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To which subversive everyday practices does feminism inspire you? A personal note

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monialer Männlichkeit interessiert. Hinzugekommen sind dann Perspektiven von LGBTIQ* und Fragen von Rassismus. Konzepte von Diversity haben das Spektrum noch weiter aufgefächert. Und heute beschäftige ich mich schwerpunktmäßig mit der Frage, was männliche Führungskräfte dazu beitragen können und welche Vorteile sie davon haben, den Frauenanteil in Führungspositionen zu erhöhen. Möglicherweise schließt sich damit der Kreis zu meinem feministischen Erstkontakt.
Andererseits liegen dazwischen viele verschiedene Erkenntnisse und Erfahrungen, die ich für mich nicht mehr nur mit „Feminismus" in Verbindung bringe. Vielleicht habe ich auch einfach den Anschluss an feministische Entwicklungen verpasst?
Während ich so über meine eigene feministische Geschichte nachdenke, erscheint mir die Frage, wie sich Menschen für Feminismus begeistern lassen, dann doch ganz einfach:
Zunächst einmal verstehen und verständlich erklärt bekommen, was Feminismus heute sein kann. Den Link herstellen zwischen der eigenen Lebensrealität und strukturellen Ungleichheiten. Verbindungen sehen und Allianzen eingehen mit Aktivist*innen, die sich mit Anti-Diskriminierungen jeglicher sozialer Kategorien beschäftigen. Feminismus als gute Basis und Standpunkt verstehen, um sich an neue Sichtweisen und Perspektiven zu trauen. Deutlich die (konkreten) Vorteile und Nutzen von Gleichberechtigung und Chancengleichheit herausstellen. Die Lust und den Spaß am Entdecken und am Erkenntnisgewinn fördern. Und natürlich: Den Optimismus – und die Vision – behalten, dass eine gerechte Welt möglich ist!

To which subversive everyday practices does feminism inspire you?

A personal note.

MIEKE VERLOO

Masses scare me, as do loud noises, which makes me totally unsuited for feminist political actions that take the form of demonstrations, or any large gatherings where people shout, especially if there is a touch of aggression to be detected. I am a bit of a coward in this, I have to admit. What, then, is a dedicated feminist like myself to do in terms of political action, except of course babysitting the kids of feminist demonstrators or cooking them soup? Are there other everyday practices that can be subversive enough to help push towards a more feminist and just world? And if there are, do I already engage in them, and can I reflect on who inspired me to do so (in 500 words, so 375 left)?

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First of all, there are hardly any feminist everyday practices that are *not* subversive. My own life experience has shown that most of the time, merely organizing my every-day life in a just way according to my feminist principles has been enough for others around me to have their assumptions challenged, be it by my caring for my kids on a equal footing with their father, buying men's clothes for greater comfort, or just not being all that much into cleaning. This means that choosing to live comfortably can already be subversive. This is a very good thing, as such choices come with being seen as a (feminist) killjoy, of course.

This first reflection points at my inspirations for such everyday feminist practice, combining Adrienne Rich's acknowledgement that it was a wild patience that had taken her thus far with Emma Goldman's refusal of engaging in any revolution if it does not involve dancing: the wildness is what allows the patience to continue; the dancing is what energizes the revolution; the wildness and the dancing then inspire others to join.

Among my fondest memories is the time when a dear colleague and I, when asked to present a draft gender-equality plan to our faculty council, inserted a demand for free tampons and sanitary napkins in it, just to see who would dare bring this point up in the discussion. Nobody did, but we were smiling all through the usual nagging about it being women's lack of ambition that explained their absence in high positions so perfectly, and we kept our motivation high for the next opportunity. And it is our ongoing motivation and joint laughter that eventually started to make a dent in the faculty's male-dominated existence. At Radboud University, we now have a thriving Hotspot on Gender and Power in Politics and Management. And we are still smiling.

My principle then seems to be that everyday feminist practices need to give you enough joy to either balance toxic killjoy accusations or to supersede them. In these troubled times, I hold on to this principle more than ever. I need the joy, the dancing, the wildness to stand up and help build the community that keeps going in the knowledge that times *will* change again and that feminism and social justice is a possible reality for all of us.

If you want to read Emma Goldman, try *Living My Life* (1931), which talks about her refusal to forgo life or joy as an activist, or *Anarchism and Other Essays* (1910). If you want to read Adrienne Rich, try *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far: Poems, 1978-1981* (1981) or *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose, 1966-1978* (1979).

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