

The gender theory, looked at from the perspective of Christian anthropology, creation theology and human ecology

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On the occasion of the **Season of Creation 2020**, FIAMC-president Bernard Ars has invited His Eminence Willem Cardinal Eijk, archbishop of Utrecht (The Netherlands) to contribute to the FIAMC website with a reflection on gender, creation and human ecology. FIAMC is happy to be able to present this text to you.

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The present distinction between the terms 'sex' and 'gender' became en vogue in the 1950s. One finds the most common formulation of this distinction in the Oxford English Dictionary. The term 'sex' concerns the two main categories in which humans and most other living beings are divided, i.e. man and woman on the basis of their anatomic and procreative differences and secondary sexual characteristics. The term 'gender' has been used in English since the fourteenth century to indicate the classes of nouns: masculine, feminine and neuter. From the 1950s the term 'gender' concerns the state of being man or woman, which rather regards social and cultural than sexual differences.¹ The definition of 'gender', used by the World Health Organization (WHO) (WGO), refers to

*"The characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time."*²

To indicate the sexual categories one uses in English the terms 'male' and "female" and in the case of gender the categories 'masculine' and 'feminine'.

Some examples explain that the gender role implies disadvantages for women: In the United States of America as well as in many other countries women earn less than men for the same type of work; in Saudi Arabia, until recently, men but not women were allowed to drive a car; in most countries women perform more household chores than men.

Another distinction is that between gender identity and gender role. The gender identity implies that one feels him- of herself male or female. The gender role concerns the role of male and female, imposed by society. In the past the gender role of man and woman would be imposed by society as a social role and in many parts of the world that is be the case. In Western society with its very strong individualism and autonomous ethics connected to it, the individual is supposed not to accept a gender role imposed by society, but to choose the own gender autonomously. By the way, the fact that the individual allows himself to be led by the classical means of communication, the social media, public opinion and by his surroundings escapes him. What matters is the feeling of being autonomous.

The gender theory engages in the question to what extent gender, the role imposed by society on male and female, originates from the biological sex, i.e. in the biological and natural characteristics of the body. The adherents to the gender theory consider gender as a role, constructed by society, for male and female, which is linked to the biological sex only to a limited extent or sometimes even not at all. Therefore, according to the gender theory the autonomous individual could and should choose his own gender identity, regardless of his biological sex and free from any social pressure. He or she should have the possibility to choose a gender identity in conformity to one's own desires and sexual inclination and to be or become a heterosexual man, a heterosexual woman, a homosexual, a lesbian, a transsexual, transgender or neuter.³ A transsexual is somebody whose gender identity does not coincide with his or her biological sex: it concerns a person who feels that he is a woman, whereas he is biologically male, or the opposite. In these cases one speaks of gender dysphoria. Transgenders are transsexuals who have decided to undergo medical and/or surgical sexual reassignment treatment or who have already undergone them.

International organizations promote respect for the freedom of people to choose their own gender identity and 'gender equity', also outside the Western world. The World Health Organization tries to promote gender equity and facilitate a policy requiring respect for gender equity in the context of human rights at an institutional level.⁴ International organizations oblige authorities and organizations at a national level by means of threatening to withdraw subsidies to guarantee to the individual the freedom to choose his own gender identity.

They also impose the obligation to facilitate this choice by offering him or her the necessary sexual reassignment treatment, if needed. In many Western countries basic health insurances or national health services compensate the costs of this treatment, partially or completely.

By means of education programmes one already tries to make children in elementary schools aware of the necessity to think about their own gender identity and make a choice as early as possible. In case children start to become transgenders, but are still unsure about their gender, it is possible to inhibit the puberal development by administering a hormonal substance, triptorelin,⁵ so as to give the child the time it needs to think about it. Apart from the collateral effects of triptorelin, one needs to realize that many young people have periods in which they are in doubt about their identity, their gender identity included. Blocking puberty in these cases may imply the risk that a problem is worsened, which would have been resolved spontaneously, or that a problem is evoked which would never have occurred, if no triptorelin had been administered. It should be observed that several transgenders are not satisfied after sex reassignment and want to return to their original biological sex, but in many cases especially the surgical treatment is irreversible.⁶

I will first discuss the origin of the gender theory and its repercussion on the possibilities to proclaim the Christian faith. In the second part the link between gender and sex is discussed from the perspective of a Christian philosophical and theological perspective, creation theology and human ecology.

The gender theory

The gender theory is rooted in the process of radicalization which feminism has undergone from the 1960s.⁷ The classical, mostly liberal feminism, which arose in the mid-nineteenth century, strove for equal rights for women concerning legislation, voting rights, property, work, marriage and divorce. The radicalization of feminism of about half a century ago, had as a consequence that it did not only focus on equal rights, but also on the essence of being female. One started to wonder what the female was: a being, determined by her biological sex and particularly her reproductive functions. Or, on the contrary, a being determined by the role which society has imposed on her. This role was considered as humiliating, because it implied that she was dominated by her husband, that she primarily served for procreation and was a prisoner of the family. The primary ideal of radical feminism in its various forms is the liberation of the female from this role.

Various movements have exercised their influence on the rise of radical feminism. In the first place *atheist existentialism* by way of Simone de Beauvoir, who is considered the founder of radical feminism. In 1949, in her book *Le deuxième sexe* she wrote:

“you are not born as a woman but you become one. No biological, psychological or economic destination determines the image which society has of the woman; it is the culture in its whole which brings about this intermediary product between a man and an eunuch, qualified as woman.”⁸

By denying a creation by a God, who gives an order to the world, which man has to respect, atheist existentialism is convinced that we are not born as a specific being but that we are the result of our choices. Simone de Beauvoir, however, observes limits in the freedom of choice of the woman, who fights with her body. The female body is ambiguous, because it is the source of positive and negative experiences. The negative ones are mostly consequences of the way in which society reacts on the physical appearance of the woman. Her attitude towards her own body changes during her life under the influence of the way in which society looks at her. What is specifically female, like the development of the sexual organs, menstruation, pregnancy and menopause has no meaning in itself. In a suppressing and patriarchal environment these phenomena start to become a burden and a disadvantage. Preadolescent boys and girls do not differ from one another. When a girl becomes physically mature, society begins to adopt a hostile attitude towards her, which reveals itself in the criticism from her mother on the posture and the body of the daughter (De Beauvoir speaks, of course, of her own adolescence, which happened in the years after the First World War) and in the interest boys show for her body. The girl starts to feel like an object, a physical sexual being in the eyes of the other, which is about to “become flesh,” as De Beauvoir puts it. The penetration in the first sexual intercourse is, not rarely, a traumatic experience for the woman, because it is painful and the man takes a dominant position in it. The experience of pregnancy, though more positive, is still ambiguous, for it is an unjust penetration of her body, whereas, by the way, it may be a positive experience too. In the process of becoming older the woman loses her attractiveness in

the eyes of society, which is in itself a disadvantage, but it has the advantage that she, being sexually less attractive, ceases to be an object.⁹

For De Beauvoir the judgment of the female is still quite directly linked to her body. In the eyes of the adherents to radical feminism this connection is less strong or even absent. In 1970 Firestone remarked that,

*"Until a certain level of evolution had been reached and technology had achieved its present sophistication, to question fundamental biological conditions was insanity."*¹⁰

Before the introduction of contraceptive means according to Firestone women were handed over to

*"the continual mercy of their biology – menstruation, menopause, and female ills," constant painful childbirth, wetnursing and care of infants, all of which made them dependent on males ... for physical survival."*¹¹

The large-scale availability of contraception has liberated the woman from this situation. Moreover, Firestone believes that this liberation will be enforced in the future by new methods of artificial reproduction. She did not explain how artificial reproduction¹² would liberate the woman of the burden of procreation; perhaps, he perhaps thought of the growth of the embryo in an artificial uterus in a laboratory, by which the body of the woman would not be burdened anymore by pregnancy.

Under the influence of these ideas and other factors¹³

radicalized feminism from the 1960s became convinced that the role of the married woman as an instrument for the procreation and the education of children would until then have been imposed on her by society. And radical feminism was equally convinced that she was freed from this role by contraception and artificial reproduction. The radical feminist Firestone wrote in 1970 that women, once freed from the "tyranny of their reproductive biology,"¹⁴ would be able to choose their own gender role, independently of their biological sex. This liberation would also be realized by the requirement of complete autonomy, including economic independence of the woman as well as that of the child. It also required the total integration of the woman and the child in all aspects of society in a broad sense: this required the destruction of all institutions which separated the sexes from one another or which excluded children from the society of adults, e.g. elementary schools. A final aim which has to be realized in the last revolution is "The freedom of all women and children to do whatever they wish to do sexually."¹⁵ After the aforementioned revolution a new society would arise in which "humanity could finally revert to its natural polymorphous sexuality – all forms of sexuality would be allowed and indulged."¹⁶ This liberation also requires an attack on the social unity organized around the procreation and the submission of the woman to her biological destination, the family.¹⁷ Firestone extended this request to the destruction of all institutions which separate the sexes from each other and children from the rest of the world, like elementary schools.

Thus, the gender theory has arisen from radical feminism. It is important to note that the gender theory arose in the 1960s, the decade in which the introduction of hormonal contraception started at a large scale, which made the desired liberation of the woman from her reproductive biology possible. This paved the way for the total separation of gender from the biological sex. This once again underlines the prophetic character of the encyclical *Humanae vitae* of Paulus VI, in which he qualified the use of contraceptives in order to prevent procreation an intrinsic evil, i.e. an essential evil act.¹⁸ Of course, Paul VI did not foresee these developments in 1968, the year in which he published this encyclical. Later, his encyclical turned out to have a much broader significance than just regarding contraception. This is also shown by the attempts of the French freemason and gynaecologist Pierre Simon, to promote contraceptives at a large scale, which he did not only in order to prevent procreation and the overpopulation of the world. His pursuit was that the human being, instead of a Creator, would shape his own nature and life. He saw in gynaecology a way to realize that goal. For him, a first step in this direction was the large-scale distribution of contraceptives in order to radically change the concept of the family.¹⁹

In 1990, Judith Butler concludes that the classical role and heterosexuality as the norm for sexual activities, both imposed by society, is part of a political plan based on wrong metaphysical ideas concerning the substance. Referring to the idea of Friedrich Nietzsche that "there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming,"²⁰ Butler says: "There is no gender identity between the expressions of gender; that the gender identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions."²¹ Feminism

"has effectively argued that sexuality is always constructed within the terms of discourse and power, where

It is obvious that some aspects of the gender role of women are socially and culturally determined and can change in the course of history: the fact that women earn less than men for the same type of work, that they are not allowed to drive a car or cannot have a bank account or a job when married, is in no way rooted in their biological sex. There are, however, aspects of gender which are inseparably linked with the biological sex, like the role of the father and the mother in marriage, in a family, in procreation, in being a father or a mother.

The discussion on the coherence of the gender identity with the biological sex, as initiated by radical feminism and advanced by the gender theory, leads to ideas and opinions which seriously conflict with the teaching of the Church in various fields.

1. In the first place, the gender theory has repercussions on the way in which one looks at the family, marriage and sexuality. Many fight for the realization of “gender equity” on a national and international level. During the United Fourth World Conference on Women in Peking in 1995 representatives of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission required the recognition of the sexual autonomy of women, free from any discrimination or suppression, particularly of women who in choosing their gender identity, deviate from sexual codes and codes for the gender role. ²³ In its final report, the Conference adopted the term ‘gender’ under an action item, namely to develop, implement and evaluate effective gender programmes. ²⁴

It is evident that discrimination of people because of their sex or sexual orientation and the use of violence against them because of their sexual orientation should be rejected. Their biological sex does not justify that women earn less than men for the same work, or that married women were not allowed to open their own bank account, as used to be the case in many countries till the 1950s. Neither does it justify that women had to quit their jobs upon marriage. The problem is that the gender theory tends to view the gender role as something which is mostly or completely independent of the biological sex, by which being man and being woman, the marriage between husband and wife, fatherhood and motherhood lose their essential significance and thus the family is destroyed.

2. The gender theory also has a repercussion on the right to life. Within the framework of gender equity one ranks the right to a safely procured abortion among the sexual and reproductive rights of women, which national laws should guarantee. ²⁵ Women, forced among others by so-called religious fundamentalists to be mothers, would be hindered to choose for a procured abortion, in case she gets pregnant against her will. Attributing the right to life to the fetus would conflict with the reproductive rights and the reproductive health of women: for the legal prohibition of procured abortion on the basis of a prenatal right to life would force women, pregnant against their will, to an illegal abortion with all its possible negative consequences for her health and her life.
3. The gender theory has also serious repercussions on the possibilities to announce the fundamental truths of Christian faith, because it considers the biological difference between husband and wife as indifferent. If this difference were indifferent, indeed, how could one announce God who reveals himself as the Father, or Christ as the Son of God and the Holy Virgin Mary as the spouse of the Holy Spirit? The analogy between the relationship of Christ with his Church and that of the husband with his wife (Ef. 5, 21-33) would lose its significance. This would have consequences for announcing the teaching of the Church concerning ordained ministry, which, partly on the basis of this analogy, is reserved for men. Actually, a complete detachment of gender from the biological sex would render proclaiming Christian faith impossible.

Because the gender theory is for several reasons a serious threat to announcing as well as to understanding the teaching of the Church, we need to pay special attention to it from the perspective of Christian philosophy and theology. I will do that in the next part from the perspective of the Christian view of man, creation theology and human ecology.

The gender theory according to the Christian view of man, creation theology and human ecology

The fact that public opinion nowadays so easily accepts a partial or complete separation of gender from the biological sex, is the consequence of a 'cocktail', i.e. in the first place a very strong individualism with its autonomous ethics and, secondly, the view of man characteristic of especially the Anglo-Saxon world, but also widespread elsewhere. Most people in present western culture – consciously or not – limit the human person to his 'mind', the rational conscience and centre of the autonomous will, actually consisting of very complicated biochemical and neurophysiological processes in the higher nuclei and the cortex of the brain. It therefore concerns a materialistic view of man.²⁶ On the contrary, the body is considered as something secondary, which is not essential for the human person. The body would be for the mind only a means to express itself. The mind as the autonomous human person determines the end and meaning of the body. The human person may therefore also determine his gender identity independently of his biological sex. He also has the right to reassign his body according to the gender identity he chooses.²⁷ Consequently, in sexual ethics only two fundamental norms remain: one is not allowed to cause damage to or exercise power over one's sexual partner, because these acts would conflict with the partner's autonomy.

This idea of practically absolute autonomy is not compatible with everyday experience that human beings have a freedom within certain limits: one is largely determined by one's education, teachers, friends, environment, the classical and the social mass media, as observed above. The human being, created in God's image, has no absolute freedom, because he is no God himself.

Moreover, the human person is not only his mind or spirit or soul but a unity of a spiritual and a physical dimension. Moreover, the human being is not only his spirit or only his body but a unity of soul and body: he is "corpore e anima unus" (*Gaudium et spes*, nr. 14).²⁸ Men as well women have the same soul – otherwise they would have different essences – and have therefore the same dignity as human persons. The difference between both sexes is therefore physical. The body – the procreative and sexual organs included – is not something secondary or accessory, but is an essential dimension of the human person and is therefore, like the human person himself, an end in itself and never purely a means which he may use for whatever end. John Paul II writes in his encyclical *Veritatis splendor*:

"A freedom which claims to be absolute ends up treating the human body as a raw datum, devoid of any meaning and moral values until freedom has shaped it in accordance with its design" (nr. 48).²⁹

The human body is, however, not a raw datum but, belonging to the very essence of the human person, it has its ends and meanings which he himself cannot change.

Man and wife are no two distinct species, but represent two different and mutually complementary forms of participation in the same human nature. This complementarity does not concern a difference in perfection or rank, but the mutual role in procreation. Neither men, nor women are able to procreate on their own. They can only do so together: men as well as women have their own physical-biological part in this, which makes them complementary with each other.

The complementarity of men and women is not limited to the field of procreation. It also concerns their bio-physical differences, which have their effects on their relationship as husband and wife and their relations with fellow human beings in other fields, like their professional and social contacts. Men have a predominantly rational attitude, an abstract inner world, cannot express their feelings that easily and have a preference for adventure and experiments. Women, on the contrary, direct themselves more to concrete things, have a stronger intuition, express their feelings more easily and are generally more caring. Through their complementarity, which excludes neither men nor women from various social sectors, they complete each other in family life and in professional and social life. Single men and women contribute, in conformity with their complementarity outside the field of marriage, with their talents to personal, professional and social life.

John Paul II has enriched this explanation of being man or woman from a theological perspective by means of the theology of the body.³⁰ The first chapter of Genesis³¹ links the distinction of human beings in two sexes directly to his being created in the image of God:

"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1, 27).

On this immediately follows the commandment of God to man and woman to procreate and to rule over the earth and to develop it as its stewards:

“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Gen. 1, 28).

John Paul II combines this in his catechesis about the theology of the body by his exegesis of the second chapter of Genesis, in which marriage is described as the most intense communion of two human beings.³²

“Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gen. 2, 24).

There is one God in three Persons. God is in Himself a community of three Persons, whose mutual relations are different, who love each other and give themselves to each other totally. Something of this “unity of the Trinity” is analogically reflected in the most intimate communion of human persons, namely marriage, in which husband and wife, both human beings, but complementary to one another, love each other and give each other totally to one another, at the spiritual, the affective and the physical level (cfr. *Mulieris dignitatem* nr. 7;³³ *Familiaris consortio* nr. 11).³⁴

Moreover, John Paul II sees an analogy between the eternal generation of the Son from the Father and of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son on the one hand and human procreation on the other. The mutual total gift of husband and wife in marriage becomes fruitful in the procreation and education of new human persons. The generation in God, however divine and spiritual, is the absolute model for human procreation, which is typical of “the unity of the two” (*Mulieris dignitatem* nr. 8).³⁵ Both the human being in two biological sexes and human procreation are created in the image of God. The essential aspects of the male and the female sex, the spouses, fatherhood and motherhood and the biological sexes are therefore equally anchored in having been created in the image of God and are part of the creation order.

In his encyclical letter on ecology, *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis, quoting his predecessor, observes that implementing the gender theory has negative consequences for human ecology. First, he writes that

“the world cannot be analyzed by isolating only one of its aspects, since “the book of nature is one and indivisible”, and includes the environment, life, sexuality, the family, social relations, and so forth. It follows that “the deterioration of nature is closely connected to the culture which shapes human coexistence” (Caritas in veritate nr. 51).³⁶ Pope Benedict asked us to recognize that the natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behaviour. The social environment has also suffered damage. Both are ultimately due to the same evil: the notion that there are no indisputable truths to guide our lives, and hence human freedom is limitless. We have forgotten that “man is not only a freedom which he creates for himself. Man does not create himself. He is spirit and will, but also nature”.³⁷ With paternal concern, Benedict urged us to realize that creation is harmed “where we ourselves have the final word, where everything is simply our property and we use it for ourselves alone. The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any higher instance than ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves.”³⁸ (Laudato si' nr. 6).³⁹

The idea of absolute freedom, the unlimited right to adjudicate on the world and his body, which the human being would have because there are no indisputable truths to guide our lives, absolute moral norms included, has seduced the human being to damage the world in all its aspects. By damaging one aspect, he causes damage to the whole world, because it is a unity. In doing so, he acts like he could create himself. However, he has been created in the image of God, which implies that he has to respect the order of creation, including the norms for his own behaviour. Pope Francis bases these insights on the doctrine of the Church on creation.

Again quoting his predecessor, Pope Francis says that ecology does not only concern our environment, the world around us. We also have the tendency to think that we may adjudicate on our own lives and our own bodies, among others by sex reassignment treatments. This conflicts with the fact that the human being has not been created only with regard to his soul but as a whole, soul and body, in the image of God. By acting against the norms arising from this, we risk damaging our own human ecology, which is strictly linked to causing ecological damage, by using the world around us in an abusive way, exactly because the book of nature is one and indivisible.

“Pope Benedict XVI spoke of an “ecology of man”, based on the fact that “man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will.”⁴⁰ It is enough to recognize that our body itself establishes us

*in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings. The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if we are going to be able to recognize ourselves in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment. The attitude which seeks "to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it" (Ibid. nr. 155) is not a healthy one.*⁴¹

Simone de Beauvoir and the radical feminists view the suppression of the woman, the contempt for her as an object of sexual lusts and as a mother, a being destined in a rather functional way for procreation and education as the consequence of a role imposed on her by society. John Paul II, on the contrary, considers original sin the source for the contempt for the woman, which obscures the being created in the image of God in the man as well as in the woman, however with graver outcomes for the woman. God, therefore says to the woman after the Fall:

*"yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen. 3,16).*⁴²

John Paul II, therefore, recommends conversion as a remedy against the discrimination of women and contempt for them, which one observes in various ways in the history of humanity. John Paul II means conversion to the recognition that man as well as woman have been created in the first place as human persons with the same dignity, both created in the image of God. He also recommends conversion to the recognition that their mutual complementarity as a consequence of their biological differences and the essential aspects of their gender are rooted in their being, for which reason they have no right to adjudicate on them.

Epilogue

It is of utmost importance to point out the errors of the gender theory, because it has grave consequences for the future of being a man and being a woman, marriage, the family, matrimonial and sexual morals and also the proclamation of Christian faith in itself.

Notes

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* online version, August 1, 2014), s.v. "Sex," Noun 2. (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/sex> en s.v. "Gender," Noun 1. (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/gender#gender_12).
2. Cfr.. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender>.
3. An alternative for the gender theory is the 'queer theory', which implies that it is impossible to classify somebody according to a gender category, because the boundaries between them are vague and fluid.
4. See: <https://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/understanding/equity-definition/en/>.
5. This hormone blocks the production of gonadotropins by the hypophysis, which stimulate the gonads to produce testosterone and an estrogen.
6. Anderson R.T. reports some of these cases in his book *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment*, New York/London: Encounter Books, 2018, Chapter III, pp. 49-76.
7. Hoff Sommers Chr., *Who stole feminism. How women have betrayed women*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994, particularly chapter 1, "Women under siege."
8. Beauvoir S. de, *Le deuxième sexe II: L'expérience vécue*, Parijs: Gallimard, 1949, Deel I, Hoofdstuk I: "Enfance," p. 13.
9. This is the thread of the book of De Beauvoir, cited in footnote 8.
10. Firestone S., *The dialectic of sex. The case for feminist revolution*, New York: Bantam Books, 1970

- (herziene ed; 1^{ste} ed. in 1970), p. 1.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 206; Firestone also observes that the use of artificial reproduction to liberate the woman, though perhaps suspect in contemporary society (i.e. 1970) will be possible in the postrevolutionary systems."
 13. Namely the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels and structuralism, zie: Eijk W.J., "L' antropologia cristiana e la teoria del genere," (vedi: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/incontri/rc_con_cfaith_20150114_esztergom-eijk_it.html), pp. 3-6; cfr. Idem, "Christelijke mensvisie en gendertheorie," *Communio* 44 (2019), nr. 2, pp. 101-122, particularly pp. 105-107.
 14. Firestone S., *The dialectic of sex. The case for feminist revolution*, New York: Bantam Books, 1970, p. 206.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
 16. *Ibid.*
 17. *Ibid.*, pp. 206-207.
 18. Paul VI, "Litterae Enciclicae *Humanae vitae* (25 juli 1968)," *AAS* 60 (1968), pp. 481-503, nr.14, particularly pp. 490-491.
 19. Simon P., *De la vie avant toute chose*, Parijs: Mazarine, 1979.
 20. Nietzsche Fr.W., *On the genealogy of Morals*, New York: MacMillan, 1897, First Essay "Good and Evil, Good and Bad," nr. 13, p. 47.
 21. Butler J., *Gender Troubles. Feminism, and the subversion of identity*, New York/London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 24-25.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
 23. Wilson A., "Lesbian visibility and sexual right at Beijing," *Signs* 22 (1996), Autum, pp. 214-218; Statement van P.B Ditsie voor de United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Peking op 13 september 1995, see: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/beverly-palesa-ditsie-first-out-lesbian-woman-address-united-nations-about-lgbt-rights>.
 24. Annex I, "Beijing Declaration," nr. 19; vgl. nrs. 24, 38; "Mission Statement," nr. 3, zie: https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/page_attachments/beijing_declaration_and_platform_for_action.pdf
 25. About this issue a clash took place during the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 between the delegation of the Holy See, which proposed to mention the right to life under the principles of the action program, and some NGO's of women who opposed that, because they feared that the recognition of the right to life of the fetus would complicate the legalization of procured abortion. One tried to resolve the conflict by mentioning as first rule of the action program article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which speaks of rights from birth, that of life included. See: Copelon R., Chr. Zampas, E. Brusie, J. de Vore, "Human rights begin at birth: International law and the claim of fetal rights," *Reproductive Health Matters* 13 (2005), pp. 120-129; cfr. Sen G., P. Östlin, *Unequal, Unfair, Ineffective and Inefficient Gender Inequity in Health: Why it exists and how we can change it. Final Report to the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health*, 2007, p. 17, see: https://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_media/wgekn_final_report_07.pdf; cf. Commission on Social Determinants of Health of the World Health Organization, *Final Report: Closing the gap in a generation Health equity through action on the social determinants of health*, Geneve, WHO Press, 2008, p. 154, see: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/43943/9789241563703_eng.pdf;jsessionid=F68600B9CE3934CC68FEE5CAE5963B35?sequence=1.
 26. This view of man is called the 'identity theory of mind', see: Armstrong D.M., *A materialist theory of the mind*, London/New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul/Humanities Press, 1968 (2nd ed. Published in

- 1993); LEWIS S.K., "An argument for the identity theory," *The Journal of Philosophy* 63 (1966), pp. 17-25.
27. One finds a dualistic view of man in the writings of several radical feminists, cfr. SPELMAN E.V., "Woman as body: ancient and contemporary views," *Feminist Studies* 8 (1982), nr. 1, pp. 109-131.
 28. Second Vatican Council, "Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (7 December 1965)," nr. 14, AAS 58 (1966), p. 1035; the Church refers in her magisterial teaching about the human being as a substantial unity of soul and body to the philosophical explanation of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, which implies that the soul is the substantial form of the human person, which 'forms' the primary matter into a living human body. The human person is therefore not limited to the soul, but is constituted by both soul and body, cfr. Council of Vienne (1312), *DH* n. 902; Lateran Council V, (1512-1517), *DH* n. 1440; John Paul II, "Encycliek *Veritatis splendor* (6 August 1993)," AAS 85 (1993), pp. 1133-1228, citaat op p. 1172.
 29. *Ibid.*, p. 1171.
 30. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Michael Waldstein (red.), Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006.
 31. John Paul II, General audience of 12 september 1979, in: *Ibid.*, 2:3-5, pp. 135-137.
 32. John Paul II, General Audiences of 14 and 21 november 1979, in: *Ibid.*, 9-19, respectively pp. 161-169.
 33. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (15 augustus 1988)," AAS 80 (1988), pp. 1653-1729, particularly pp. 1664-1667.
 34. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (22 november 1981)," AAS pp. 81-191, in het bijzonder pp. 91-93.
 35. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*," op. cit., p. 1670.
 36. Benedict XVI, "Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009)," AAS 101 (2009), pp. 641-709, quote on p. 687.
 37. Benedict XVI, "Address to the Bundestag, Berlin (22 September 2011)," AAS 103 (2011), pp. 663-669, quote on p. 664.
 38. Benedict XVI, "Address to the Clergy of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone (6 August 2008)," AAS 100 (2008), pp. 625-641, quote on p. 634.
 39. Pope Francis, "Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'* on care for our common home (24 May 2015)," AAS (2015), pp. 847-945, particularly 849.
 40. Benedict XVI, "Address to the German Bundestag, Berlin (22 September 2011), op. cit, p. 668.
 41. Pope Francis, "Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'* ..., op. cit., pp.
 42. Cfr. John Paul II, "Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*," op. cit., nrs. 9-10, pp. 1670-1677.