

‘Wild and Rebellious Women?’

A Critical Evaluation of Lucy Peppiatt’s

Attempt at Understanding Paul’s Teaching on

the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians.

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Abstract

Lucy Peppiatt makes a bold attempt to suggest a resolution of the vexed question of St Paul's attitude towards women in the Church. She argues that 1 Corinthians is part of an ongoing dialogue between Paul and the Corinthian church leaders. Her solution is to read 1 Corinthians 11: 2-16 rhetorically, as a conversation between Paul and the church with Paul citing his opponents in order to refute them. This dissertation examines Peppiatt's concern that an androcentric perspective, not sanctioned by Paul, has led to a misreading of the text that has prevailed in the Church throughout much of its history. Her innovative proposed rhetorical reading sheds new light on Paul's intended meaning. Peppiatt's work will be examined and the reception of her proposed reading of 1 Corinthians 1:2-16 explored through dialogue with the wider academic community. Finally, I will assess whether the criticisms of her work undermine her thesis or establish a basis for development.

Introduction

Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church is, in many respects, enigmatic and opaque. The issues raised by Paul's teaching are of theological and historical interest and also of immense practical importance for the Church today. Paul's instructions determine how aspects of the Church's corporate life as well as its structures and leadership should be performed, and they prescribe the roles that men and women may exercise in public worship. Furthermore, Paul's directives impact on ways in which men and women relate in the Church, socially and within the family today.

Divisions within the Corinthian church, including divergence from, what Paul believed were the marks of authentic Christian discipleship, prompted him to engage in a dialogue with the church. Paul's letter is remedial in this respect. In a series of written and verbal transactions Paul seeks to refute the flawed beliefs and misguided practices that undermined the witness of the Corinthian church and which may well have set them apart from other newly established groups of Christians. He thus urges them to follow his example, 'Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ' (1 Cor.11:1). Areas of contention addressed in the first surviving letter to the Corinthians therefore include immorality, the conduct of the Lord's supper, marriage, the use of spiritual gifts, and instruction on the conduct and role of women.

This purpose of this study is to engage with the tension identified in Paul's letter concerning the role of women in public worship. A straight-forward reading of the text presents a range of exegetical and hermeneutical problems. Firstly, Paul's instructions in the letter appear to be inconsistent and contradictory in terms of the practise he prescribes. Paul seems to assume that both men and women will pray and prophesy in

a public context. 1 Corinthians 11:4-5 deals with how men and women, in contrasting ways, would be guilty of bringing 'dishonour' on themselves when speaking in the assembly. Since Paul is addressing the consequence of inappropriate head covering for both men and women, it would seem that it is how they pray in public, rather than whether they should pray in public, lies at the heart of his strictures. Yet, the prohibition on women exercising any formal role in public worship seems unequivocal: 'Women should be silent in the churches' (1 Cor. 14:34-35). Furthermore, the letter's insistence that women 'should be subordinate' (14:34) makes it difficult to come to anything but a hierarchical view of the relationship between men and women since the argument would seem to be rooted in an authoritative historic edict, 'as the law also says' (14:34).

Secondly, the argument that men and women should be required to adopt different practices, of a hierarchical nature, in public worship is in tension with the teaching that the new life in Christ confers equality on male and female alike. Elsewhere Paul declares that all in the Christ-following community share parity of status, since 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal.3:28).

The tensions and inconsistencies apparent in 1 Corinthians are explored through an analysis of the work of Lucy Peppiatt.¹ Peppiatt offers a critique of the exegetical interpretations offered by other scholars of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Her intriguing and controversial re-reading of the passage prompted the evaluation of her work described in this dissertation.

¹ Lucy Peppiatt, *Women and Worship in Corinth* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015).

Peppiatt is uncomfortable with a reading of 1 Corinthians that underpins a hierarchical relationship between men and women, defining in patriarchal terms the part each may play within church worship, leadership structures, and marriage. She argues that placing women in a subordinate role, contrasts oddly with a mutualistic reading of Scripture that assigned roles according to gifting rather than biological sex, ethnicity, or social status.

Peppiatt approaches these issues through a close examination of the letter's text. Her contention is that Paul's is not the only voice speaking in the text. She argues that there are passages in 1 Corinthians² where Paul creates a dialogue with the leadership of the Corinthian church to highlight and then refute their mistaken assertions.

One possible solution is to draw the conclusion that Paul is indeed unclear in his thinking and consequently unreliable in his teaching.³ Letting go of the belief that the text of 1 Corinthians is the timeless word of God frees the reader from any obligation to treat it as an authoritative writing to be revered and obeyed. But for those who hold to a higher view of Scripture, and Peppiatt is one such theologian and exegete, the notion that Paul is mistaken, expressing views that are personal, flawed and locked into his first-century world view, is problematic. Whilst some support the view that 1 Corinthians is a pastiche of other Pauline letters,⁴ this dissertation assumes with Peppiatt that the overarching purpose of 1 Corinthians is the promotion of unity in the developing Corinthian Christian community, by challenging views that foster hierarchical divisions. This approach follows

² 1Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:20-25; 14:26-39).

³ C.H. Dodd, 'The Mind of Paul: I'; and 'The Mind of Paul: II' in *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: University Press, 1953), 67-82 and 83-128, is of the opinion that Paul's thinking developed, or that he changed his mind, about the timing of the Parousia.

⁴ Brian Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men: Paul's Rhetoric of Gender and Power in 1 Corinthians* (Langham, Maryland: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2019), 11 n, 2, draws attention to the work of Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910).

Margaret Mitchell's thesis that '1 Corinthians is a single letter of unitary composition which contains a deliberative argument persuading the Christian community at Corinth to become reunified'.⁵

Chapter 1 of this study offers definitions of key words used in the debate: 'hierarchicalist' and 'mutualist'. Chapter 2 examines two controversial passages commonly deployed to support a hierarchical position: 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12. Chapter 3 explores Peppiatt's analysis of the diverse views of commentators on 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and her solution to the issues raised. Chapter 4 draws this dissertation towards a conclusion by setting Peppiatt's work in dialogue with other recent scholarly works.

⁵ Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 1.

Chapter 1

Definitions

Throughout this study 'Church' refers to the universal or catholic Christian community, whereas 'church' will connote the local assembly. Biblical quotations will normally be from the NRSV translation unless otherwise noted.

The terms 'complementarian' and 'egalitarian' are often used to signal opposing standpoints. Peppiatt has argued the case for the labels 'hierarchical' and 'mutualist' as better defining the two perspectives.¹ The different principles underlying these two positions determine, and distinguish in practical terms, how men and women may function in society, in the church community, and in domestic settings. These terms define the correlation between gender and power and establish the lens through which commentators view the contested passages that are explored in this study.

Complementarian or Hierarchalist?

The term 'complementarian' connotes that whilst both male and female have equal standing before God, the roles they are apportioned are different but complementary. Piper and Grudem embrace the term 'since it suggests both equality and beneficial differences between men and women'.² They acknowledge this reciprocity is only maintained within the marriage and within the church if authority is understood as a

¹ Peppiatt, Lucy, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2019), 6-9.

² John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 15.

divinely ordained male characteristic.³ Their position is rooted in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 arguing that:

‘*authority*’ refers to the divine calling of spiritual, gifted men to take responsibility as elders for Christlike servant-leadership and teaching in the church... ‘*submission*’ refers to the divine calling of the rest of the church...to honor and affirm the leadership (emphasis in the original).⁴

Hence, they claim that ‘these texts give abiding sanction to an eldership of spiritual men’.⁵ Baum draws a similar, but less restrictive, conclusion based on his analysis of Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian texts. The cultural background, Baum argues, informs Paul’s judgement that it is unacceptable for a woman to speak publicly without male consent, ‘whereas female public speaking with male consent was tolerable if female chastity was preserved’.⁶

Whilst complementarians assert the equal standing of men and women before God, the harmonious and reciprocal relationship is predicated on a fundamental structural imbalance. Lowe makes a pertinent observation arguing that this complementarian position regarding the role of women in the Church ‘is that a distinction must be maintained between one’s status soteriologically and one’s function or role sociologically’.⁷

³ Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 63. ‘*Biblical headship* for the husband is the divine calling to take primary responsibility for Christlike servant leadership, protection and provision in the home. *Biblical submission* for the wife is the divine calling to honor and affirm her husband’s leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts’ (emphasis in original).

⁴ Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 63.

⁵ Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 74-75. Their case for male leadership seems weakened by the caveat that it ‘is *probably* (my emphasis) not a mere cultural phenomenon...but reflects God’s original design’.

⁶ Armin D. Baum, ‘Paul’s Conflicting Statements on Female Public Speaking (1 Cor. 11:5) and Silence (1 Cor. 14:34-35): A New Suggestion’, in *Tyndale Bulletin* 65.2 (2014), 247-274, here 247. <https://librarysearch.uwtsd.ac.uk> [accessed 14.12.21]

⁷ Stephen D. Lowe, ‘Rethinking the Female Status/Function Question: The Jew/Gentile Relationship as Paradigm’, in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34/1 (1991) 59-75, 59.

The implication of the complementarian stance is that there is a divinely mandated gender-based ranking with authority vested in the male and obedience in the female. Peppiatt's portrayal of this position as 'hierarchical' rather than 'complementarian'⁸ is endorsed in this dissertation. It should be noted that Piper and Grudem reject the term 'hierarchicalist' 'because it overemphasises structural authority while giving no suggestion of equality or the beauty of mutual interdependence'.⁹ George Knight is insistent that complementarianism is grounded on the assumption that 'the apostolic teaching insists on men being the primary leaders in the church...and therefore excludes women from the role'.¹⁰ Pawson roundly rejects attempts at avoiding the conclusion that Paul advocates discrimination between the sexes. He contends that Paul's restriction on the role of women 'relate(s) to gender, not ignorance; and that this is based on creation, not culture'.¹¹ Peppiatt argues that this vision of reciprocity is better described as hierarchical, not complementarian, because it is contingent on the structural authority that 'will only endure for as long as a woman agrees to renounce authority...in favor of a man, for the common good'.¹² Her argument is persuasive. The term 'hierarchical' highlights the inherent imbalance between gender and power that is obscured by the term 'complementary'.

⁸ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 6.

⁹ Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 15.

¹⁰ George W. Knight III, 'The Family and the Church', in Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 423.

¹¹ David Pawson, *Leadership Is Male: A Challenge to Christian Feminism* (Crowborough: Highland, 1988), 72.

¹² Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 7.

Egalitarian or Mutualist?

An alternative position is often defined as 'egalitarianism'. Peppiatt questions whether this definition which 'connotes flat structures in all systems',¹³ is sufficiently subtle to describe male/female relationships. In Peppiatt's view, the phrase 'Leading Together, Serving as Equals' employed by Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE)¹⁴ is more nuanced than 'egalitarian' implies. She prefers the more flexible term 'mutualist',¹⁵ and she observes that the term is now commonplace.¹⁶

The debate between egalitarians and hierarchicalists has been especially fierce in North American evangelical circles. The opposing views of the Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE)¹⁷ and the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW)¹⁸ have been vigorously contested. In the UK the opposing positions have, in the main, been more accommodating of each other's views.¹⁹

¹³ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 8.

¹⁴ www.cbeinternational.org/content/about-cbe.

¹⁵ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 8.

¹⁶ Peppiatt's assertion is corroborated by a search for the word 'mutuality'; see, e.g., Dawn M. Nothwehr, *Mutuality: A Formal Norm for Christian Ethics* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1998); Edward B. Foley, ed. *Mutuality Matters: Family, Faith and Just Love* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

¹⁷ Christians for Biblical Authority, www.cbeinternational.org/content/about-cbe (accessed 10 September 2021).

¹⁸ Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, <https://cbmw.org> (accessed 10 September 2021). The mission of CBMW is 'to set forth the teachings of the Bible about the complementary differences between men and women, created equally in the image of God, because these teachings are essential for obedience to Scripture and for the health of the family and the church'.

¹⁹ Belmont Chapel, <https://larnaphuli.typepad.com/files/women-in-leadership-at-belmont> (2009), 20. When Belmont Chapel, Exeter, argued for the inclusion of women in positions and ministry, they stated that 'For many years, we have had a group of people in our church who have been in just that position. They were those who believed (in some cases very strongly) that women should be allowed to teach and lead. Some were men, who felt deprived of the contribution their Christian sisters could be making, and longed to see them able to participate in public teaching and church leadership; some were women, who felt quite keenly that God had given them gifts they just weren't allowed to use. These people have stayed with us for years, contributing immensely to the life and work of the church, even though they disagreed profoundly with the stance we had adopted at that point. We are grateful to them, and we really hope and pray that those who are on the other side of the question will now show the same grace that they did. If they do, the church will benefit enormously. If they don't, and simply walk out, our ministry will be weakened and impoverished.'

For complementarians the issue is clear-cut; female submission under male authority is held to be a biblical truth. However, mutualists are exercised by what they perceive as contradictory teaching within the Bible and particularly in Paul's letters. Marshall acknowledges that requiring silence and submission from women in the church assembly is contentious, although he acknowledges that 'the purport of this instruction is not clear'.²⁰ He draws attention to Fee's²¹ proposal that these verses might be seen as an interpolation rather than an authoritative statement from Paul.

Prior's understanding is less tentative, declaring that Paul is concerned that:

amongst Christian wives [who] had discovered a unique freedom in the life of the Christian community...it is possibly that this freedom had gone to their heads, or, more precisely, to their tongues.²²

Keener's tone is less disparaging, identifying cultural norms rather than ill-discipline as Paul's primary concern. He notes that in:

Western society it is nearly impossible for anyone who engages in any activity in public...to avoid some casual cross-gender conversation [whereas] this was not the case in the first century.²³

He maintains that 'one cannot simply assume that Paul's claim that it is "shameful" for a woman to speak in the assembly is meant to be transcultural'²⁴ since Paul's purpose is to uphold order and propriety in the Corinthian Christian community. Keener's conclusion is that none of Paul's strictures 'prohibit women in very different cultural settings from speaking God's word'.²⁵ Marshall, Prior and Keener identify context, social custom and the goal of orderly worship as the justifications for restrictions on women

²⁰ I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 263.

²¹ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987), 780-792.

²² David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 2nd edn. (Nottingham: IVP, 1993), 252.

²³ Craig Keener, 'Learning in the Assembly', in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. by Ronald Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 166.

²⁴ Keener, *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 167.

²⁵ Keener, *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 171.

participating in leadership and ministry, rather than, as complementarians insist, on divine fiat.

Peppiatt's advocacy for the terms 'hierarchical' and 'mutualist', is helpful in that it exposes the dynamics in gender relationships.

Chapter 2

Contested Passages

This chapter examines two contested passages from the letters attributed to Paul that highlight the problems faced by the Church when trying to determine whether, or to what extent, women might be permitted to take part in public worship. Firstly, ‘women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says’ (1 Cor.14:34-35). Secondly, ‘Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent’ (1 Tim. 2:11-12). A plain reading of these passages presents an uncompromising and hierarchical position. I will seek to show that the situation is more nuanced and that neither passage rules out Peppiatt’s mutualistic reading of 1 Corinthians.

Is 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 a Pauline Passage?

These verses present a direct challenge to mutualists, but they also present problems for hierarchicalists. Pawson comments on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 that ‘it would be foolish to deny that this is a “difficult” passage (even to understand, never mind integrate!)’.¹ Clearly these passages are important since, on the face of it, Paul is assigning women a subordinate role in the Church, and, if the texts are not addressing issues solely within the context of the first-century Corinthian church, then there are

¹ Pawson, *Leadership Is Male*, 66.

questions for the Church today. The claim that the prohibition on women speaking and being submissive is established 'as the law also says' (1 Cor. 14:35) is problematic. Fee observes that 'nowhere in the entire corpus does [Paul] appeal to the Law in this general, but absolute way as binding on Christian behaviour'.² Moreover, no Old Testament law makes such a claim. Payne observes that the teaching seems at odds with Paul's insistence that 'believers stand in a new relationship with the law'.³ The authorship and the import of these texts has been questioned. I will consider arguments that these texts are non-Pauline additions, or even, in the case of 1 Timothy, that the letter is a pseudonymous composition.

Some dismiss 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, doubting Paul's authorship, instead believing that they are a post-Pauline gloss, added to reflect the agenda of an increasingly patriarchal and hierarchical church. Barton challenges their authenticity, suggesting that 'a persuasive, but not quite water-tight case can be made that these verses are a post-Pauline interpolation'.⁴ Fee's primary reason for doubting their Pauline authenticity is more assertive. His questioning of the authorship of verses 34-35 is primarily text-critical suggesting they are a marginal gloss by an unknown author rather than a scribal error, with some ancient texts placing the verses after verse 40. He argues this displacement

² Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edn. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), 791.

³ Philip Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 259.

⁴ Steven Barton, '1 Corinthians', in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. by James D.G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 1345. He adds the rider, 'If these verses are not authentically Pauline, at least they were judged authentic to the spirit of Pauline thought by an early scribe'.

is unique since 'there is simply nothing else even remotely like it anywhere else in that history of tradition'.⁵

The argument for a non-Pauline interpolation is by no means conclusive and, in Thiselton's view, relatively weak'.⁶ His suggestion is that the verses are better seen as a corrective⁷ to the circumstances in the Corinthian church, arguing '14:34 cannot be understood to be a universal prohibition for women not to speak in public worship'.⁸ This conclusion is grounded on three factors. Firstly, he cites instances where women '*do have leadership positions that would probably involve teaching, preaching, and leadership in prayer*' (Thiselton's emphasis).⁹ Secondly, he argues that 'Paul's alleged reputation for viewing women as somehow inferior to men has been convincingly criticised by F.F. Bruce'.¹⁰ Thirdly, he draws attention to the examples in Paul's writings of the equal status of men and women, notably Galatians 3:28. Thiselton suggests that this 'equality of status and probable ministry is reflected in some Old Testament eschatological traditions, for example in Joel 2:28-29'.¹¹

⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edn., 78 This displacement is acknowledged in many texts and translations including NIV, ESV, NRSV by the use of parentheses. Furthermore, Fee seeks to strengthen his case by drawing attention to the 'considerable un-Pauline way of saying things'. Fee questions Pauline authorship of the texts as both textually and intrinsically improbable.

⁶ Anthony Thiselton, *Puzzling Passages in Paul* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 58.

⁷ Thiselton, *Puzzling Passages*, 58.

⁸ Thiselton, *Puzzling Passages*, 55.

⁹ Thiselton, *Puzzling Passages*, 55. Thiselton draws attention to Phoebe (Rom. 16:1), Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2), Priscilla (Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19; Junia (Rom. 16:7) and Lydia (Acts 16:14,40) all of whom play a prominent role in church life.

¹⁰ Thiselton, *Puzzling Passages*, 56-57. He notes that Bruce speaks of 'the most incredible feature in Paul of popular mythology is his alleged misogyny...'. Thiselton draws attention to Bruce's suggestion that Priscilla would have been unlikely to expose herself to the danger of death (Rom. 16:4) for an 'incorrigible misogynist'.

¹¹ Thiselton, *Puzzling Passages*, 57. 'Then afterwards I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my Spirit' (Joel 2:28-29).

Payne notes this prophecy features in Acts 2:16-18 and, since Luke and Paul were for many years co-workers, 'presumably Paul knew about it'.¹² He dismisses Edwards' suggestion that Paul might have changed his view 'upon mature reflection'¹³ on the grounds that 'it insults Paul's coherence to suppose that his thoughts matured to such a radical degree from chapter 11 to 14'.¹⁴ I share the conclusion expressed by Payne that the evidence that 1 Cor. 14:34-35 is a non-Pauline interpolation and therefore lacks apostolic authority is compelling and therefore it 'should not be used to restrict the speaking ministries of women'.¹⁵

The consequence of Thiselton's view that 1 Cor. 14:34-35 is Pauline, but not a universal prohibition; Fee's judgement that the 'wonder is that anyone should continue to argue for its authenticity',¹⁶ and Payne's view that the verses are non-Pauline, is that the verses have, at the most, only a muted voice in the debate concerning the role of women in the Church.

Is 1 Timothy 2:11-12 a Pauline Text?

Despite significant translational difficulties and little consensus amongst scholars, these verses are frequently cited as foundational in churches that embrace male-only leadership. Denny Burk writes, 'God intends for a principle of male headship to exist not only in the home but also in the leadership and teaching ministry of the church'.¹⁷

¹² Payne, *Man and Woman*, 220.

¹³ Payne, *Man and Woman*, 220.

¹⁴ Payne, *Man and Woman*, 220.

¹⁵ Payne, *Men and Women*, 267.

¹⁶ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edn., 781.

¹⁷ Denny Burk, <https://cbmw.org/2018/01/23/a-mere-complementarian-reading-of-the-most-contested-verse-in-the-evangelical-gender-debate> (accessed 18 February 22).

Burk's confidence is not shared by most commentators. Many have cast doubt on whether these words can be understood as an injunction with universal application.¹⁸ Others argue that the verses reflect editorial licence exercised by an amanuensis, possibly Luke.¹⁹ Marshall maintains that the majority view amongst scholars is 'that the letters are pseudonymous compositions',²⁰ written at a later date and invoking Paul's name to give local church leaders an authoritative resource to combat heresy.

Notwithstanding the widely held views of most scholars, Marshall holds to a minority view that the letter is from Paul and that it was written because restrictions on women teaching 'was necessary because of specific circumstances and not a timeless principle'.²¹ Nevertheless, he moves away from a mutualist standpoint arguing that although women were not permitted to teach in the Church, this would place them at no great disadvantage since 'they would still be able to persevere in their Christian lives to final salvation through fulfilling their other Christian duties, including (for most women) motherhood';²² this is a thoroughly hierarchicalist position.

Payne sees 1 Timothy not as a manual prescribing Church order but as Paul offering Timothy advice on countering false teaching in the Ephesian church.²³ He supports

¹⁸ David E. Aune, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 9. 'While seven of the letters attributed to Paul are almost universally accepted as authentic (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon), four are just as widely judged to be pseudepigraphal, i.e., written by unknown authors under Paul's name: Ephesians and the Pastorals (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus)'.

¹⁹ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 3rd edn. (Leicester: IVP: 1970), 621. Guthrie draws attention to the view of some scholars that the verses reflect editorial licence exercised by an amanuensis, possibly Luke.

²⁰ Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 398.

²¹ Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 402.

²² Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 402.

²³ Payne, *Man and Woman*, 310.

Winter's view that the reference to 'submission' in verse 11 is about submission to Christian doctrine rather than a wife's submissiveness to her husband.²⁴

These verses are of dubious Pauline authorship, and the author, in all probability, was addressing a particular issue within the Ephesian church. Furthermore, the intended meaning of key words is moot. The hierarchical sentiments of the verses are inescapable yet demonstrably at odds with Paul's theology as expressed in Galatians 3:28 of what it means to be 'in Christ'. I share Payne's conclusion that 'while not denying sexual differences, Gal. 3:28 does repudiate any second-class status or reduced privileges for women in Christ'.²⁵ The issue of authorship and the significant textual difficulties posed by these verses, undermine their authority as a benchmark against which other Pauline teaching should be judged.

Having argued that these contentious verses - 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 - should be set to one side, I will now turn to Peppiatt and her analysis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

²⁴ Payne, *Man and Woman*, 314, footnote 7. Payne argues that the generic singular applies the command to women in general rather than to a wife.

²⁵ Payne, *One in Christ*, 76.

Chapter 3

Lucy Peppiatt: Paul's Rhetorical arguments in 1 Corinthians

Lucy Peppiatt's¹ recent published works address Paul's interactions with the Corinthian church and his teaching on the roles of men and women in the newly established Christian community.² Peppiatt sets herself two tasks: firstly, to identify the intended meaning of Paul's letter to the Corinthians, and secondly, to ask how Paul's strictures might be applied in the twenty-first century, determining our theology of men and women, determining practices in the Church and impacting on marriage, family and society.

Peppiatt recognises that her own position has been shaped by a 'significant experiential factor'.³ In practice, she declares, 'there is no gender discrimination in the apportioning of the Spirit's gifts'.⁴ Therefore, 'a pneumatological understanding of calling and vocation leads to an uncompromisingly equitable structure'.⁵ Her experience is at odds with the teaching in evangelical communities that employ the Bible as a 'powerful weapon...against the participation of women in ministry',⁶ governing the relationship between men and women in the church and society. However, her mutualist stance, arguing that Paul advocates that both men and women are called to be equal partners,

¹ Westminster Theological Centre, <https://wtctheology.org.uk> (accessed 3 July 2021). Lucy Peppiatt is the Principal of Westminster Theological Centre, an interdenominational, theological college based in Cheltenham, U.K. She is also part of the leadership of the Crossnet Anglican Church in Bristol. Her research interests include Christ and the Spirit, Charismatic theology, theological anthropology, discipleship, 1 Corinthians, and women in the Bible.

² Other titles by Peppiatt include *Unveiling Paul's Women* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2018) and *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019).

³ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 18.

⁴ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 18.

⁵ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 18.

⁶ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 18.

both in marriage and in church leadership, is controversial, since the implications of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians is perplexing.

Peppiatt is not the first to recognise the tensions and contradictions in 1 Corinthians. The confusion stems from the texts themselves and there have been many attempts to identify the logic of Paul's teaching. She cites the speculative and imaginative bids made by scholars to offer a rational explanation of seemingly contradictory statements. Her analysis of commentaries on 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 reveals 'a staggering lack of coherence'⁷ including the suggestion 'that Paul uses the same word with two different meanings in sentences that occur one after the other'.⁸

Peppiatt's thesis is that both those who dismiss Paul's letter as inconsistent, and those who contrive to establish coherence in his arguments, 'doggedly hold to the notion that these verses in their entirety reflect *Paul's* views' (Peppiatt's emphasis).⁹ 'Ultimately', Peppiatt argues, 'the traditional approach to the text...leaves the reader with very few options for rescuing Paul from misogyny, or inconsistency, or bad theology, or all three'.¹⁰ Peppiatt sets herself the task of identifying the different and opposing voices in the text aiming to provide a reconstruction of the dialogue between Paul and the Corinthian church.

⁷ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 5. My earlier analysis of Piper and Gruden, Barton, Thiselton, Payne, Marshall, Belleville, Fee and Campbell, illustrates this point.

⁸ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 5. This is the case in the ESV where in 1 Corinthians 11:3 the Greek '*anēr*' is rendered as 'man' in the first couplet and as 'husband' in the second: 'I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God'. Confusingly, and for no obvious textual reason, the ESV uses the Greek word '*gunē*' translated as 'woman' in verses 7-9, but reverts to 'wife' in verse 10, 'woman' in verses 11-12, 'wife' in verse 13, and 'woman' in verse 15.

⁹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 5.

¹⁰ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 33.

Central to Peppiatt's thesis is the argument that Paul quotes the Corinthian church leaders' misguided views, only then to refute them. She is not the first to make this observation,¹¹ but her contention is that these references are more extensive than previously recognised. Peppiatt acknowledges that identifying quotations in 1 Corinthians is a challenge since the text contains no indicators or communicative cues such as 'you say...but I say'. However, she argues, the Corinthian church leaders would have recognised the phrases and arguments that represented their views rather than Paul's.¹² Peppiatt thus claims that she has identified a rhetorical pattern (see Appendix A) whereby Paul reiterates misguided Corinthian assertions to highlight their incongruity. Peppiatt's proposal is, nevertheless, contentious since she moves well beyond the bounds of contemporary rhetorical practice of Greek and Jewish first-century writers.

Peppiatt examines three key passages: firstly, 1 Cor.11:2-16 dealing with head coverings; secondly, 14:33b-36, the silencing women in the congregation; and, thirdly, the technique she proposes is applied to 14:20-25. This study will focus on 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

¹¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edn., 278.

¹² Peppiatt's argument is that in 1 Corinthians 11:2-3, 6, and 11-16 (but not verse 14) articulate Paul's argument, whereas verses 4-5, 7-10, and 14 represent Paul's representation of the stance adopted by the Corinthian church leaders.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Contested Meanings

Peppiatt notes many New Testament scholars¹³ draw attention to the numerous exegetical problems in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. In her judgement, Fee's analysis is an accurate summary of the difficulties facing scholars.¹⁴

Peppiatt identifies points of disagreement among scholars and aligns herself with Blomberg's view that any analysis of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 'should inspire a fair measure of tentativeness on the part of the interpreter'.¹⁵ Peppiatt illustrates the multiple, contradictory positions held by scholars: head covering or hair style; whether Paul's strictures have universal application or are restricted to husbands and wives; the meaning of 'κεφαλή' (head).

Head Covering or Hair Style?

Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is notoriously problematic because of numerous interpretive puzzles. Firstly, the issue of whether Paul is speaking about head coverings (or perhaps a veil), or hair styles is a matter of judgement and, consequently, much debate. Scholars are divided over the meaning of *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* in verse 4. There

¹³ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 21-21. Peppiatt cites Payne, Moule, Caird, Meeks and Blomberg who describes it as 'the most complex, controversial, and opaque of any text of comparable length in the New Testament'.

¹⁴ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 543. 'Along with these larger contextual questions, this passage is full of notorious exegetical difficulties, including (1) the 'logic' of the argument as a whole, which is in turn related to (2) the uncertainty about the meaning of some absolutely crucial terms and (3) our uncertainty about prevailing customs, both in the culture(s) in general and in the church(es) in particular (including the whole complex question of early Christian worship). Paul's response *assumes* (Fee's emphasis) an understanding between them at several key points, and these matters are therefore not addressed. Thus, the two crucial contextual questions - what was going on and why? - are especially difficult to reconstruct'.

¹⁵ Craig Blomberg, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 214.

is no consensus over whether head covering, or hair length is implied by the literal translation 'having down on the head' or 'having down from the head'. Thomas Schreiner is convinced that the verse is condemning the practice of a man covering his head whilst praying. To do so, he argues, would be disgraceful for a man since he would be 'depicting himself as a woman'.¹⁶ However, Payne presents a persuasive argument that hair length is the intended meaning, maintaining it was not disgraceful in either a Jewish or a Roman context for a man to drape a garment over his head when praying. Indeed, 'the Hebrew Scriptures...approved head-covering garments for men leading worship'.¹⁷ Payne draws on contemporary Greek, Roman and Jewish literature to support his contention that long hair had homosexual connotations and Paul's use of an ambiguous term ('hanging down from the head')¹⁸ was intended to allude to, but 'avoid speaking directly of such disgraceful things'.¹⁹

The arguments that in first-century Greek, Roman and Jewish culture, men with effeminate hair styles and women with their hair let down were identified as sexual promiscuity are strong. The question posed in verse 14 'Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears his hair long, it is degrading to him?' suggests the expected answer is 'yes'. However, whilst long hair might well have been a deliberate signal of homosexuality and promiscuity in some Greco-Roman contexts, other interpretations are clearly possible.²⁰

¹⁶ Schreiner, 'Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity', in Piper and Grudem, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 166.

¹⁷ Payne, *Man and Woman*, 142.

¹⁸ Payne, *Man and Woman*, 144.

¹⁹ Payne, *Man and Woman*, 145.

²⁰ Following the practices of Nazarite piety (Num. 6:5), Paul refrained from cutting his hair (Acts 18: 18; 21:23-26) for a period of up to 18 months. Peppiatt calculates that this would add approximately 9 inches of growth. Indeed, it was the breaking of Sampson's Nazarite vow (Jud. 16:17) by cutting off his hair that led to his downfall. Intriguingly, throughout most of the last two millennia the visual arts have

Peppiatt acknowledges Payne's case that hair length could be the intended meaning in verses 4 and 7, rather than hair covering. However, whilst all that Payne says about the cultural significance of hair styles connoting sexual incontinence might be true, it has no bearing on Paul's argument if head covering is the issue. Fee acknowledges that his own position that head covering rather than hair length is the issue still leaves the question as to why head covering for a man is shameful since, 'we simply have to admit that we do not know'.²¹ Fee and Payne offer complex arguments but on balance Fee's suggestion that 1 Corinthians 11:15b implies head covering is, in my judgement, the more convincing.

Not only are the terms used unclear, but there is no obvious textual justification for the shift of meaning employed by some translators from head covering to hair length within the passage.²² Andrew Bartlett makes the pertinent observation that, 'verses 2-16 seem to be a jumble of thoughts about head coverings and hair, with obscure and impenetrable reasoning'.²³

Uncertainty about the meanings of key terms and conflicting views about the first-century cultural significance of both hair length and head covering make it difficult to follow the passage's train of thought. Peppiatt notes that it is not easy to 'make any

portrayed Jesus and his contemporaries with long hair implying that 'nature' has been understood as synonymous with 'culture', rather than connoting a timeless principle enshrined in the created order.

²¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edn., 560. Furthermore, Fee's advocacy of head covering rather than hair length fails to take into account critical remarks and advice given to Timothy regarding ostentatious and extravagant hair styles adopted by women in the Ephesian church; surely not an issue if women 'who profess to worship God' (1 Tim. 2:9-10), routinely wore veils.

²² The NRSV introduces the discourse with reference to a man with 'something on his head' (1 Cor. 11:4) and 'any woman...with her head unveiled' (1 Cor. 11:5) which suggests head covering is the issue, yet the passage concludes with reference to 'long hair' as 'degrading' for a man (1 Cor. 11:14) but for a woman 'long hair...is her crowning glory' (1 Cor. 11:15). Likewise, the NIV makes the same transition from references to head covering in verses 4 and 5, to hair length in verses 14 and 15.

²³ Andrew Bartlett, *Men and Women in Christ* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2020).

assertions as to what exactly *was* (her emphasis) shameful or honoring in terms of attire'.²⁴

All Men and Women or Husbands and Wives?

Furthermore, it is conjectural whether verses 2-16 are making a universal ruling for all men and all women with respect to head covering/long hair, or whether they should be understood within the more limited context of marriage. Many bible translations acknowledge this ambiguity with the Greek '*anēr*' rendered as 'man' or 'husband' and '*gunē*' rendered as either 'woman' or 'wife'.²⁵ Translators are divided over whether Paul is speaking of head coverings or hair length, nor is there consensus on whether the teaching is directed at husbands and wife or more widely applicable to all men and women.

The meaning of κεφαλή.

Further questions arise regarding 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 because Paul uses the word 'head' (κεφαλή) in both a literal and a metaphorical sense. The problem addressed is literally to do with a worshipper's head since it concerns 'every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered' (1 Cor. 11:4) and 'every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered' (1 Cor. 11:5). Paul's concern is for the restoration of orderly worship since the Corinthians seem to have adopted inappropriate practices

²⁴ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 62.

²⁵ Whilst allowing for the possibility that husbands and wives are the intended focus of the passage, the NIV consistently uses the terms 'man' and 'woman', whereas the ESV prefers the term 'husband' and 'wife' but accepts in footnotes that 'man' and 'woman' could be the intended meaning.

regarding head covering, or arguably, hair length. Behind the practical issue of head covering lies a relationship problem. The Corinthians practice regarding head coverings seems to impact on the relationship both between men and women and their relationship with God. Paul deploys the word 'head' in a metaphorical sense to help define how he understands the nature of the relationship between men and women.

However, the metaphorical use of 'head' is open to two principal interpretations: 'authority', or 'source'. Schreiner has no doubt that the term 'head' is best understood as connoting authority. His position is predicated on his understanding that 'Grudem has shown that the meaning 'authority' is indisputable...while the meaning 'source' is never certainly attested.'²⁶ However, Schreiner's view is roundly dismissed by Bartlett who argues Grudem 'has overstated his case and reached an incorrect conclusion',²⁷ furthermore, Paul would have had to 'take deliberate steps to make his meaning clear...as ['authority'] was not widely used as a metaphor in that sense'.²⁸ Fee's analysis, like Bartlett's, leads him to the opposite conclusion from Schreiner. In his view, 'Paul's understanding of the metaphor...and almost certainly the only one the Corinthians would have grasped, is 'head' as 'source'.²⁹ Clearly the issue is debatable because we only have access to one part of Paul's dialogue with the Corinthian church leaders. To conclude that 'head' means 'authority' leads inevitably to a hierarchical understanding of Paul's teaching on gender relationships. The weight of modern biblical scholarship,

²⁶ Schreiner, 'Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity', in Piper and Grudem, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 161.

²⁷ Bartlett, *Men and Women in Christ*, 118.

²⁸ Bartlett, *Men and Women in Christ*, 119.

²⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edn., 555.

endorsed by Peppiatt, favours 'source' as the more likely reading thus allowing the possibility of a more mutualist approach.

Paul's Theological Argument from Creation

Having identified, but not resolved, the problems with the meaning of key terms, (head covering or hair length), the intended focus of the teaching (within marriage or universally applicable), and exactly what was shameful about the conduct of some Corinthian Christians, and contradictory views on the meaning of 'head', I will now examine Peppiatt's analysis of the rational underpinning the argument in the passage.

Peppiatt identifies further confusion in that Paul seems to 'shift or oscillate'³⁰ between arguments primarily addressing issues of shame based on culture, with theological arguments based on God-ordained differences between men and women. The issue is whether Paul's theology of gender is based on mutuality, or a gendered theology based on hierarchy.³¹ She notes that there is strong evidence Paul's argument is theological, rooted in creation, rather than on cultural norms.³²

Peppiatt notes that although the issue raised concerning head covering or hair length is cultural and social, Paul's response is theological.³³ She identifies three problems: firstly, it is not possible to say with certainty what practices concerned with head covering might be universally shameful; secondly, the offense is clearly serious and elicits a strong rebuke from Paul; thirdly, the passage opens with reference to the relationship of men

³⁰ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 45.

³¹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 49.

³² Peppiatt, *Woman and Worship*, 45.

³³ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 45.

and women to each other, to God and to Christ. Thus, Peppiatt argues it seems Paul's argument reflects his view of creation rather than his interpretation of social mores.

Paul reminds the church leaders in verse 3 of a key theological principle that underpins Christian relationships which presumably was being overlooking, or perhaps applied inappropriately in the Corinthian church. Peppiatt notes that Paul's argument rests on three couplets using the word 'head' metaphorically; 'I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ' (1 Cor. 11:3 NRSV). This verse poses questions for mutualists since Paul apparently implies that a timeless hierarchical relationship underpins his argument. Hence, there is more at stake than Paul's criticism of the offence caused by the violation of a cultural taboo. If Peppiatt's view is correct, then verse 3 is Paul reminding the Corinthians that, whilst they have properly understood much of what he had taught them, in one respect, they were mistaken; their grasp of his teaching on the relationship between men and women, was muddled. They had set to one side, not just cultural norms, but fundamental truths enshrined in the created order.

For hierarchicalists this is a key verse. In Schreiner's view Paul is arguing that some women were flouting conventions because they had no regard for divinely ordained structures of authority.³⁴ Schreiner's contention is that the word 'head' is used metaphorically to indicate 'authority'.³⁵ He rebuffs claims that the third couplet expresses a Christological heresy, arguing that Paul is not asserting an ontological

³⁴ Schreiner, 'Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity', in Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 159.

³⁵ Schreiner, 'Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity', in Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 162. Thus, he argues the intent of verse 3 is to demonstrate that 'Christ is the authority over every man, man is the authority over woman, and God is the authority over Christ'.

difference between the Father and the Son, no inferiority between Son and Father is implied, rather 'the Son willingly submits Himself to the Father's authority'.³⁶ Hence, the difference is not in essence but in function. Such a reading is problematic in that it supposes both Paul and his Corinthian readers, like Schreiner, possessed a degree of insight into the reasoning explored through the Council of Nicaea. This raises the question of the extent to which it is helpful to draw on the church's credal statements to shed light on Paul's teaching. Lakey's view is that it is anachronistic and therefore 'hermeneutically naïve and exegetically unsatisfactory'³⁷ to deploy patristic Trinitarian debates as a tool in any exegesis of 1 Corinthians. More to the point, Paul is not concerned with exploring Trinitarian doctrine. He speaks of 'Christ', 'man', 'woman', and 'God', not 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit'. Paul's primary purpose is to clarify what is fitting conduct for both men and women engaged in public worship.

Furthermore, Peppiatt argues that the order of the couplets, the head of every man is Christ, the head of every woman (or wife) is man (or husband), and the head of Christ is God, suggests that the third couplet is the climax of the sentence. The third couplet, God-Christ, arguably the key relationship, is mentioned last, and illustrates the nature of the relationships between the first two pairs. Peppiatt's response is to propose that Paul has indeed taught that Christ is the head of man, and man the head of women. Both couplets, she argues are dependent on the third, that God is the head of Christ, not a hierarchical relationship but one identifying origin, or source.³⁸

³⁶ Schreiner, 'Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity', in Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 163.

³⁷ Michael Lakey, *Image and Glory of God* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 180.

³⁸ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 84.

But if God can, in one respect, be described as the metaphorical head or source of Christ, the question arises as to how Christ might be described in the same way as the source of man. In neither of the creation accounts³⁹ is Christ identified as the source of man. In the light of Genesis 2:21 man might well be understood as the source of woman. However, Schreiner questions how a husband (although we have noted that 'man' is the more likely meaning) can be understood as the source of his wife (rather than 'woman'), an argument deployed to bolster his contention that 'authority' is the better understanding of 'head'.⁴⁰ Paul's intended meaning behind his declaration that man can be seen as the 'head' of woman (1 Cor. 11:3b) is unclear.

Peppiatt notes that it is not clear what Paul means when he writes that man ought not to cover his head in public worship because he 'is the image and reflection of God' (1 Cor. 11:7) or 'the image and glory of God' (NIV). The meaning of the terms 'image' and 'glory' are debatable. Furthermore, it is unclear what Paul is asserting when he writes 'woman is the glory of man' (1 Cor. 11:7 NIV).

Payne suggests that 'pride and joy'⁴¹ is the closest English equivalent of 'glory' and that the 'glory of someone is the person in whom one glories'.⁴² Payne develops his case along hierarchical lines claiming that Paul is proposing that there are good reasons for a wife to show respect for her husband because 'man is the image of God (v. 7b), woman

³⁹ Gen. 1:1-2:3; Gen. 2:4-3:24. God is said to make 'humankind (NRSV), or 'mankind' (NIV), or 'man' (ESV) in our image and likeness' (Gen. 1:26). In Genesis 2:7 God is portrayed as the creator forming the man from the 'dust of the ground'.

⁴⁰ Schreiner, 'Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity', in Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 161.

⁴¹ Payne, *One in Christ*, 180.

⁴² Payne, *One in Christ*, 179.

is the glory of man (v.7c), woman's source was from man (v. 8), and woman was created to fulfil man (v.9).⁴³

Peppiatt summarizes Payne's approach as 'Man fulfils a particular role in relation to God, woman in relation to man'.⁴⁴ She acknowledges that this is a plausible reading but questions whether this approach accurately reflects the creation narrative. A clear understanding of what is implied by 'glory' and by 'man' is crucial to understanding Paul's argument. However, as Fee observes, defining 'glory' is problematic.⁴⁵ Lakey questions how Paul derives the expression 'image and glory' from Genesis 1:26-27. He acknowledges there is a link in that 'image and glory' mirrors 'image and likeness', and suggests it is an interpretive gloss.⁴⁶ Bartlett, accepting there are many possible meanings of 'glory', proposes 'something that one glories in or delights in'⁴⁷ as the most appropriate in the context, reflecting God's judgement that the apex of creation, male and female made in his image 'was very good' (Gen. 1:31). Bartlett's view highlights uncertainty over the term 'man'. Peppiatt recognises the difficulty with the possibility that Paul is speaking of prelapsarian man, or fallen man, or man 'in Christ', or eschatological man. Bartlett seems to have prelapsarian man in mind. The possibility that Paul is speaking of fallen man as the 'image and glory of God' seems improbable in the light of his assertion that 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23).

⁴³ Payne, *One in Christ*, 181.

⁴⁴ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 51.

⁴⁵ Fee, *The Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edn., 570.

⁴⁶ Lakey, *Image and Glory*, 111.

⁴⁷ Bartlett, *Men and Women in Christ*, 146.

Peppiatt examines the possibility that Paul is presenting a patriarchal, hierarchicalist argument based on his understanding of the relationship between God, the creation, men and women. The arguments examined are undoubtedly complex and nuanced. She identifies a body of opinion,⁴⁸ defined by her as ‘characterized as having a reasonably moderate and accommodating approach to Paul’,⁴⁹ that regards Paul as holding competing views in tension while simultaneously presenting both patriarchal and egalitarian arguments. The charge that Paul is guilty of ‘gross inequality or misogyny’⁵⁰ is deflected by those who argue that Paul ‘holds to a soft patriarchy as an overarching view’,⁵¹ which Peppiatt regards as still fundamentally hierarchical. Consequently, she views Fee’s position as essentially the same as Thiselton’s. On the one hand, acknowledging that Paul’s teaching ‘would have given newfound freedom to the women’,⁵² but, on the other, that this freedom exposed them to the ‘temptation to push the boundaries’.⁵³ She summarises their arguments, concluding that ‘sadly, Paul’s leniency towards women appears to have been abused. He gave them an inch and they took a mile’.⁵⁴ However, the suggested resolutions that seek to incorporate conflicting positions are, in Peppiatt’s eyes, profoundly unsatisfactory.

Peppiatt’s analysis identifies four possibilities: (a) Paul prohibits women’s participation in public worship, or (b) that he is not making a universal ruling but that the prohibitions apply in specific circumstances, or (c) that although Paul is not the author, a

⁴⁸ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 23. Peppiatt examines, amongst others, the positions of Thiselton, Gundry-Volf, Bloomberg, Fee, Payne and Murphy-O’Connor.

⁴⁹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 23.

⁵⁰ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 24.

⁵¹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 24.

⁵² Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 28.

⁵³ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 28.

⁵⁴ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 28.

commentator is reflecting Paul's views, or (d) that the prohibitions are the unwarranted and un-Pauline additions made by an anonymous editor. Peppiatt's response to the lack of consensus amongst New Testament scholars is to propose a radically different approach.

Peppiatt's Position

Peppiatt's observation that 'there is a spectacular array of contradictory commentary on this passage in scholarly circles'⁵⁵ is incontrovertible and indicative that an adequate explanation has yet to be found. For those who, like Peppiatt, identify a mutualist trajectory in scripture exemplified by the prophecies of Joel 2:28-29, and reflected in Paul's letter to the Galatians (Gal. 3:28), the uncompromising injunctions in Paul's letters advocating a gendered hierarchy create an uncomfortable tension from the perspective of interpretation and application. Secondly, she notes that the instructions that women should not pray bareheaded (1 Cor. 11:5) or even speak publicly in the worshipping community (1 Cor. 14:34-35), whilst exercising the minds of commentators, are 'consistently and comprehensively ignored by the majority of churches in the world'.⁵⁶ This is a profoundly unsatisfactory situation for Peppiatt since Paul's purpose is to encourage unity in the Corinthian church by challenging disruptive and divisive patterns of behaviour; patterns of behaviour that still undermine the unity of the Church in the twenty-first century.

⁵⁵ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 67.

⁵⁶ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 67.

This backdrop of disagreement and confusion prompts Peppiatt to propose a solution that acknowledges that the lack of consensus amongst New Testament scholars could provide the key to understanding Paul's stance. She argues that the 'sheer level of confusion'⁵⁷ suggests that none of the proposed explanations of the textual difficulties posed by 1 Corinthians 11 provides an adequate solution. The confusion, she suggests, arises from the nature of the text. Her proposal is that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is better understood as a rhetorical device used by Paul to present a dialogue between competing voices; Paul's and those with whom he disagrees.

Peppiatt's first step is to construct a case for a reappraisal of the passage. Her argument is that a rhetorical reading offers a plausible and coherent account that challenges male dominance and embraces a mutualistic understanding of the new relationships between men and women in the church. Secondly, she challenges the weakness of arguments against such a rhetorical reading. Thirdly, she contends that historical reconstructions give insufficient weight to the prevailing misogynistic culture in first-century Corinth and focus on troublesome women as the problem exercising Paul, rather than overbearing men. Fourthly, studies that suggest Paul is primarily concerned with honour and shame are at odds with his message that his own ministry is characterised by public dishonour and ignominy. Finally, Peppiatt argues that Paul's teaching on the relationship between men and women, as portrayed in Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians 7:1-7, should establish the theological context against which comments about women and worship should be assessed.

⁵⁷ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 67.

Firstly, Peppiatt's engagement with Douglas Campbell's work on Paul's letter to the Romans suggested a different approach.⁵⁸ Campbell argues that Paul uses the technique of 'speech-in-character',⁵⁹ a rhetorical device used by ancient writers to express the arguments and opinions of an opponent rather than their own. Campbell's contention is that, since illiteracy was the norm rather than the exception in the ancient world, Paul's letters would have served as a script to be read and arguably performed to their intended audiences. Letters were designed to be heard rather than read.⁶⁰ Campbell highlights the need to appreciate the communicative/performance setting of Paul's Roman Christian auditors. A good storyteller, alert to the intention of the script, can present multiple voices that reveal a dialogue or debate. A good performance, through inflection and non-verbal cues, removes the necessity for formal textual signals, such as 'she said'. The audience would hear both Paul's voice and that of his interlocutor(s). He contends that 'such texts therefore deliver their ironic and subversive potential *entirely performatively*' (Campbell's emphasis).⁶¹ This point is not developed by Peppiatt, although she refers to 'tone of voice'⁶² as an important element in her proposed reading. Campbell's contention that, between Romans 1:18 and 3:20, Paul is presenting the views of a legalistic Jewish-Christian antagonist might, Peppiatt reasons, also offers a key to unlocking passages in 1 Corinthians. She notes that Campbell draws attention to this possibility stating:

⁵⁸ Douglas Campbell, *The Deliverance of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

⁵⁹ Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 531.

⁶⁰ Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 531. Campbell draws attention to the 'Protestant emphases on Scripture, individualism, and... interiority'. In passing, he notes that 'even private reading was usually done aloud'.

⁶¹ Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 541. Furthermore, Campbell notes that there may have been compelling reasons for not revealing the source and identity of an argument for fear that the letter would fall into the wrong hands.

⁶² Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 139.

‘it is widely...conceded that Paul [quotes] the position of others, often unannounced...in...his letters and that there are “uncontested instances” of this in 1 Corinthians’.⁶³

Peppiatt supposes that reference, albeit unannounced, to the views of those Paul seeks to challenge might be more widespread than generally acknowledged. Peppiatt’s proposal is that the irreconcilable clash between the hierarchicalist position and the mutualist position rests on the assumption that all the material contained in Paul’s authentic letters accurately reflects his own position. Amongst New Testament scholars it has been almost universally acknowledged there are instances where Paul quotes another’s point of view as a rhetorical device. Carson,⁶⁴ Fee⁶⁵ and Payne⁶⁶ all accept the premise that Paul makes use of well-known sayings to highlight his opponents’ misguided views. This point is illustrated by Paul’s twice repeated ‘All things are lawful for me’ (1 Cor 6:12) only then for him to refute, or at least modify, the phrase; firstly, with the response, ‘but not all things are beneficial’, and, secondly, ‘but I will not be dominated by anything’. Not all Bible translations present the phrase within quotation marks.⁶⁷ There are none in the Greek text, so their addition lies firmly with editorial judgement. Some translations make clear that the phrase is indeed a quotation through the addition of an explicit expression, not present in the original, such as “‘I have the right to do anything”, *you say* (my emphasis) – “but not everything is beneficial”” (NIV).⁶⁸ Thiselton notes, ‘the reader has to judge when a phrase...is a quotation’.⁶⁹

⁶³ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 84.

⁶⁴ Carson, ‘Silent In The Churches’, in Piper and Grudem, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, 189.

⁶⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edn., 278.

⁶⁶ Payne, *Man and Woman*, 170.

⁶⁷ For example: ASV, AMP, CEB, KJV.

⁶⁸ For example, CEV, GNT. In other translations (NRSV and NET) quotation marks only are used.

⁶⁹ Anthony Thiselton, *1 Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 93. Most readers, for whom the original text is inaccessible, are reliant on the judgement of academic Bible translator(s). Since there is no infallible method of precisely determining

Peppiatt argues that it is the weaving together of opposing views, in line with Campbell's proposal, not signalled by quotation marks or verbal indicators, which generates confusion. Paul's teaching and the misguided stance of the Corinthian church leaders are bound together within the same text. 'I contend that it is precisely that feature which we find confusing and baffling about the texts – namely, their incoherence – that is the clue to understanding them'.⁷⁰ Peppiatt's proposition is that there is more than one voice speaking from the passage to an extent that is unrecognised by many New Testament scholars.

Peppiatt recognises that a proposal made by Shoemaker⁷¹ opens the possibility of another way forward. Shoemaker draws on the work of Mercadante⁷² by suggesting that her analysis of the history of the interpretation of this passage is helpful. Mercadante demonstrates that, in general, only Paul's voice has been assumed by biblical commentators.

Shoemaker accepts Mercadante's summary of the different attempts at unravelling the meaning of the passage: that Paul is indeed advocating a hierarchical (complementarian)

Paul's intended meaning for his audience in Corinth, the impact of the text on modern readers will always be subject to interpretation and alternative readings.

⁷⁰ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 15.

⁷¹ Thomas Shoemaker, 'Unveiling of Equality: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16' in *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (1987) 60-63.

⁷² Linda Mercadante, *From Hierarchy to Equality* (Vancouver: GMH Books, 1978). She distinguishes between two schools of thought. On the one hand, she identifies what she sees as the traditional approach where the passage is read as Paul's contention that women are placed in a position of hierarchical submission to men, and furthermore this relationship should be seen as normative in the universal Church today. This assumes verses 4-9 are Paul's instructions to the Corinthian church. On the other hand, she highlights the views of scholars who acknowledge that a problem in the passage must be admitted. This approach to the passage, Mercadante argues, falls into two broad categories: firstly, that the issue lies with the material; Paul's teaching is indeed, confused and contradictory, and therefore extreme caution must be exercised before attempting to make his teaching prescriptive. Or, secondly, that the problem lies with us and our understanding of Paul's intended meaning; this view proposes that it is the interpretation rather than the material that causes the confusion. Thus, once again, application within the Church community is problematic.

stance; or, that Paul's intention is unclear; or, that separated by two millennia from the Corinthian context the intended meaning for the modern reader is difficult to fathom. However, he proposes that a quite different approach is possible. Shoemaker subjects the passage to chiastic analysis (Appendix B) with verses 2-9, reflected in verses 11-16. The hierarchical structures implied by verses 2-9 are contrasted with the egalitarian practices portrayed through verses 11-16. The calls for feminine submission and in particular the issue of veiling addressed in verse 2-9, are refuted in verses 11-16 where Paul argues that women should not be subject to veiling.

Shoemaker presents the passage in chiastic form placing the focus on verse 10 'For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have liberty over her head'. Shoemaker's electing to use the word 'liberty' in verse 10 makes his point clear; Paul is arguing against the faction that maintain women should submit to veiling. Peppiatt accepts this train of thought and notes that Padgett makes a similar case. His translation of the verse speaks of woman having 'authority over her [literal] head'.⁷³ Padgett contends that Paul is declaring that 'women ought to have what they did not have according to some Corinthian leaders – that is, the power to wear or not wear a head-covering in church when they pray or prophesy'.⁷⁴

Secondly, Peppiatt recognises that this line of argument is contentious, but her response to critics of Shoemaker and Padgett is two-fold. If the argument voiced by Shoemaker and Padgett is rejected, then the corollary, that a head covering for women is mandatory, leads Peppiatt to an uncomfortable conclusion, since the instruction 'is

⁷³ Alan Padgett, *As Christ Submits to the Church*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 71.

⁷⁴ Padgett, *As Christ Submits to the Church*, 71.

consistently and comprehensively ignored by the majority of churches in the world'.⁷⁵ Furthermore, she contends that arguments against Padgett's position lack rigour. She acknowledges that scholars are in general agreement that Paul's use of his interlocutors ideas and phrases in 1 Corinthians (6:12, 13; 7:1; 8:1, 8:4; 10:23; 15:12) is limited to a few words⁷⁶ and not lengthy quotations. However, the fact that he repeatedly uses this rhetorical device is surely of significance. The acknowledged use by Paul of short quotations or slogans cannot be seen as a decisive objection to the proposal that at other times he quotes longer passages. Peppiatt's task is to demonstrate, not just that the proposal is possible, but that it is worthy of consideration as likely. Lakey examines other interpretations of the chiasmic structure⁷⁷ but none of the alternatives provides a sufficiently compelling case to undermine Peppiatt's proposal that more than one voice is to be heard in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

Peppiatt identifies a third reason to question the view that the passage reflects only Paul's voice. The assumption made by most commentators is that Paul is challenging and seeking to restrain the women who had taken liberties with their new-found freedom and whose behaviour subverted cultural norms. Their unrestrained behaviour dishonoured the relationship between men and women, particularly within the context of marriage and discredit the standing of Church in the eyes of the wider community. Peppiatt challenges the assumption that it is easier imagine a group of disruptive women

⁷⁵ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 67.

⁷⁶ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 67-68.

⁷⁷ Lakey, *Image and Glory*, 100. Lakey cites Fee, *First Corinthians*, 493-94 and W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Zurich: Benziger, 1995), 490.

than to imagine a group of domineering men requiring women 'to wear a sign on their heads that protects them from some form of imagined infringement'.⁷⁸

Peppiatt advances her argument by drawing on the analysis of Payne⁷⁹ and Bristow⁸⁰ that the assumption that women were inferior to men was deeply embedded in the prevailing culture. Both the men and the women in the Corinthian Church would have had their lives shaped by the values and practices of Graeco-Roman culture, a culture challenged by the new freedoms found in Christ. Old habits die hard, and since Paul was no longer with them (Acts 18:18), Peppiatt suggests that without Paul's steadying hand, the leaders of the church defaulted to the cultural norms and their pre-Christian world view, reinstating 'teaching and practices that reinforced a particular hierarchical view of men based on a creation theology of derivation'.⁸¹ News that the Corinthian church continued to exercise male-dominated ways, would surely have prompted Paul to want to release women from oppressive practices and mistaken theology. Paul's response, Peppiatt argues, challenges these misconceptions and seeks to reiterate his advocacy for the new-found status women have in Christ.

A fourth reason to challenge the view that the passage accurately reflects Paul's stance relates to the perception of shame and honour in Corinthian society. Peppiatt observes that the arguments deployed in 1 Corinthians 11:1-9 are at odds with Paul's views

⁷⁸ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 68.

⁷⁹ Payne, *Man and Woman*, 32-34. Payne draws on multiple sources, including Euripides (c.479-406BC), Plato (c.437-347BC), Aristotle (384-322BC), Menander (c.343-291BC), Plutarch (c.46-120AD) to conclude that there was 'a broad misogynistic streak' in Mediterranean society. He quotes Aristotle's judgement that 'the female is as it were a deformed male', 33.

⁸⁰ John Temple Bristow, *What Paul Really Said about Women: An Apostle's Liberating Views on Equality in Marriage, Leadership, and Love* (New York: HarperOne, 1988). Bristow argues that Aristotle gave authority to the practice of sexual discrimination and inequality and that the church leaders in Corinth were a product of that Aristotelian culture, however, 'a careful reading of what Paul wrote demonstrates that [he] was actually challenging Aristotle's idea instead of supporting it', 6-7.

⁸¹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 69.

expressed elsewhere in the letter. Even allowing for the textual and interpretative issues already discussed, these verses seem to underscore the inappropriateness of behaviour, in respect of head-coverings, which would bring shame on worshipers, especially women. The argument deployed in the passage suggests the divinely ordained hierarchical order of God-man-woman, is undermined and dishonoured by the public violation of cultural norms. This position would have been understandable in Corinthian society where an honour-shame cultural orientation prevailed. Worthington points out the contrast between 'a city where social climbing was a major preoccupation',⁸² and Paul deliberately abandoning the marks of social status in a manner that would have been interpreted as shocking and provocative. Paul identifies with the crucified Christ, seeing himself as, 'last of all...sentenced to death...a spectacle to the world...fools for the sake of Christ...weak...in disrepute...the rubbish of the world...the dregs of all' (1 Cor. 4:9-13).

Peppiatt argues Paul aligns himself with society's lowest, 'the shamed, the dishonored, the disgraced...with what in Roman society would have been the sinful woman's and the slave's position.'⁸³ Furthermore, Peppiatt draws attention to the example of Jesus, Paul's master, who in allowing a sinful woman to anoint him with oil and then wipe his feet with her hair, sanctioned a blatant violation of contemporary cultural and religious codes.⁸⁴

Fifthly, Peppiatt argues that Paul's wider theology, reflected in Galatians 3, sees traditional boundaries superseded by the new familial relationships established in

⁸² Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 21.

⁸³ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 71.

⁸⁴ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 71.

Christ. The possibility that Paul's purpose is to reassert historic hierarchical and culturally recognised relationships between men and women is at odds with the sentiments expressed in Galatians 3:28.⁸⁵ Peppiatt observes that in writing 1 Corinthians Paul's overarching theme is his desire 'to combat the division that is plaguing the community'.⁸⁶ The use of spiritual gifts and the celebration of the Lord's Supper are two of the areas where the rich and the privileged are lording it over the poor. Paul chides them declaring 'I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good' (1 Cor.11:17).⁸⁷

Peppiatt's case is that Paul's mutualistic theology spelled out in Galatians 3:28, his intentional rejection of contemporary codes of shame and honour, the pervasive hierarchical nature of Corinthian Graeco-Roman culture, and his desire to promote unity in the Church, prompted him to address and challenge these conditions, *not* to reinforce and uphold them. Peppiatt argues that her proposed reading of the passage irons out many of the intractable problems identified by commentators. Peppiatt's understanding is that Paul is ruling against head covering (whether, hair length, or a veil, or some kind of headdress), on the grounds that no other Christian community has adopted such repressive, hierarchical practices. Such a view is consistent with Paul's position expressed in Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians 11:11-12.

⁸⁵ Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1990), 138. Antoinette Wire takes a different approach, arguing that 'social distinctions are not overcome in Christ but are accepted and integrated into Christ'.

⁸⁶ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 74.

⁸⁷ The picture of a harmonious and integrated community where there is 'no longer Jew or Greek...slave or free...male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:28) is fleshed out by Paul in the body imagery of 1 Corinthians 12. The emphasis in this passage is on the assimilation of every element and aspect of the body and Paul makes no reference to, or distinction between, between men and women. The reference to male and female, present in Galatians 3:28, but absent in 1 Corinthians 12:13, should not be seen, in Peppiatt's judgement, as a significant anomaly, since Paul has already made a strong case for parity between men and women in 1 Corinthians 11:11-12.

Peppiatt acknowledges that her proposed 'rhetorical reading...cannot be proven beyond a shadow of doubt'.⁸⁸ Her claim that she seeks to demonstrate 'the fragility and inconsistencies of the existing interpretations'⁸⁹ is demonstrable and so too is her claim to have offered 'a solution that, although not yet perfect, contains more than enough internal consistency to warrant a hearing'.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 137.

⁸⁹ Peppiatt, *Woman and Worship*, 17.

⁹⁰ Peppiatt, *Woman and Worship*, 17.

Chapter 4

Responding to Peppiatt's Proposal

This chapter examines Peppiatt's proposed rhetorical reading of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 in the light of recent scholarly works. Robinson's notion of 'subordinate masculinity' is explored and the possibility that it enhances Peppiatt's argument is considered. Issues prompted by Peppiatt's innovative reading of the text will be investigated. The role of oral hermeneutics is suggested as a way of overcoming weaknesses in Peppiatt's engagement with the dynamics of the relationship between Paul and his Corinthian audience.

Campbell's cautionary assessment that Peppiatt's work 'will be controversial...the target of criticism'¹ has not been widely realised. However, his view that Peppiatt's approach would stimulate a positive response is demonstratable. Jonathan Robinson,² whilst offering criticism of Peppiatt's 'lack of discussion of ancient rhetorical practices',³ nevertheless, allows that her work 'remains a valuable thought experiment and an important critique of traditional interpretation of these verses'.⁴ Gabriel Radle⁵ recognises the significance of Peppiatt's contribution to the debate about the power struggles concerning women in the Corinthian church. She cites Peppiatt's work alongside other noted scholars.⁶ Chris Green judges her work to be 'stimulating and innovative'⁷ in challenging the view that Paul affirms 'patriarchy, androcentrism, and

¹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, x.

² Jonathan R. Robinson, *Reviews in Religion and Theology* (2019), Vol.26 (1), 128-129.

³ Robinson, *Reviews in Religion and Theology*, 129.

⁴ Robinson, *Reviews in Religion and Theology*, 129.

⁵ Gabriel Radle, 'The Veiling of Women in Byzantium', in *Speculum* 94/4 (October 2019), 1082.

⁶ Wire, Macdonald, Padgett, Murphy-O'Connor, Fiorenza and Martin.

⁷ Chris Green, 'Does (Not) Nature Itself Teach You?', in *Pneuma* 38, (2016), 460.

male superiority'⁸ as the appropriate paradigm for the Church. Melanie Howard's review of feminist approaches to the New Testament in the period 2000 to 2021, places Peppiatt alongside other scholars, including Payne and Westfall, willing to wrestle with the texts of the Pauline Epistles in relation to 'power, leadership, and agency of women today'.⁹ Tom Steffen and William Bjoraker¹⁰ maintain that Peppiatt presents a powerfully argued case that Paul used the technique of diatribal discussion to present his argument that unity must overcome division and that all are equal under the new covenant.

Peppiatt's proposals have provoked interest in Paul's use of rhetoric. However, for Peppiatt's case to be regarded as compelling rather than simply interesting, she must demonstrate that she has offered a convincing rebuttal to three significant objections: firstly, the view that if Paul is indeed committed to patriarchy and the silencing of women, then there is no need to propose an alternative reading of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 14:33b-36; secondly, there are no other known examples of Paul quoting his opponents with the aid of such extended 'cited' passages; thirdly, the passages contain no textual signals that Paul is referring to the mistaken ideas of his Corinthian interlocutors.

Peppiatt's analysis has shown, there are strong advocates for both the hierarchical and the mutualistic points of view. Her speculative proposals for a rhetorical reading can only be justified if she can build a plausible case that Paul's purpose in engaging with the

⁸ Green, 'Does (Not) Nature Itself Teach You?', 461.

⁹ Melanie A. Howard, 'Recent Feminist Approaches to Interpreting the New Testament', in *Currents in Biblical Research* 20, 1 (2021), 65-96.

¹⁰ Tom Steffen and William Bjoraker, *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 88-89.

Corinthian church is to challenge inequalities, especially gender inequalities that are grounded in a flawed and hierarchical theology within the congregation.

In my judgement, Peppiatt's advocacy for a mutualistic reading of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, can be strengthened in two areas by studies that post-date her proposal. Firstly, the work by Brian Robinson¹¹ adds weight to Peppiatt's understanding of Paul's theology of gender, his intentional rejection of a hierarchical disposition, and his explicit espousal of a mutualistic stance. Secondly, Peppiatt's speculative reading of the passage is strengthened through the argument presented by Steffen and Bjoraker¹² that explores the role that orality plays in interpreting ancient texts. Both these approaches will be examined in the present chapter of this dissertation.

Robinson's Subordinate Masculinity

Whereas Peppiatt seeks to explain inconsistent arguments within the text of 1 Corinthians, Robinson's work focuses on the underlying assumptions driving Paul's concerns for the church. He argues that Paul's use of feminine imagery in 1 Corinthians intentionally deconstructs the conventional masculine hegemony that was inconsistent with a Christian lifestyle and that fostered discord in the church. Robinson identifies the works of Foucault, Halperin, and Richlin as of the 'utmost importance'¹³ in developing his understanding of the relationships between the physical body, power and gender in Graeco-Roman perceptions of masculinity. Robinson identifies instances where Paul

¹¹ Brian Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men: Paul's Rhetoric of Gender and Power in 1 Corinthians* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2019).

¹² Steffen and Bjoraker, *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics*.

¹³ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 12.

sees himself as a subordinate man refusing to occupy and manipulate privileged positions of masculinity and power. He argues that Paul's vision for the church is itself an imitation of the crucified body of Christ that abandons domination and embraces equality. Both Robinson and Peppiatt thus argue that Paul's teaching reflects Jesus' non-hierarchicalist stance in contrast to the hegemonic norms of the day. Robinson's work is particularly relevant in relation to Peppiatt's argument since he offers 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 as a case study.

Robinson examines contemporary texts,¹⁴ and their analysis by modern scholars¹⁵ to determine the connection between power and gender in Graeco-Roman culture. He concludes that masculinity and power are demonstrably linked.¹⁶ Robinson contends that in ancient Greek and Roman texts, authors show a high awareness of the likely impact of their writing on a reader's perception of the author's masculinity. Typically, writers 'strategically use their authorial presence and self-referencing to construct a *persona* for specific rhetorical effect'.¹⁷

Robinson recognises three levels of masculinity in this respect: hegemonic, complicit, and subordinate.¹⁸ He contends that Paul intentionally portrays himself as a subordinate male, conforming to the image of Christ crucified by adopting a *persona* that would be

¹⁴ Robinson cites, amongst others, Flavorinus, Philo and Josephus.

¹⁵ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 54-63. Robinson offers an extensive list of modern scholars.

¹⁶ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 19-63.

¹⁷ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 8.

¹⁸ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 66. Hegemonic masculinity embraces traits and characteristics associated with social and, importantly, legal and political dominance over other forms of masculine or feminine identities. Complicit masculinity, falls short of the hegemonic ideal, lacking key markers of hegemonic masculinity, nevertheless, it exhibits 'enough masculine traits to participate in the patriarchal structures created by the hegemonic ideal'. Subordinate masculinity describes men whose traits and characteristics would have been interpreted as feminine and undermining their ability to function as men in legal, political and social contexts.

read as subordinate and therefore, as failed masculinity.¹⁹ Robinson demonstrates this by drawing attention to Paul's extensive use of feminine imagery.

Robinson identifies instances in 1 Corinthians where Paul appropriates and applies female imagery to himself, or, portrays himself through the language of failed masculinity. Both approaches 'would pose catastrophic consequences for his ability to function as a man'.²⁰ In doing so, Robinson argues, Paul's self-presentation as a subordinate male intentionally cuts himself off from the 'institutions and relationships that reinforce patriarchy and hegemonic dominance'.²¹ In presenting himself a role model for subordinate masculinity, Robinson contends, that when Paul implores the Corinthians to 'Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ' (1 Cor. 11:1), he is urging them to abandon the repressive socio-economic constructs that typify the hegemonic masculinity that was undermining the unity of the congregation.

Robinson draws attention to instances that illustrate his point. Paul presents himself as a failed orator, preaching a message of 'foolishness' (1 Cor. 1:18) without recourse to 'wisdom and eloquence' (1:17). This is strikingly different from the more usual public display of wisdom and rhetorical sophistication that marked out the finest teachers. That the Corinthians need 'milk, not solid food' (1 Cor. 3:2) and that he, Paul, assuming the feminine imagery of a wet nurse,²² upturned convention. Paul's depiction of fatherhood, Robinson accepts, is complicated. Nevertheless, he argues that rather than portraying himself as a proud, commanding, virile *paterfamilias*, Paul describes himself as a father shamed by his immature children, and in doing so he fails 'to embody the normative

¹⁹ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 13.

²⁰ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 113.

²¹ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 113.

²² Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 121-130.

gendered discourse of fatherhood'²³ distancing himself from the model of a hegemonic or complicit man.

Robinson broadens his argument noting that Paul urges the Corinthians to avoid seeking redress through the civil courts (1 Cor. 6:1-8) where justice was meted out according to status rather than the merits of the grievance. Passages in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 concern food sacrificed to idols. Paul's response to factionalism is to deny any sense of privilege or personal freedom by adopting the diets of the weak since 'if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall' (1 Cor. 8:13).

Robinson's analysis of Paul's injunction that husbands should submit to their wives and wives to their husband (1 Cor. 7:1-6) is significant in two respects. Firstly, there a reciprocity in the relationship that marks it out from the hierarchical norms of Graeco-Roman society, but secondly, 'he commands the empowerment of the party that is most liable to the abuse of power...by providing women the power to divorce'.²⁴ Robinson sees Paul's self-revelation of his celibacy (1 Cor. 7:1-7) as 'another jarring moment'²⁵ reinforcing the view that Paul overtly espouses an unmanly, subordinate masculinity.

Taken together these instances of deliberately mis-performed masculinity build a more persuasive case than Peppiatt's presentations of Paul's advocacy of subordination where high-status men intentionally forsake positions of dominance to occupy positions of equal status with women and marginalised men. Zeichmann comments that whilst the examples of subordinate masculinity identified by Robinson 'may vary in

²³ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 133.

²⁴ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 186.

²⁵ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 135.

persuasiveness, their cumulative weight is entirely compelling'.²⁶ This view probably overstates the case however, Peppiatt's position is strengthened by Robinson's contention that Paul intentionally embraces subordinate masculinity. Both Peppiatt and Robinson argue that Paul's purpose is to counter out-of-control men, rather than out-of-control women.²⁷ Furthermore, Robinson²⁸ and Peppiatt²⁹ share the conviction that Paul's plea to the Corinthians to 'Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ' (11:1), the one whose crucifixion is a stumbling block and foolishness and a scandal to all (11:23), would serve as a corrective against attempts to increase power and status.

However, it is important to note that Robinson's examination of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 as a case study offers no support to Peppiatt's proposed rhetorical reading of the passage. Robinson argues that head coverings in cultic settings were a signal of superior status. Thus, Paul's instructions for men to leave their heads uncovered (1 Cor. 11:4) are prompted by 'his desire for the men of the community to avoid manipulating markers of identity that would elevate them above other members of the community'.³⁰ Peppiatt's proposed reading is based on the opposite assumption, namely that by insisting on head covering for the women, the men in the community were imposing a publicly recognised symbol of restriction and submission. Peppiatt and Robinson share the view that Paul's purpose is to suppress male hegemony. However, if Robinson's understanding of the passage is correct, then Peppiatt's manipulation of the text is rendered unnecessary.

²⁶ Christopher B. Zeichmann, review of 'Being Subordinate Men' by Brian Robinson, in *Religion and Gender*, 10 (2020), 230-232, 231.

²⁷ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 11.

²⁸ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 162.

²⁹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 136.

³⁰ Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, 221.

A Compelling Solution?

Peppiatt's remark that her proposed 'rhetorical reading...cannot be proven beyond a shadow of doubt'³¹ is a candid admission of an inherent weakness in her argument. Garland's words of caution are apposite, namely that 'interpreters should refrain from resorting to Corinthian slogans or quotations to solve exegetical riddles unless there is clear textual evidence that Paul is citing another's position'.³² In the broadest sense, Paul's letters are certainly rhetorical seeking to present arguments that encourage their recipients to live a more Christ-like, lifestyle. But does Paul employ the rhetorical structure proposed by Peppiatt? The use of rhetoric in Paul's letters is explored in a series of essays, edited by Paul Sampley and Peter Lampe. Parallels with contemporary secular texts have been used to demonstrate Paul's use of classical rhetorical techniques.³³ However, that Peppiatt's work lacks discussion of rhetorical practices is a demonstrable methodological weakness.³⁴

³¹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 137.

³² David Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 649.

³³ Duane Watson, 'The Three Species of Rhetoric and the Study of the Pauline Epistles', in J. Sampley and Peter Lampe eds. *Paul and Rhetoric* (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 31, draws attention to Wilhelm Wuellner's argument that 1 Corinthians is epideictic rhetoric, centred on praise and blame (William Wuellner, 'Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation', in *Early Christian Literature and Classical Intellectual Tradition: in Honorem Robert M. Grant*, ed. William R. Schoedel and Robert L Wilken, ThH54 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979, 177-88). Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza contends that Paul's intention is primarily deliberative in that it is persuasive and dissuasive in character, albeit with some judicial passages, concerned with accusation and defence ('Rhetorical Situation and Historical reconstruction in 1 Corinthians' in *NTS* 33, (1987), 390-93). Margaret Mitchell's study of the language and composition of 1 Corinthians is important in that she demonstrates that the letter 'is a unified deliberative letter which throughout urges unity on the divided Corinthian church' [by means of] 'thematic, rhetorical and compositional unity', Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 296-297).

³⁴ Jonathan Robison, *Reviews in Religion and Theology*, 128.

That 1 Corinthians is in some sense a construction with rhetorical intent is widely accepted.³⁵ Peppiatt's innovative proposal builds on what Campbell sees as the uncontested view that Paul frequently refers the position of others without always making this clear through written cues.³⁶ Her argument is that in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Paul employs the simple technique of presenting opposing views; the views of the leaders of the Corinthian congregation set against his own. Her contention is that Paul expresses the argument explicitly and in the form of a responsive dialogue. Thus, the two voices can be heard in conversation. This is central to Peppiatt's thesis, yet this claim has not been endorsed by other scholars.³⁷

So, the question remains, how can we be sure when, and to what extent, Paul is quoting his opponents? Peppiatt concedes that this is a difficult exercise, but her confidence in her proposed solution is that it works. Her suggested structure identifies both sides of the dialogue with Paul's mutualistic refutation set against the hierarchicalist views of the Corinthian church leaders. Those who have enthusiastically welcomed Peppiatt's proposals³⁸ draw attention to the outcome rather than the unproven process she employs. Steffen and Bjoraker concede that Peppiatt's 'powerful argument for Paul's use of rhetoric...is difficult to pick up strictly from the text'.³⁹ Their work is helpful in that

³⁵ Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 252. 'It has been cogently claimed that the letter forms a unified answer to the problems raised by...divisions that had arisen within the church.'

³⁶ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 84.

³⁷ Edward Watson and Martin Culy eds. *Quoting Corinthians* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2018). Watson and Culy, recognising the well-attested case that Paul does quote his opponents mistaken views, address the difficulty facing interpreters of the letter. Their solution is to propose twelve objective criteria against which putative quotes can be assessed. Whilst acknowledging that their study is of limited scope, Watson and Culy make no mention of 1 Corinthians 11 as a significant example of Paul's use of quotations. This is rather surprising since this notoriously contentious passage is crying out for analysis.

³⁸ Robinson, *Reviews in Religion and Theology*; Radle, *The Veiling of Women in Byzantium*; Green, 'Does (not) Nature Itself'; Howard, *Recent Feminist Approaches*; Steffen and Bjoraker, *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics*.

³⁹ Steffen and Bjoraker, *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics*, 89, footnote 93.

they set Peppiatt's work in the context of a different approach to biblical analysis, a paradigm that recognises the foundational role of orality in teaching and the formation of the written text; oral hermeneutics.

Oral Hermeneutics

In this section the possibility that oral hermeneutics might have a role to play in uncovering the meaning of 1Corinthians 11:2-16 is explored.

As already noted, the absence of textual cues in 1 Corinthians makes it difficult to identify where Paul could be employing his opponents' arguments as a rhetorical device. Significant elements of Paul's dialogue with the Corinthians and our understanding of the cultural context in which he was writing can only be surmised. Peppiatt's observation, that 'it is not at all unlikely, as we are only party to "half a conversation," that we might be missing the cues',⁴⁰ is undoubtedly true. The written text is, by and large, a fixed point around which discussion of meaning takes place. Commentators have to contend with the partial witness of the text that addresses issues played out in the Corinthian church two millennia ago. Biblical studies in its varied, developing and sophisticated forms, has by and large focussed on the written text. The historical-critical method of the eighteenth and nineteenth century followed by source-critical studies in the twentieth century offered methodological tools designed to uncover the context and meaning of biblical texts. By the late twentieth century narrative criticism turned attention away from the construction of the text to the world behind the text. Analysis

⁴⁰ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 84.

of the New Testament letters shifted from how they were composed to the likely influence on those who received the letter. Rhoads and Dewey⁴¹ argue that both the historical-critical paradigm and the more recent narrative paradigm still have an important part to play in New Testament studies, but they also argue that important insights are to be gained through the recognition that there was an element of performance in the delivery of biblical texts.

In recent years a new dimension in Biblical studies has developed to take account of the fact that the early church was rooted in a predominantly oral culture. However, historically little attention has been paid by scholars to the impact the spoken word; the scriptural text has been read rather than heard. Rhoads and Dewey make the sapient observation that this approach is akin to musicologists studying scores but not listening to music and theatre scholars studying scripts but never seeing a performance.⁴² It is important to recognise that Paul's letters were intended to be read aloud since most could not read. Analysis of the text, however, exhaustive and insightful, overlooks the impact of oral presentation of the letter on the Corinthian Christian community. The predominant paradigm that is centred on the analysis of the written word takes little account of the oral nature of the texts nor of the importance of oral dynamics.⁴³

Imaging the context, the *Sitz im Leben*, of 1 Corinthians is fraught with difficulties and Peppiatt acknowledges that 'the process of historical reconstruction is highly

⁴¹ David Rhodes and Joanna Dewey, 'Performance Criticism: A Paradigm Shift in New Testament Studies' in Kelly Iverson ed., *From Text to Performance* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2015), 1-26.

⁴² Iverson, *From Text to Performance*, 8-9.

⁴³ Iverson, *From Text to Performance*, 10. Rhodes and Downey characterise the assumed centrality of the written text in textual hermeneutics as: Author - Written Word - Individual Silent Reader. Whereas, in oral hermeneutics the trajectory is: Oral Composition - Composing Orally from Memory - To a Communal Audience.

problematic'.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, we can say with a high degree of certainty that most people would have *heard* not *read* Paul's letter. Sampley describes the process used by Paul to convey his teaching to a church community. Typically, he argues, 'one of his trusted agents...would not only read the letter...to the assembly...but would also be there to lend authoritative interpretation and elaboration'.⁴⁵ Paul identifies Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17) as one charged with not just reading the fixed text of a letter but 'even more on persuasion, on arousing the emotional conviction of the audience to take action of some kind'.⁴⁶ Rhoads and Dewey describe how oral presentation was not fixed, like a written text, but fluid with the performer interacting with and adjusting each presentation to the perceived needs of the audience.⁴⁷ Intractable and frustrating ambiguities and contradictions, so apparent in the written text, and, as we have shown, open to multiple interpretations by New Testament scholars, can in an oral setting become the focus of debate and explanation between the performer and the audience. In other words, the written text is the *aide memoire* upon which teaching is grounded.

Peppiatt's proposed rhetorical reading of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 requires the reader and hearer, to detect a movement not signalled in the written text. This movement is the shift in voice between two interlocutors: Paul and the leaders of the Corinthian church. Peppiatt gives few clues as to how these different voices can be discerned. She suggests that two key pointers, or patterns, are available to the reader: 'The first is the obvious "breaks" in the text'⁴⁸ where there is a noticeable change of view or a contradiction and

⁴⁴ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 9.

⁴⁵ Paul Sampley and Peter Lampe, eds. *Paul and Rhetoric* (London: T. and T. Clark, 2010), ix-x.

⁴⁶ Iverson, *From Text to Performance*, 11.

⁴⁷ Iverson, *From Text to Performance*, 11.

⁴⁸ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 8.

the second is the 'use of the rhetorical question'.⁴⁹ She concedes that this is no easy task and leaves the reader with 'a perplexing array of interpretations [which] ultimately they will have to judge...which reading sounds more "convincing"'.⁵⁰

Unlike the modern reader for whom the written text is frustratingly enigmatic - as Peppiatt amply illustrates, Paul's intended audience, according to Steffen and Bjoraker,⁵¹ received a text that was designed to be spoken aloud and heard in the congregation rather than read silently by individuals. Thus, the modern reader's problem is not just the barrier posed by the two millennia since the letter was written but an understanding of the role of the letter as a teaching tool. At the heart of Steffen and Bjoraker's argument is the assertion that 'cultural change and developments over the centuries brought about a shift from oral dominance to textual dominance in the learning and teaching of Scripture'.⁵² Steffen and Bjoraker argue that since the fifteenth century, with the invention of the Gutenberg press, the printed word has privileged textual hermeneutics over oral hermeneutics, particularly in Western culture. This shift of emphasis has led scholars to apply rigorous scrutiny of the text, but that the importance of the texts oral provenance has been largely overlooked. Steffen and Bjoraker acknowledge that Peppiatt's use of the terms 'diatribal discussion' and 'speech-in-character'⁵³ indicates her awareness of the role of the reader-performer in conveying information to the audience not signalled in the written text.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 8.

⁵⁰ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 13.

⁵¹ Steffen and Bjoraker, *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics*, 89.

⁵² Steffen and Bjoraker, *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics*, xvii.

⁵³ Steffen and Bjoraker, *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics*, 89.

⁵⁴ Steffen and Bjoraker, *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics*, 89

Conclusion

To what extent has Lucy Peppiatt's bold attempt at providing a resolution to the vexed question of Paul's attitude towards women been successful? Has she been able to demonstrate convincingly that Paul's theology is uncompromisingly mutualistic? Does her rhetorical reading stand up to scrutiny? Peppiatt has argued that the multiple interpretations offered by scholars of Corinthians 11:2-16 offer little consensus since textual and exegetical problems abound. For hierarchicalists (those who self-identify as complementarians) different roles for men and women are divinely ordained and timeless and the teaching in 1 Corinthians reflects Paul's desire to curtail the inappropriate and undignified behaviour of women. For mutualists the teaching is awkward, clashing with their mutualist convictions, and generally explained as culturally expedient. Peppiatt argues that the different perspectives cannot be ignored since both approaches have consequences for the life of the Church today posing questions of authority and the exercise of power.

Both hierarchicalists and mutualists have assumed that the confusing, and at times, contradictory arguments in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 reflect Paul's standpoint. Peppiatt challenges this view. Her conviction is that Paul's overarching teaching is that equality in Christ is the birthright of all, and this determines the lens through which she views the text. But this dialogue is hidden from view; the text contains no indicators that identify the speaker. Her solution suggests that the contradictions connote dialogue, with Paul's corrective teaching set against the androcentric theology and practices of male leaders in the Corinthian church reflecting their drifting away from the teaching

Paul gave them when he was with them. Peppiatt's proposal (see Appendix A) presents 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 as a dialogue, with the views of the Corinthians countered by Paul.

This is a mutualistic view that Peppiatt shares with Shoemaker and Robinson. However, her proposed reading of the passage, although intriguing, is by her own admission, largely unproven. Shoemaker's chiastic reading also allows for a mutualist interpretation of the passage, but his approach is more nuanced than Peppiatt's. Indeed, her proposed reading is unnecessary if Robinson's understanding of the passage is accepted, namely that head covering is a sign of superiority rather than submission.

Peppiatt's proposed rendering of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 introduces punctuation, not present in the original text, to suggest Paul's 'tone of voice'.¹ This insight is important. This dissertation has argued that although the term is used by Peppiatt figuratively, it implies that there is a vital extra-textual element required for the passage to be understood. For most, Paul's rhetorical arguments would have been received orally: Paul's letter would have been *heard* rather than *read*. However, the impact of the oral presentation of Paul's letter is largely unrecognised in Peppiatt's work. I argue that the emergent study of oral hermeneutics, embraced by Steffen and Bjoraker, and by Rhodes and Dewey with reference to performance criticism, suggest a possible interpretive perspective through which to extend Peppiatt's work on Paul's rhetoric.

Peppiatt amply illustrates the difficulties posed by Paul's letter for those seeking clarity on the question of male authority and female submission. She is right to describe the difficulties as textual. The precise meaning of words and phrases, written in a different

¹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 139.

age, may never properly be understood, as is made abundantly clear by the conflicting opinions of contemporary scholars. Hearing the words in context is important. Identifying 'tone of voice' is an imaginative device that signals the dynamic interaction between performer and listener.

It has been argued in this study that the issue that prompted Paul to write to the Corinthian church was the presence of a male-dominated hierarchy rather than disruption caused by wild and rebellious women. I have shown that Peppiatt and Robinson share this mutualistic view. They are at one in identifying the root of the problem as theological rather than cultural, and therefore the application of Paul's teaching is not just a matter for the Corinthian church but is universal and timeless. Furthermore, this dissertation proposes that the hermeneutical and exegetical interrogation of Paul's rhetoric, not explicitly signalled in the written text, requires a more developed understanding of the oral nature of his message, before Peppiatt's rhetorical reading can be accepted as a persuasive explanation of the enigmatic and opaque text found in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

Appendix A

Peppiatt's Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Peppiatt's rhetorical reading of the passage presents Paul's voice in block quotes and uses italics to represent the Corinthian position and phraseology. She introduces punctuation to indicate Paul's 'tone of voice'.

I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions/teachings, just as I passed them on to you. But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of woman is man, but the head of Christ is God.

Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head.

And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head – it is just as though her head were shaved.

So if a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head!

A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.

Nevertheless, [the point is] in the Lord, woman is not independent of/separated from man, nor is man independent of/separated from woman. For as a woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for yourselves: Is it fitting for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not

the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him,

but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her in place of a head covering. If anyone wants to be dangerously divisive about this, we have no such custom – nor do the churches of God.¹

¹ Peppiatt, *Women and Worship*, 139-140.

Appendix B

Shoemaker's Chiastic Analysis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16²

A (2-3) Introduction

B (4-7) 'woman,' 'uncovered,' 'to pray,' 'man,' 'glory'

C (8a) not 'man from woman'

D (8b) 'woman from man'

E (9a) not 'man on account of woman'

F (9b) 'woman on account of man'

X (10) For this reason, and because of the
angels, the woman ought to have liberty over her head.

F' (11a) 'Neither woman apart from man'

E' (11b) 'nor man apart from woman'

D' (12a) 'just as the woman is from man'

C' (12b) 'thus also the man is through the woman'

B' (13-15) 'woman,' 'uncovered,' 'to pray,' 'man,' 'glory'

A' (16) Conclusion

² Shoemaker, 'Unveiling of Equality', 60-63.

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