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Chapter 17

How to Incorporate Gender in Lutheran Pietism Research: Narratives and Counternarratives

Ulrike Gleixner

This article draws attention to the gender gap in the field of Lutheran Pietism research. I would like to discuss three "issues": first, how to incorporate gender in Pietism research; second, women's participation and the expansion of their agency through the piety of Pietism and third, the challenges of the gender order by pietistic practices, which I call "gender trouble". My observations about Pietism and Pietism research derives from my view on Lutheran middle class Pietism in Württemberg/Germany.[1]

Narrative and Counter-narrative

The undertaking of incorporating a gender perspective into Pietism research needs to overcome a double barrier: first, the tradition in church history which has focused research primarily on leading male figures; and second, the tendency of social history to ignore the gender aspect.[2] Many experts on Pietism have criticized this practice and we have seen an increase in gender studies in the field of Lutheran Pietism. Interestingly, however, this work has faced obstacles in being integrated into mainstream Pietism research.[3] One parameter for the barrier of

[1] See Ulrike Gleixner and Erika Hebeisen, (eds), *Gendering Tradition. Erinnerungskultur und Geschlecht im Pietismus* (Korb, 2007).

[2] For this discussion see Jonathan Sperber, 'Kirchengeschichte or the Social and Cultural History of Religion?', *Neue Politische Literatur*, 43 (1998): 13–35; Jonathan Strom, 'Problems and Promises of Pietism Research', *The American Society of Church History*, 71 (2002): 536–54; Merry Wiesner, 'Women, Gender, and Church History', *The American Society of Church History*, 71 (2002): 600–620.

[3] Richard Critchfield, 'Prophetin, Führerin, Organisatorin: Zur Rolle der Frau im Pietismus', in Barbara Becker-Cantarino (ed.), *Die Frau von der Reformation zur Romantik* (Bonn, 1987), pp. 112–37; Jeannine Blackwell, 'Herzensgespräche mit Gott. Bekenntnisse deutscher Pietistinnen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', in Gisela Brinker-Gabler (ed.), *Deutsche Literatur von Frauen*, (Stuttgart: Beck, 1988), vol 1, pp. 265–89; Felicity

reception and out of this resulting gender gap is the new four-volume German handbook *Geschichte des Pietismus*. Only in the last volume do we find some articles where the contribution of women to Pietism are seen as central.[4] This modern trend differs even from the self perception of early modern male Pietists. For example Johann Henrich Reitz (1655–1720) has in his biography collection

Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject. Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-century England* (Baltimore, 1989); Christel Köhle-Hezinger, 'Frauen im Pietismus', *Blätter für Würtembergische Kirchengeschichte*, 94 (1994): 107–21; Cornelia Niekus Moore, 'Magdalena Sibylla Rieger, "die Poetische Eh-frau"', *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, 21 (1995): 218–31; Cornelia Niekus Moore, ,'Gottseliges Bezeugen und frommer Lebenswandel. Das Exempelbuch als pietistische Kinderlektüre', in Josef N. Neumann and Udo Sträter (eds), *Das Kind in Pietismus und Aufklärung* (Tübingen, 2000), pp. 131–42; Irina Modrow, 'Religiöse Erweckung und Selbstreflexion. Überlegungen zu den Lebensläufen Herrnhuter Schwestern als einem Beispiel pietistischer Selbstdarstellung', in Winfried Schulze (ed.), *Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte* (Berlin, 1996), pp. 121–29; Ulrike Witt, *Bekehrung, Bildung und Biographie. Frauen im Umkreis des Halleschen Pietismus* (Tübingen, 1996); Katherine M. Faull, *Moravian Women's Memoirs. Their Related Lives, 1750–1820* (Syracruse, 1997); Jutta Täge-Bizer, 'Weibsbilder im Pietismus. Das Beispiel von Frankfurt am Main 1670–1700', in Leonore Siegele-Wenschkewitz et al. (eds.), *Frauen Gestalten Geschichte. Im Spannungsfeld zwischen Religion und Gesellschaft* (Hannover: , 1998), pp. 109–36; Ulrike Gleixner, 'Pietism, Millenarianism, and the Family Future: The Journal of Beate Hahn-Paulus (1778–1842) of Württemberg', in John Christian Laursen and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture, vol. 4: Continental Millenarians: Protestants, Catholics, Heretics* (Dordrecht, 2001), pp. 107–21; Ulrike Gleixner, 'Memory, religion and family in the writings of Pietist women', in Ulinka Rublack (ed.), *Gender in Early Modern German History* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 2002), pp. 247–74; Ulrike Gleixner, *Pietismus und Bürgertum. Eine historische Anthropologie der Frömmigkeit. Württemberg 17.–19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2005); Gisela Mettele, 'Der Entwurf des pietistischen Körpers. Die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde und die Mode', in Rainer Lächele (ed.), *Das Echo Halles. Kulturelle Wirkungen des Pietismus* (Tübingen, 2001), pp. 291–14; Erika Hebeisen, 'Vom Rand zur Mitte – eine weibliche Genealogie aus dem pietistischen Milieu Basels 1750–1820', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, 52 (2002): 463–76; Juliane Jacobi, 'Pietismus und Pädagogik', *Zeitschrift für pädagogische Historiographie*, 8 (2002): 49–53; Fred van Lieburg, *Living for God. Eighteenth Century Dutch Pietist Autobiography* (Maryland, 2004); Ruth Albrecht, 'Johanna Eleonora Petersen (1644–1724). Eine engagierte und streitbare Schriftstellerin', in Peter Zimmerling (ed.), *Evangelische Seelsorgerinnen. Biographische Skizzen, Texte und Programme* (Göttingen, 2005): 82–102; Ruth Albrecht, *Johanna Eleonora Petersen: theologische Schriftstellerin des frühen Pietismus* (Göttingen, 2005).

[4] *Geschichte des Pietismus*, vol. 1: Martin Brecht (ed.), *Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 2: Martin Brecht and Klaus Deppermann (eds), *Der Pietismus im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 3: Ulrich Gäbler (ed.), *Neunzehntes und zwanzigstes Jahrhundert*, vol 4: Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), *Glaubenswelt und Lebenswelten* (Göttingen, 1993, 1995, 2000, 2004).

"*Historie der Wiedergebohrnen*" (1698–1745) almost as many women as men.[5] Modern Pietism experts and church historians don't give women's contribution to Pietism as much weight.

In my understanding and definition, Gender studies have three related areas: first, the contribution of women to history and how womanhood is constructed in a given society; second, how manliness is constructed and has an effect on society; and third, the gender order in society and the establishing of gender differences as an instrument of power.[6] To develop an integral perspective for gender, rather than approaching it as an additive perspective, we first need to reread the sources we already know and use. Most documents have not only information about men but also women. For example, the whole range of autobiographical and biographical documents, and also letters provide a rich view of women and their contribution to Pietism. Where you find a male Pietist, you also find wives, daughters, mothers, and spiritual female companions. Narratives of male Pietists, a spiritual diary or a curriculum vitae, contain much information about women who surrounded the author. Together with published and unpublished documents written by female Pietists – which we often find in family collections or in the archive under the name of a male relative – we can draw a more distinct picture of Pietist women. In addition, we can get a deeper understanding of the Pietist movement in which piety was practiced in a culture of communication where women were involved. I suggest rereading the narratives and focusing on the counter-narratives, a term out of the field of literary criticism and post-colonial studies, which emphasizes the voices of the Unheard.

A second field could be men's studies. The material could be reread to examine how manliness was constructed through Pietism. The concept of manliness as understood by pastors, patriarchs or learned Pietists is unknown. To what extent did their common experience of education and communication in schools and universities influence their sense of manliness and male group culture? How was male dominance produced and secured in Pietistic groups?

[5] Johann Henrich Reitz, *Historie Der Wiedergebohrnen/Oder Exempel gottseliger/ so bekandt = und benant = als unbekandt = und unbenanter Christen/Männlichen und Weiblichen Geschlechts/In Allerley Staenden/Wie Dieselbe erst von Gott gezogen und bekehret/und nach vielen Kämpfen und Aengsten/Durch Gottes Geist und Wort/zum Glauben und Ruh ihres Gewissens gebracht seynd*, Teil 1–7, 1698–1745, reprint 4 vols., Hans-Jürgen Schrader (ed.) (Tübingen, 1982).

[6] See Ulrike Gleixner, and Marion Gray (eds), *Gender in Transition. Discourse and Practice in German-Speaking Europe*, 1750–1830 (Ann Arbor, 2006), especially the introduction, pp. 1–22.

Participation and Expansion

In overviews on women and Pietism we can read that Pietism attracted women in particular, and that in the first time of change women took an influential role, but with the consolidation of the movement they were pushed back into their more traditional roles.[7] This result requires a closer examination. We should ask: How was this postponement put into practice, which arguments were used, and how women perceived their driving out.

But nevertheless Pietism enabled women to expand their personal and public realms. In Lutheran Pietism women gained opportunities for spiritual experience. Women began prophesying and they insisted on the validity of their religious experiences. They demanded individual time to read the bible and devotional literature and to reflect on their spiritual lives. In mainstream Pietism middle-class women received for the first time in history the right to write: diaries, spiritual life stories, death-bed-accounts and thousands of letters.[8] Some Pietist women of high status and higher education even wrote devotional literature and theological interpretations, which in Early Modern Europe was not unusual for noble and learned women.

Pietism gave women new opportunities to say "I", new methods to develop a subject position and therefore new ways to gain self-confidence. For women and for men Pietism supported the process of individuation.

The new Pietist mode of communication even gave women the opportunity to act in public – in a village or town circle and as noble women in court. Although we do not have a detailed examination of women's roles in small groups of religious devotion, we do have many references of their participation. As the jurist and politician Johann Jakob Moser tells in his spiritual biography of his deceased wife Friederike Rosine Moser. The couple met in Stuttgart in the 1730s with Moser's mother, his siblings and their partners and other friends to prepare for the Communion. He called the circle "Geistes=Gemeinschaft".[9] And there are more references to Pietist circles of high civil servants in Stuttgart in the 18th Century which were socially closed and in which we find couples, wives and husbands, and also widows. Besides charismatic individual leaders of conventicles family, kinship, spiritual friendship and similar social statuses could be the basis for women's participation in small groups of religious devotion. We even find women who lead conventicles for women. The pastor Philipp Matthäus Hahn (1739–1790) finally divided his overflowing conventicles for his parish by sex and social status. Every other time his so-called "Weiberstunde" (Women's hour) met, it was

7 Critchfield, 'Prophetin'; Köhle-Hezinger,'Frauen im Pietismus'.

8 See Gleixner, *Pietismus und Bürgertum*.

9 Johann Jacob Moser, *Etwas von dem inneren Leben der seeligen Frauen Frideriken Rosinen Moserin* (Stuttgart, 1775), pp. 9ff.

run by two women of the parish. Decades later his daughter was head of a small conventicle with other village women.[10]

Pietist Women, married and unmarried, visited Pietist pastors to discuss religious affairs. As an unmarried woman Helena Flattich (1748–1811), daughter of the pastor Johann Friedrich Flattich, visited Friedrich Christoph Oetinger several times in the second half of the 1770s to discuss questions of faith with him.[11] Noble women or women of the upper middle class could even have independent correspondence with Pietist theologians and pastors. After the death of her husband in 1759, the upper-middle-class poet Magdalena Sibylla Rieger, born Weissensee, (1707–1786) started a correspondence with the Pietist Pastor Philipp David Burk (1714–1770), which lasted for years. Again a woman with a high social status had a spiritual correspondence with a pastor with a lower social status and lower position.[12] It seems that the unequal social status (middle class – nobility/ or high middle class) could be balanced by the inequality of sex (male – female). The usual border of the gender difference is invalidated by the social status difference. The neutralization of the gender-status difference enables equality which is essential for a spiritual pen-friendship. A great deal of correspondence where Pietist women were involved is based on family, kinship and spiritual friendship.

When we ask if women participated in theological discourse, the analysis of autobiographical writing provides some information. The participation of daughters and wives in the theological discussions and plans of their educated fathers and husbands was no exception. Women in the educated middle class possessed a basic knowledge of Latin which they were taught in the paternal home, together with their brothers, by their fathers, teachers or curates. Their lessons ended when their brothers left home for higher education. In the autobiographies of learned Pietists, references are frequently made to the involvement of their wives and daughters in their work. Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702–1782) writes of the highly educated daughter of Johann Jakob Schütz, who drew his attention to Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata*. After their marriage, Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687–1752) taught his wife, Johanna Regina Seeger, Greek. The reason for this instruction was the Pietistic idea of "*Gefährtin*" (helpmate) which emphasized the spiritual partnership of marriage and had very practical uses. Wives copied out the theological manuscripts of their husbands so that they could be sent to intimate colleagues for evaluation. Beate Regina Hahn, second wife of Philipp Matthäus Hahn – was trained by her father Johann Friedrich Flattich, a pioneer for women's

10 Gleixner, *Pietismus und Bürgertum*, pp. 116–18; for an active role in village conventicles see Hans-Volkmar Findeisen, *Pietismus in Fellbach 1750–1820 zwischen sozialem Protest und bürgerlicher Anpassung. Zur historisch-sozialen Entwicklungsdynamik eines millenaristischen Krisenkultes* (Tübingen: Univ. Diss, 1985).

11 Philipp Matthäus Hahn, *Die Kornwestheimer Tagebücher 1772–1777*, Martin Brecht and Rudolf F. Paulus (eds), (Berlin, 1979), pp. 365–86.

12 Gleixner, *Pietismus und Bürgertum*, p. 98.

higher education. She wrote down from memory the theological reflection of her pastor husband in his devotional hours, which he then corrected for the printer.[13]

The importance of mothers and grandmothers in producing learned sons and grandsons was not limited to Württemberg. Spener's daughter Susanna Katharina (1665–1726) was described as an exceptionally learned woman who educated her son Karl Otto with care. Zinzendorf's grandmother, Henriette Catharina Gersdorf, had an important role in his religious education. In mainstream Pietism women's contribution was embedded in family, kinship and small groups and occasionally extended to a wider audience. That women expanded their sphere of influence in Pietism is also verified through the opponents of Pietism who always pointed out the – in their view – indecent public role of women in this movement. All female Pietist authors needed to insist in their printed works that in spite of writing they didn't neglect their most important duties as housewives, wives and mothers, because they wrote only in their leisure time.

In the transition to the 19th Century there was a major change. Whereas in the 18th century in the betrothal correspondence the brides portrayed themselves as self-confident spiritual personalities, the female rhetoric of this genre in the 19th Century was that of their female inferiority. But we should be cautious about blaming the Pietist movement for the devaluation of women in the 19th Century – the devaluation of women's legal position, women's work and women's intellectual capacities was part of modernity in the first half of the nineteenth Century.[14] Whereas the Napoleonic Code protected the male individual from state intervention, women were again denied the same protection. The modern concept of citizenship as a male concept brought a new public–private split and women were now seen as belonging to the private realm. Even the understanding of historical knowledge changed fundamentally. With the emergence of the new academic history in the course of the 19th century, women's contribution to this history was denied.[15] Therefore it is not a surprise that the Pietistic tradition was also reorganized without women's contributions.

But parallel to these changes the Pietist emphasis on education and social work developed new areas of work for women in the 19th Century, including Pietistic schools, the social work in the *Rettungshausbewegung*, and the deaconess and the female missionary. The "Domestic" and "Foreign Mission" enabled women to work outside the family realm. In my view the Pietist emphasis on social work, education and mission was a kind of catalyst for women's demands for occupying roles in the broader society.

[13] Gleixner, 'Pietism, Millenarianism and the Family Future'.

[14] Gisela Bock, *Women in European History* (Oxford, 2002), Ch. 2.

[15] Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History. Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, MA, 1998); Angelika Epple, *Empfindsame Geschichtsschreibung. Eine Geschlechtergeschichte der Historiographie zwischen Aufklärung und Historismus* (Cologne, 2003).

Gender trouble

Renunciation of matrimony was an option in Pietism but didn't determine mainstream pietism. Most educated middle class Pietists married. Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705) and other Pietist theologians emphasized the spiritual partnership of marriage, but the subordination of the wife was mandatory at the same time. If we look on pietistic marriage sermons it is evident that the pietistic marriage order doesn't differ from the Lutheran concept. In his catechism sermons Spener stated that the couple should live in mutual love and in mutual responsibility for the soul of the partner. The wife shall be the helpmate of her husband who has to support her. Parallel to his symmetrical perspective the wife has to be obedient to her husband and has to subordinate herself under his will.[16] The reciprocal responsibilities are in indissoluble tension to the asymmetrical subordination of the wife.[17] In this tension "gender trouble" was grounded.

The journal of Beate Paulus (1778–1842) offers insight into these tensions. She was born in 1778 as the oldest daughter of Philipp Matthäus Hahn. Ten years after the death of her father she entered into an arranged marriage with the pastor Karl Friedrich Paulus (1763–1828), who came from a wealthy family of Stuttgart civil servants. Paulus, however, was not a Pietist and the spouses' differing conceptions of piety led them into considerable conflict. Beate Paulus began her journal in 1817 and ended it eleven years later after the death of her husband in 1828.[18] Her writings document the couple's primary conflict over the financing of their sons' formal education. In contrast to her husband Beate Paulus was convinced that only with a university education would her sons be able to serve the kingdom of God in a proper way. Like her father she lived under the conviction of being chosen. Her millenarian notion of status must be understood against the background of the Württembergian Pietistic notion of the educated elite, in which the learned constitute an especially elect group in working towards the kingdom of God. In her journal she needs all her religious rhetorical capacities to argue why she is allowed to transgress the worldly gender order and to be disobedient towards her husband. She didn't follow his life plan, managed a lot of financial transactions behind his back and expressed her criticism of him as a husband, father and pastor.[19]

Pietistic husbands could also use their spirituality to empower their household position. The diary of Philipp Matthäus Hahn, written in the last quarter of the

[16] Philipp Jakob Spener, Schriften, 1. Section, vol. II.2: *Kurtze Catechismuspredigten* (1689), Erich Beyreuther (ed.), (Hildesheim, 1982), p. 729.

[17] Gleixner, *Pietismus und Bürgertum*, pp. 209–36.

[18] The journal is stored in the manuscript section of the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart under Wochenbuch Beate Hahn Paulus (1817 to 1828) Cod. Hist. oct 109,4; 109,5; 109, 6; 109,7; 109,9; 109,10; quart 370,8; 370,11; see Beate Hahn Paulus, *Die Talheimer Wochenbücher 1817–1829*, Ulrike Gleixner (ed.), (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

[19] Gleixner, *Pietismus und Bürgertum*, pp. 249–70.

18th Century, from 1772 to 1790, shows how hard he worked to assure his self-construction as a patriarch. His position as a pietistic patriarch was unstable and therefore he demanded permanent signs of subordination of his wife and other household members.[20]

In the Pietist movement the "priesthood of all believers" expanded women's activities, and the concept of spiritual equality before God strengthened women's consciousness of their own value. But the concept of "spiritual equality" never transgressed or changed the actual gender order in society. Spiritual equality never led to a Pietistic demand for civil equality. Looking at radical, separatist Pietist groups we will possibly find a stronger challenge of the established gender roles, but these attempts don't reach over to affect the larger society.

[20] Ibid, pp. 236–49.

Pietism in Germany and North America 1680–1820

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Jonathan Strom, *Atlanta*
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