

Foreword to the 1st German Edition

Hardly any other subject leads to more uninformed discussions than that of »sex« and the matter of its »naturalness.« Participants often refer to popular literature that cites repeatedly rehashed conclusions of biological research which have long since been criticized for their lack of methodological soundness. Those researches of sex themselves begin by grouping people as »women« and »men.« Further methodological endeavors then follow this binary classification. The result is the difference between »woman« and »man.« *But how should they come to any other conclusion when proceeding that way?*

Often, and moreover, conclusions are drawn from researches dealing with no more than twenty, ten, six or even one single individual yet, they lead to far-reaching conclusions for the »female« and »male« sex. Even the emancipatory gender studies and politically interested young people far too often rely on conclusions of biology or medicine, without looking at the tasks of research, methodology, or the resulting conclusions of current research.

This book is intended to spark an informed debate and broaden the horizon: the biological-medical theories dealing with the sex are historically and currently so multifarious that it does not even touch reality when stating the simple assertion »modern« biology has never discussed anything else than dichotomic differences of the sexes« – as done following the works of Thomas Laqueur, Claudia Honegger, or Londa Schiebinger. Topics touched are not only the differences, but also sameness, of »woman« and »man«, and the woman-and-man-being of every person. Current biological and medical research arrive at so many factors which are sup-

posed to play a role for the development of sexual characteristics – and they require moving beyond the confinement of a dichotomic sex.

The keen eye is of essence: the *argument of pre-determination and irreversibility* – either based on »God« or »nature« – seems the guiding theme for discussing »sex.« This position was often voiced by those profiting from a social structure who did (or do) not wish to understand that the inequality of the people's opportunities is the result of society's unequal treatment. Karl Marx and Simone de Beauvoir start with the situation of the socially under-privileged, the huddled masses; Donna Haraway suggests we join in solidarity with their perspective.

One of the theoretical and practical approaches of this book is that social criticism and that of sex are brought together. Economic conditions determine all facets of society, including contemporary society. Thus, we are no longer aware just how fundamentally »sex« is the result of society. *A just social order and just relations of the sexes, which are not to the disadvantage of any, are both sides of the same coin.*

This book is not the result of working in seclusion, rather it has a history: it is the result of debate, and the interaction of people. In short, it is marked by life with its many facets. To a great extent, it is the result of studying biology, being involved with queer-feminist contexts, battling racism and hatred, as well as the many discussions about sex and biology following the publication of my dissertation and in seminars. This book would have been impossible without many dear people. Some of whom I would like to mention by name: Waltraud Voss, Ralf Buchterkirchen, Salih Alexander Wolter, Dean Cáceres. I am particularly grateful to Rüdiger Lautmann, Sigrid Schmitz, Volker Hess, Johannes Ungelenk and Florian Mildenberger who offered invaluable reason for continuous thought. The involvement of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and the Schmetterling-Verlag made this book possible. Thank you very much!

Have an inspiring read. I am looking forward to the arguments and (ex-)change we will have. *We* will make a *just* society a reality!

Heinz-Jürgen Voß, Hanover, October 2010