

# “Gender injustice – surely humanity’s most foundational and persistent structural sin”<sup>1</sup>

Julie Clague, *Gender and Moral Theology: A Shared Project*, in: James F. Keenan (Ed.), *Catholic Theological Ethics Past, Present, and Future: The Trento Conference*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2011, p. 291.

Drawing courtesy of Justice et Paix Pays-Bas



# 'Hegemonic Masculinities' *An Urgent Challenge for Theology and the Churches*

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*Cedara*

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# By way of introduction

- A couple of anecdotes
  - Fort Hare 2000/2001 ~ peer pressure...
  - Pietermaritzburg 2009 ~ urban myth...
- ‘Masculinity’ – *quid?* – Spontaneous responses
  - Masculinities; father; femininity; good in bed; Steven Seagal; big trouble; *me!*; ...
  - But: whatever we are talking about – no isolation or opposition ‘masculinity’ /&/ ‘femininity’ -- cf. ‘*Ni putes, Ni soumises*’ [Neither Whores Nor Doormats]

# NI PUTES NI SOUMISES

- Sohane Benziane: raped and murdered in Paris on October 4, 2002.
- Samira Bellin: *Dans l'enfer des tournantes* [In Gang Rape Hell], Gallimar, 2003.



# The problem of 'hegemonic' masculinity

- Male identity ~ use of force and violence against other males
- Male identity ~ use of force and especially sexual violence against women  
(~ research by Graham Lindegger, UKZN)



# A contribution by moral theology?

- “Moral theology is faith in God seeking expression in behaviour” (Jack Mahoney, 1987).
- “It is the task of moral theology to explain how, according to our Christian revelation, our relation to God affects all our doings” (Louis Janssens, 1999).
- “Moral theology is the scientific study of God’s salvific action on behalf of humanity, which in its significance for the ethical behaviour of human beings is hermeneutically systematized and argumentatively presented” (Klaus Demmer, 1989).

# A contribution by moral theology?

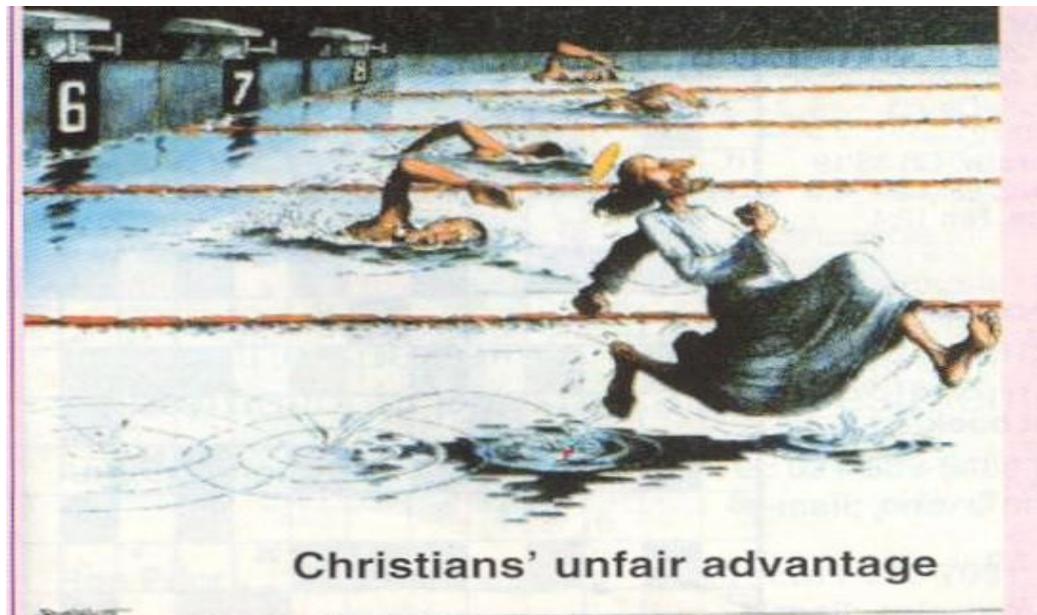
- The task given by the Second Vatican Council, in *Optatam totius* (Decree on Priestly Formation, October 28, 1965), n° 16:
  - “Special care must be given to the perfecting of moral theology.
  - Its scientific exposition, nourished more on the teaching of the Bible, should shed light on the loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ
  - and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world”.

# The challenge for theology and the Churches

- Why masculinity is important to us as Christians & how is it a faith issue?
  - Being a 'Christian' is living according to the good news of the kin-dom of God, including the promise of *justice & peace*
  - *Gloria Dei vivens homo...* => whatever are disvalues or disgraces for human beings is contrary to God's will & purpose
- What do we draw from scripture on these issues?
  - Radical [*radix* = root] equality of all human creatures before God ~ Genesis 1,27: "So God created humankind [*adam*] in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them".
  - Biblical role models? – the problem of selective retrieval from a library... => what & how to grant 'authority' (1 Tim 3: 1-7?)

# The challenge for theology and the Churches

- What do we draw from scripture on these issues?
  - *WWJD*: at least the gospel witness of a shift of paradigm ~ Jesus as a 'gender-bender', cf. John 4: 4-42 [27 - Just then his disciples came. They were *astonished* that he was speaking with a *woman*, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?"]
  - Avoid the temptation of any kind of 'christian advantage'!



# The challenge for theology and the Churches

- How are distortions of masculinity *theologically* founded and culturally embedded?
  - The **catastrophic** issue of ‘primary/secondary’ ~ the [second] account of creation in Genesis 2: 4b-23
    - 1 Tim 2: 11-15 “Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed *first*, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty”.
    - 1 Cor 11: 3; 8-9 “ But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ. ... Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man”.

# The challenge for theology and the Churches

- **But also...**

- 1 Cor 11:12: “ For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God” => radical theocentrism!
- Gal 3:28 “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus”.

→ *A new creation* in Christ Jesus => the ‘old dispensation’ is no longer...

- ουκ ενι αρσεν και τηλυ = LXX, Gen 1:27
- παντες = àll of you; àll of us!

# The challenge for theology and the Churches

- How are distortions of masculinity theologically founded and *culturally* embedded?
  - Political and cultural substantiation and enforcement of patriarchy
    - Patriarchism = the rule of males [=> patri-anarchy?]
    - Androcentrism = real knowledge comes from males only
    - Sexism = males are superior to females
  - The classical 'one sex model'
    - Greek/Roman biology & metaphysics: human-kind is really only mankind: women as failed/underdeveloped men
    - Early modern biology & anatomy: women are *not* failed men... but the 'opposite' sex... => 'males' remain point of reference

# The moral dynamics of the Scriptures

- Liberation out of 'slavery' => the rejection of all and any kind of 'objectifications'

! Re-reading the Ten Commandments !

1° The general context: the biblical account // the catechetical reduction

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20: 2-3)

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me" (Deut 5: 6-7)

"I am the LORD, your God; you shall not have strange gods before me" (CCC).

2° The change in the 'tenth commandment'

Ex 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house: you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor".

Deut 5:21 "You shall you covet your neighbor's wife. Neither shall you desire your neighbor's house, or field, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor".

# The moral dynamics of the Scriptures

- Towards the μετανοια of becoming neighbour: the good news according to Luke, chapter 10, verses 25-28; 29-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live”.

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

# The moral dynamics of the Scriptures

But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, became a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "*Go and do likewise.*"

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*Gaudium et spes*, 27: "In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbour of every person without exception and of actively helping him when he comes across our path, whether he be an old person abandoned by all, a foreign labourer unjustly looked down upon, a refugee, a child born of an unlawful union and wrongly suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a hungry person who disturbs our conscience by recalling the voice of the Lord, "As long as you did it for one of these the least of my brethren, you did it for me" (Matt. 25:40)".

# Sex, erotic desire and gender: shifting connections and differentiations

- **Sex** (~ biological component / 'given')
  - 44 + xy // 44 + xx // 44 + ?
  - male // female // 'hermafrodite' – intersex... - 'not yet'?
- **Erotic desire** (~ orientation of attraction / 'discovered')
  - Complementarity (binary?) of male & female // of human beings?
  - Reciprocity (binary?) of male & female // of human beings?
- **Gender** (~ social/cultural roles re. power / 'constructed')
  - 'Typical roles'... ~ *stereo*-[binary!]-types
  - Ascription & expression of gender: wide variety!
  - Gender/ed identities ~ what relation to sex & erotic?

# Gender/ed stereotypes



# Gender/ed stereotypes



# Integrating sex, desire and gender ~ human/e flourishing

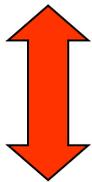


# To walk the talk: gender mainstreaming as an ecclesial task and programme

- Gender mainstreaming (  $\leftrightarrow$  'male'-streaming... )
  - *Deutschen Kommission Justitia et Pax* (2004) : Gender mainstreaming consists of the re/organisation, the amelioration, the development and evaluation of processes of decision with the aim that all actors involved take account of the criterion of equality between women and men in all issues and at all levels.
- What makes 'us' passing by on the other side / What prevents me from becoming neighbour?
  - To what degree are we 'part of the problem...'
- Alternatives ~  $\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\omicron\sigma$  moment?
  - Non-exclusive language 'in all issues and at all levels'
  - Actively opposing sexism 'in all issues and at all levels'
  - Inclusive role models ~ inspiring persons!

# To walk the talk: gender mainstreaming as an ecclesiastical task and programme

- Structural problems of ecclesial hierarchy ~ remnants of a clerical 'one sex model'?
  - What relationship between hegemonic masculinities and hegemonic church structures?
  - The hidden curriculum of [liturgical & sacramental] language and practices
- An ethics which turns the tables “Jesus said to them: the sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath” (Mark 2: 27).





“The door that opens onto the future of gender and moral theology is one that we – women and men - with faith in each other are helping to push open – even if we can neither fully appreciate nor dare to dream what lies beyond”. Clague, p. 293.