific argumentative goal or specific prescription of behavior, the nature of what was “natural” could shift drastically. For example, those moral philosophers who eschewed homoerotic sexual relationships utilized appeals to nature as a “proof” for their arguments (C. Williams, *Roman Sexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999], 234-44) in the same way that Martial could utilize “nature” as a “proof” for penetration of both males and females by the fully masculine male (cf. 11.22.9-10; Williams, *Roman Sexuality*, 242).

³⁸ In Hellenistic Judaism this particular distinction becomes more complex, as *nomos* is not simply “convention” (from humans) but “law” from God. In 4 Maccabees, for example, *nomos* is praised and personified in much the same way as Nature in Epictetus. Eleazar is here in fact praised as one “in harmony with the law” (7:7) (S. D. Moore & J. Capel Anderson, “Taking it Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees,” *JBL* 117 [1998], 252-53).

³⁹ Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1999), 20-21.

⁴⁰ Since “male” is the norm, acting against nature can in some contexts be beneficial for those who are inferior, culturally or otherwise (some of these sentiments are based on the Aristotelian one-sex model, in which women were imperfect males measured against the “complete man;” see G. Sissa, “The Sexual Philosophies of Plato and Aristotle,” in P. S. Pantel [ed.], *A History of Women in the West I. From Goddesses to Christian Saints* [trans., A. Goldhammer; Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1992], 65-67; and D. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995], 230).

result from both? Or is it that the unusual is proper in mourning, and it is more usual for women to go forth in public with their heads covered and men with their heads uncovered? So in Greece, whenever any misfortune comes, the women cut off their hair and the men let it grow, for it is usual (*sunethes estin*) for men to have their hair cut and for women to let it grow (267 A-B).

It is remarkable that both Plutarch and Paul refer to length of hair when they discuss covering the head. They also use similar terminology to do so.⁴¹ They agree that long hair and a headcovering are appropriate for women, but not for men. On other points, however, they differ. Plutarch refers to the (apparently legitimate) reversal of this practice in a specific situation, namely at the funeral of parents. Plutarch, moreover, does not refer to nature in this respect, but only to custom (*nomos*) and what is usual (*sunethes*), while Paul refers to nature with respect to hair, but to *sunetheia* with respect to the wearing of a headcovering (11:16).⁴² On the one hand, it is noteworthy that the basic assumptions about hair and headcovering are consonant with what we find in 1 Cor 11; there is an “accepted” and “expected” pattern.⁴³ On the other hand, the fact that Plutarch allows for exceptions suggests something noteworthy about the function of distinction in this passage. Plutarch tries to explain the deviant behavior of women and men in a specific situation, but does not see this as a problem per se, while, in the previous examples of Paul and Epictetus, appeal to nature affirms the difference between

⁴¹ According to Cynthia L. Thompson, the similarity in language “may suggest that this discussion was somewhat conventional...The true importance of Plutarch’s passage is the underlying conviction that in hairstyle and head-covering women and men must be different. Paul, too, is anxious to maintain distinctions” (C. L. Thompson, “Hairstyles, Headcoverings, and St. Paul. Portraits from Roman Corinth,” *BA* 51 [1988], 105).

⁴² Some scholars have suggested that *sunetheia* rather relates to *philoneikos* v. 16a. In that case Paul would claim that “we” do not have such a custom of being contentious. So, for instance, Ph. Bachmann, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (2nd edn; Leipzig, 1910), 362; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians* (2nd edn; Minneapolis, 1963), 451-452; van de Sandt, *1 Kor 11,2-16*, 420. However, in light of the use of *sunetheia* earlier in the letter, where it refers to practice of idolatry (8:7), it seems more likely that Paul refers here to another existing practice in the Corinthian community, that of uncovering the head.

⁴³ In antiquity, deviations from the norm were particularly significant and this is in large part what Plutarch reflects in this passage. In Acts 18:18, Paul cuts his hair (presumably in a way that is different from the norm) to solemnize a vow. The deviation from the normal pattern signals that this is a sacred duty (in line with this, physical transformations/departures were also seen as signs of “cardinal moments;” A. Bowie, “*Exuvias Effigiemque*: Dido, Aeneas and the Body as Sign,” in D. Montserrat [ed.], *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings: Studies on the Human Body in Antiquity* [New York: Routledge, 1998], 60-61). This is further reflected in mourning rituals. Women who shave their head, such as the old mother and her foreign attendants in Euripides’ *The Suppliants* (95), are grieving for their male dead (cf. also *Phoenissae* 1485). In the *Iliad*, Hector’s mother throws off both her veil and tears her hair (22.405), while his wife throws off her veil (22.470). The parallel of the veil and hair is significant here, since both are marks of feminine married/household identity. Thus, when writers want to demonstrate the expression of grief, the women are portrayed as “shedding” (and thereby grieving the loss of) their marks of domestic character, which is a way of evoking pathos in the spectator (cf. Euripides’ contrasting of Clytemnestra [with long beautiful hair] and Electra [with short, cropped hair] in this regard; R. Hawley, “The Dynamics of Beauty in Classical Greece,” in *Changing Bodies*, 48-49). In a bit of a different vein, Thecla’s desire for transformation into Christian/male identity in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* is denoted by her wish to cut her hair short (25) and her eventual altering of her “female” cloak into a “male” garment (40).

men and women with respect to hair, and both writers react against the blurring of that difference. They confirm the ontological character of sex/gender distinctions for the sake of making explicit arguments about proper recognition of the divine and the proper comportment of the individual in the body politic. These texts are prescriptive in aim. By contrast, the passage from Plutarch is descriptive. Thus, the rhetorical function of the *topos* has everything to do with the particular function of the reference to nature. This means, then, that we must now turn to Paul's larger rhetorical aim in 1 Cor 11:2-16. We will do so by placing particular emphasis on his *ethos* argumentation in terms of establishing both the community's identity as well as his own.

II. Establishing *Ethos*: Paul in "Proper" Perspective

1. *Ethos* Argumentation

Since the establishment of the character of the speaker was one of the most important moves of ancient rhetorical theory, it is important to set forth in a preliminary manner our particular understanding of *ethos* argumentation before turning to 1 Cor 11:2-16.⁴⁴ Formal studies of *ethos* argumentation highlight more specifically the proper establishment of the speaker's character, as well as the proper construction/depiction of the character of those in whose behalf or against whom the orator is speaking. *Ethos* argumentation thus has several distinctive trajectories within a speech, moving between speaker and subject (i.e., that of which/whom is spoken). It is also one of the main bridges between the orator/narrator and the audience/spectator (one can only persuade if they properly detect and/or construct the *ethos* of the hearers). While the rhetorical discussions of *ethos* argumentation acknowledge that it has a particular function in the course of the elaboration of the argument, the entire speech itself can readily be understood (often explicitly, always implicitly) as establishing and maintaining the *ethos* of the speaker, his subject, and his spectator. The ancient world embodies a culture of persuasion, which did not come to an end when the speech concluded or when the specific rhetorical function of a argumentative device was described and fixed. If we take seriously

⁴⁴ This is important for, as J. W. Marshall notes, "though ethos is almost universally praised as an extremely powerful means of persuasion... what treatment it has received [in ancient and modern theories and applications] is confused and confusing" ("Paul's Ethical Appeal in Philippians," in S. E. Porter & T. H. Olbricht [eds.], *Rhetoric and the New Testament* [JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993], 358).

Vernon Robbins's characterization of ancient Greek and Roman culture as rhetorical, then we must reexamine the intersections of rhetoric and life.⁴⁵ And they are many.

The emphasis on “character” in ancient composition coheres well with the assessments of *ethos* one finds in writers from Aristotle to Quintilian.⁴⁶ In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defines *ethos* as that which happens when “speech or action reveals the nature of a moral choice...” (1454a). Not surprisingly, then, the quintessential emphasis has been on the moral quality as the heart of what Aristotle, at least, meant by “character.”⁴⁷ Indeed, in this view, the narrative will reveal the moral character of the actor precisely by making their choices apparent (since the “outer” appearance of their *logos* or *ergon* reflects something about their “inner” nature).⁴⁸ This is one of the most important points about ancient *ethos* discussion. As S. Halliwell notes, “the basis of character for Aristotle is constituted by developed dispositions to act virtuously or otherwise. These dispositions are both acquired and realized in action; they cannot come into existence or continue to exist for long independently of practical activity... character represents the ethical qualities of actions... dramatic characterization... must [therefore] involve the *manifestation* of moral choice in word or action...”⁴⁹ Characterization, in this view, involves four specific elements: the presentation of good characters, appropriateness, likeness (i.e., representative of the human class), and consistency of character. While Aristotle was naturally concentrating on the composition of particularly tragic (and to a lesser extent epic) composition, these same premises also infuse his discussion of *ethos* in his *Rhetoric* (2.12-17).

⁴⁵ Robbins describes a “rhetorical” culture as one in which speakers and writers compose “both orally and scribally in a rhetorical manner” (“Progymnastic Rhetorical Composition and Pre-Gospel Tradition: A New Approach,” in C. Focant [ed.], *Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism* [BETL 110; Leuven: Leuven Univ. Press, 1993], 110; see also his “Writing as a Rhetorical Act in Plutarch and the Gospels,” in D. F. Watson [ed.], *Persuasive Artistry* [JSNTSup 50; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991], 145-49).

⁴⁶ Some have drawn out significant differences in the understanding and use of *ethos* between the Greeks and Romans. The argument has been that the Romans made a shift to a more strongly emotional use of *ethos* (and *pathos*), away from Aristotle's focus on their use as specific, rational arguments (see esp. S. J. Kraftchick, “*Pathos* in Paul: The Emotional Logic of ‘Original Argument’,” in T. H. Olbricht & J. L. Sumney [eds], *Paul and Pathos* [SBLSS 16; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2001], 47-57; also J. M. May & J. Wisse, *Cicero: On the Ideal Orator* [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001], 34-35). It is probably best, however, to think of a difference in degree and emphasis rather than any type of fundamental divide between the two camps: in the Roman tradition there is clearly an argumentative, rational quality to the use of the milder emotional appeal of *ethos*, particularly in term of its connection to the *topoi* (Barton, *Power and Knowledge*, 110-111).

⁴⁷ S. Halliwell, *The Poetics of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1987), 140.

⁴⁸ See E. S. Belfiore, *Tragic Pleasures: Aristotle on Plot and Emotion* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992), 94-95; and N. Sherman, *The Fabric of Character: Aristotle's Theory of Virtue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 79-83.

⁴⁹ S. Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics* (London: Duckworth, 1986), 151-52. See also T. E. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), 13-14.

Most importantly, the fundamental moral quality of *ethos* extends to the Roman rhetorical reception. Indeed, it might not be too far fetched to envision the “stage” of Roman public life as one long process in the establishment of one’s ethical “core,” which was nothing less than the external performance and manifestation of *ergon* and *logos*. Cicero demonstrates aptly how *ethos* could be applied to the *persona* that the speaker creates. In his *de Oratore*, Cicero states:

Now, since the emotions which eloquence has to excite in the minds of the tribunal, or whatever other audience we may be addressing, are most commonly love, hate, wrath, jealousy, compassion, hope, joy, fear or vexation, we observe that love is won if you are thought to be upholding the interests of your audience, or to be working for good men, or at any rate for such as that audience deems good and useful. For this last impression more readily wins love and the protection of the righteous esteem... You must struggle to reveal the presence, in the cause you are upholding, of some merit or usefulness, and to make it plain that the man, for whom you are to win this love, in no respect consulted his own interests...zeal for others’ service is applauded (206-207).⁵⁰

The intersection of the speaker’s *ethos* with that of both the audience’s and of the subject’s are evident in Cicero. The speaker wants to be “loved” (by his client and his audience), and can secure this by “appearing” to represent the “good” and “useful.” Moreover, by appealing to *topoi*, the speaker can also invoke the perceived (and manufactured) *ethos* of his audience (“zeal for others’ service is applauded”). In this context the rhetorician “paints” characters “in words,” constructing “upright, stainless, conscientious, modest, and long-suffering under injustice” *ethē* for his subjects (cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1554b). Moreover, the manner of the delivery of these very same “words” also establishes the character of the speaker: “for by means of particular types of thought and diction, and the employment besides of a delivery that is unruffled and eloquent of good-nature, the speakers are made to appear upright, well-bred and virtuous men (*boni viri*)” (184). Indeed, Cicero goes on to argue that when one addresses any audience, not only is the orator’s “talent” on trial, but even more importantly his “attributes” are being scrutinized; virtues such as “loyalty, sense of duty and carefulness, under whose influence even when defending complete strangers, we still cannot regard them as strangers, if we would be accounted good men (*virī boni*) ourselves” (192-93). In line with this, and on the flip side of *virtus*, the idea that the speaker must also demonstrate *imperium* over the audience is critical: “If they surrender to me...of their own accord lean towards and are prone to take the course of action in which I am urging them on, I accept the bounty...”

⁵⁰ The “love” of which Cicero speaks may better be classified as *pathos* (since it is more extreme in nature), but one is dealing with degrees of separation here (cf. Quintilian, 6.2.12).

(187).⁵¹ We see here just how much is at stake for the orator: his very identity as a Roman male stands on trial, his virtue in limbo, his power and authority in need of demonstration. Not surprisingly, then, Cicero has explicitly linked his own masculine identity (conquering the audience, making them submit to his will/skill, seizing the glory of the vanquished, manifesting supreme virtue) to the act of making the argument and persuading the audience. In this sense, Cicero readily demonstrates the high stakes involved in ancient rhetorical combat: masculine status could be won or lost in the course of persuasion.

2. Character and Masculinity in Ancient Rhetoric

Both Maud Gleason's *Making of Men* and E. Gunderson's *Staging Masculinity* provide an excellent engagement of the connection of rhetorical practice to the larger issue of gender identity in the ancient world, demonstrating that at stake in speeches was no less than a battle for the authority and power of the speaker in terms of his publicly constructed *persona*, which in the ancient context was predominantly the forum for the display of the masculine *virtus* and *imperium*. Moreover, the characterization of the speaker was not simply something that was spoken, it was also embodied in his physical display and comportment of the body (the physiognomic connection). Thus, from delivery to composition, from opening to closing, the speech or narrative defined the very essence of the individual. Gunderson aptly captures this:

It is in performance that one acts out this authentic essence, that one performs the *vir bonus*; here it is exposed and evaluated, appreciated or derided...in Latin *persona* is not just personal "character" but also the mask that a character on the stage wears, a mask that is stylized and revelatory of character. Becoming a good man implies learning to assume one's own face as a mask...Oratorical performance is ideally the performance of the *vir bonus*. This performance is not merely the donning of a mask or semblance, but a performance that ought to lend credence to the notion of truth, of an essence underlying appearances. Thus one is in a sense making manifest to the world a soul, a fact of the person. Similarly, this soul needs to be seen and appreciated by other souls, by other Romans.⁵²

⁵¹ Quintilian's treatment of the same comes fully into line with Cicero's assessment of *ethos*: "The *ethos* which I have in mind and which I desiderate in an orator is commended to our approval by goodness...the chief merit in its expression lies in making it seem that all that we say derives directly from the nature of the facts and persons concerned and in the revelation of the character of the orator in such a way that all may recognize it" (6.2.13). Quintilian, in a similar way to Cicero, suggests that since *ethos* focuses on moral character, the orator ought to be "a man of good character and courtesy (*bonum et comem virum*)" (6.2.18). The rhetorician's own "excellence" in character is fundamentally at stake in all of this, both constructed within the speech and displayed without. In the end, while the subject is always central to the rhetorical act itself, it is also in some ways simply a conduit between the speaker and audience for the latter's public recognition of the former's superior qualities in *logos* and *ergon*.

Gunderson here refers explicitly to the performance aspect of oratory, but this statement could just as readily apply to any public display (written or oral) of rhetorical acts in the ancient world. We would perhaps push this assessment one step further, however, since it is not only in “performance” that one “exposes” the *vir bonus*, because the performance itself is an integral part of the process of *becoming* such a male as this.

Flowing out of this general context of ancient rhetorical thinking, speaking, composing and acting, the gendered nature of this culture of persuasion must be highlighted as not the only, but certainly a major, feature of *ethos* argumentation. Indeed, if the goal of the orator is *virtus* and *imperium*,⁵³ then the discourse itself is fully coherent with establishing these facets of the rhetorician’s larger character presentation. It is interesting in this light to observe how the gendered character of ancient writers and speakers was constructed in narrative discourse. In the *Lives of the Sophists*, Philostratus relates a story in which the Emperor verbally attacks the orator Philiscus, who “gave offence by the way in which he stood, his attire seemed far from suitable to the occasion, his voice effeminate, and his language indolent and directed to any subject matter rather than to the matter at hand.” The Emperor responds with a sharp attack on Philiscus’s masculinity: “His hair shows what sort of man he is, his voice what sort of orator” (623). The public comportment of the orator made it evident what sort of man he was or wasn’t.

Lucian, in his amusing satire *A Professor of Public Speaking*, encourages his “protégé” to avoid at all costs the “vigorous man with hard muscles and a manly stride, who shows a heavy tan on his body, and is bold-eyed and alert” (9). This is the person who speaks of such men of the past as Demosthenes and Plato. But Lucian bids his hearer to say “good-bye to that hairy, unduly masculine fellow, leaving him to climb up himself, all blown and dripping with sweat, and lead up what others he can delude” (10).” Here the “philosopher-king” of Plato is to be abandoned for the “handsome gentleman with a mincing gait, a thin neck, a languishing eye, and a honeyed voice, who distils perfume, scratches his head with the tip of his finger, and carefully dresses his hair, which is scanty now, but curly and raven-black...” (11; cf. 12, 15). And with this adoption true virtue (modesty, self-mastery, respectability) is to go out the window, and instead the orator is encouraged to embrace the mantle of “shamelessness” (15; cf. 22). Most striking, Lucian advises that such a one should be “elegant...and take pains to create the impression that women are devoted to you...the

⁵² E. Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity: The Rhetoric of Performance in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2000), 89.

⁵³ On the close association of these two categories of male identity, see Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 132-35.

public...will infer from it that your fame extends even to the women's quarters" (23). Lucian even suggests that this orator ought to be proud of being labeled effeminate, even though he has hair. Indeed, the final "insult," by way of advice, is Lucian's suggestion that this man should imitate women in being talkative and catty.

The last example comes from Seneca's short epistle describing how "degenerate" styles of speech arise in different time periods. He recites the Greek proverb that a "man's speech is just like his life," which coheres closely with the notion of *ethos* developed above. Seneca then states: "Exactly as each individual man's actions seems to speak, so people's style of speaking often reproduces the general character of the time, if the morale of the public has relaxed and has given itself over to effeminacy. Wantonness in speech is proof of public luxury...A man's ability cannot possibly be of one sort and his soul of another. If his soul be wholesome, well-ordered, serious, and restrained, his ability also is sound and sober. Conversely, when one degenerates, the other is also contaminated" (114.2-3). Seneca goes on to delineate the character of a certain Maecenas, who, in a time of civic strife, appeared in public with two eunuchs, "both of them more men than himself" (6). He was excessive in his heterosexuality, a sign of his effeminate nature (i.e., lacking in self-mastery),⁵⁴ and all his "unusual, unsound, and eccentric" character qualities were reflected fully in the patterns of his speech (6-7). While this orator allowed his hair to grow long,⁵⁵ he nonetheless "plucked" his beard (21). The final insult in character occurs when Seneca suggests that this effeminate style and comportment is the result of an effeminate soul, which turns kingship to tyranny over the individual (25). This is perhaps one of the strongest statements on the relationship of comportment, persuasion, and the construction of masculine identity in the ancient world. At stake in speaking and acting in the public forum is nothing less than the battle for creating and maintaining one's ideal male identity, often at the expense of some else's.

The outward manifestation of *ethos* is thus fundamentally a gendered concept in the ancient world. The orator and writer were constantly fixed on establishing their male character for an audience. Moreover, the very moral nexus of *ethos* was at stake in their verbal and physical comportment: virtue flowed naturally from the well-springs of ordered speech and suitable and moderate comportment. Indeed, as Seneca assures us, such outward manifestations are reflections, finally, of the inner soul. All of this is readily apparent, we

⁵⁴ A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality & Aggression in Roman Humor* (rev. edn; New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 222.

⁵⁵ In some contexts, long hair was deemed to be a sign of effeminate males; Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus*, 139; Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic," 483-88; D. E. Blattenberger, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Through Archaeological and Moral-Rhetorical Analysis* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 66.

would argue, from the use of *ethos* in 1 Cor 11, where Paul uses his discussion of the body to calibrate his own identity with respect to God and the Corinthian community.

3. Pauline Character and the Corinthians

Modern NT scholars often shun the idea that Paul could have employed such cultural models (both implicitly and explicitly) of communication. It is noteworthy, for instance, that at the end of his treatment of 1 Cor 11:2-16, Bruce Winter concludes that the problem in Corinth that Paul was addressing was in fact the Corinthian community's involvement in the "power politics of the body politic in Roman Corinth."⁵⁶ It is intriguing that Winter reflects little understanding or appreciation that Paul is the only one that we know of who actually was involved in "power politics of the body politic"—we have, after all, his letters. In his treatment of 1 Cor 1-4, Mark Given notes, by way of assessing (and dissenting from) the general trend of Pauline studies, that "any analysis of Paul's rhetorical strategy that would tend toward detecting in it a manipulative and coercive dimension, a cunningly insinuating strategy for regaining control over a situation in which the subject himself has a personal stake, must be avoided."⁵⁷ Alongside Given, we are suggesting that Paul's "manipulative and coercive dimension" ought to be delineated, since it is a fundamental aspect of his own verbal and *ethetic* comportment in his writings, in this case Corinthians. In this light, the recent statement of Lauri Thuren with respect to Paul's use of *pathos* is rather striking: "a study of [Paul's] persuasive techniques calls for a greater caution in making any claims about the feelings, intentions, and motives of the real author beyond the text."⁵⁸ By contrast, if one accepts the nature of *ethos* outlined above, particularly not only its pervasive presence in ancient rhetoric and composition, but also the major premise that the rhetorical "actor" actually constructs his character and *persona* in the act of writing and speaking, then quite the opposite of what Thuren suggests seems more likely: the historical and social situation behind 1 Corinthians is much more veiled than the author of the text. Or, perhaps, we can say that we

⁵⁶ B. W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 141.

⁵⁷ M. D. Given, *Paul's True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning and Deception in Greece and Rome* (ESEC 7; Harrisburg: Trinity Press Int'l, 2001), 95. Cf. the somewhat similar remarks by D. Amador, "Interpretive Unicity: The Drive Toward Monological (Monotheistic) Rhetoric," in S. E. Porter & D. L. Stamps (eds.), *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture* (JSNTSup 180; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 61-62: "...we will no longer allow ourselves the role of interpreter as conservative retainer of Paul's canonical status and reputation. Such a role, both theologically and also pragmatically, has meant that we abrogate our obligation to fulfill our role as rhetorical *critics*—we must become something more than rhetorical 'yes-men' and 'yes-womyn'" (61).

⁵⁸ L. Thuren, "By Means of Hyperbole (1 Cor 12:31b)," in *Paul and Pathos*, 113.

know what Paul wants us to know about him and his constructed identity. In the ancient context of public comportment, this, for Paul and his readers, highlights the apostle's virtuous character and the inner nature of his soul. Beyond his own personal construction and maintenance of this identity, there is little else that Paul is interested in revealing.⁵⁹

Returning to 1 Cor 11:2-16, then, perhaps the first place to start is to emphasize what is the most critical component of Paul's self-presentation in this unit: his concern for order in the Christian community,⁶⁰ which he "manages" according to his own sense of values and authority.⁶¹ Both of the features, *virtus* and *imperium*, which were integral to the *ethos* of the orator, are reflected here in Paul. We see him primarily adopting the mantle of the *paterfamilias*;⁶² he is the master of the household and the "broker of God's patronage."⁶³ This is important, for when read this way 1 Cor 11 tells us much more about Paul and his own projected identity, then it does about the particular problems ongoing in the worship service of the Christians of Corinth. Indeed, as David Amador notes in his brief treatment of this text, Paul doesn't even seem all that concerned to construct a coherent and convincing argument in the first place, and his final conclusion in 11:16 is "a power move, pure and simple: the last resort of a weak argument."⁶⁴

Given this emphasis on constructing his *persona* in the text, it is no wonder that Paul places so much stress on the ordering and indeed gendering of the household. Underlying his arguments from nature, from creation, and from custom, is that which is "appropriate"

⁵⁹ In this sense, it is important to distinguish between modern and ancient conceptions of character and their relation to the "inner" person. Halliwell places great stress on separating *ethos* in classical texts from the modern concept of personality and individuality; in fact, the very notion of character in the classical system assumes cultural patterns of virtue and vice that work against modern conceptions of individuality (*Aristotle's Poetics*, 151).

⁶⁰ It is noteworthy that just a bit earlier in 1 Corinthians Paul constructs his *ethos* as a faithful steward of the gospel (*oikonomian pepisteumai*; 9:17). See S. M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (SLBDS 134; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 220-22.

⁶¹ There are of course contrasting images of Paul's self-presentation in 1 Corinthians, which function interdependently to promote various contextualized images of the apostle in relation to his specific argument. These are not mutually incompatible, however. For instance, Paul, throughout his writings, not infrequently portrays himself as a "slave" or "steward" of God, but this functions in all ways to enhance Paul's own stature in his writings (cf. the Pauline use of the rhetorical *topos* of the enslaved leader in 1 Corinthians, detailed by D. B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), 117-18, 124-26). Paul is willing to go even further and depict himself in the "female" role with respect to Christ, in part to indicate something about his current situation with respect to the Corinthian community (for this aspect in Romans, see Moore, *God's Beauty Parlor*, 164-65, 169-70). But one must not confuse this "submission" to Christ as in some way implying that Paul becomes weak and impotent, because his discourse reveals anything but.

⁶² R. A. Ramsaran notes that Paul's use of maxims earlier in 1 Corinthians "directly support Paul's *ethos*" and "focus on the ability to guide and speak and on the appropriateness of doing so" (*Liberating Words: Paul's Use of Rhetorical Maxims in 1 Corinthians 1-10* [Valley Forge: Trinity Press Int'l, 1996], 35). Ramsaran goes on to note that Paul also places himself in the role of the "father in the faith" (37).

⁶³ S. J. Joubert, "Managing the Household: Paul as *Paterfamilias* of the Christian Household Group in Corinth," in *Modelling Early Christianity*, 216-17.

(*prepon*), which is established by God, and which Paul now maintains and enforces. Not surprisingly, this ordered household reflects the ordered deity/cosmos; but all of this reflects, in the end, on Paul. In the case of 1 Cor 11 he exercises control over the community, placing special emphasis on “suitable” hairstyles and veiling practices. But the orderedness of the Corinthian body does not stop here; rather, it is part of Paul’s larger body control in 1 Corinthians: to promote a distinct, ordered, moderate, upright community that reflects the “glory” of God, which is in fact the “glory” of Paul as well. If people imitate Paul as he imitates Christ (1 Cor 11:1) and play their appropriate role, stay in their “suitable” place, and adopt their “natural” comportment within the rhetorical sphere of the Corinthian body, there is indeed enough “glory” to go all around. These associations, however, are not accidental, but are generated in part from the rhetorical moves Paul himself makes in the process of constructing his discursive character.

This becomes clearer when we see the connection between household and nature that is prevalent in Pauline discourse: the ontological arguments all serve to fuse the order of the household with the order of the natural/created world (Paul covers all his bases!). They ground the household in “divine” realities and powers⁶⁵ that justify the social hierarchy Paul desires to maintain and control. Thus, Paul both asserts his interest in order (establishing his virtue as a “real” male, not given to the effeminacy of the “males” constructed in Rom 1) and in control (virtuous in restraining himself and his community). The move towards political discourse that seems to lie just beneath the surface in this framework is illuminated more clearly by Bruno Blumenfeld: “Paul...is the ideological guardian of the processes and structures of imperial power. Paul’s political objective was to make the empire endure, to ward off its decay by steeling it with a Christian ribband.”⁶⁶ This is an important observation, not only because it moves away from those interpretations that see Paul as fundamentally opposed to empire and its network of power relations, but it also helps explain why the household was so important to Paul: it was also a microcosm of the empire (which goes back

⁶⁴ Amador, “Interpretive Unicity,” 57.

⁶⁵ Indeed, one may read the reference in 11:10 to women having “authority” over their head “because of the angels” as a further reflection of the divine necessity and legitimation of the gendered order. It seems rather unlikely, however, that, as BeDuhn suggests, “Paul is attributing the separate formation of woman from man to a creative act of angels, not of God” (Jason D. BeDuhn, “‘Because of the Angels’: Unveiling Paul’s Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11,” *JBL* 118 [1999], 308).

⁶⁶ B. Blumenfeld, *The Political Paul: Justice, Democracy and Kingship in a Hellenistic Framework* (JSNTSup 210; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 283. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge sums up this approach quite aptly, by suggesting that “Paul’s language replicates and reinscribes imperial power relations” (C. Briggs Kittredge, “Corinthian Women Prophets and Paul’s Argumentation in 1 Corinthians,” in R. A. Horsley [ed.], *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation* [Harrisburg: Trinity Press Int’l, 2000], 108).

already to Hellenistic political philosophy and Aristotle).⁶⁷ We see, then, that his appeal in 1 Cor 11:16 to a rhetorical power play demonstrates that, whatever else, Paul is most concerned to preserve this hierarchy in the household, not least because it reflects his concern with the hierarchy of the empire. Paul of course does not appeal to the empire in this argument, or elsewhere for that matter, but rather uses the arguments from creation and nature to undergird a social and cultural structure that Paul deemed fundamental to his own identity (and that of the Corinthians). And this discourse, while fairly conservative in terms of its rendering of images, nonetheless presumes a predominantly male audience, or at least has that as its focus: the (re)constitution of female comportment in the text lies “under” the male’s (even granted the concession to interdependence in 1 Cor 11:11-12). The “viewer” whose image stands to be enhanced by this is the male’s. Therefore, while female comportment is quintessential to Paul’s argument/concern, the function of this discourse has much less to do with specific female identity in the Corinthian body and much more to do with inscribing male domination and power over those constructed as in need of control.⁶⁸ One can argue that the “body” as a whole stands to gain from proper “bodily” comportment all around, both sexes included, and this is partly true. But the predominant cultural value-system out of which Paul is operating here and which he inscribes on the Corinthian body, and indeed seeks to promote as the basis for his own identity for the audience, has to be seen from a (Greco-Roman) male perspective. There is no other lens that Paul or his culture offers us.

In light of these associations, then, the emphasis on female comportment in 1 Cor 11 is worth examining a bit further. While scholars like Dale Martin have argued that in the ancient world there was good reason to control women—their “uncontainable sexuality” threatens to pollute the social order of the community⁶⁹—the question remains whether this fully accounts for Paul’s own self-comportment in the text. That is, what does Paul gain by controlling women in this way? One possible avenue of exploration may rest in the patriarchal power that is evinced in controlling powerful women. Susan Fischler, in her work on the role of women in the images of the imperial cult, suggests that inclusion of women in imperial

⁶⁷ R. B. Hays’s observation that Paul’s use of Hebrew Bible citations and allusions are fundamentally ecclesiocentric in their orientation fits in well with the notion of Pauline argumentation being developed here (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1989]). Scholars such as Hays have seemed reticent, however, to explore more deeply the domestic and imperial grounding of this *ekklesia*-focused discourse.

⁶⁸ See the similar observations made with respect to the male “viewer” and their relationship to the murals of violence against women in Roman homes, by A. O. Koloski-Ostrow, “Violent Stages in Two Pompeian Houses: Imperial Taste, Aristocratic Response, and Messages of Male Control,” in A. O. Koloski-Ostrow & C. L. Lyons (eds.), *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 254-57.

⁶⁹ Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 247-48.

iconography was critical for displaying imperial dominance: “As male authority figures, the emperors and their heirs were displayed as revealing the prowess of the heroes and the stately attributes of the first citizens of the empire. But to complete the image of the patriarch, the emperors also needed to display control over their household. They needed a wife or other female authority figure who was restrained and maternal, whose body was seen as fertile and thus symbolic of the continuity of the dynasty.”⁷⁰ Fischler goes on to note how these women were also portrayed as powerful, having their image associated with potent goddesses. For Fischler this demonstrates even further the masculine dominance of the imperial male: he controls powerful women, and this says something about his ability to control his empire. In this regard, it is intriguing to see some of the connections between Fischler’s observations about imperial iconography and Paul’s own image of “control” over women in 1 Cor 11. These women are prophesying,⁷¹ and in the ancient world this was viewed as a boundary-crossing activity.⁷² Thus, from Paul’s own depiction, this is no ordinary household: it is a social body that channels the divine (seemingly on a frequent basis). And Paul depicts it as his task (and within his power and ability) to control such a situation as this.

There is probably one further consideration that should be put forth in this connection: the proper comportment of women in particular says something very important about the nature of Paul’s community, and hence about Paul himself. If we go back to the discussion on Rom 1, we saw there that Paul was quite concerned to support a particular view of “world” order based on nature. Paul critiqued the Gentiles for departing from the proper worship of God, which in turn resulted in their going “against nature” in terms of not only their sexual conduct, but also their complete degeneration into vice. Women represented a critical component in that move; the first to be mentioned in the argument. In this light, we can quite correctly see the emphasis on comportment in 1 Cor 11 as a particular Pauline concern for self-mastery/*disciplina*. This connection is insightfully articulated by Sandra Joshel thus:

Discipline was necessary not only for the acquisition of empire but also for ruling it. The denial of the body to the self speaks the denial of social power to others; a Roman’s rule of his own body provides an image of Roman domination and a model of sovereignty—of Roman over non-Roman, of upper class over lower, of master over slave, of man over woman, and of Princeps over everyone else...In particular, the morality of control served Rome’s new ruler. Augustus presented the required image of control and sacrifice...In the Princeps’ new order, there were to be no more selfish

⁷⁰ S. Fischler, “Imperial Cult: Engendering the Cosmos,” in L. Foxhall & J. Salmon (eds.), When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power & Identity in Classical Antiquity (New York: Routledge, 1998), 179.

⁷¹ As the context makes clear: “...Paul does not silence the women’s voices, but takes their prophetic role for granted” (M. R. D’Angelo, “Veils, Virgins, and the Tongues of Men and Angels: Women’s Heads in Early Christianity,” in *Off With Her Head*, 139).

⁷² Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 239-42.

desires like those which had precipitated civil war. Woman was to be returned to her proper place. Marriage was to be regulated by the state; women's sexuality was to form the images and establish the boundaries so necessary to secure Rome's domination of others and Augustus's structuring of power. Harnessed, chaste, and deadened, Woman became the matter of a new order designed to control men and the free movement of all bodies.⁷³

This gives us some appreciation of Paul's interest: the counter to chaos is an ordered and structured Christian community, in which women "know their place." For Paul, this structure is an essential part of his own sense of self-mastery; control of his own body (1 Cor 7) is the starting point for his domination of others (1 Cor 11). And the female body becomes the cultural and rhetorical battleground for the maintenance of *ethos* in Paul. Thus, as Paul paints his character, he quite naturally does so by using the Corinthian women as his canvas. The result is that the *ekklesia* as "household" has here fully realized the aims of empire. This is a powerful statement about Paul's status as *paterfamilias* and about the function of the Corinthian community itself in Paul's *ethos* argumentation.

Yet, it would be wrong to leave the impression that this *imperium*, created and then exercised in the discourse, is devoid of any virtue, as Paul is also quite concerned to express his beneficence towards his subjects.⁷⁴ Paul's sense of taking care of his community, looking out for their interests, in part simply keeping them in line with what "nature" teaches, all of this points to a Paul who is concerned about the well-being of his subjects. In line with the statements of the deified Augustus on the temple in Ancyra, we see here a "power-broker" who intends to embody beneficent kingship rather than merciless tyranny. This in fact lies at the heart of Margaret Mitchell's study of 1 Corinthians, in which she emphasizes that Paul's main deliberative aim in this text is to promote concord and harmony in the Corinthian community.⁷⁵ In Mitchell's treatment of 1 Cor 11:2-16 she places emphasis on Paul's goal of dissolving factionalism. In this attempt, Paul "subordinates the issue itself to the overall

⁷³ S. R. Joshel, "The Body Female and the Body Politic: Livy's Lucretia and Verginia," in A. Richlin (ed.), *Pornography and Representation in Greece & Rome* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 120-21. Moreover, the uncontrolled female was associated with the descent into moral chaos. This is particularly important theme of Roman discourse (119; cf. also her "Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire: Tacitus's Messalina," in *Roman Sexualities*, esp. 230-35).

⁷⁴ On the associations of the imperial image of the father and the attendant virtues, see Eva Maria Lassen, "The Use of the Father Image in Imperial Propaganda and 1 Corinthians 4:14-21," *Tyndale Bulletin*, 42 (1991), 127-136.

⁷⁵ M. M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 60-64. See also L. L. Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric in the Corinthian Epistles* (Macon: Mercer Univ. Press, 1997), 43-75; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 39-47. Cf. the explicit use of the term *philoneikos* in 1 Cor 11:16, which represents the negative side of harmony and concord.

concern for the unity of the church” and concludes with a “reconciliatory argument” that has the “conservative leanings typical of arguments of concord.”⁷⁶

Mitchell has hit on a key point in this passage, although she ends off by stressing Paul’s rhetorical goal as primarily that of creating concord in the Corinthian community. Indeed, we can at the very least say this is the impression that Paul works very hard to create and maintain. Paul is clearly projecting in this the image of a beneficent ruler, who cares deeply for all of those under his care. In this respect, it is noteworthy, as Dale Martin suggests, that in arguments on concord “yielding to the other and giving up one’s private interest for the sake of the common good is a regular theme of *homonoia* speeches, and sometimes this entails the stronger yielding to the weaker.”⁷⁷ In line with this, Paul’s statements on the mutual interdependence of man and woman in 11:10-12 makes more sense in terms of the establishment of Paul’s character. While scholars like Gundry-Volf appeal to these texts as a basis for Paul’s liberating hermeneutical praxis, they can also just as easily be understood in the opposite direction: they invest the *persona* of Paul with further authority, by suggesting that such a one as Paul rules with the concern of his subjects in mind. At this point we are fully engaged in *polis* discourse, as Paul is comporting himself as the benevolent civic leader. Thus, while Paul insists on an ordered community, he also seeks to display his earnest regard and concern for his subjects. This combination, again, places his language and framework fully at the intersection of the household and empire. And unlike the depilated male “spectacle” of Epictetus’s discourse above, Paul comports himself as a true citizen of the *polis*, and his legacy is clearly a community of the “unplucked.” This, in the end, serves to ratify the image that Paul has asserted all along: he himself is as “hairy” as they come.

This final point leads to an even deeper dimension of *ethos* argumentation that is taking place here: fundamental to the moral/ethical persuasion of 1 Cor 11:2-16 is Paul’s concern to create his community in his own image. This means, in essence, that while Paul constructs his own character in the text, he also seeks to “characterize” the Corinthians. The concern for bodily comportment, reflected for instance in Seneca’s statements earlier, demonstrates the connection in ancient rhetorical culture between outward appearances and the inner soul. On the one hand, Paul’s establishment of his character in 1 Cor 11 is exactly that: his discursive self-comportment reflects and projects his “inner nature.” On the other hand, the Corinthian community represents an outward manifestation of Paul’s *ethos*. They are a visible expression of the *paterfamilias*, reflecting something about the ordered nature of

⁷⁶ Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 262.

⁷⁷ Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 42.

their founder. Paul seeks to establish the character of the Corinthians so that they too will imitate his *virtus* and *imperium*. And this public comportment of the *ekklesia* says, finally, much about the God who has appointed Paul and whom Paul so willingly promotes. Of course, it comes as no surprise, as Paul's use of the arguments from nature and creation suggest, that this God embodies the same character as Paul: the gendered hierarchy is affirmed by a beneficent deity, who controls all. This deity is as virile as Paul's potent rhetoric. But it is a circular image, for the gendered deity finally falls back on Paul, validating ontologically the *ethos* of his foremost apostle.

III. Conclusion: *Virtus* and *Imperium* in Interpretation

Recently, in his reading of 1 Cor 11:2-16, David Horrell has argued that Paul's "purpose seems clearly to be the establishment of 'proper' distinction between men and women and not superiority or authority."⁷⁸ In light of the discussion here, however, the various rhetorical features of the argument and the establishment of the Pauline *ethos* would seem to challenge such sentiments as these rather strongly. Given the cultural ethos of antiquity, the very attempt to emphasize "distinction" brought with it a gendered vocabulary and conceptual framework that sought to inscribe masculine identity in empire, which in turn most suitably characterizes the body politic in its civic and religious duty and devotion. The "ontological" category in this case rested comfortably in the lap of the virile Roman male. For Paul, the orderly church that he constructs represents a particular kind of identity over against a world that in the Pauline apocalyptic framework is in disorder and chaos, devoid of virtue and value. Thus, whatever else Paul may be doing in 1 Cor 11, one cannot overlook the dominant socio-cultural (and rhetorical) paradigms that control his articulation of gender identity in this text. The proper comportment of himself, the church, and God in a rhetorical culture is in fact the fullest expression of masculine identity in a world that Paul is all too willing at times to effeminize (cf. Rom 1). But this also results in a Pauline world that is, as Stephen Moore points out, devoid of significant female presence, especially in the "inner sanctum of Pauline theology."⁷⁹

In the end, returning to Gundry-Volf's argument outlined in the beginning, we see that she has simply isolated sources for both positive and negative features of Pauline gender

⁷⁸ D. G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 173 (cf. 175).

⁷⁹ Moore, *God's Beauty Parlor*, 170.

interpretation, leaving on its own the “revelatory,” “experiential” character of the text, divorced from its cultural moorings, as if being “in the Lord” was not a cultural affirmation to begin with. In fact, this is the fundamental flaw of Gundry-Volf’s approach: she dichotomizes features and gives the impression that Paul’s emphasis on now hierarchy now egalitarianism draws its inspiration from different spheres of “doing theology.” This approach would allow Gundry-Volf to shuck off Paul’s particular formulation of sex differentiation in 1 Cor 11:2-16 (she wouldn’t want to be veiled), but would also end up affirming the argumentative end: not doing something culturally shameful or against the eschatological affirmation of Christ. The problem, however, is that at no point in her discussion of Paul has Gundry-Volf actually ever left the realm of the Greco-Roman gendered cultural context. It is simply impossible to make a move from the specifics of what is culturally shameful to a general principle as such.

There is no realm “outside” of this in Paul; it is the cultural mode of discourse that Paul simply affirms, which is not to say that it is a “patriarchal” or “male” framework *in toto*, or that “egalitarian” notions were in principle excluded. The picture is much more complex than that. However, masculine identity in the ancient world must be seen as the starting point for understanding Paul’s characterization of himself and the “ideal” church that is his embodied *ethos*. While 1 Cor 11:2-16 is often utilized for insight into Pauline theological ideas of creation, in fact what we see is “theology” here veiling the rhetorical combat for identity, which Paul is all too willing to win through his appeal to creation/nature. As Judith Butler points out, the “very concept of sex-as-matter, sex-as-instrument-of-cultural-signification, is a discursive formation that acts as a naturalized foundation for the nature/culture distinction and the strategies of domination that that distinction supports.”⁸⁰ The binary opposition between sex and gender on the one hand and nature and culture on the other are in that case not just similar but interrelated. They are mutually supportive dualisms that affirm the ancient cultural framework of masculine identity delineated herein. Thus, Gundry-Volf’s articulation really needs to be reversed: Paul does not have a “theology of gender” per se, but a “gendered theology” that permeates all aspects of his discourse and thinking. We do not fault Paul for this, but think, rather, that it makes him all the more important (and certainly the more interesting) to study.

⁸⁰ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York/London: Routledge, 1990), 37.