

# Globethics Repository

The logo for Globethics, featuring the word "Globethics" in white, lowercase, sans-serif font centered within a solid blue rectangular background.

## Gender Responsibility in Religious Leadership

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository. More information on Globethics see <https://www.globethics.net>. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see <https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy>.

Item Type	Book chapter
Authors	Walz, Heike
Publisher	Globethics.net / WCC Publications
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-07-09 15:10:16
Link to Item	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/173434">http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/173434</a>

## GENDER RESPONSIBILITY IN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

*Heike Walz, Germany/Argentina*

### **1. Leadership in Argentina**

Leadership is in crisis in Argentina. It is not only about politicians, who have been criticised for showing lack of moral authority and integrity in recent times, but also about religious leaders, mainly from the Roman Catholic Church, which traditionally has had a significant impact on religious life in Argentina.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, trust in politicians, political organisations and the State is lacking, and the credibility of institutions such as political parties, members of the judicial system, trade unions, educational institutions and religious institutions is in crisis. On the other hand, human rights organisations of civil society such as the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo or the ecumenical movement for human rights (MEDH) are still active and publicly respected. Argentina is going through a transformation process from a 'defective democracy' to a 'consolidated democracy', to use categories of political science. A lack of confidence in democracy as a political system as well as in representatives of democracy is part of the crisis of leadership.

However, as we have noted, there are also actors of civil society such as neighbourhood organisations, NGOs, social and church networks, which, in many cases, are experimenting with participative and horizontal democratic structures themselves, or are accompanying those developing them, with the aim of enabling and fostering citizenship participation. Diaconal projects against poverty see *enabling participation* as a key goal because almost half of the population is suffering from some kind of non-participation, especially with respect to basic needs and citizenship. One of the most urgent problems all leaders of the country are facing is the high rate of poverty and of pauperisation.<sup>2</sup> A sort of social ecumenism already exists between members of different denominations, sometimes extending to other religions, together with NGOs and social movements, e.g. in empowerment projects to help women and men develop basic competencies in citizenship (e.g. in the so-called *escuelas de ciudadanía*, schools of citizenship), and projects focused on education and literacy.

Those working in such projects are observing *gender differences* in terms of participation. Women and men are participating or *not*

participating in economy and society in different manners. They are also participating differently in the struggle for citizenship. Generally speaking, groups of women are often the first to organise for social change in contrast to the many men who leave their family, become addicts or violent. The concept of masculinity is at stake here since without a job and money men lose self-esteem. There is little evidence of men finding constructive solutions to their problems. Generally, women are those left alone with the responsibility to care for the children. As they have to struggle for their own survival and the survival of their children, many women have been taken to sharing their crisis, often creating neighbourhood organisations. While women also feel shame, depression and loss of self-esteem, they seem to have to loose less than men, so that many of them are able to share their crisis with others and to mobilise themselves. The concept of femininity is also a factor here. Though the economical crisis has increased, and in spite of their vulnerability (e.g. women earn 48 % of the wages of men in the informal economic sector), women have been organising themselves and developing leadership qualities within these participation projects.

A specific gendering in churches and in society can either enable women or men to participate in the struggle for a better life, or prevent and negate their participation. The question is how religious leadership can contribute to solve this problem of lack of participation. What I would like to suggest in this paper is that leadership implies *enabling participation* of everybody in church and society; and therefore that religious leadership should include *gender responsibility*.

With regard to this, I will (1) explain the idea of *religious leadership* as enabling participation; demonstrate (2) the need for *gender responsibility* and (3) the necessity of developing *gendered ethics* of religious leadership; (4) explore the idea of how *body vulnerability* as a 'material principle' (Enrique Dussel) serves as a critical principle; (5) argue that the model of leadership as enabling participation is based on Christian understandings of *God's Trinitarian participation* in the world that enables the church's mission in the world, before (6) ending with some conclusions.

## **2. Religious Leadership as Enabling Participation in Life**

In this paper I will focus on religious leadership from a Christian perspective. I will refer to internal church leadership, clergywomen and clergymen and lay leaders as well as to the *public and prophetic mandate* of churches within society, noting that Christians are called to be like salt of the earth (Matt 5:13). It is a diaconal perspective of leadership, as it puts emphasis on serving the community, as a testi-

mony that God's Kingdom is already present on earth. This christological concept of leadership is based on Mark 10:35-45 where Jesus presents himself as deacon of all human beings. Leadership as service means here that leadership is understood as *enabling women and men participating in life*.<sup>3</sup>

Some people on the margins of Argentina criticise the idea of 'participation' as utopian. In the Province of Buenos Aires new generations of children are growing up without schooling, a stable family life or job prospects and in a context of violence and crime. Participation in civil life seems to be a utopian vision.<sup>4</sup> At the same time leadership as a public and prophetic mandate of the churches deals with responsibility. Generally speaking, responsibility can be understood as the will or obligation to deal with the consequences of one's actions.<sup>5</sup> Applying this on the proposed concept of leadership, gender-conscious ethical reflection is a result. Naivety or ignorance with regard to gender must be transformed.

### **3. Gender Responsibility in Ethical Discourses**

Gender neutrality is not possible, because everybody is dealing with social constructs of gender and accompanying prejudices in personal relationships and the wider society. This becomes clearer when we look at the history of philosophical and theological ethical discourses. There have been various hermeneutics with which the discourses have faced the question that human beings are considered either female or male. The gender question is either explicitly or implicitly dealt with, and the relation between women and men is valorised in a specific way.

The first hermeneutic presents itself as *gender neutral*, since it fails to talk about men and women explicitly. Most of the historical protestant theologians kept silent about gender. Perhaps some considered women and men as equal and thought that there was nothing more to say, yet working with a concept of abstract humanity that ignores concrete reality that all human beings are declared either female or male in the first seconds of their life. Taking a closer look at this type of discourse, it becomes clear that it is operating *implicitly* with gender constructions that are also asymmetrical in many cases.

The second method is talking about women and men *explicitly* and in an *asymmetrical way*, as it had been present in much philosophical history. The female is viewed in comparison to the 'general human', which is considered as male. As a consequence of the feminist movements, Women Studies, and Gender Studies this discourse has been criticised, but – depending on the context – has not completely disappeared.

The third hermeneutic is the concept of *complementarities* of women and men, which is very common (explicitly or implicitly) in theological discourses and church life as well as in many cultural contexts. In many cases this discourse puts emphasis on the different 'nature' and social position of women and men, but states that this difference means equality. It argues that women and men have different destinies in the world. Looking at the lived reality it becomes clear that this discourse is instrumentalising the concept of difference in order to hide inequality. This discourse confuses two concepts: it is not difference that should be eliminated in favour of a more equal society, but inequality. All people are different from each other (by age, nationality, sex, ethnicity, etc.) and this difference is part of the interdependency of identity and alterity in humanity, but differences do not have to result in inequalities. The discourse of complementarities mixes up the antinomy of equal/unequal and identical/different.

This brief overview on gender hermeneutics in philosophy and theology shows that in most cases implicit and explicit gendering of ethical discourses does not manage to overcome gender asymmetries. As a result, ethical discourses tend to be accomplices in devaluing women while failing to meet the needs of men, too. Gender responsibility in ethical discourses about religious leadership needs gender reflection, which deals with the concrete realities of women and men, instead of operating with an abstract concept of humanity that is supposed to talk about 'man'.

#### **4. Gender Ethics as Responsibility for the Concrete 'Other'<sup>6</sup>**

Gender ethics are not just another theory of ethics, but offer a specific perspective on ethics intending to transform ethical theories and moral practices. In the same way as feminist ethics are considered to be a specific form of *political ethics*,<sup>7</sup> gender ethics can be understood as a form of critical theory that questions the very concept of politics (including the conceptualisation of the private and the public) and of democracy, arguments legitimating power, the concept of subjectivity, autonomy, etc. In addition to this, I want to suggest that the moral subject should not be conceptualised as an abstract subject without body and without relationships, because this tends to result in a white male moral subject with property and social status. Gender ethics is dealing with a situated person living in a concrete historical situation, with a body and emotions.

At this stage it is helpful to consider Seyla Benhabib's ethical theory. In her concept of the *ethics of the concrete Other*,<sup>8</sup> she proposes a way of dealing with the concrete reality of women and men. She makes a distinction between the standpoint of the generalised Other

and the standpoint of the concrete Other. Moral theories based on autonomy in a universalistic perspective normally deal with the standpoint of the generalised, but in order to attempt to understand one's own subjectivity, as well as others' points of views, people need to interact with specific others. Benhabib states: 'Neither the concreteness nor the otherness of the "concrete other" can be known in the absence of the voice of the other. The viewpoint of the concrete other emerges as a distinct one only as a result of self-definition. It is the other who makes us aware both of her concreteness and her otherness'.<sup>9</sup> She proposes an interactive universalism in which the generalised Other always is a concrete Other. The difference between the generalised and the concrete Other is not meant in a prescriptive way, but in a critical perspective: the intention is to respect the dignity of the generalised Other in order to accept the moral identity of the concrete Other.<sup>10</sup> Benhabib developed this idea by discussing the controversy between Carol Gilligan and Lawrence Kohlberg.<sup>11</sup> It is obvious that she does not want to give up entirely universal and general perspectives in ethics, but she wants to include the standpoints of the concrete subjects of moral decisions.

Benhabib's concept is very close to the *ethics of responsibility* developed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer,<sup>12</sup> Hans Jonas,<sup>13</sup> Hans-Eduard Tödt,<sup>14</sup> and others. In this article I want to refer to the ethics of responsibility developed in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since the 1970s, during the Cold War, responsibility has become a central topic in Latin American moral reflection. 'Neoliberal' economic politics excluding wide sectors of the population, corruption in politics, ecological problems, marginalisation and discrimination led to an ethic which began with historical realities.<sup>15</sup> Enrique Dussel underlines that responsibility includes three aspects: responsibility for something or somebody; responsibility for action; and responsibility for consequences. His ethics of responsibility from the Latin-American context is individual and social at the same time, as persons and social structures are concerned.

Benhabib's concept of the concrete Other and an ethics of individual and social responsibility in Latin America lead to an *ethics of gender responsibility for the concrete Other and the social structures* of the society and the churches. Therefore it is important to make a shift from feminist ethics<sup>16</sup> to gender ethics<sup>17</sup> in the sense that the gender problem has to engage both women and men to transform the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity and in order to change the established gender order with its asymmetries.<sup>18</sup> Creating equal opportunities for women and men in all institutions (in law, politics, churches, etc.) will always be the base of gender ethics. I call this an *ethic of equality*. The struggle for equality should not assimilate women to men, this is an ethic of *equality in differences*, but it should also not repeat the classical

gender order, in which women have to care for everybody and men have to exercise power. Hence, I prefer to combine an ethic of care with an ethic of justice, as various feminist ethicists are arguing.<sup>19</sup> Often women and men seem to use different strategies to cope with economical and life crisis. If we do not reduce this 'female' and 'male' ethics on biological reasons, the ethic of care and the ethic of justice are a result of gendered social practices and not a result of biological essence. Consequently we can suggest changing gender behaviour, and if we have a closer look at the concrete life of men, we observe that not every man is able to make profit of the 'patriarchal dividend'.<sup>20</sup> There are also specific gender barriers that sometimes prevent men from contributing to life, especially from caring for life. Still other barriers (ethnicity, class, age, etc.) interfere with gender.

Hence, what I am proposing here is a *constructivist* perspective on *gender ethics*. Gender does not automatically refer only to women, as women and men are constructors of their gender and of the gender of others. Furthermore the constructivist perspective includes critical men's studies on gender. One of the main protagonists of the critical men's studies, Robert W. Connell from Australia, shows how the 'hegemonic concept of masculinity' creates hierarchies between men.<sup>21</sup> Concepts of hegemonic masculinity and also classical femininity are interrelated. In the long run, changes in gender constructions will only be put in practice, if not only women are changing themselves and transforming the society, but if men are actively working on changing the gendered society as well. In most places, men who question the established masculinity are considered as 'dangerous' and meet a lot of resistance. Gender ethics including critical men's perspectives has to start with a *theological dialogue about gender between women and men who are taking over gender responsibility*. A sort of ethical code for this dialogue has to be worked out.<sup>22</sup>

This constructivist perspective on gender ethics takes into account differences between women and between men. The impact of gender on the life of persons and institutions can differ from one context to the other, as there are also other categories building up inequalities (class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, etc.). The interdependency of these categories should be taken in account by gender ethics. Therefore a constructivist perspective questions whether we can really talk about *one* female or *one* male moral behaviour; and we also have to ask if there is one female ethic and one male ethic. If we radicalise this position, the consequence is the deconstruction of the binary construction of female and male gender. This is the so-called *deconstructivist* perspective which says that social gender and *biological sex* are historically, socially, and culturally constructed. By questioning the established gender order and the very concept of gender itself, this position is causing *gender trouble*.<sup>23</sup>

There is an ongoing debate on the question whether it is a better strategy to claim 'female' values and a specific 'female morale' (as e.g. care ethic is doing it) or to put in question the category of female and male in itself (as deconstructivism is doing it) to overcome asymmetries. I think the only way to change the gender order is to question its very construction. It is not sufficient to value femininity, if the whole gender order is not challenged. Clear notions of what is female and what is male gives provides stability. But women pay a high price for this stability and, as highlighted above, men do, too, but in a different way. The idea is to accept and motivate more *fluid* gender conceptions, which enable women and men to enter in zones that have been closed for them. Therefore I suggest combining a *gender differentiated analysis* and a creative way of *gender troubling*.

Before concluding this section, I would like to make a critical observation. Deconstructivism tends to concentrate on symbolical and verbal recognition of different gendering. It risks forgetting the material, embodied, and institutional dimensions of gender. This leads to two consequences. Gender responsible ethics have to work both on the transformation of socio-economic and political gender barriers as well as on the transformation of symbolical gender constructions. This is the reason why I will introduce a critical principle in the next section – that of 'body vulnerability'.

## **5. Body Vulnerability as Critical Principle**

There are two reasons for choosing body vulnerability as critical principle for gender ethics. The first has to do with the *Latin American context*. It is not accidental that in recent years the body has been central to Latin American liberation theologies and feminist discourses in general.<sup>24</sup> Vulneration of bodies prevents women and men in difficult conditions of life from real participation in life. Liberation theology has always considered the suffering of the people as the starting point of theology.<sup>25</sup> Therefore various *body theologies* have been developed; some concepts by male theologians, others within ecofeminist body theology. This focus on the body is related to the politics of violating bodies and making bodies disappear during the dictatorships of recent Latin America<sup>26</sup> having rigid reproduction laws, irresponsible sexual ethics and polluted body of the environment, which disproportionately impact on the bodies of poor people. Body theologies emerge in a context of pauperisation and male violence against women as well as in the context of violence of men against men.<sup>27</sup> Thus, bodies have been vulnerated by political powers, by consequences of rigid reproduction moral, by sexual moral teaching, by lack of ecological responsibility, and by violence. Caring for the body and

the bodies of the concrete Other, responsibility for my body and the bodies of the concrete Other (individual perspective) should be combined with social ethics of justice for all embodied selves (social perspective) and with caring for the body of the earth (ecological perspective). Vulnerability is a fundamental of all life on earth. All human beings are facing body vulnerability, be they poor or the rich.

The second reason has to do with *anthropological aspects* of theology. The concrete gendered human being leads to the perception of human beings as *gendered embodied selves*. Thus gender discourse has focused on *body discourses* during recent years. Since reflecting on gender, questions about corporeality are automatically part of the problem. Body politics concern private and intimate aspects of life and yet are present in public, political and theological discourses. Including body discourses in ethical reflections changes the perception of the subjects of doing ethics. It becomes clear that these subjects are not abstract, but embodied selves.<sup>28</sup>

What I am suggesting here is a gender-differentiated perspective on the concrete body vulnerability of women and men. The intention is to overcome gender stereotypes in order to be responsible women and men. Thus care, responsibility, and justice for embodied selves do not picture care as female and justice as male, but gives value to such concerns as vulnerability, care giving, nurturing, mothering – not in the biological sense, but as a social activity – while disconnecting them from biological femininity, so that they are not exclusively female. The aim of this deconstructive position is to overcome these limitations in order to build up a society who takes over responsibility as a whole.

## **6. Theology of the Triune God's Participation in Life**

Responsibility for gender and the body in religious leadership is based on a *Trinitarian participation theology*. God's wisdom participates in the life of creation, as it says in Wisdom 7:27: 'Although she is but one, she can do all things. And while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets.'<sup>29</sup> This participation can be seen in the history of salvation: the Triune God is the giver of life, creating the world as vulnerable. God incarnate in the body of Jesus Christ participates in the vulnerability and suffering of humanity, but overcomes suffering in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God has been present since the creation of the world and is a gift to the world, participating in the lives of embodied selves of women and men. The community of women and men in the Church is nurtured by this participation of God in the community. This concept of *par-*

*ticipation in Christ* is part of Paul's theology, particularly through the metaphor of the mystical union with Christ ('to be in Christ', 'Body of Christ', see in 1 Cor 12:14, Rom 12:4-8, 1 Cor 6:15-15). This has consequences for ecclesiology and church leadership. The community of women and men celebrate and preach God's participation in bodily selves in the Church and in the world. The body of Christ as community of real embodied selves has received the mandate to be responsible to enable participation in God's life for every woman or man, within the Church and within the political community. It is obvious that there would be a more equal Church.<sup>30</sup>

## **7. Final Remarks**

God's participation in the world in salvation history enables women and men to see themselves as enablers of participation in life. Leadership means to engage oneself in enabling of participation. Religious leaders have to take over gender responsibility, as gender constructions can either facilitate or prevent women and men's participation in life. Responsible leadership needs to develop gender ethics, which have been described above as ethics of gender responsibility for the concrete Other and the social structures of communities. Starting point of gender ethics is the concrete reality of women and men are living as gendered and embodied selves. In comparison to feminist ethics, gender ethics considers women and men as responsible for changing the established gender order. This change includes the transformation of socio-economic and political gender barriers as well as the transformation of symbolical gender constructions. The ethical subjects are gendered and embodied selves. Body vulnerability serves as critical principle, gender and body issues are interrelated. Care, responsibility and justice for all embodied selves are the aim of gender responsibility in religious leadership. Religious leaders can count on God's presence and action through the Spirit and Christ.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The majority of the people in Argentina say they are Catholics. Empirical statistics about Protestants (historical churches and Pentecostals) give a varying number of 5 % and 10 % (see Wynarczyk 2003, 31-33). Pentecostals are not as numerous in Argentina as in other Latin American countries, but they are still well represented, especially among poor people and indigenous communities. Protestant historical churches (Lutheran, Reformed, United, Methodist, Anglican tradition, etc.) are small in number and therefore rarely visible in public. Thus, their impact on politics and society is quite limited. The Jewish population represents about 2 % of the total population, and other religions, including Muslims, about 4 %. Argentina has engaged in interreligious dialogue in recent years. Two significant events took place in August 2005: Catholics, Jews and Muslims signed a declaration against terrorism and fundamentalism; and an interreligious conference (with Jews, Muslims, Catholics and Protestants) about the integration of differently abled persons was held in Buenos Aires.

148 *Responsible Leadership: Global Perspectives*

- <sup>2</sup> About half of the population in Argentina is excluded from the current global economic system. Argentina, especially the capital Buenos Aires, seems to mirror the whole world 'in nucleon'. After the economical crisis in 2001, Argentina has become more 'Latin American', with about 47.8 % of the population (about 15.5 million people) living in poor homes and about 18.7 million people lacking daily food. Unemployment is an urgent problem and in many cases wages are so low that people need extra income resources. The gap between the richest and the poorest has increased between 1980 (with a ratio of 1 to 11.9) and 2002 (1 to 46.6). Communities of indigenous people are obviously the poorest of the poor.
- <sup>3</sup> In ecumenical discourses, emphasis has been put on a *theology of life*. See Raiser, Konrad, *For a Culture of Life. Transforming Globalization and Violence*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002; Robra, Martin, 'Theology of Life – Justice, Peace, Creation. An Ecumenical Study', in: *Ecumenical Review* Vol. 48, no.1, 1996, pp. 28-37.
- <sup>4</sup> See the recent publications about ethics of liberation and philosophy of liberation by Enrique Dussel, an Argentinian philosopher and theologian living in Mexico. For instance, see Dussel, Enrique, *Ética de la liberación*, Madrid: Trotta, 1998.
- <sup>5</sup> Thus, responsibility means to consider such consequences as success, failure, luck, or guilt. Responsibility is something coming in mind after having done an action, when one is called to account for her action. Secondly responsibility is also accompanying actions, especially when we feel responsible for something or someone. Thirdly responsibility is also at stake before having done something. If one agrees to do a work, one declares him as responsible. Responsibility normally is viewed as a positive thing, while people acting without responsibility are judged negatively because they harm other people, the community, the environment or cause danger. Consequently one should be conscious of her responsibility, because one is influencing other people either positively or negatively. Sometimes discourses about responsibility are hiding that one is aiming at getting power or conserving power for oneself.
- <sup>6</sup> 'Other' written with a majuscule refers here to the alternate Other.
- <sup>7</sup> Pieper, Annemarie, *Gibt es eine feministische Ethik?*, München: Fink, 1998, pp. 22-23.
- <sup>8</sup> Benhabib, Seyla, 'Der verallgemeinerte und der konkrete Andere. Die Kohlberg/Gilligan-Kontroverse aus der Sicht der Moraltheorie', in: Seyla Benhabib, *Selbst im Kontext*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992, pp. 161-191. She asks: 'Can there be a feminist contribution to moral philosophy? That is to say, can those men and women who view the gender-sex system of our societies as oppressive, and who regard women's emancipation as essential to human liberation, criticise, analyse and when necessary replace the traditional categories of moral philosophy in order to contribute to women's emancipation and human liberation?' See Benhabib, Seyla, *Situating the Self. Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, p. 148.
- <sup>9</sup> Benhabib, Seyla, *Situating the Self. Gender, Community and Postmodernism Contemporary Ethics*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, p. 168.
- <sup>10</sup> Benhabib, Seyla, 'Der verallgemeinerte und der konkrete Andere. Die Kohlberg/Gilligan-Kontroverse aus der Sicht der Moraltheorie', in: *op. cit.*, p. 183.
- <sup>11</sup> Gilligan, Carol, *In a Different Voice. Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982; Nunner-Winkler, Gertrud (ed.), *Weibliche Moral. Die Kontroverse um eine geschlechtsspezifische Ethik*, München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1995.
- <sup>12</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Ethik*, ed. by Ilse Tödt et al., Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1998 (1st edition: 1992).
- <sup>13</sup> Jonas, Hans, *Das Prinzip Verantwortung. Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation*. Frankfurt am Mainz: Insel, 1979.
- <sup>14</sup> Tödt, Heinz Eduard, *Perspektiven theologischer Ethik*, München: Chr. Kaiser, 1988; Schuhmacher, Wolfgang, *Theologische Ethik als Verantwortungsethik. Leben und Werk Heinz Eduard Tödt in ökumenischer Perspektive*, Öffentliche Theologie, Bd. 20, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006.
- <sup>15</sup> May, Roy A., *Discernimiento moral. Una introducción a la ética cristiana*, San José: 2004, p. 118 ff. Philosophers and theologians who worked on the topic include Franz Hinkelammert, Yung Mo Sung, Enrique Dussel and José Miguez Bonino.
- <sup>16</sup> See e.g. Praetorius, Ina, *Handeln aus der Fülle. Postpatriarchale Ethik in biblischer Tradition*, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2005; Wendel, Saskia, *Feministische Ethik zur Einführung*, Hamburg: Junius, 2003; Schnabl, Christa, 'Feministische Ethik: Profil und Herausforderungen', in: *Salzburger Theologische Zeitschrift* 6, 2002, pp. 269-282, also on

*Gender Responsibility in Religious Leadership* 149

[http://www.sbg.ac.at/sathz/2002-2/sathz-2002-2-09\\_schnabl.pdf](http://www.sbg.ac.at/sathz/2002-2/sathz-2002-2-09_schnabl.pdf); Cahill, Lisa L., *Sex, Gender and Christian Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

- <sup>17</sup> See e.g. Mieth, Dietmar, 'Geschlechtertheorie als Subtext theologischer Ethik', in: *Theologische Quartalschrift* Vol. 184, no. 1, 2004, pp. 1-2; Wendel, Saskia, 'Hat das moralische Subjekt ein Geschlecht?', in: *Ibid.*, pp. 3-17.
- <sup>18</sup> We can identify four main tendencies since the 1970s in European and US discourses on feminist ethics. Each tendency has contributed important aspects. Though these tendencies developed chronologically, all of them have been at stake up until now. Sometimes these main lines are put in competition and in conflict to each other. I combine basic ideas in order to elaborate gender ethics. See Kuhlmann, Helga, 'Ethik der Geschlechterdifferenz?', in: *Und drinnen waltet die züchtige Hausfrau. Zur Ethik der Geschlechterdifferenz*, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995, pp. 7-15.
- <sup>19</sup> Some ethicists are suggesting an ethic of difference saying that a female morale of care is better than a male morale of justice, referring to the classical conflict between Carol Gilligan and Lawrence Kohlberg. Gillian's ethics of care inspired many feminist ethicists. Another example of combining the two aspects is found in: Schnabl, Christa, *Gerecht sorgen. Grundlagen einer sozialetischen Theorie der Fürsorge*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2005.
- <sup>20</sup> Connell, Robert W., *Der gemachte Mann. Konstruktion und Krise von Männlichkeiten*, Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000, pp. 97-102, here: p. 100 (Original in English: Connell, Robert W., *Masculinities*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- <sup>21</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 102.
- <sup>22</sup> Together with one woman (Tania Oldenhage) and two men (Christoph Walsler, Andreas Borter) we have built up a network on gender and theology for women and men including queer perspectives: Netzwerk geschlechterbewusster Theologie (NGT). So far we have begun networking with German speaking theologians and held a conference in Switzerland in January 2006.
- <sup>23</sup> Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Thinking Gender, New York & London: Routledge, 1990; Butler, Judith, *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, New York & London: Routledge, 1993.
- <sup>24</sup> Kriesel, Stefan, *Der Körper als Paradigma. Leibesdiskurse in Kultur, Volksreligiosität und Theologie Brasiliens*, Lucern: Exodus, 2001; see ecofeminist theologians like Ivone Gebara in: *Intuiciones ecofeministas: ensayo para repensar el conocimiento y la religión*, Montevideo: Doble Clic, 1998; 'Ecofeminism: a Latin American Perspective', in: *Cross Currents* 53, 2003, pp. 93-103; *Longing for Running Water. Ecofeminism and Liberation*, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999.
- <sup>25</sup> In January 2005, Norwegian theologian Sturla Stålsett gave a speech about vulnerability ('Another world is here. Notes on religion and political power') at the World Forum on Liberation and Theology at Porto Alegre. His speech was highly appreciated by the Forum. See: <http://www.pucrs.br/pastoral/fmtl/noticias/noticias24ing.htm> (last accessed 15 August 2005).
- <sup>26</sup> Proaño-Gómez, Lola, *Poética, política y ruptura, Argentina 1966-1973: Teatro e identidad*, Buenos Aires: ACTUEL, 2002.
- <sup>27</sup> The Forum on Gender and Theology at the Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos (ISEDET) had also been studying body discourses in the year 2005.
- <sup>28</sup> Unfortunately I cannot develop the body concept here. One has to make the distinction between *Leib* and *Körper* as the *Leibphänomenologie* is doing it.
- <sup>29</sup> In reference to this Trinitarian participation theology, see Johnson, Elizabeth A., *Friends of God and Prophets. A Feminist Theological Reading of the Communion of Saints*, New York: Continuum, 1998. This biblical verse is central for Johnson, see p. 2.
- <sup>30</sup> In reference to the debate about gender deconstruction and feminist theology, church leadership with regard to body and gender discourses in ecclesiology, etc. see my doctoral thesis: Walz, Heike, *'Nicht mehr männlich und weiblich?' Ekklesiologie und Geschlecht in ökumenischem Horizont*, Frankfurt am Main (in print).