

## Paul and the Genealogy of Gender

*For Keren Lurie-Pardes and Nadya Raz-Haham,  
born while this was being conceived*

RECENTLY FEMINIST THEORY has provided us with extraordinarily subtle analyses of the ways that the mind/body split is inextricably bound up with the Western discourse of gender. The work of Judith Butler is of particular importance. She argues that the critique of dualism is in fact at the heart of the founding text of modern feminist theory, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*:

Although Beauvoir is often understood to be calling for the right of women, in effect, to become existential subjects and, hence, for inclusion within the terms of an abstract universality, her position also implies a fundamental critique of the very disembodiment of the abstract masculine epistemological subject. That subject is abstract to the extent that it disavows its socially marked embodiment and, further, projects that disavowed and disparaged embodiment on to the feminine sphere, effectively renaming the body as female. This association of the body with the female works along magical relations of reciprocity whereby the female sex becomes restricted to its body, and the male body, fully disavowed, becomes, paradoxically, the incorporeal instrument of an ostensibly radical freedom. Beauvoir's analysis implicitly poses the question: Through what act of negation and disavowal does the masculine pose as a disembodied universality and the feminine get constructed as a disavowed corporeality?<sup>1</sup>

I wish to trace one of the historical trajectories along which this act of negation, disavowal, and construction takes place. In her book *The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy*, Genevieve Lloyd has described the historical process within philosophy wherein the universal mind came to be identified as male, while the gendered body became female.<sup>2</sup> In my current work, I am trying to do two things: to further specify the cultural mechanisms which rendered this gender ontology dominant in our formation and to show how "the Jew" has been constructed analogously to "Woman" within the culture, and by a very similar historical vector.<sup>3</sup> Here, I will concentrate on the question of gender through a close and contextualized reading of the crucial Pauline texts.

### Paul's "Backsliding" Feminism

My reading of Paul is the following. Paul was motivated by a Hellenistic desire for the One, which among other things produced an ideal of a universal

human essence, beyond difference and hierarchy. This universal humanity, however, was predicated (and still is) on the dualism of the flesh and the spirit, such that while the body is particular, marked through practice as Jew or Greek, and through anatomy as male or female, the spirit is universal. The strongest expression of this Pauline cultural criticism is Galatians and especially 3.28–29, a passage to be read in some detail below. 1 Corinthians, on the other hand, has been read and used within much Christian practice as a powerful defense of a cultural conservatism. Making 1 Corinthians the hermeneutical key to Paul has had fateful cultural consequences, although to be sure such a reading has also been the *product* of the very ideologies that it eventually underpinned. The task of my reading here, among other things, is to articulate a coherent reading of Paul as a social and cultural critic, one that takes Galatians very seriously but also makes sense of 1 Corinthians.

I am, of course, not the first critic to attempt this task. In her justly famous feminist reconstruction of Christian origins, *In Memory of Her*, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza reproduces an “apocryphal” female epistle of Phoebe written by one of Fiorenza’s students. This document contains the following lines:

The second story is one I would like to discuss with Paul who lately seems so concerned with putting women back in “their proper places.” He is so taken up with giving a good impression to the pagans that he is reverting to his rabbinic prejudices I think. As if the proper place of woman was in the home bearing children—“woman is the glory of man” indeed! Surely with his background he would know where Genesis puts woman: “in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” What a strange man he is. In his letter to us he so firmly emphasized the equality of woman and man in marriage; in the same letter he raged on and on about hairstyles in the assembly. . . . And, even more pointed, are these words from his letter to our Galatian neighbours: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” I do fear that some people hear, not these words of Paul which so clearly reflect the attitude and teaching of Jesus our Wisdom but hear instead his returns to the past before he received the freedom of the Spirit. I shudder to think that some time in the future a leader of one of the churches will say, “Gentiles, slaves and women cannot become part of the ministry of the Word because Jesus did not entrust the apostolic charge to them.” When I said that to Paul, he laughed uproariously and exclaimed, “Phoebe you are a person with the strangest notions! If any of my letters do survive, only someone bewitched will fail to see the difference between my preaching of the Good News and my ramblings about cultural problems and situations. People from another age will easily disregard the cultural trappings and get to the heart of the message.” If only the distinction were as clear to the rest of us as it is to Paul!<sup>4</sup>

Fiorenza, of course, quotes this discourse very approvingly. This student writing, according to her, “can highlight the educational and imaginative value of retelling and rewriting biblical androcentric texts from a feminist critical perspective.” What we have here, in fact, is a fairly typical move of certain Christian feminists. One aspect of Pauline discourse, indeed constituted by only one (crucial) verse in

Galatians, is rendered the essential moment of his message about gender, while the rest is relegated to an incompletely exorcised, demonized Jewish past. I submit here two propositions: the first is that such a reading of Paul will simply not stand up critically and, indeed, trivializes him beyond retrieval. Paul's so-called "ramblings" about cultural problems and situations are, indeed, at the heart of his ministry, as Fiorenza herself indicates.<sup>5</sup> The second is that no feminist critical perspective will be progressive if it is dependent on false and prejudicial depictions of Judaism or, for that matter, so-called paganism.<sup>6</sup>

If I have cited Fiorenza here, this is not because she is in any way an egregious offender in these respects; if anything, she has made special efforts not to fall into such traps.<sup>7</sup> For that reason, however, this lapse is all the more symptomatic. If her student has failed to produce an acceptable solution, she certainly has exposed the problem. For there is a major issue here for Pauline studies. On the issue of gender, as on several other matters of equal significance, Paul seems to have produced a discourse that is so contradictory as to be almost incoherent. In Galatians Paul seems, indeed, to be wiping out social differences and hierarchies between the genders in addition to those that obtain between ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes, while in Corinthians he seems to be reifying and reemphasizing precisely those gendered hierarchical differences. Fiorenza's student's answer to this dilemma comprehends, in fact, two standard approaches to such problems in Pauline studies. One is that there is conflict within Paul between an unreconstructed Jewish past and his Christian present, and the other is that Paul was given to caving in under external "pagan" pressures on even fundamental and critical points in his ideology.<sup>8</sup> In a third approach to this and other similar problems, Paul is granted absolution, as it were, from the sin of inconsistency by being absolved of any desire for consistency to start with. According to this version, Paul was not a systematic thinker, and all of his pronouncements are oriented toward the local problems with which each of his epistles is dealing.<sup>9</sup> Thus, while writing to the Galatians Paul emphasized the social equality of the sexes in the new Christian reality, but when writing to the Corinthians, for whom such notions of equality had apparently become spiritually and socially dangerous, he backtracked or backslid and reinstated gender difference and hierarchies.

In my view, none of these ways of understanding Paul is adequate, and I wish to propose here a different way of reading him, one that is generated, no less than the reading produced by Fiorenza's student, by feminist reading practices, politics, and theory. Let me begin by restating the problem. First of all, there is the question of apparent contradiction between Galatians and Corinthians. This contradiction obtains on two levels. First, in the baptismal formula in Galatians 3.28, the phrase "There is no male and female" is included, while in the Corinthians version it is dropped (1 Cor. 12.12–13). Secondly, much of the advice on marriage and general discussion of gender in Corinthians seems to imply that there very much is and ought to be male and female in the Christian communities

and households, certainly insofar as marriage is to continue. Finally, even within Corinthians itself, there seems to be much tension between “egalitarian” notions of the status of the sexes and rigidly hierarchical ones. I am going to propose a partially new resolution of these contradictions within the context of an overall interpretation of Paul’s thought, because these expressions and tensions function within the entire system. I will argue in the end that Paul is caught here on the horns of a dilemma not of his own making, as it were, and one on which we are impaled into postmodernity and (embryonic) postpatriarchy—the myth of the primal androgyne.

The construction I wish to build here is constituted on the following notion. The famous “myth of the primal androgyne”—together with the myth of Adam’s rib—provides the ideological base of gender in our culture until this day. According to this myth, the first human being was an androgyne who was later split into the two sexes. However, and this is the catch, in the Hellenistic world and late antiquity the primal androgyne was almost always imagined as disembodied, so that the androgyne was really no-body, and dual-sex was no-sex.<sup>10</sup> This myth, I suggest, encodes the dualist ideology whereby a spiritual androgyny is contrasted with the corporeal (and social) division into sexes.

*The spirit and the flesh.* The linchpin of my reading of Paul is that he is mobilized by as thoroughgoing a dualism as that of Philo. This, to be sure, is a very controversial claim to make about Paul, so I had better begin here by defending it and establishing the terms in which I make it. Moreover, the morphology of this dualism has to be carefully delineated, *because it does not imply a rejection of the body*, and this nonrejection of the body is the key to the solution of the problem I am considering here. Let me begin, then, to outline my general approach to Paul.<sup>11</sup>

For a variety of partly unspecifiable reasons, various branches of Judaism (along with most of the surrounding culture) became increasingly platonized in late antiquity. By platonization I mean here the adoption of a dualist philosophy in which the phenomenal world was understood to be the representation in matter of a spiritual or ideal entity that corresponded to it. This has the further consequence that a hierarchical opposition is set up in which the invisible, inner reality is taken as more valuable or higher than the visible outer form of reality. In the anthropology of such a culture, the human person is constituted by an outer physical shell, which is nonessential, and by an inner spiritual soul, which represents his/her true and higher essence. “In this life itself, what constitutes our self in each of us is nothing other than the soul” (Philo *Laws* 12.959.a.7–8). For Philo, “the soul may be seen as entombed in the body.”<sup>12</sup> This was a commonly held conception through much of the Hellenistic cultural world.

Paul also uses similar platonizing dualist imagery although, significantly enough, without negative imagery of the body.<sup>13</sup> The clearest example of this in his writing is in 2 Corinthians 5.1–4:

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, so that by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Now it is beyond any doubt that Paul here is referring to a resurrection in the body, however at the same time the resurrected body is not the same kind of body as the one “we dwell in” now. Paul does consider some kind of a body necessary in order that the human being not be naked, and he polemicizes here against those who deny resurrection in the flesh. He is not, then, to be understood as holding a radical flesh/spirit dualism that despises the fleshly. Nevertheless, the image of the human being that Paul maintains is of a soul dwelling in or clothed by a body, and, however valuable the garment, it is less essential than that which it clothes. It is “the earthly tent that we live in”; it is not *we*. The body, while necessary and positively valued by Paul, is, as in Philo, not the human being but only his or her house or garment.<sup>14</sup> The verse just preceding this passage establishes its platonistic context beautifully: “While we look not at the things which are seen [τὰ βλεπόμενα], but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal [πρόσκαιρα]; but the things which are not seen are eternal [αἰώνια]” (2 Cor. 4.18). What could possibly be more Platonic in spirit than this double hierarchy—on the one hand the privileging of the invisible over the visible; on the other hand, the privileging of the eternal over the temporal? The continuation of the passage dramatizes this point even more:

We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord . . . and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Rudolf Karl Bultmann recognized that these verses “are very close to Hellenistic-Gnostic dualism, but not identical because of the ‘indirect polemic against a Gnosticism which teaches that the naked self soars aloft free of any body.’”<sup>15</sup> I could not agree more.

In the hermeneutics of such a culture, language itself is understood as being such an outer, physical shell as well, and meaning is construed as the invisible, ideal, and spiritual reality that lies behind or trapped within the body of the language. When this philosophy is combined with certain modes of interpretation current in the Ancient East, such as dream reading in which one thing is taken for another similar thing, then allegory is born—allegory in the most strict sense of the interpretation of the concrete elements of a narrative as signs of a changeless, wholly immaterial ontological being.<sup>16</sup> Language is thus a representation in two senses—in its “content” it represents the higher world; in its form it represents the structure of world as outer form and inner actuality.<sup>17</sup> The human being is also a representation of world in exactly the same way; in his/her dual structure is reproduced the very dual structure of being. It is for this reason that the “lit-

eral” can be referred to by Paul as the interpretation which is “according to the flesh” (κατὰ σάρκα), while the figurative is referred to by him as “according to the spirit” (κατὰ πνεῦμα).<sup>18</sup> Literal interpretation and its consequences; observances in the flesh, e.g., circumcision; commitment to the history of Israel; and insistence on procreation are all linked together in Paul’s thinking, as are their corresponding binaries: allegorical interpretation per se and in the facts of circumcision as baptism, of Israel as a signifier of the faithful Christians and of spiritual propagation. As Karen King has put it, “Here allegory is not just an interpretive tool to lay Tanakh [Hebrew Bible] bare to Paul’s whims but a constitutive part of his world view.”<sup>19</sup>

Given this general understanding of the context of Pauline thought and expression, I can begin to set out my interpretation of the differences and apparent contradictions between Galatians and Corinthians on gender. To put it briefly and somewhat crudely: Galatians is, on my reading, a theology of the spirit and Corinthians a theology of the body.<sup>20</sup> In Galatians Paul’s major concern is to defend his doctrine of justification by faith as a means of including the Gentiles in the Israel of God, and he violently rejects anything that threatens that notion and that inclusion. “For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ: ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is no male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.’ If, however, you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3.26–29).

In Deuteronomy 14.1 we find the Jews referred to as the “children of God.” But Paul is most troubled by the notion that one particular People could ever be referred to as the children of God to the exclusion of other peoples, which is apparently exactly what the opponents were propounding to the Galatians. To disprove that claim, Paul cites the baptismal formula that the Galatians themselves recited or heard recited at the time of their baptism.<sup>21</sup> He moreover interprets the text. In the baptism there was a new birth, which is understood as substituting an allegorical genealogy for a literal one. In Christ, that is in baptism, all the differences that mark off one body from another as Jew or Greek (circumcision considered a “natural” mark of the Jew!), male or female, slave or free are effaced, for in the Spirit such marks do not exist. Accordingly, if one belongs to Christ, then one participates in the allegorical meaning of the promise to the “seed,” an allegorical meaning of genealogy that was already hinted at in the biblical text itself, when it said that in “Abraham all nations would be blessed,” and even more when it interpreted his name as “Father to many nations.” The individual body itself is replaced by its allegorical reference, the body of Christ of which all the baptized are part.<sup>22</sup> This is what the “putting on” of Christ means.

In order to keep a focus on Paul’s dualism, *which does not radically devalue the body, but nevertheless presupposes a hierarchy of spirit and body*, we do best by considering the nature of Christ, which was so central in Paul’s thought. Christ inscribes

a dualism of spirit and body as well as valorizing body, at least insofar as God became flesh. For Paul, in this sense, the historical Jesus, while subordinate to the risen Christ, certainly is not deprived of value, and likewise the individual human body is not deprived of value vis-à-vis the soul.

On the present reading, the fundamental insight of Paul's apocalypse was the realization that the dual nature of Jesus provided a hermeneutic key to the resolution of the enormous tension that he experienced between the universalism of the Torah's content and the particular ethnicity of its form. Paul understood both the dual nature of Christ's person as well as the crucifixion in the light of the familiar platonic dichotomy of the outer and the inner, the material and the spiritual, or in Paul's own terminology the flesh and the spirit. Jesus was explicitly of a dual ontology, having an outer aspect of the flesh and an inner aspect of the spirit, or in more properly hermeneutic terms: there was a Christ according to the flesh (Rom. 9.5; which corresponds to the literal, historical Jesus) and a Christ according to the spirit (the allegorical, risen Christ). By a simple analogy, the dual nature of Jesus the Jew became the sign of a dual signification of all of the Jews, of Israel. The particularity of Israel came to be read as the signifier of which the universal was its signified. This is how a Christology becomes cultural politics:

Concerning His son who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the son of God in power, according to the spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1.3–4)

Jesus is the son of David according to the flesh but the son of God according to the spirit. Even less ambiguous, it seems to me, is 2 Corinthians 5.16: "Wherefore from now we know no man according to the flesh, and if we did know Christ according to the flesh, we will no longer know him," in a context discussing the death and resurrection of Christ.

The dual person of Christ in the world is a perfect homology then to the dual nature of language and the necessity for allegorical interpretation to fulfill the spiritual meaning of concrete expression. Corporeal difference yields to spiritual universalism.<sup>23</sup> This structure is manifested beautifully in 1 Corinthians 10.1–11, where the manna and water given the Jews in the wilderness is called "spiritual" (3), and the rock that followed the Jews in the Wilderness is interpreted as Christ (4). And thus "our ancestors were *all* under the cloud" (1), that is Paul's and the Corinthians' ancestors were all under the cloud, interpreted as baptism! As Hans Conzelmann remarks, "'our ancestors': Paul is speaking as a Jew, but includes also his Gentile-Christian readers. The church is the true Israel."<sup>24</sup> Just as there is a Jesus according to the flesh and a Jesus according to the spirit, so also there is an Israel according to the flesh (1 Cor. 10.18), which clearly entails an Israel according to the spirit. Israel according to the flesh corresponds to the literal, concrete history talked about in the Torah and to the literal concrete, embodied practices of the Torah, which indeed mark that Israel off from all other nations

of the world. On the other hand, Israel according to the spirit corresponds to the allegorical meaning of the historical narrative and the commandments, which do not mark Israel off from among the nations.

Paul's allegorical reading of the rite of circumcision is an almost perfect emblem of his hermeneutics of otherness. By interpreting circumcision as referring to a spiritual and not corporeal reality, Paul made it possible for Judaism to become a world religion. It is not that the rite was difficult for adult Gentiles to perform; that would hardly have stopped devotees in the Ancient World; it was rather that it symbolized the genetic, the genealogical moment of Judaism as the religion of a particular tribe of people. This is so in the very fact of the physicality of the rite—its grounding in the practice of the tribe and in the way it marks the male members of that tribe—but even more so, by being a marker on the organ of generation, it represents the genealogical claim for concrete historical memory as constitutive of Israel. The fact that the Hebrew word for “flesh,” *בשר*, has widespread metaphorical usage as “penis” and as “kinship” has made a mighty contribution to this hermeneutic as well. By substituting a spiritual interpretation for a physical ritual, Paul at one stroke was saying that the genealogical Israel, “according to the Flesh,” is not the ultimate Israel; there is an “Israel in the spirit.” The practices of the particular Jewish People are not what the Bible speaks of; rather what is spoken of is faith, the allegorical and universal meaning of those practices. I argue, therefore, that the major motivating force behind Paul's ministry was a profound vision of a humanity undivided by ethnos, class, and sex. If Paul took “no Jew or Greek” as seriously as all of Galatians attests that he clearly did, how could he possibly—unless he is a hypocrite or incoherent—not have taken “no male and female” with equal seriousness?

But in 1 Corinthians, Paul is fighting against pneumatics who seem both radically anti-body and radically antinomian.<sup>25</sup> He thinks the whole Christian mission is in danger, having fallen into the peril that he anticipated at the end of Galatians of allowing the spirit to provide opportunity for the flesh, because the realities of the flesh and its demands have not been attended to. He produces, therefore, a theology of the body that balances and completes, but does not contradict, the theology of the spirit of Galatians. It is no wonder, then, that this is the text which is richest in “halakhic” prescriptions, and no wonder, as well, that it is this text which inscribes hierarchy between men and women in the marriage relationship.<sup>26</sup> In the life of the spirit, in Paul as in Philo, there may be no male and female, but in the life of the body there certainly is. Next is the fact that in Corinthians there is an explicit and frequent appeal to both Jewish tradition and that of apostolic, Jewish Christianity. Paul several times in this letter refers to his passing on of tradition (*παράδοσις*), which he had received, and all but one of his citations of traditions attributed explicitly to Jesus appear in this letter as well.<sup>27</sup> All this is in direct contrast (not contradiction) to Galatians, in which Paul emphasizes that he is not authorized by tradition, by the teaching of Jesus in the flesh,



that he is an apostle not from men but from God, authorized by his visionary experience of the spirit. It is no accident that the Pauline text which most thematizes the body is the one that also most manifests such fleshly concerns as rules and regulations, tradition, literal interpretations, and authority. I suggest that we best read Paul as a middle way between the insistence on literality and corporeality, perhaps even the monism of the Jerusalem Church, on the one hand, and the radical dualism of gnostics (and gnostic-like tendencies in the early Church) on the other.<sup>28</sup> Paul's is a dualism that makes room for the body, however much the spirit is more highly valued. In this light I will reread Paul on gender.

"*There is no male and female.*" Crucial to an understanding of Paul on gender is a proper appreciation of the history of the phrase "There is no male and female" in Galatians 3.28: "For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is no male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.'" It has been recognized, at least since the publication of Wayne Meeks's landmark "The Image of the Androgyne," that Paul is here citing Genesis 1.27: "And God created the earth-creature in His image; in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them."<sup>29</sup> One of the proofs that the verse is being alluded to in the Pauline formula is the latter's language. Note that he shifts from nouns—*Jew, Greek, slave, freeman*—to adjectives, using ἄρσεν, "male," and θῆλυ, "female," instead of the expected ἀνῆρ, "man," and γυνή, "woman." Secondly, the use of καί, "and," in place of the οὐδὲ, "or," used in the other phrases gives this away. The "ungrammaticality" marks this as a site of intertextuality, sociolinguistic heterogeneity, dialogue in the Bakhtinian sense of the word.<sup>30</sup>

Meeks and more recently Dennis Ronald MacDonald have demonstrated that in this baptismal formula is encapsulated a very early Christian mythic formation and its liturgical expression in the pre-Pauline church.<sup>31</sup> What was the meaning of this "original" baptism? According to Meeks, this was a "performative" ritual utterance in which "a factual claim is being made, about an 'objective' change in reality which fundamentally modifies social roles."<sup>32</sup> Whatever the "original meanings," however, I think that the entire context of the passage in Galatians leads rather to the conclusion that what is being referred to is an ecstatic experience, in which not social roles are modified but ontological categories in the pneumatic moment of initiation. Paul's whole claim at this moment is based on an appeal to the Galatians' *memory* of their ecstatic experiences at baptism.<sup>33</sup> This interpretation would tend, of course, to make Pauline baptism more similar to the initiatory rites of the Mysteries, in which, as Meeks himself argues, "the exchange of sexual roles, by ritual transvestism for example, was an important symbol for the disruption of ordinary life's categories in the experience of initiation. This disruption, however, did not ordinarily reach beyond the boundaries of the initiatory experience—except, of course, in the case of devotees who went

on to become cult functionaries.”<sup>34</sup> Following the researches of MacDonald we can further assume that the expression “no male and female” originally referred indeed to a complete erasure of sexual difference in some forms of earliest Christianity and is cited by Paul here from such contexts.<sup>35</sup> In such groups, the declaration that there is no male or female may very well have had radical social implications in a total breakdown of hierarchy and either celibacy or libertinism.

*Philo and the primal androgyne.* In order to establish the background for this interpretation of Paul, I would like first to briefly consider the writings of another crucially important first-century Jew, Philo of Alexandria. I should make it clear that I am *not* claiming that Philo is the background for Paul, but only that he provides a background for my *reading* of Paul; that is, certain themes which are explicit in Philo seem to me to be useful for understanding inexplicit moments in Paul’s texts.<sup>36</sup>

The myth of a primal androgyne was very widespread in late antiquity, particularly among platonists in the Jewish (and then Christian) traditions.<sup>37</sup> One of the motivations of this myth is the fact that the first and second chapters of Genesis contain two different accounts of the creation of humanity. In the first story God creates male and female simultaneously: “Male and female created he them,” while in the second the familiar account of Eve’s secondary creation is related. In the interpretation of Philo, the first Adam is an entirely spiritual being, of whose noncorporeal existence it can be said that he is male and female, while the second chapter first introduces a carnal Adam, who is male and then from whom the female is constructed. Bodily gender—structurally dependent, of course, on their being two—is thus twice displaced from the origins of “Man”:

It is not good that *any* man should be alone. For there are *two* races of men, the one made after the (Divine) Image, and the one molded out of the earth. . . . With the second man a helper is associated. To begin with, the helper is a created one, for it says, “Let us make a helper for him”: and in the next place, is subsequent to him who is to be helped, for He had formed the mind before and is about to form its helper. (Legum *Allegoria* 2.4)

Philo here regards the two stories as referring to two entirely different creative acts on the part of God and accordingly to the production of two different races of “Man.”<sup>38</sup> Thus both myths are comprised in his discourse: a primal androgyne of no-sex and a primal male/secondary female. Since the two texts, that is the one in Genesis 1 and the one in Genesis 2, refer to two entirely different species, he can claim that only the first one is called “in the image of God”; that is, only the singular, unbodied Adam-creature is referred to as being in God’s likeness, and his male-and-femaleness must be understood spiritually. The designation of *this* creature as male-and-female means really neither male nor female. We find this explicitly in another passage of Philo:

After this he says that “God formed man by taking clay from the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life” (Gcn. 2.7). By this also he shows very clearly that there is a vast

difference between the man thus formed and the man that came into existence earlier after the image of God: for the man so formed is an object of sense-perception, partaking already of such or such quality, consisting of body and soul, man or woman, by nature mortal; while he that was after the Image was an idea or type or seal, an object of thought, incorporeal, neither male nor female, by nature incorruptible. (Emphasis added)<sup>39</sup>

Philo's interpretation is not an individual idiosyncrasy. As Thomas Tobin has shown, he is referring to a tradition known to him from before.<sup>40</sup> The fundamental point that seems to be established is that for the Hellenistic Jews, the oneness of pure spirit is ontologically privileged in the constitution of humanity. This Platonic Jewish anthropology is elegantly summed up with respect to Philo by Steven Fraade, who writes, "Philo inherits from Plato a radically dualistic conception of the universe. In this view, the material world of sense perception is an imperfect reflection of the intelligible order which emanates from God. The human soul finds its fulfillment through separation from the world of material desires, a world that lacks true reality, and through participation in the life of the spirit and divine intellect; the soul finally reunites *the true self* with its divine source and thereby achieves immortality"<sup>41</sup> (emphasis added). Since, as we have seen, that primal state is one of spiritual androgyny, in which male-and-female means neither male nor female, this fulfillment would naturally be a return to that state of noncorporeal androgyny. This notion had, moreover, social consequences as well in the image of perfected human life that Philo presents.

In his *On the Contemplative Life*, Philo describes a Jewish sect living in his time on the shores of Lake Mareotis near Alexandria. It is clear from the tone of his entire depiction of this sect and its practice that he considers it an ideal religious community. The fellowship consisted of celibate men and women who lived in individual cells and spent their lives in prayer and contemplative study of allegorical interpretations of Scripture (such as the ones that Philo produced). Once a year (or once in seven weeks), the community came together for a remarkable ritual celebration. Following a simple meal and a discourse, all of the members begin to sing hymns together. Initially, however, the men and the women remain separate from each other in two choruses. The extraordinary element is that as the celebration becomes more ecstatic, the men and the women join to form one chorus, "the treble of the women blending with the bass of the men."<sup>42</sup> I suggest that this model of an ecstatic joining of the male and the female in a mystical ritual recreates in social practice the image of the purely spiritual masculine-feminine first human of which Philo speaks in his commentary—indeed, that this ritual of the Therapeutae is a return to the originary Adam.<sup>43</sup> This point is valid whether or not the community of Therapeutae ever really existed or not. In either case the description is testimony to the translation of anthropology into social practice in Philo's writing. If they did exist, moreover, we have further strong evidence that Philo is representative of larger religious traditions and groups. Although, obviously, the singing and dancing are performed by the body,

the state of ecstasy (as its etymology implies) involves a symbolical and psychological condition of being disembodied and thus similar to the primal androgyne. The crux of my argument is that a distinction between androgyny as a mythic notion and one that has social consequences is a false distinction. The myth of the primal androgyne, with all of its inflections, always has social meaning and social significance, for Paul no less than for Philo, for rabbis and for Corinthian Christians.

Now what is crucial here as background for a reading of Paul on gender are the following two points. First of all, the society and religious culture depicted by Philo *does* permit parity between men and women and religious, cultural creativity for women as for men. Secondly, this autonomy and creativity in the spiritual sphere is predicated on renunciation of both sexuality and maternity.<sup>44</sup> Spiritual androgyny is attained only by abjuring the body and its difference. I think two factors have joined in the formation of this structure—which will be repeated over and over in the history of Western religion, including at least one instance within Early Modern Judaism. On the materialist level, there is the real-world difference between a woman who is bound to the material conditions of marriage and childbearing/rearing and a woman who is free of such restraints. Even more to the point, however, is the symbolic side of the issue. Just as in some contemporary feminist philosophy the category “woman” is produced in the heterosexual relationship, so in Philo as well a female who escapes or avoids such relationships escapes from being a woman.<sup>45</sup> This division in Philo is reproduced in his interpretations of the status of female figures in the Bible as well, who fall into two categories: women and virgins!<sup>46</sup> Those biblical figures defined as “virgins” by Philo are not women and thus do not partake of the base status that he accords women. Any parity between “male and female” subsists only in the realm of spiritual and ecstatic experience or in the symbolic spiritual myth of the primal androgyne. What about Paul?

Paul never intended for a moment to promulgate a truly “gnostic” doctrine of escape from the body and rejection of it with all of the social consequences which that would entail. This is proven by Galatians 5.13–17—“For you were called to freedom, brothers, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh,” i.e., do not misuse your Christian freedom to allow yourself hedonistic pleasure. Nor did he ever imagine a social eradication of the hierarchical deployment of male and female bodies for married people.<sup>47</sup> While it was possible for him to conceive of a total erasure of the difference between Jew and Greek on the level of the body—all he had to do was to eliminate circumcision, and Jews were just like Greeks; female Jews and Greeks having always been bodily alike—he, no more than anyone else of his time, could not imagine that male and female bodies would be in any condition other than dominant and dominated when they were in sexual relationship with each other, that is when they were living “according to the flesh.” It is sexuality, therefore, that produces gender, for Paul

as for Philo and, we shall see, within crucially paradigmatic texts of the Christian cultural tradition.<sup>48</sup>

There is thus no contradiction between Galatians and Corinthians on the question of gender. As I have suggested, Paul's preaching always intended a moderate pneumaticism—but not more, a spirit-flesh hierarchy in which spirit was, of course, higher than flesh but the flesh—i.e., sexual *morality*, propriety and ethics—is not thereby canceled (as the end of Galatians makes entirely clear). Assuming that Paul's original teaching of the Corinthians was similar to the doctrine of the first four chapters of Galatians, it is easy to see where they could have gotten their ideas: no male or female indeed! Galatians 5.25–6:10 shows how clearly Paul anticipated this danger, which seems to have been realized in Corinth.<sup>49</sup> If Paul was not troubled in Galatians by the implications (misreadings from his point of view) of the quoted ancient formula, it was because the “error” in the understanding of Christianity that concerned him there was in the direction of too much physicality; so the pneumatic, gnostic implications of “There is no male and female” were not a stumbling block. In 1 Corinthians, however, where his problem is Christians who have gone too far (from Paul's ideological standpoint) in the pneumatic direction and where he must emphasize, therefore, the theology and ethics of the body, “no male and female” would be exactly antithetical to the message that he wishes to promote. And so it is dropped, because of the way that Paul perceived it as open to serious misunderstanding as being applicable to life “according to the flesh,” and not only “according to the spirit.”<sup>50</sup> There is thus no contradiction in Paul's thought at all. He held out the possibility of a momentary ecstatic androgyny but only that; on the corporeal level of human society, sex/gender difference was maintained. Paul on gender, it seems to me, represents then neither the more misogynistic trend of such thoroughly Hellenized Jews like Philo nor a breakthrough in the politics of gender as some Christian feminists would have it. His picture of the relations of married people seems most like that of Palestinian Judaism in general, a moderate, “benevolent” domination of women by men, or rather wives by husbands, one that neither permits cruelty to women nor entirely suppresses the subjectivity of women.<sup>51</sup>

*Paul's ethic of the body.* What then is Paul's ethic of the body, his picture of the relations between married men and women, and how does it compare with the detailed rules for married life promulgated by the rabbinic Judaism of the second and following centuries? Careful study of 1 Corinthians 7 supports the conclusion drawn by Peter J. Tomson that Paul's ethic (“halakha”) of sexuality and marriage and “Paul's conception of women was not much different from his [Jewish] contemporaries.” Thus the famous pronouncement of verses 3–5: “Let the husband give the wife what is due to her, and let the wife likewise also give her husband his due” is identical to the provision of the Mishna that provides the same penalties to the husband who refuses sex to his wife and to the wife who refuses sex to her husband.<sup>52</sup> Rabbinic literature preserves, moreover, strong polemics against

men who out of desire for holiness cease sleeping with their wives.<sup>53</sup> There is, however, one element in Paul's thought on sexuality that divides him sharply from the later rabbinic tradition and connects him rather with certain other trends in first-century Judaism, and that is the question of celibacy, which, I argue, is crucial to solving the problem that I am about in this paper.

Tomson has provided us with a suggestive analysis of the cultural context of Paul's discourse on celibacy in 1 Corinthians 7.<sup>54</sup> The apostle prefers celibacy both personally, practically, and religiously, but he is quite unwilling to consider the married state forbidden, condemned, or even disparaged by God. Moreover, since as stated in his ethic of the obligations of married people to each other, he is close if not identical to Jewish traditions of his day, those who are presently married must fulfill those obligations. Finally, insofar as Paul himself, and Jesus whom he follows here, seem to reflect a particular (attested) ancient Jewish tradition against divorce, those who are married ought not to divorce, and neither can they separate from their partners to whom they are obligated.<sup>55</sup> We can thus explain all of the details of 1 Corinthians 7 on the basis of the assumption that Paul maintains a two-tiered system of thought regarding sexuality: celibacy as the higher state but marriage as a fully honorable condition for the believing Christian as well.<sup>56</sup> This is by-and-large identical to actually attested forms of Palestinian Judaism and not very far from Philo either. Even Paul, whose hostility toward the body was so much less extreme, manifests quite a cold and ambivalent feeling about married sex, regarding it primarily as a defense against lust and fornication. As Peter Brown has written:

What was notably lacking, in Paul's letter, was the warm faith shown by contemporary pagans and Jews that the sexual urge, although disorderly, was capable of socialization and of ordered, even warm, expression within marriage. The dangers of *porneia*, of potential immorality brought about by sexual frustration, were allowed to hold the center of the stage. By this essentially negative, even alarmist, strategy, Paul left a fatal legacy to future ages. An argument against abandoning sexual intercourse within marriage and in favor of allowing the younger generation to continue to have children slid imperceptibly into an attitude that viewed marriage itself as not more than a defense against desire. In the future, a sense of the presence of "Satan," in the form of a constant and ill-defined risk of lust, lay like a heavy shadow in the corner of every Christian church.<sup>57</sup>

Where I disagree with Brown is when he says, "At the time, however, fornication and its avoidance did not preoccupy Paul greatly. He was concerned to emphasize, rather, the continuing validity of all social bonds. The structure of the household as a whole was at stake. This included the institution of domestic slavery. On this, Paul was adamant: slaves, like wives, must remain in their place."<sup>58</sup> On my reading, the situation is exactly opposite. Paul called for freedom and the breaking down of all social bonds. Realizing, however, the unrealizability of that goal—for slaves because of the social unrest and suppression of Christianity that would result, for wives because of *porneia*—Paul settled for something else, some-

thing less than his vision called for, and thus the continuation of the domestic slavery of marriage for those not called to the celibate life. Rabbinic Judaism ultimately went in another direction entirely, increasingly rejecting not only the preferability of celibacy but ultimately even its permissibility. With that rejection, the one avenue of escape into autonomy for women was closed but a much richer and warmer appreciation of sexuality developed.<sup>59</sup>

This interpretation of Paul is coherent with the interpretation of his anthropology in general offered above. If celibacy corresponds to “the spirit” and marriage to “the flesh,” then the axiological relationship between these two states fits perfectly, for as I have argued above the flesh, while lower than the spirit in Paul’s thought, is by no means rejected or despised by him. The analogy with celibacy versus marriage is exact. Marriage is a lower state than celibacy—he who marries a virgin does well, and he who does not marry does better (v. 38)—but not by any means forbidden or despised.<sup>60</sup> However, and this is the crux, any possibility of an eradication of male and female and the corresponding social hierarchy is only possible on the level of the spirit, either in ecstasy at baptism or perhaps permanently for the celibate. In other words, I surmise that although Paul does not *cite* the myth of the primal androgyne, his gender discourse seems just as likely to be an outgrowth of that ideological structure as is that of Philo—no male and female—in the spirit, but in the flesh, yes indeed.<sup>61</sup>

### **“The Man Is the Head of the Woman”**

The crucial text for strengthening this interpretation, or at least for rendering it plausible, is arguably 1 Corinthians 11.1–16—“in the same letter he raged on and on about hairstyles in the assembly.”<sup>62</sup> In this passage, on my reading, Paul makes practically explicit the ratio between the politics of the spirit and the politics of the body. The crucial verses are 3, 7–9, and 11–12:

[3] I would have you know, however, that every man’s head is Christ, but a woman’s head is the man, and Christ’s head is God. . . .

[7] For a man must not veil his head, since he is the image and reflection of God. [8] but a woman is the reflection of man. For man did not originate from woman, but woman from man. [9] Neither was man created for woman’s sake, but woman for man’s. . . .

[11] Of course, in the Lord there is neither woman without man nor man without woman. [12] For just as woman originated from man, so, too, man exists through woman. But everything comes from God.

These verses have been much discussed from many points of view. It is far beyond the scope of the present paper to analyze either the theological or hermeneutic issues involved in the text, but, however we interpret them, it is clear that Paul explicitly thematizes two (partially opposed) forms of conceptualizing gender,

one in which there is an explicit hierarchy and one in which there is none.<sup>63</sup> Paul himself marks this difference (the gap between the hierarchy of verses 7–9 and the “there is neither woman without man nor man without woman” of verse 11) as the situation of “in the Lord” (ἐν κυρίῳ). I do not think it is going too far—nor is it unprecedented in Pauline interpretation—to connect this “in the Lord” with the “in Christ” of Galatians 3.28 and read them both as a representation of an androgyny that exists on the level of the spirit, however much hierarchy subsists and needs to subsist in the flesh, in the life of society even in Christian communities.<sup>64</sup> These two levels might well correspond, indeed, to the two myths of the origins of the sexes as found in Genesis 1 and 2. The no-male-or-female that is “in the Lord,” or “in Christ,” would represent the androgyne of chapter 1, understood, as in Philo, as neither male nor female, while “since he is the image and reflection of God, but a woman is the reflection of man. For man did not originate from woman, but woman from man,” which Paul cites here, would be a reference to the story as found in chapter 2!<sup>65</sup> “In the Lord” might even be seen then as an allusion to “in the image of God,” and the latter human of chapter 2 would be “in the flesh” in contrast. This perhaps speculative interpretation is dramatically strengthened if Josef Kürzinger’s suggestion is accepted that verse 11 means “In the Lord woman is not different from man nor man from woman.”<sup>66</sup> Ultimately, as Karen King suggests, the two myths of gender “are quite compatible in that both imagine the ideal to be a unitary self, whether male or androgynous, whose nature is grounded in an ontology of transcendence and an epistemology of origins.”<sup>67</sup>

Now, on the one hand, these verses demonstrate that Paul had not changed his mind or backslid from Galatians; they also explain, given the context of the Corinthian correspondence, why he chose to omit “There is no male and female” in the Corinthian version of the baptism.<sup>68</sup> I suggest, therefore, that for Paul just as much as for the Corinthians, a state of androgyny, a cancellation of gender and sexuality, would have been the ideal. The difference between them lies in the application of the principle.<sup>69</sup> The Corinthians believe that they have already achieved a state of perfection which permits the acting out of the cancellation of gender difference, whereas Paul is skeptical of their achievements (cf. 4.8). This does not, however, imply that for Paul the ideal of androgyny has no social consequences.

There are in fact three (not mutually exclusive) options for a social enactment of the myth of the primal androgyne: some gnostics (and perhaps the Corinthians) seem to have held that once having attained the spirit humans transcended gender entirely and forever whether in celibacy or libertinage.<sup>70</sup> Philo, on the other hand, restricts such transcending redemption from gender to celibates and then only to special ritualized moments of ecstacy. Paul’s strictures against women with short hair and the speaking out of woman prophets (14.37–38)—if the latter is genuinely Pauline—seem to suggest a third option: for all (not



only celibates) there is no male and female, but only momentarily in the ritualized ecstasy of baptism. It is only then, in this life, that people attain the status of life in the spirit, in Christ or in the Lord in which there is no male and female. I am thus inclined to agree with Tertullian's view that the notion of Paul giving celibate women the power to teach, preach, and baptize—that is, functional, social equivalence to men—seems hard to credit.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, it may not be gainsaid that he had women associates in his ministry, nor that he implied that virgins could achieve spiritual states unavailable to the married (7.32–35). All three of these possibilities are equally dependent, however, on a notion that gender difference only exists at one ontological level, the outer or physical, the corporeal, but that at the level of true existence, the spiritual, there is no gender, that is no dualism. Much of the immediate post-Pauline tradition seems to have adopted a version of the first option—namely that celibate women *could* attain a permanent state of the erasure of gender, a development which has had profound effects on the later discourse of gender in European culture.

### **Thekla and Perpetua; or, How Women Can Become Men**

The “myth of the primal androgyne”—that is, an anthropology whereby souls are ungendered and only the fallen body is divided into sexes—is thus a dominant structuring metaphor of gender for the early church and for the Christian West as a whole. There are many different versions of the application of this myth. In some versions of early Christianity, all Christians *must* remain celibate, and in that spiritual existence a total eradication of gender difference becomes imaginable.<sup>72</sup> In some communities such celibate men and women lived together in the same dwellings, arousing the suspicion/calumny of their pagan neighbors and the ire of more establishment Christian leaders. In other communities, more in tune with the Pauline and deutero-Pauline message, there was a two-tiered society: the celibate in which some form of gender parity obtained and the married for which the hierarchical *Haustafeln* were the definitive ethic. This could be accompanied by more or less approbation of the married state, more or less privilege for virginity/celibacy over marriage. In every case, however, virginity was privileged to greater or lesser extent over the sexual life, and, more to the point of the present argument, it was only in virginity, that is only in a social acting out of a disembodied spiritual existence, that gender parity ever existed.<sup>73</sup> Female humans could escape being “women” by opting out of sexual intercourse. Just as in Philo, virgins were not women but androgynes, a representation, in the appearance of flesh, of the purely spiritual nongendered, presocial essence of human being.<sup>74</sup> For all of these forms of Christianity, as for Hellenistic Judaism, this dualism is the base of the anthropology: equality in the spirit, hierarchy in

the flesh. As a second century follower of Paul, Clement of Alexandria expressed it, "As then there is sameness [with men and women] with respect to the soul, she will attain to the same virtue; but as there is difference with respect to the peculiar construction of the body, she is destined for child-bearing and house-keeping."<sup>75</sup> As this quotation suggests and Christian practice enacts, this version of primal androgyny provided two elements in the gender politics of the early Church. On the one hand it provided an image or vision of a spiritual equality for all women—which did not, however, have social consequences for the married;<sup>76</sup> on the other hand, it provided for real autonomy and social parity for celibate women, for those who rejected "the peculiar construction of the body," together with its pleasures and satisfactions.<sup>77</sup> As Clement avers in another place, "For souls themselves by themselves are equal. Souls are neither male nor female when they no longer marry nor are given in marriage."<sup>78</sup>

Much of the paradigmatic literature of early Christianity involves this representation of gender and its possibilities. Elizabeth Castelli has described the situation with regard to one of the earliest and most explicit texts of this type, *The Gospel of Thomas*:

The double insistence attributed to Jesus in the *Gospel of Thomas* saying—that Mary should remain among the disciples at the same time as she must be made male—points to the paradoxical ideological conditions that helped to shape the lives of early Christian women. At once they are to have access to holiness, while they also can do so only through the manipulation of conventional gender categories.<sup>79</sup>

As I have suggested above, however, these were not only the paradoxical ideological conditions of Christianity but similar indeed to paradoxes of contemporary Judaism as well. The Therapeutrides also have access to the same spirituality as their male counterparts—for all of them, however, at the expense of conventional gender categories.<sup>80</sup> One of the most striking representations of such manipulation of gender is the story of the martyr Perpetua brilliantly analyzed recently by Castelli.<sup>81</sup> This story enacts both sorts of gender erasure. On the social level, the marks of Perpetua's gendered status are indicated by her leaving of her family, renunciation of her husband (who is not even mentioned), and eventual giving up of her baby, together with a miraculous drying up of the milk in her breasts, that is a sort of symbolic restoration of virginity. The crux of the story, however, and of Castelli's argument, is that in Perpetua's dream in which she becomes a man and defeats her opponent in the gladiatorial ring, her victory is, in fact paradoxically, a representation of her death as a martyr, while defeat for her would have meant giving in to her father, renouncing her Christianity, and continuing to live.<sup>82</sup> Life in the spirit represents death in the body and the converse, and the erasure of conventional gender is thus also an event in the spirit. This is, then, a drastic version of Paul's eradication of gender in Christ.

The best representation, however, of an androgynous status for Christian

celibate women in late antiquity is, however, the story of Thekla, also treated by Castelli. This apocryphal female companion to Paul refuses to marry, cuts her hair short like that of a man, dresses in a man's clothing, and accompanies Paul on his apostolic missions. Castelli notes with regard to this and similar stories:

It is striking that in all of these narratives, the women who perform these outward gestures of stretching dominant cultural expectations related to gender are also embracing a form of piety (sexual renunciation and virginity) which resists dominant cultural expectations vis-à-vis social roles.<sup>83</sup>

If my reading of Philo and Paul and of the general cultural situation is compelling, however, this connection is not so much striking as absolutely necessary. Insofar as the myth of the primal, spiritual androgyne is the vital force for all of these representations, androgynous status is always dependent on a notion of a universal spiritual self that is above the differences of the body, and its attainment entails *necessarily* one or another (or more than one as in the case of Perpetua) of the practices of renouncing the body: either ecstasy or virginity or physical death.<sup>84</sup> We thus see that from Philo and Paul through late antiquity gender parity is founded on a dualist metaphysics and anthropology in which freedom and equality are for pregendered, presocial, disembodied souls and predicated on a devaluing and disavowing of the body, usually, but not necessarily, combined with a representation of the body itself as female.<sup>85</sup> On my reading, then, Christian imaginings of gender bending/blending do not really comprehend a “destabilization of gender identity.” Rather, insofar as they are completely immured in the dualism of the flesh and the spirit they represent no change whatever in the status of gender.<sup>86</sup> All of these texts are mythic or ritual enactments of the “myth of the primal androgyne,” and, as such, simply reinstate the metaphysics of substance, the split between Universal Mind and Disavowed Body. It is striking how closely they match Butler's description of Beauvoir's critique of the “very disembodiment of the abstract masculine epistemological subject”:

That subject is abstract to the extent that it disavows its socially marked embodiment and, further, projects that disavowed and disparaged embodiment on to the feminine sphere, effectively renaming the body as female. This association of the body with the female works along magical relations of reciprocity whereby the female sex becomes restricted to its body, and the male body, fully disavowed, becomes, paradoxically, the incorporeal instrument of an ostensibly radical freedom.

This trap is, I claim, based in the material conditions of heterosexual marriage, if not—even more depressingly—in the material conditions of heterosexuality itself, and to the extent that Paul was unwilling to disallow or disparage marriage, as some of his more radical followers were to do, precisely to that extent something like the pronouncements of I Corinthians 11 and the *Haustafeln* were almost a necessary superstructure. Rather than “resting on the assumed natural differences between the sexes institutionalized in patriarchal marriage,” as Fiorenza

puts it, I would suggest that patriarchal marriage—that is, at least until now, marriage—*produces* such naturalized gender differences.<sup>87</sup> To be sure, Christian women had possibilities for living lives of much greater autonomy and creativity than their rabbinic Jewish sisters, but always on the stringent condition and heavy price of sexual renunciation.<sup>88</sup> Let me make myself absolutely clear: I am not allying myself with Christian conservatives who argue that Paul's pronouncements in Galatians 3.28 did not have social meaning. Paul's entire gospel is a stirring call to human freedom and universal autonomy. I think that, within the limitations of *Realpolitik*, he would have wanted all slaves freed, and he certainly passionately desired the erasure of the boundary between Greek and Jew.<sup>89</sup> In arguing that “no male and female” did not and could not mean a fundamental change in the status of wives, I am not arguing that he was inconsistent (nor that I am being inconsistent myself) in the name of the preservation of male privilege, but rather I am suggesting that *wives are/were slaves*, and their liberation would have meant an end to marriage.<sup>90</sup> Jews and Greeks need ultimately to cease being Jews and Greeks; slaves need to cease ultimately to be slaves; and the equivalent is that husbands and wives need ultimately to cease being husbands and wives—but Paul feels that the last is unrealistic for most people, even Christians: because of immorality, let each man have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband (7.2).<sup>91</sup> When Paul says, “the form of this world is passing away” (7.31), it seems to me that he is doing two things. On the one hand, he is emphasizing why it is not necessary to engage in radical, immediate social change, in order to achieve the genuine radical reformation of society that he calls for, and secondly, he is explaining why having children and families is no longer important. Procreation has no significance for Paul at all. From Paul on through late antiquity, the call to celibacy is a call to freedom (7.32–34). Virgins are not “women.” Rabbinic Judaism, which rejected such dualism and thus celibacy entirely, strongly valorized the body and sexuality but cut off nearly all options for women's lives other than maternity, trapping all women in the temperate and patronizing slavery of wifeness. This should not be read, however, as in any sense a condemnation of Christianity, nor, for that matter, of rabbinic Judaism, for, I suspect, all it means is that people in late antiquity had not thought their way out of a dilemma that catches us on its horns even now—in *very* late antiquity.

## Notes

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This paper was written while I was enjoying the stimulating intellectual fellowship of the Shalom Hartman Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies. I wish to thank Jeremy Cohen, Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, Menahem Lorberbaum, and especially Elizabeth Castelli and Richard Hays for reading a draft of this paper and making important interventions. On 5 April 1992 a version of the paper was presented to the Center for

Hermeneutical Studies (CHS) of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, where I had the privilege of receiving very serious and important formal responses from Karen King, Steven Knapp, and Antoinette Wire, as well as the informal responses and criticisms of an extraordinarily learned audience, and especially David Winston, who saved me from some errors in the interpretation of Philo. This version of the paper represents several substantial revisions made in response to that discussion. The full text of the paper in its former version as well as the responses and discussions will be published as the Proceedings of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies, colloquium 63. Of course, only I am responsible for the results, particularly as I have not always taken the advice of my interlocutors.

1. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London, 1990), 12.
2. Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy* (Minneapolis, 1984), 7, 26.
3. In drawing this analogy, I should make it clear that I am not reducing the problem of gender domination to an epiphenomenon of difference; nor would I so reduce anti-Semitism. The analogies seem, nevertheless, illuminating as partial accounts of both and, moreover, help explain the historically very-well-attested association of Jewishness with femaleness as a topos of European culture.
4. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York, 1983), 63–64.
5. *Ibid.*, 226.
6. I wish to spotlight the eloquent remarks of Adele Reinhartz, "From Narrative to History: The Resurrection of Mary and Martha," in *"Women Like This": New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Atlanta, 1991), 161–85, 183: "While I am concerned about the roles of women within the Jewish community and can offer a critique of their ambiguous portrayal in Judaism's foundational documents, I deplore superficial and apologetically motivated attempts to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity to Judaism on the basis of the respective roles they accord women."
7. See the brief discussion of her work from this perspective by Reinhartz, "From Narrative to History," 166–67. However, I must admit that I find bizarre Fiorenza's comment on Jewish manumission of slaves: "The slave gained complete freedom except for the requirement to attend the synagogue" (*In Memory of Her*, 214), as if "Christian freedom" did not carry with it also a series of religious obligations. Is the requirement to participate in the eucharist somehow more free than the requirement to attend synagogue? I feel an echo of a very ancient polemic (and dispute) here.
8. There seems to be little recognition that these two explanations are at least partially contradictory, or at any rate render each other otiose. If it was the "pagans" who pressured Paul to insist on male-female hierarchy, then what is the function of "rabbinic prejudices" here other than to provide a gratuitous slap at Judaism? Incidentally, at the time of Paul, the rabbinic movement did not yet exist, so "rabbinic prejudices" is in any case an anachronism. In fact, as we shall see below, it is also an inaccurate (although widespread) description of the relationship between Pauline "halakha" and that of contemporary Judaism(s), but I anticipate myself.
9. A prominent and extreme representative of this school of Pauline interpretation is the Finnish scholar, Heikki Räisänen, "Galatians 2.16 and Paul's Break with Judaism," *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 543–53; and "Legalism and Salvation by the Law: Paul's Portrayal of the Jewish Religion as a Historical and Theological Problem," *Pauline Literature and Theology* (Århus, Fin., 1980), 63–84.
10. The spherical humans described by Aristophanes in the *Symposium*, while obviously

related genetically to the myth of the primal androgyne, encode quite a different set of meanings. First of all, they are physical, and second of all they are not all androgynes by any means. Aristophanes' myth comes rather to provide an etiology for sexualities than to be an "articulation of the notion that human perfection is only accessible apart from sexual difference," as Elizabeth Castelli would have it in an article otherwise wholly admirable: "'I Will Make Mary Male': Pieties of the Body and Gender Transformation of Christian Women in Late Antiquity," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, eds. Julia Epstein and Kristina Staub (London, 1991), 29–50, 31. A very important discussion of the Aristophanes text may be found in Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 52–53 and 260, n. 82. As I mention below, Philo, who strongly endorses the myth of the primal androgyne in his writing, is thoroughly contemptuous of Aristophanes' story.

11. Most of the book within which this essay will eventually be incorporated consists of an elaboration of this thesis. My general argument is that Paul was primarily motivated by what is essentially a social vision of human unity or sameness, one that would eradicate all difference and thus hierarchy. The dualism of the body and the spirit that I am about to address was primarily assumed by him and utilized as the vehicle for the moral and political transformation that he envisioned. I read Paul as a Jewish cultural critic.
12. David Winston, "Philo and the Contemplative Life," in *Jewish Spirituality from the Bible Through the Middle Ages*, ed. Arthur Green, *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest*, vol. 13 (New York, 1988), 198–231, 212.
13. Philo also, however, can refer to the body as "a sacred dwelling place or shrine fashioned for the reasonable soul" (*De opificio mundi* 137), a much less misomatist but just as dualist image. See also Daniel Boyarin, "'Behold Israel according to the flesh': On Anthropology and Sexuality in Late Antique Judaism," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 5, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 25–55, n. 6.
14. Another elegant argument for this interpretation of Paul's anthropology is provided by Philipians 1.19–26, for which see Robert H. Gundry, *Sôma in Biblical Theology with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1987), 37: "'To depart' is to die bodily death. 'To be with Christ' is to be absent from the body (cf. II Cor 5:7–9)."
15. Quoted in *ibid.*, 48, n. 1.
16. David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley, 1992), literally hot off the press, is an excellent discussion of this history.
17. Cp. Sallust who writes, "The universe itself can be called a myth, revealing material things and keeping concealed souls and intellects," quoted by A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology Against Its Graeco-Roman Background* (Tübingen, Germ., 1987), 127.
18. It has become current in Pauline studies to understand the key terms *κατὰ σάρκα* (according to the flesh) and *κατὰ πνεῦμα* (according to the spirit) as axiological/sociological terms—the former meaning, in one typical formulation, "human life organized without reference to God and his purposes," and the latter the opposite. In my forthcoming book I have argued at length for the interpretation given here. Perhaps the key passage is "the Christ which is according to the flesh" (*ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα*), Romans 9.5. I submit that it is impossible to gloss this expression as "the Christ who lives without reference to God" or "the Christ who seeks justification by works." The passage must be understood as the Christ in his human, fleshy aspect, Christ before Easter. This Christological duality is matched by a homologous hermeneutical

duality as well, which works perfectly, because that interpretation which is literal, “according to the flesh”—the outer meaning of the language—is precisely the mode of interpretation that on the plane of content privileges physical observances, physical kinship, and the paradox of the “historical Jesus,” ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα. Circumcision, of course, is in the flesh par excellence. Because the ways of both Jews and the Jerusalem Christians emphasize precisely these values, they can be identified by Paul as “according to the flesh,” not because they are self-righteous, without reference to God or against the will of God. Life or interpretation κατὰ σάρκα only become pejoratively marked terms when they have the negative social effects in Paul’s eyes of interrupting the new creation of the universal Israel of God. Fuller demonstration of this point will have to await the full publication.

19. From her response at CHS. I wish to be clear on this. I am not claiming that Paul was a philosopher; I am claiming that such fundamental dualist conceptions of the world, language, and humanity were commonplace for virtually all in that culture. The closest analogy is the way that conscious and unconscious, drives and repression have become the commonplace ways of describing the human psyche even for those in our culture who have no other knowledge of Freud and no commitment to his system other than these topoi.
20. Cf. Jerome H. Neyrey, *Paul, in Other Words: A Cultural Reading of His Letters* (Louisville, Ky., 1990): “Of all Paul’s letters, 1 Corinthians is thoroughly and intensely concerned with the physical body” (114). “Word-statistics show a sudden rise in the frequency of *sōma* in I and II Corinthians and Romans. The denigration of the body at Corinth provides the reason”; Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology*, 50. See below other symptoms of the “corporeality” of Corinthians.
21. Wayne A. Meeks, “The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity,” *Journal of the History of Religions* 13, no. 1 (1973): 165–208.
22. The parallel citation of the formula in 1 Corinthians 12.13 makes this even more explicit: for in one spirit we were all baptized into one body.
23. See David Boyarin, “Allegoresis Against Difference: The Metalinguistic Origins of the Universal Subject,” forthcoming in *Paragraph*.
24. Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia, 1975), 165. This passage in Corinthians is marvelously rich and significant for my reading, but its full interpretation will have to wait for the longer version of this study in the book. See also Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection*, 241–49.
25. There is nothing particularly new in this formulation per se. What is new in my interpretation is that the differences between Galatians and Corinthians, while contextualized by different discursive, “political” contexts, nevertheless form a consistent pattern and social theory on Paul’s part.
26. “A letter remarkable for its parenthetical character is First Corinthians”; Peter T. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (Philadelphia, 1990), 57 and 69.
27. *Ibid.*, 72–73; Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction Through Paul’s Rhetoric* (Minneapolis, 1990), 272, goes even further and argues that the one other apparent citation of Jesus in Galatians 5.14 is to be interpreted differently, strengthening this point further.
28. Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 17, reads “the emergence and domestication of radical *gnōsis* in its countless forms” as the “common feature in these struggles that recur throughout the [Western] history of interpretation.” Karen King has emphasized to

me that the term *gnostic* itself is a highly problematized one in current research, and has suggested simply abandoning it in this context. I think, however, that as long as we define our terms and use the term to refer to specific spiritual, ideological tendencies it still serves a useful purpose.

29. Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne."
30. By "ungrammaticality" here I mean the stylistic infelicity of the formal difference between the different clauses of the Pauline formula, that stylistic infelicity which marks formally the site of a citation and thus points to the intertext. This provides the strongest argument for Meeks's view that Galatians 3.28 has a proto-gnostic background (to use J. Louis Martyn's terminology) and not an apocalyptic one. Martyn claims: "Nothing in the text or context of Gal. 3.28 indicates that the thought is that of re-unification"; "Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 410–24, 423, n. 16; but precisely this argument that Paul is citing Gen. 1:27 and alluding to the "myth of the primal androgyne" does constitute an indication of reunification.
31. Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female: The Fate of a Dominical Saying in Paul and Gnosticism* (Philadelphia, 1987); and "Corinthian Veils and Gnostic Androgynes," in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, ed. Karen L. King (Philadelphia, 1988), 276–92.
32. Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne," 182.
33. Thus, I completely disagree with Fiorenza, who claims that "the immediate context in Galatians speaks neither about baptism"; *In Memory of Her*, 208. From the very beginning of the chapter until its end, that is all that is being spoken of.
34. Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne," 170. Below I will argue further that Pauline baptism functioned in this way, providing a momentary experience of breaking of categories in the experience of "the spirit."
35. MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female*. I am, of course, aware that MacDonald's reconstructions are not universally accepted.
36. It is important to emphasize how crucial the thinking of these two men has been in founding the culture of the West. For Paul this is obvious to all; however, Philo, because of his decisive influence on much patristic thought, was also of enormous importance. See J. E. Bruns, "Philo Christianus: The Debris of a Legend," *Harvard Theological Review* 66 (1973): 141–45; David Winston, *Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, the Giants, and Selections* (New York, 1981), xi–xii and 313–14; and Kerstin Aspegren, *The Male Woman: A Feminine Ideal in the Early Church*, ed. Renée Kieffer (Stockholm, 1990), 81–82.
37. Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne"; and Henri Crouzel, *Origen: The Life and Thought of the First Great Theologian*, trans. A. S. Worrall (San Francisco, 1989), 94.
38. Philo contradicts himself on this point in several places. I am not interested here in sorting out Philo's different interpretations and their sources. Moreover, this has been very well done already in Thomas H. Tobin, S. J., *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (Washington, D.C., 1983). My interest here is rather in how the reading given here enters into a certain politics of the gendered body. For further discussion of this passage in Philo and his followers, see *ibid.*, 108–19; and Jeremy Cohen, "Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It": *The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1989), 74–76 and 228.
39. Philo *De opificio mundi* 134.
40. Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 32.
41. Steven D. Fraade, "Ascetical Aspects of Ancient Judaism," in Green, *Jewish Spirituality*, 263–64.



42. Ross Kraemer, "Monastic Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Egypt: Philo on the Therapeutrides," *Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14, no. 1 (1989): 342–370, is the most recent and fullest description of the Therapeutae.
43. Cf. Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne," 179; and MacDonald, "Corinthian Veils," 289. This hypothesis also explains the otherwise seemingly unmotivated reference in Philo's text to the *Symposium* of Plato and especially to Aristophanes' story of double-creatures (not necessarily androgynes by any means) at the origins of humanity. Philo is counterposing to this "abhorrent" image of physically double bodies an ideal one of spiritually dual humans. Philo's reversal was double-reversed by the rabbis, who restored the myth as one of a physical androgyne, as I argue in "Behold Israel."
44. Anne Wire has made the valid point that Philo describes the Therapeutrides as "aged virgins," which, given his usage discussed below, might very well mean formerly sexually active women. In a sense, then, these women had "had their cake and eaten it too." The symbolic incompatibility, however, between sexuality and spirituality is nevertheless reinforced, and, as we shall see, in many groups the renunciation had been total and permanent. Furthermore, it is important to note that the women of the culture may not have experienced this "renunciation" as a sacrifice but as a liberation, and I am making an open judgment here which draws on my own contemporary values, which is valid to the extent that I am involved here in a critique and analysis of contemporary culture using the ancient materials as one tool of analysis. In any case, however, it is clear that an autonomy which is predicated on the forced choice of celibacy (in order to achieve autonomy) is a highly compromised autonomy, however it may have been experienced.

It is not to be ignored, of course, that men as well in these systems are ideally expected to embrace celibacy. Male autonomy and creativity are *not*, however, predicated on such renunciation, except in one sphere. Thus noncelibate men have many avenues of self-expression and freedom together with sexuality and paternity, while women can only choose between an all-encompassing maternity or none at all. There are, to be sure, in both Judaism and Christianity, some hints at ruptures in this rule. See Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (forthcoming), chap. six; and Verna E. F. Harrison, "Male and Female in Cappadocian Theology," *Journal of Theological Studies* 41 (October 1990): 441–71.

45. See also discussion of Tertullian *On the Veiling of Virgins* in Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Veils, Virgins, and the Tongues of Men and Angels: Women's Heads in Early Christianity," in *The Female Head: Public Meanings of Women's Hair, Faces, and Mouths*, ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz and Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (forthcoming), where precisely the issue between Tertullian and his opponents is whether virgins are women or not!
46. Dorothy Sly, *Philo's Perception of Women* (Atlanta, 1990), 71–90. See, for example, the characteristically Philonic usage, "When a man comes in contact with a woman, he marks [makes her marked; notice the semiotic terminology] the virgin as a woman. But when souls become divinely inspired, from being women they become virgins"; Philo *Questiones en exodum* 2.3. Now obviously Philo's usage is influenced by general Greek diction in which παρθένος is often contrasted to γυνή, as for instance in Xenophon *Anabasis* 3.2.25: γ. και παρθένοι, cited in Liddell and Scott. This Greek usage alone is significant, because it already encodes the idea that virgins are not women. In Hebrew, the word אשה, which also means both "woman" and "wife," can never be contrasted with בתולה, "virgin," and indeed אשה בתולה, "a virgin woman," is a common expression. Finally, even in Greek, one can speak of a γυνή παρθένος, "virgin woman," as in Hesiod *Theogony* 514. The structural opposition between virgin and woman in

Philo is thus very significant and revealing even if he is only exploiting and developing a sort of quirk of Greek, a fortiori if, as I hold, he is doing more than that.

The passage from *Joseph and Aseneth*, cited by MacDonald, "Corinthian Veils," 289, also supports this reading, for Aseneth is told, "Because today you are a pure virgin and your head is like that of a young man." When she is no longer a virgin, only then she becomes a woman.

47. Steven Knapp has made the excellent point that the social entailments of a statement like "There is no male and female" could not but "leak from one social space to another" as it were, nor that Paul's formulations have only the consequences that he intended them to have. "On the other hand, there is some reason to think that marriage in what Boyarin calls 'the Christian West' has evolved into a more egalitarian institution than marriage in at least some other cultures; if so, how would one go about excluding the possibility that this tendency was encouraged by the Pauline ideal of spiritual androgyny?" (response at CHS). The answer is that I am not trying to exclude such a possibility at all. I am here speaking of Paul's intent, not as a hermeneutical or historical control on his text, but as a construct in its own right and a way to understand what seem otherwise to be contradictory moments in his discourse. Of course, this "leaking" goes both ways, for ultimately if a certain vision of gender equality that we share owes its origins to perhaps unintended consequences of Paul's discourse, it is perhaps equally the case that the general male-female hierarchy of even celibate Christian communities owes its origin to his discourse on marriage!
48. Note that in Colossians, a text which if not Pauline is certainly from circles close to him, the *Haustafel* follows hard by "There is no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all" (3.10ff). Fiorenza acutely remarks that "Paul has taken great care to give a double command covering each case of active sexual interaction between husband and wife. However, it would be reaching too far to conclude from this that women and men shared an equality of role and a mutuality of relationship or equality of responsibility, freedom, and accountability in marriage. Paul stresses this interdependence only for *sexual* conjugal relationships and not for all marriage relationships"; *In Memory of Her*, 224.
49. One consequence of my interpretation is that we need not assume "outside" influences for explaining Corinthian Christianity.
50. Cf. also Wire, *Women Prophets*, 137–38.
51. For a fairly thoroughgoing account of this "benevolent" gender hierarchy, see my *Carnal Israel*. Note that in that form of Judaism, for all its genuine discrimination against women, it is not enshrined as law that wives must be obedient to their husbands' rule. The verse, which in certain Christian circles is usually cited as requiring wifely obedience, Genesis 3.16, "And your desire shall be toward him, but he will rule over you," is interpreted in talmudic law that husbands must be particularly attentive to their wives' unspoken need for sex. Philo the misogynist does read this verse as encoding female submissiveness, but even he explicitly remarks that this servitude is not to be imposed through violence; Judith Romney Wegner, "Philo's Portrayal of Women—Hebraic or Hellenic?," in Levine, ed., "*Women Like This*," 41–66. None of this remark should be taken, however, as a covering over or apology for either the misogynist tone of some talmudic/midrashic discourse nor for the pervasive disenfranchisement of women in that culture and particularly their near total confinement to the roles of wife and mother. If individual men were somewhat restrained in this culture from cruel physical domination of individual women, the culture as a whole certainly was psychologically cruel in its restriction of possibilities for female freedom. Once

more, as in the case of celibacy, women may not have experienced this as cruel. From our perspective, nevertheless, it is. I am not prepared, however, to dismiss their experience as “false consciousness.” As Karen King has remarked, “The difference between men’s imaginings of women and women’s lives is such that we can affirm that women have found spiritual fulfillment and salvation in the practice of Judaism and Christianity despite what the texts would lead us to think” (response at CHS).

52. Tomson, *Paul and Jewish Law*, 107. Since this is the passage to which Fiorenza’s student refers as where “he so firmly emphasized the equality of woman and man in marriage,” then his apparent contradiction of them can hardly be seen as “reverting to rabbinic prejudices.” Moreover, such provision for mutual consideration of husband and wife for each other’s needs is hardly incompatible with gender hierarchy. As I have argued with regard to rabbinic Judaism and suggest here with regard to Paul as well, the attitude of husband to wife was expected to be one of benevolent dictatorship, which precluded any cruelty or lack of consideration.

What is remarkable about the Corinthians passage is rather its rhetoric, the fact that Paul addresses men and women equally, whereas the implicit subject of the Mishna is always a man who both owes obligations to his wife and to whom she is obligated. This is an important distinction; however, we should not make too much of it, for we do not know what rhetorical form a pharisaic/rabbinic address to the populace, whether oral or epistolary, would have taken. Paul’s rhetorical stance is usually every bit as androcentric as that of the rabbis: “It is well for a person not to touch a woman”—not “It is well for persons not to have carnal knowledge of other persons.” Conzelmann’s argument that the reason he used this form is “due to the formulation of their question” represents wishful thinking; *Corinthians*, 115. Much more convincing is Wire’s interpretation: “The immorality he exposes is male. The solution he calls for is marriage, and here, for the first time in the letter, he refers to women as an explicit group. Paul is not telling the offending men to marry. This cannot happen without the cooperation of others and the others cannot be male”; *Women Prophets*, 78. This would certainly explain well the shift from androcentric to “egalitarian” rhetoric in 7.2–3. See also her remark that with regard to the virgin, “Paul does not repeat the same words to the woman but continues to the man, ‘But if you marry, you do not sin, and if the virgin marries, she does not sin’ (7.28). In this way Paul manages to incorporate the rhetoric of equality, although the woman is only talked about, not addressed” (87).

Karen King has contributed some very wise remarks which I think worth quoting extensively:

My own work has shown that quite often a pattern can be discerned in men’s writings about women: that is, the way that men view their own bodies and sexuality is structurally analogous to how they view women. In a sense, men often use women (or the category of woman) to think with. Control of one’s own sexuality and the use and control of women seem to be two sides of the same problem.

For Philo, a man’s relationship to himself is one of control pure and simple: the control of the body by the mind. This control constitutes good order and the best interests of the self. Analogously, women are to be under men’s control. They are not rejected, but it is understood that the good of society and man’s spiritual progress can only be achieved by the subordination of women, for their own good. Women out of control again and again constitute Philo’s primary metaphor for spiritual and social disaster. . . .

For Paul, however, the relation to the self is less one of control and more

one of reciprocity. He does not abandon the body, but expects to see it transformed. Sexuality, body, and spirit are more fully integrated in his conceptuality of self than with Philo. Yet as you note, there still exists a clear hierarchical relation between spirit and body. Celibacy models this relation most clearly. It is also the inscription on the body of his ideal of unity expressed in Galatians 3.28. The model for relations between men and women is similarly one of reciprocity, not equality, as is shown in 1 Corinthians 7 and 11. (Response at CHS)

I would only wish to emphasize, following Wire and the logic of King's own statement, that this reciprocity of male and female is hierarchical precisely in the way that spirit and flesh are for Paul, thus further confirming King's approach.

53. See Daniel Boyarin, "Internal Opposition in Talmudic Literature: The Case of the Married Monk," *Representations* 36 (1991): 87–113, for extended discussion and critique of rabbinic culture on this issue.
54. Tomson, *Paul and Jewish Law*, 105–8.
55. See *ibid.*, 111, for demonstration that there was such a trend of thought in one form of Palestinian Judaism, and that the prohibition was derived from Genesis 1.27!—just as Jesus had done. In addition to this, for Paul at any rate there is the general apocalyptic sense that everything should remain just as it is until the imminent Parousia. For this interpretation, see Vincent L. Wimbush, *Paul the Worldly Ascetic: Response to the World and Self-Understanding According to 1 Corinthians 7* (Macon, Ga., 1987).
56. This interpretation carries with it the consequence that certain Orthodox Fathers of the church best represent the "authentic" Pauline tradition—for instance, Clement of Alexandria, whose positive view of marriage is well known, but also such figures as Gregory Nazianzen, who writes, "I will join you in wedlock. I will dress the bride. We do not dishonour marriage, because we give a higher honour to virginity"; quoted in David Carlton Ford, *Misogynist or Advocate?: St. John Chrysostom and His Views on Women* (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1989), 25. I am also quite convinced by Ford's description of the later John Chrysostom's ideology of sexuality that his mature view was not very different from that of the rabbis (*ibid.*, 49 and *passim*), but, once again it is important to note that with all that, Chrysostom, himself, was celibate, and as Ford notes, "he continued all his life to consider a life of virginity in dedication to God as an even higher calling" (73). Others of the Cappadocian fathers, including Gregory of Nyssa, seem also to reflect such positions. See Verna Harrison, "Male and Female."
57. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988), 55.
58. *Ibid.*
59. My *Carnal Israel* is entirely devoted to this rejection and its cultural consequences, both promising and disturbing.
60. See Wire, *Women Prophets*, 88, for an excellent discussion of the interpretative problems of this verse, but the point being made here is not affected. Any way you cut it, the ratio between celibacy and marriage here is the same.
61. 1 Corinthians 6.16–17 is instructive here as well: "Don't you know the one who is joined to the prostitute is one body with her, since it says, 'the two will become one flesh,' whereas one joined to the Lord is one spirit with him!" Now it would seem that the antithesis to one joined to the prostitute would be one joined to his lawful wife, as the cited verse from Genesis 2 would suggest as well. The fact that Paul refers rather to the spiritual joining with Christ leads strongly in the direction I am putting forth, that is of an ideal spiritual state in which sexuality is destroyed, in Paul as in Philo. In that state, I am suggesting, "there is no male and female." See also Wire, *Women*

*Prophets*, 77–78, and especially, “Paul’s words would be most congenial to women who have used their freedom to live separately from men, although the next chapter shows that he has no intention of ruling out sexual union for those in union with Christ. But his use of the Genesis quotation, ‘the two will become one flesh,’ to build the stark antithesis of two kinds of union appeals to those whose union with Christ replaces sexual union.”

62. I find that Wire’s interpretation of this section (*ibid.*, 116ff., esp. 118–20) is the only weak part of her argument. I think, moreover, that the reconstruction offered here strengthens her overall reading considerably.
63. Once again, let me make clear that even the explicit hierarchy which these verses reify does not necessarily authorize a tyranny of men over women, certainly not a vicious one. *Κεφαλή* may or may not mean “ruler,” but there can be no doubt that structurally there *is* here a hierarchical series of God > Christ > man > woman, whatever the value placed on that hierarchy. I thus find myself here, as in other respects, in complete agreement with Troels Engberg-Pedersen, “1 Corinthians 11:16 and the Character of Pauline Exhortation,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110, no. 4 (1992): 679–89, 681, n. 9. See also Joseph Fitzmyer, S.J., “Another Look at ΚΕΦΑΛΗ in 1 Corinthians 11:3,” *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 503–11, for a strong argument that this term *does* mean “one having authority over” in Jewish koine.
64. Cf. Conzelmann, *Corinthians*, 185, n. 41: “We must presume that these tendencies are bound up with enthusiasm: the Spirit makes all alike. Female charismatics can begin by drawing conclusions from this for their appearance. Paul would then be reminding them that the equality is equality ‘in Christ’ and that consequently women remain women. Their personality does not disappear, as in enthusiasm”; and again, “One must not read v. 11 in the first instance in isolation, without the expression ἐν κυρίῳ, ‘in the Lord.’ It maintains the central Pauline idea that the cancellation of distinctions has its specific place, that they are canceled ‘in the Lord,’ not ‘in us’” (190)—or, as I would put it, “in the spirit,” not “in the flesh.” See also Madeleine Boucher, “Some Unexplored Parallels to 1 Cor. 11.11–12 and Gal. 3.28: The New Testament on the Role of Women,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 31 (1969): 50–58, on these two verses. We find “in the Lord” as the opposite of “in the flesh,” in Philemon 16, and synonymous parallelism with “in Christ” in Philemon 20. And note also that in 2 Corinthians 11.17–18, we find κατὰ κύριον in apparent opposition to κατὰ σάρκα. Note that Wire’s reading of the passage (*Women Prophets*, 128) does not take sufficient account of the crucial “in the Lord.” On the other hand, in her response to this paper when it was presented at the Center for Hermeneutical Studies, she raised the substantial objection to my interpretation that versc 12 seems certainly to be speaking of birth!
65. This interpretation was suggested to me by Karen King. Anne Wire has proposed an entirely different reconstruction of the relation of the baptismal formula to Genesis, suggesting that it does not represent a return at all but a new creation which negates the original one. She accordingly disagrees with the Meeks-MacDonald interpretation. My construction of Paul is not crucially dependent on either one of these historical reconstructions being “correct,” although admittedly it is much neater following MacDonald.
66. Josef Kürzinger, “Frau und Mann nach 1 Kor. 11.11f,” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 22 (1978): 270–75. I learned of this important paper from the citation in Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 229.
67. From her response at CHS.
68. Contrast Hans Dieter Genz, “Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Church

- in Galatia,” in *Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia, 1979), 200.
69. Compare MacDonald, “Corinthian Veils,” 286, and esp. 290, who sees a much more fundamental difference between Paul and the Corinthians than I do. Note that my interpretation of “in the Lord” is diametrically opposed to his (291). As in many cases in chapter 7 as well, as Wire points out (*Women Prophets*, passim), Paul grants a point in principle and disagrees in practice. Note, moreover, that the cases are exactly parallel.
  70. For the latter, see Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 191, 199; and Wire’s characteristically shrewd remarks: “On the contrary, [the Corinthians] may claim in their prayer and prophecy to mediate between God and humanity so that through the spirit the perishable does inherit imperishability and the primal dissociation is breached”; *Women Prophets*, 23. This breaching of the dissociation between spirit and flesh, raising of flesh to the status of spirit, would be that which transcends gender as well and explains much of the Corinthians’ behavior, including paradoxically both their tendencies toward celibacy and libertinage as well as the Corinthian women’s apparent adoption of male styles of headdress (Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 202; MacDonald, “Corinthian Veils”).
- It is important to point out that, although less prominently, celibate men were also apparently sometimes imagined as androgynous. Verna Harrison has been doing very important work on this issue. It is tempting to speculate that Origen’s self-castration fits into this paradigm as well; a speculation that can take place, incidentally, whether or not it actually happened. See on this point also the important and stimulating remarks in Brown, *Body and Society*, 169. This pull to celibacy (and androgyny) for men is also a function of being freed from the constraints of the “world and the flesh,” correspondingly weaker insofar as those constraints were much less burdensome for men than for women to start with. Note that the priests of Agdistis used to emasculate themselves (Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 169). (Fiorenza’s reference to this cult in apparent support of her claim that Galatians 3.28 “does not express . . . ‘gnosticizing’ devaluation of procreative capacities,” seems somewhat inapposite in this light; *In Memory of Her*, 213.)
71. Tertullian *De baptismo* 17.4–5.
  72. The classic study of this phenomenon is still Arthur Vööbus, *Celibacy: A Requirement for Admission to Baptism in the Early Church* (Stockholm, 1951); and see the excellent chapter in Brown, *Body and Society*, 83–103.
  73. Elizabeth Clark, “Ascetic Renunciation and Feminine Advancement: A Paradox of Late Ancient Christianity,” in *Ascetic Piety and Women’s Faith: Essays in Late Ancient Christianity* (New York, 1986), 175–208.
  74. See the important passage in *The Acts of Andrew*, cited by Aspegren, *Male Woman*, 126, in which the apocryphal apostle begs Maximilla to remain steadfast in her decision to cease having sexual intercourse with her husband in the following terms, “I beg you, then, O wise man [ὁ φρόνιμος ἀνὴρ!], that your noble mind continue steadfast; I beg you, O invisible mind, that you may be preserved yourself.” Here it is absolutely and explicitly clear that through celibacy the female ceases to be a woman. The passage could practically appear in Philo.
  75. Clement of Alexandria, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Fathers of the Second Century* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1989), 20.
  76. See, however, note 47 above.
  77. Interestingly enough, there is a unique historical case that suggests that this structure

remained dormant even in Judaism as a marginal structural possibility. I refer to the one case of a postbiblical Jewish woman who functioned as an independent religious authority on the same level as men, the famous nineteenth-century “Maid of Ludmir,” and precisely the same mechanism operates, autonomy and religious leadership for a woman as an equal to men but only because she is celibate and therefore *not a woman*. Indeed, as soon as she engaged in marriage, at the age of forty, at the urging of male religious authorities—and a celibate marriage at that—her religious power disappeared, *because she had revealed that she really was a woman, and not a man in a woman’s body*, nor an asexual androgyne. See Ada Rapoport-Alpert, “On Women in Hasidism,” in *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky*, ed. Rapoport-Alpert and Steven J. Zipperstein (London, 1988), 495–525.

78. Clement *Stromateis* 6.12.100, quoted in MacDonald, “Corinthian Veils,” 284.
79. Castelli, “‘I Will Make Mary Male,’” 33. Incidentally, Simon Peter’s declaration in this text that women do not deserve life should be contrasted to the explicit statement in the Talmud that women must pray just as men do, “because do not women require life [just like men]?”; Kiddushin 34b.
80. This also suggests that it is not so obvious that the only direction of such gender blending or bending was from female to male, even for a misogynist like Philo, a fortiori for less misogynist Jews and Christians, even though it is not to be denied, of course, that the usual image was of a female becoming male.
81. Castelli, “‘I Will Make Mary Male.’” This story, as well as that of Thekla, has, of course, been discussed by myriad critics and commentators.
82. *Ibid.*, 42.     83. *Ibid.*, 44.
84. In this light, the fact that the *Gospel of Thomas* most likely originates in the most rigidly celibate of all early “Orthodox” churches, the Syrian church, takes on particular significance. See Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 194. See also C. C. Richardson, *The Gospel of Thomas: Gnostic or Encratite?* (Rome, 1973).
85. According to Steven Davies, *The Revolt of the Widows: The Social World of the Apocryphal Acts* (Carbondale, Ill., 1980), these texts were produced by women very similar in social status to the “virgins” of Philo, older women who were either unmarried or who had left their husbands. Even Dennis Ronald MacDonald, “The Role of Women in the Production of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,” *Iliff Review of Theology* 40 (1984): 21–38, who disagrees with Davies, still agrees that the oral sources of these texts were produced among celibate women.
86. See also MacDonald, “Corinthian Veils,” 285.
87. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 207.
88. Once more, I emphasize that neither they nor the Jewish women may have experienced their lives the way we predict owing to our own cultural prejudices.
89. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 210. Incidentally, Fiorenza errs when she writes there that in rabbinic Judaism, “even the full proselyte could not achieve the status of the male Israelite.” This does not affect, however, her larger claim that the constitution of the Christian community through baptism was intended to be something entirely different than the solidarities of physical kinship that characterized Judaism. This fundamental change in the notion of kinship did not produce, however, only and always welcome sociocultural effects, as Jews and Native Americans (among others) know only too well. In my forthcoming book on Paul from which this chapter is taken, I explore further just these political consequences. For the nonce, see my forthcoming article in *Paragraph*.
90. This should not be taken as a totalizing statement denying wives (either in Christianity

or in rabbinic Judaism) all freedom and subjectivity; indeed, it is not inconsistent with the notion that married women could have positions of at least partial leadership in the Pauline churches. Cf. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 232–33.

91. In this sense, then, Paul essentially agrees with the Corinthians as to the way to gender equality (cf. Wire, *Women Prophets*, 65 and especially 90), but Paul sees what he takes to be negative social and moral effects of the wrong people attempting to achieve such status. We need not necessarily accept as “historically” accurate Paul’s evaluation of the situation. Wire has argued that Paul’s position involved a great deal of oppression of the Corinthian women: “Apparently Paul sets out to persuade women to give up what they have gained through sexual abstinence in order that the community and Christ himself may be saved from immorality” (79). I think that Wire’s rereading of 1 Corinthians 6 and 7 is of great significance for our *evaluation* of Paul here, although for reasons I shall immediately lay out, not for our *interpretation*. By a very careful and close reading Wire has arrived at the following conclusions vis-à-vis this section of his text: Paul is primarily concerned with male immorality, and his injunctions to marry fall on women to provide legitimate sexual outlets for men, so that they will not fall into *porneia*. This includes those Corinthian women who have already achieved a high degree of spiritual fulfillment, who are now commanded to renounce this achievement for the sake of providing sexual service to men not called to the celibate life. Paul’s discourse is, on this reading, considerably more compromised ethically than I have allowed above in that its hierarchical imbalance falls on all women, including those successfully called to the celibate life. The consequence of Wire’s brilliant reconstruction is that “Paul’s agreement with the Corinthians concerning gender equality on principle is strictly a rhetorical ploy if he is, as you say, ruled by the ‘negative social and moral effects of the wrong people attempting to achieve such status’” (response at CHS). It is here, however, that I wish to introduce a nuance, which, if it be apologetic, at least is not compromised by being apology for my own religious tradition, although there may be another factor working here: as a male Jew, all too aware of the gap between my own aspirations toward feminism and the shortcomings of my practice, I may be drawn to forgiving perceived—or constructed—analogue failures on the part of a forefather of sorts. Nevertheless, even given all the details of Wire’s construction of the Corinthian women prophets and Paul’s repressive reaction to them, I think we do not need to conclude that his agreement with them in principle is “strictly a rhetorical ploy” but rather I think a genuine and failed vision. Whether or not the baptismal formula in Galatians 3.28 is, as I suppose, a reflection of the primal androgyne interpretation of Genesis 1.28, or whether it reflects a radical rewriting of Genesis in the new creation of Christ as Wire proposes, I think that it genuinely holds out the vision of social equality for all human beings. Paul, however, simply cannot think himself to an adequate social arrangement with equality for the sexes other than chastity, which for one reason or another he considers to be an unworkable solution at the present time. And yes, I agree, it may very well be that it is unworkable because of *male* sexual need in his view, and women may be the servants, for him, of that need; nevertheless I think that he as well as the Corinthians, as opposed to rabbinic Judaism, envisions an end to gender hierarchy. In any case, if on the one hand, Wire points to the devastating history of male oppression of women in the name of Paul, one can also cite at least a nascent discourse and real history of chastity as female autonomy also carried out in his name in what is, after all, the Acts of Paul and Thekla, for notable example. Similarly with regard to the parallel issue of slavery—Philemon has been used (maybe misused) as a text in the service of slavery.



It is just as true, however, that Galatians 3.28 has been mobilized in antislavery discourses. The failure of consistency here does not involve Paul's aspirations but his achievements. Others who come after may indeed be able to put into practice that which in Paul is fraught with contradiction. I think that the ultimate elimination of slavery in all of the Christian world is an eloquent case in point, although it took nearly two thousand years for Paul's vision to be realized here.