Erik Schneider, Christel Baltes-Löhr (eds.)

NORMED CHILDREN

Effects of Gender and Sexs Related Normativity on Childhood and Adolescence

[transcript] GenderStudies

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Introduction[1]

Christel Baltes-Löhr, Erik Schneider

The present publication is based on selected contributions for the 2012 conference 'Gender Normativity and its Effects on Childhood and Adolescence', which was held in cooperation between the association Intersex & Transgender Luxembourg and the University of Luxembourg.[2] The conference helped release synergies, an occurrence which is still unusual for not only Luxembourg, but also the spheres beyond it: the collaboration and joint discussion between people whose own biographical circumstances led them to engage with the conference topic, political activists aiming at establishing equal rights for all those who do not conform to the normative notions of a binary sex/gender order and at removing the taboos around their ways of life, and finally members of the scientific community who dedicate themselves to this subject in their research and teaching. During the exchange of innovative ideas and concepts regarding the subjects and topics related to 'inter- and trans-sex/gender-related constitutiveness',[3] the aim was to avoid any hierarchizing speech about so-called affected persons by so-called professionals, and to strive for an equal exchange of all conference participants regardless of their sex/gender affiliation.

Around 200 attendees from various European countries (Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Great Britain), Canada and Cuba, as well as speakers from such diverse disciplines as biology, medicine, law, education, psychology, sociology and philosophy, made it possible to embark on a comprehensive and multi-faceted debate. The conference was met by considerable media interest, even far beyond the borders of Luxembourg. Following the event, a desire for a continued international exchange between

1 | Originial version in German.

2 | URL: http://idw-online.de/pages/de/attachmentdata18240.pdf [21.12.2013].

3 | Instead of trans*, the German version of this publication uses the form trans' developed by the association Intersex & Transgender Luxembourg. In order to not to disturb the lecture and to avoid miss-understandings, trans' is not used in the English version and replaced by trans. Inter' is replaced by inter. The term of sex/gender-related constitutiveness will underline the assumption that all sexes, all genders are to be considered as results of ongoing processes of social constructions and developments. 'Inter- and trans-sex/gender-related constitutiveness' is an innovative translation for the German terms 'Intergeschlechtlichkeit' and 'Transgeschlechtlichkeit'.

speakers, researchers and interested persons remained. This led to the development of international and pluridisciplinary connections which also included parents' groups of trans children. Thus the present publication can serve as a landmark for raising further awareness of issues of inter- and trans-sex/gender-related constitutiveness within scientific and public debates.

What is particularly remarkable about the conference is its focus on the life situations of children and adolescents, whose subjective self-attributions of sex and gender do not conform to the binary normative sex/gender matrix, but who live – are forced to live – lives that are strongly delimited, and often even constricted, by this very matrix. This indicates a more comprehensive perspective offered by the conference and the present publication: the questioning of currently accepted sex/gender norms.

Generally, sex/gender and the corresponding norms seem to be an integral part of life – like the air we breathe. It seems *normal* to have a sex/gender – and only one at that. The power of such normative notions becomes particularly clear in encounters with people who do not seem to conform to these norms, or who even seem to resist them altogether. This observation brings up questions about the necessity of such norms and the consequences resulting from their *blind*, i.e. unreflected implementation.

Particularly with regard to children, adolescents and their families, an intersectional perspective quickly reveals correlations regarding the potency of normative attributions of sex/gender with other interrelational dimensions such as ethnicity, age and physical constitutiveness. On the other hand, normative notions, processes of norming, of approaching variation and otherness, as well as confirmation and affirmation can also be elucidated with such a perspective on children and adolescents.

Without trying to establish yet another classification of people with affiliations to particular groups of sex/gender, we will in the following present two groups, regarding those who do not conform to the hitherto predominant sex/gender norms, that this publication is primarily concerned with: people who feel they do not belong to the sex/gender assigned to them at birth are in the following referred to as trans persons. Those whose physical features cannot be reduced to one of the two standard sexes, i.e. female or male, are referred in the present publication as intersex persons. Correspondingly, children and adolescents are referred to as trans children/adolescents or intersex children/adolescents. Their situation remains, even in the year 2014, largely uncharted territory, which only very few parents, families or professionals have had a glimpse of, often through the presence of a child who does not conform to the hitherto valid, binary sex/gender order.

The conference and the present publication continue the cooperation between the association Intersex & Transgender Luxembourg (resp. its precursor Transgender Luxembourg) and the University of Luxembourg, which has been maintained since 2010, and open a new chapter for gender research in Luxembourg. From the very beginning, the association Intersex & Transgender Luxembourg has, apart from the distribution of information for and the support of children, adolescents and adults and their families, devoted itself to the further education of professionals in all those occupational areas which are relevant for intersex and trans persons, particularly in the fields of medicine, law and the educational sector, and has conducted debates with policy makers. In addition, the association has consistently sought contact with research institutions. The embedding of these gender issues in a scientific and empirical context has been achieved by the university research group Gender Studies, established in 2003, which has since become the Institute of Gender, Diversity and Migration at the University of Luxembourg, in cooperation with the University's Gender Representative.

On the part of the university, the thematic focus on research of intersex and transgender issues represents a consistent advancement of women's studies towards a research initially guided by a binary, and later a more plural approach to sex/gender orders.

The conference of 2012 was preceded by two jointly organized conferences in the years 2010, 'All sexes/genders are present in nature ... but not equal before the law' ('Alle Geschlechter sind in der Natur ... aber nicht gleich vor dem Gesetz'), and 2011, 'Identities Beyond Facts & Ideologies' ('Identitäten jenseits von Fakten & Ideologien').

These events, which remained largely unnoticed by the public and professional circles, had from the very start been geared towards an international, interdisciplinary, empirically based, theory-forming and practical orientation. The collaboration further comprised the organization of joint teaching events which met with a highly concentrated and sustained interest on the part of the students.

We would like to thank the President of the University of Luxembourg (2005-2014), Prof. Dr. Rolf Tarrach, not only for supporting the matter of all these events and the present publication, but also for his long-standing and constant encouragement to include issues beyond the gender mainstream in the spotlight of scientific and social debates. Our thanks also go to Mars Di Bartolomeo, the minister of health at the time, for the patronage of this conference, as well as to the Luxembourg *Fonds National de la Recherche* (FNR) for providing extra financial funding, enabling us to stage the conference on which this publication is based. We thank all authors, translators, and the layout designer. Many

of those who helped and supported us in accomplishing the wide range of tasks necessary for the success of a publication of this kind remain unnamed here. We would at this point like to thank them sincerely for their dedication, as well as the team of the publisher 'transcript' for its unfailingly patient, creative and pleasant support.

In the *first* of six chapters, the present conference proceedings 'Normed Children' suggest the topic of a conceptual understanding of gender as a continuum, as changeable, polypolar and plural, without disregarding the problem of a simplifying and labeling attribution. Subsequently, the question of complex forms of existence that can become muddled to the detriment of normative orders is discussed, followed by issues of sex/gender identities in connection with human rights. The topical framework concludes with the examination of aspects of non-discrimination in the context of gender debates.

The *second* chapter is devoted to a more detailed discussion of categorization and places it in relation to non-compliance with normative precepts and the possible consequences resulting from it. The term 'human sex/gender-related constitutiveness' is examined for its epistemological and ethical relevance, followed by reflections on if and how it is possible for anyone to avoid categorizations. The chapter concludes with replies to the questions 'Who has a disorder? Who gets to decide this?' and finally presents an artistic take on sex/gender.

Biomedical approaches constitute the focus of the *third* chapter, which begins with an investigation of the sexuation of anatomy, goes on to discuss the predictive power of genes and DNA on the development of the genital tract, and presents the example of a Cuban government-funded project in the health sector as an innovative way of dealing with plural forms of sexuality, sexes and bodies by making and questioning connections between sex/gender norms frequently regarded as universal, and medicine, as well as changes in approaching norms.

The *fourth* chapter addresses issues of sex/gender normativity with regard to trans identity from various perspectives, with one particular focus being on aspects of definitional power and self-determination of trans children, and another on the presentation and discussion of innovative concepts dealing with hormone blockers at the beginning of puberty, as well as on issues of reproductive medicine in the context of genetical and biological trans parenthood.

The *fifth* chapter centers around a multi-faceted discussion of sex/gender normativity and inter-sex/gender-related constitutiveness. The emphasis in this chapter lies on the representations of personal realities from the perspective of intersex persons, including the accompanying demands for the recognition of non-normative notions which are not reflected in the framework of a heteronor-

mative and binary matrix of sexes. The legitimacy of medical measures is questioned in view of this, followed by a discussion of the rights of intersex persons as well as the resistance of the medical field against criticism of intersex activists whose actions target operations on the frontline of credibility.

The *sixth* chapter is devoted to the field of education and shows the influence of sex/gender norms, particularly in the context of school and over the course of childhood and adolescence. This chapter explores the significance of the parent-child bond for the development of humans, describes the conveyance of gender competency in the education of biology teachers using a practical example, subsequently investigates the connection between cultural sex/gender-related constitutiveness and trans children, presents gender-plural educational offers beyond a binary sex/gender order and discusses the connection between trans identity and puberty.

The publication concludes with an unusual review of the conference, reflecting on optimism, happiness and other cruelties of a conference on gender norms.

As editors of this volume we hope to reflect the diversity of the conference held in September 2012 in Luxembourg, which continues to reverberate to this day, and thus to contribute to a debate which has only just begun and which offers a chance to do more justice to the plurality of life forms.

Chapter 1: Thematical Framework

Always Gender – Always Different[1]

An Attempt at a Definition

Christel Baltes-Löhr

Summary

The present article attempts to define sex/gender in its physical, psychological, social and sexual dimensions. It draws on pluridimensional concepts of identity that regard gender, age, ethnic orientation, economic status and physical constitutiveness as interwoven and mutually influencing each other (Baltes-Löhr 2006, 2009), and further, on an understanding of constitutions of the subject that form identities and differences via processes of attribution and appropriation. Gender is thus perceived as situated along a continuum and as modifiable, polypolar and intersectionally situated. The point is not to arrive at specific definitions of femininity, masculinity, transgender or intersex, but rather to attempt to establish a definitional framework which could apply to all genders and seeks, in the sense of doing gender, to combine a discursive-performative perspective of processes of gender construction with a symbolic-interactional one.

Conceptual Confusion – Unambiguous Ambiguities

Before, during, and in the aftermath of the conference 'Gender Normativity and Effects on Childhood and Adolescence' ('Geschlechternormativität und Effekte für Kindheit und Adoleszenz') that this publication is based on, it became evident that there is currently a considerable struggle within the field of transgender and intersex, but also in Gender Studies in general, to resolve issues around the nomenclature of key concepts. The terms 'transgender' and

1 | Original version in German. A further developed approach is published in Cultural and Religious Studies, Vol 6, Number 1, January 2018; New York: David Publishing, DOI: 10.17265/2328-2177/2018.01.001, pp. 1-32; entitled: What We Are Speaking About When We Speak About Gender? Gender as a Continuum. There the author also developed the new terms 'transity' in order to replace 'transsexuality' or 'transgender', in German 'Transgeschlechtlichkeit' and 'interity' in order to replace 'intersexuality', in German 'Intergeschlechtlichkeit'.

'intersex' and the concept of homosexuality are frequently mentioned in one breath, often utterly disregarding the fact that transgender and intersex persons do not wish to see themselves reduced to a particular sexual orientation, however it may be defined. Helga Bilden for example speaks of the "great variety of genders and sexualities" and mentions "lesbians, gays, bisexuals, intersex persons, transsexuals, transgender persons"[2] in one breath and without further comment (Bilden 2001: 144). Michael Becker, too, bundles "a-, bi-, homo-, inter- and trans-sexuality"[3] (Becker 2008: 18) together without any attempt at differentiation. The extent of this entanglement of trans- and intersexuality with homoerotic orientations is also evident in the name of the so-called IDAHO Day. IDAHO Day stands for 'International Day against Homophobia' and has been, after continuous and widely-debated extensions, expanded to IDAHO-TI, 'International Day against Homo-,Trans*- and Inter*phobia'. A similar concept applies to the self-description of non-heterosexual persons in the so-called LGBT community, which refers to the terms 'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual'. In this too, there is a current discussion over the expansion of the acronym to LGBT-I, in order to include the group of intersexual persons in all its diversity. However, this in itself does not yet resolve the necessity of avoiding the reduction of intersexuality and transsexuality to the aspect of sexual orientation. Nor does it further the point for queer theoreticians to emphasize that queer approaches consciously seek to avoid categorization, since categories always need to exclude as well. This assumption, in its connection with the proposed definition of the term 'gender', will have to be reassessed when discussing the permeabilities of categorical delimitations. The abolishment of the categorial order which has been partly demanded within the field of queer theory seems (Butler 2009: 18f.), particularly in the light of the persistence of heteronormative, categorially supported forces of influence (Baltes-Löhr et al. 2010), to be of little use if the goal is to achieve a removal of taboos and an equal presence of preferably all forms of gender.

The novel 'Stone Butch Blues' (1993) by Leslie Feinberg allows an insight into the complexity of the issue of terminology. Against the backdrop of the McCarthy era (1947-1956) and the associated persecutions of homosexuals in the USA, the novel describes the protagonist, who is living as a lesbian, bio-morphologically female woman, wanting to change her sex, and the conflicts this creates with her lesbian, bio-morphologically female girlfriend, who does not want to live with a man. The novel shows very poignantly how deeply homoerotic relationships can remain entrenched in a binary logic as well and

2 | Personal translation of: "Vielzahl der Geschlechter und Sexualitäten"; "Lesben, Schwule, Bisexuelle, Intersex-Personen, Transsexuelle, Transgender-Personen."

3 | Personal translation of: "A-, Bi-, Homo-, Inter- und Transsexualität."

how productive it could be to release gender as well as sexual orientations out of a rigid heteronormative brace.

The influence of this heteronormative discourse is also evident when searching for films addressing the subject of transsexuality. The internet shows a list of 43 titles which, beginning in 1953 and including several coproductions, were directed in Argentina, Australia. Belgium, Germany, Denmark, France, Greece, Great Britain, Iran, Japan, Canada, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Thailand and the USA.[4] We are not concerned with film analysis in this context, but rather with the fact that the search for films on the topic of intersexuality does not produce such a neatly organized list and instead, specific films are discussed on the internet. It is furthermore noteworthy to mention that many of these films are listed on the list of transgender films.[5] This, then, suggests that everything which is not considered hetero is easily subsumed in a different category, in this case the term 'transgender', and this regardless of whether and how the subsumed parts or aspects fit together or not.

A further example of ambiguous terminology is provided by the magazine GEO – Seeing the World with Different Eyes.[6] In the edition of December 2013 GEO headlined: 'The search for personality. The girl within the boy: The joy and suffering of gender-variant children'[7] and ran the accompanying article 'Boy? Girl? I am me!'.[8] The issue of gender variance is illustrated via the example of a holiday camp in the USA where gender-variant children can meet and live the way they want to – without omnipresent binary gender norms, without gender-connoted hostilities and without being teased. Parents of children who do not want to be fitted into one of the two dominant gender roles share their experiences and ask themselves: 'Why does the question of an unambiguous gender identity bear such incredible weight?'[9] (GEO 2013: 106). However, this article still refers to the concept of the child in the wrong body (GEO 2013: 108), which suggests that there exists such a thing as the child in the right body and that every other, variant child has something that is not right. The body normatively defined as the right one marks all other bodies as wrong and thus not conforming to the norm. What becomes very obvious here is that norms do not, as it were, serve to display the pluralities lived by different people, but that people are measured by the degree to which they are able to comply with these

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4 | See URL: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_von_Transgender-Filmen, in 2014.

5 | For instance the films XXY (Germany, 2007) and Tintenfischalarm (Austria, 2006).

6 | Personal translation of: "Die Welt mit anderen Augen sehen."

7 | Personal translation of: "Persönlichkeitssuche. Das Mädchen im Jungen: Vom Glück und Leid geschlechtsvarianter Kinder."

8 | Personal translation of: "Junge? Mädchen? Ich bin ich!"

9 | Personal translation of: "Warum bloß wiegt die Frage nach einer eindeutigen Geschlechtsidentät so unglaublich schwer?"

norms. Back to the GEO edition of December 2013: In addition to the report on the holiday camp, the terms 'intersexual', 'gender-variant', 'transvestite' and 'transsexual' are discussed in a glossary (GEO 2013: 112). It becomes all too clear how the naming of intersexual, gender-variant, transsexual, trans-identical persons as well as transvestites – despite the editors' assumed educational intention – implicitly upholds the normative standard of the two-gender system, if an unambiguous biological gender is given as a point of departure for variances or changing gender identities. The same pattern is displayed in explanations about transvestites, who according to GEO are marked by the feature that they wear clothes of the opposite gender without wanting to physically belong to another gender (GEO 2013: 112). The prevailing binarity of the gender order of female/male is not questioned. This may also serve as a clear example of what it means to stabilize the own (German: das Eigene) by declaring what is not one's own' (German: das Nicht-Eigene) as different or variant.

In 2008 Janina Stührmann alternatively interprets transsexuality and transidentity as a perceived deviation from the gender assigned at birth (Stührmann 2008: 9). Here the entry in the civil register becomes the normative guideline from which the perceived gender deviates. If, until the beginning of the 21st century, in Western Europe and the Anglo-Saxon countries children with ambiguous physical sexual characteristics were often assigned one gender via surgery, this also means that they were not granted the space to develop a gender of their own and that major surgery, for instance the creation of a vaginal structure, was performed on their healthy bodies. Parents had to make momentous decisions for their children, frequently in a still completely tabooed space invariably marked by wrong or partial information or a lack of it. For a long time this space had been dominated by the power of medical professionals, who during their education had usually only been presented the pathologizing perspective on ambiguous physical genders, and only fairly recently has this dominance been, at least in some small degree, challenged by the emergence of parent self-help groups and so-called 'affected' adult parties. In the light of all this it is of far-reaching significance that the amendment of the German civil register law of 1 November 2013 (§ 22, 3) provides for the following: "If the child can be assigned neither to the female or the male gender then the civil status event shall be recorded without this information in the registry of births."[10] (Federal Law Gazette 2013 Part I, p. 1122).

10 | Personal translation of: "Kann das Kind weder dem weiblichen noch dem männlichen Geschlecht zugeordnet werden, so ist der Personenstandsfall ohne eine solche Angabe in das Geburtenregister einzutragen."

So far, we have established that firstly there is a lack of terminological clarity regarding the terms 'transgender', 'transsexuality' and 'intersex', and secondly that anything that does not fit into the grid of the still dominant heteronormative discourse is quickly considered different, variant, deviating, or even wrong. It further became clear that genders which are not conceived as either female or male are often sexually connoted and frequently located in the proximity of homosexuality, which may not correspond to the lived realities of intersex and transgender persons. However, the strong effect of heteronormative sexual dualism should not obscure the fact that even the definitions of the two genders female and male have somewhat faltered. The apparently unambiguous physical sex has been called into question, since not all persons with a vagina also have an elevated bosom and ovaries as adolescents or adults, a similar estrogen concentration or the same set of XX chromosomes. Similarly, persons with an XY chromosome do not always have a penis, testicles and the corresponding testosterone level. This variance in the combination of the various corporal-biological components suggests that one can no longer speak of a biologically unambiguous sex (see Henke et al. 1998: 43-64). All these assessments support the assumption that a terminological definition of gender that encompasses all possible genders is needed. If this term is difficult to define, then it can be assumed that this difficulty reflects the complexity of the matter itself. All the more reason to attempt as comprehensive a definition as possible.

Gender as a Dimension of Identity, Difference and Subjectivity

It seems obvious that for many people, gender is connected to what they understand, comprehend, feel, perceive, accept or reject as their self, their I, their identity, their own subjectivity, their difference from others. Personality as well as individuality continue to be viewed as being strongly connoted with gender. For a long time gender was regarded as the structural category not only for societal orders, but also for the personality, individuality and identity of every human being. Besides gender, dimensions or sections such as age, ethnic origin, corporal and physical disposition, religious and ethical and moral orientations, together with a pluridimensional and intersectional conception of identity, play a significant role when it comes to finding an understanding of what comprises or can comprise human beings in their human being-ness. Thus, what we are concerned with here is to explain which identities or differences are assigned to human beings and which they appropriate, and how these negotiation processes should be defined.

And again: identities and différance

Refers to Zirfas (2001), concepts of identity such as formulated by Mollenhauer and Welsch, concepts of core identities and fixed self-identities have been abandoned. Nevertheless, notions of the term 'identity' as based on a "coherent and continuous performance of synthetization and integration which allows the individual to address themselves across space and time as 'I'"[11] (Zirfas 2001: 52) continue to remain virulent. On the other hand, deconstructivist concepts of identity following Derrida should not serve as the band to unify these differences in the sense of Welsch. Identity consists "of the dispersing bands of the differences themselves: in this sense the search for identity is a search for traces."[12] (Zirfas 2001: 61). This trace runs, writes Zirfa, "from the integrating identity to the disintegrating difference, from the I to the other."[13] This is therefore a question about an identity "which is marked by differences and differentiations of the other."[14] (Zirfas 2001: 60). Representing the own in the other and the other in the own and thereby wanting to do justice to oneself and the other – according to Zirfas drawing on Derrida, this may be what is meant when we speak of identity as an experience of the impossible. Derrida is not concerned with relationalization, like Mead's symbolic interactionism (1934) is with the relationship between I and Me, wherein the I is reacting to the attitude of others and representing the will, the uniqueness of a person, their own aspirations and their biographical uniqueness, and the Me, the Generalized Other, is indicating conventions and habits, social adaption and recognition and the functionality of the individual in society. Derrida however points out that "in the idea of the I [...] there is always a different idea at work."[15] (Derrida quoted by Zirfas 2001: 53). If Derrida uses the term 'différance' to denote "that every meaning can only ever be expressed within a deferral, a delay, a deliberation or a retrospect"[16] (Derrida quoted by Zirfas 2001: 55), then différance also means repetition, interval and distance. Différance signifies an event which is repeated in language through the act of speaking, but can never be represented in its entirety, so that one can speak of continuous shifts of meaning (Zima 1997: 167). Identity, the construction of which depends on events, experiences and the act of speaking, thus seems to

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11 | Personal translation of: "Identität liegt eine kohärente und kontinuierliche Synthetisierungs- und Integrationsleistung zugrunde, die es dem Individuum erlaubt, zu sich selbst über Raum und Zeiten hinweg 'Ich' sagen zu können."

12 | Personal translation of: "Identität besteht aus den zerstreuenden Bändern der Differenzen selbst: Identitätssuche ist insofern Spurensuche."

13 | Personal translation of: "Die Spur geht von der integrierenden Identität zur desintegrierenden Differenz, vom Ich zum Anderen."

14 | Personal translation of: "Die sich durch Differenzen und Differenzierungen des Anderen auszeichnet."

15 | Personal translation of: "In der Vorstellung des Ich ist immer schon eine differente Vorstellung am Werke."

16 | Personal translation of: "Différance meint, dass jeglicher Sinn immer nur in einem Aufschub, einer Verzögerung, einem Kalkül oder einer Nachträglichkeit zum Ausdruck kommen kann."

congeal into a fleeting occurrence. Following Deleuze (1968) it should also be assumed that repetition can never be repetition of the same, because the repeated elements cannot be encompassed by a term common to all of them as an origin. Consequently he wants repetition to be seen as a repetition of the not-same, the non-identical, the diverse. This view of repetition corresponds to the diverse subject. "The subject of the eternal recurrence is not the same, but the different, not the similar, but the dissimilar, not the one but the many, not the necessity but the coincidence."[17] (Zima in reference to Deleuze, Vattimo, Lyotard 1997: 169). We could add: The subject is not that which is confined, but rather that which is not defined within its confines. However, these performative repetitions harbour possibilities to bring forth multiple new aspects of an object, so that dually and dichotomically arranged hierarchies can change, shift, dissolve, but also stabilize themselves. In this sense, repetition can have a de-homogenizing and heterogenizing effect, can make room for plurality and differences, and at the same time bring out similarities or reject them. The new is thus always created in relation to something, mostly to what is old, traditional, known. The new emerges within slowly shifting changes. The now is now past. The new now, that which is conceived in the future, is now already the past now of just a moment ago.

Performance and repetition

If events, the world, realities, representations of realities are embedded in processes of linguistic performance, this does not signify the denial of materiality, but rather the reality-constructing effect of performative actions. If a performative action is "one which produces or stages that what it names" (Butler 1993: 123) then repetitions become significant, and with them subversive shifts of meaning which then become possible. Diversities can be represented, in the full knowledge that a performative action, a performative act and the concomitant descriptions and definitions can never claim to represent the entire object or the object in its supposedly correct or indeed true meaning. Originals that existed prior to the performative act are negated. The performative repetition always refers to a something which is considered different.

With an approach like this, combined with the ethno-methodologically and interactionistically oriented assumptions, one could explain the production and construction of realities by showing how what appears to be a virtually unlimited range of possibilities can, in reality, transform into very concretely ascertainable facts. Gender could be conceived of as both interactively and discursively/performatively produced (Meissner 2008). Regarding the construction processes of

17 | Personal translation of: "Das Subjekt der ewigen Wiederkehr ist nicht das Selbe, sondern das Differente, nicht das Ähnliche, sondern das Unähnliche, nicht das Eine sondern das Viele, nicht die Notwendigkeit, sondern der Zufall."

gender one could, besides ethno-methodological and interactionist approaches of doing gender (West/Zimmermann 1991) and discourse-analytical and performative approaches, consider psychoanalytical approaches that build on the inner experiences of individuals (Bilden 2001: 144). With reference to Goldner, Bilden points to the possibility that "an unambiguous gender identity [...] is a result of pathological processes, in which everything that does not fit into the respective cultural or environmental idea of gender is denied, dissociated or relegated to the underground through other defensive reactions."[18] (Bilden 2001: 142). Drawing on Dimen, Bilden emphasizes the possibility that adhering to one pole of the gender dualism could hint at a split in the self (Bilden 2001: 142). In order to overcome a suspected split such as this, Dimen offers the concept of interstitial spaces, spaces that are occupied by differences, i.e. spaces between male and female, active and passive, subject and object (Dimen quoted by Bilden 2001: 142 f.). What is remarkable is that according to Dimen, the interstitial space is inhabited exclusively by differences but not similarities, and that the differences are considered as situated between the two poles of female and male.

Potentialities and factualities

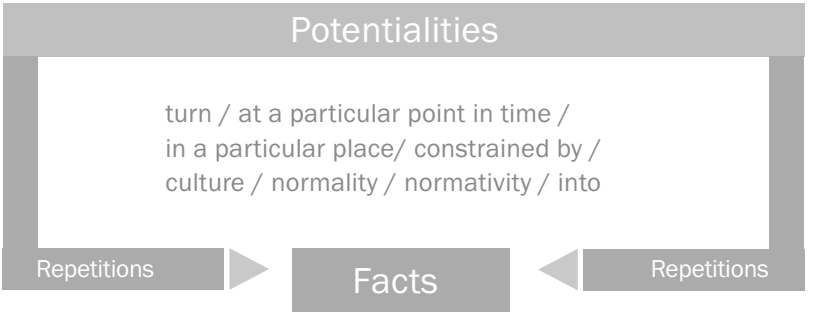

Figure 1: From potentialities to facts (see Baltes-Löhr 2006: 30)

These two terms are by no means to be understood as a dualistic opposition, but instead as interwoven aspects of a continuum. People can be regarded as being equipped with a broad range of possibilities, potentialities. This is also relevant for gender and gender relations. Based on the assumption of the construction of gender as a continuum, normatively legitimizing and categorizing bundlings contribute to producing femininity and masculinity, which then often create the impression as being laid down by the laws of nature. At a certain point – de-

18 | Personal translation of: "Dass eine eindeutige Geschlechtsidentität ein Ergebnis von pathologischen Prozessen sei, in denen alles, was nicht in die jeweilige kulturelle oder Milieu-Vorstellung von Geschlecht passt, verleugnet, abgespalten oder durch andere Abwehrreaktionen in den Untergrund geschickt wird."

pending on the socio-cultural notions of a certain place, depending on what is regarded as normality and depending on which values and ideas are recognized as norms – possibilities become characteristics and abilities or facts.

The relevance of assumptions of performance theory for gender

If definitions, the production and stagings of, for instance, gender can be seen as repeated performative acts in time and space, then potentially subversive repetitions also harbor possibilities of breaking through dominant discourses, for example regarding gender, and to multiply the bipolarity of the gender order by making other facets of gender visible. In this way diversities can be represented, differences can become legitimate, and not least be regarded as normal. Women, men, transgender and intersex persons need not be understood as a homogenous group, characterized by essential features. Gender images and ideas about individual gender groups are also variable. The borders between categories are porous and permeable. Via namings, matters become, for instance, bodies and gendered bodies, bodies become genders, spaces become national territories, sinners become pure once more through the three words "Ego te absolvo". People become couples by a third person saying: "I hereby pronounce you husband and wife". It is not contrition that liberates sinners from their supposed burden of sins, and it is not love that makes a couple become a couple, but rather the spoken word of the registrar. One particular, remarkably performative phrase is familiar to all Roman Catholics when every year at Christmas the Gospel of John is quoted: "And the word became flesh." (Gospel of John 1,14), thereby announcing the birth of Jesus. Back to our subject: With regard to gender we have to emphasize Jutta Hartmann's statement that "performativity generates the subject, but it does not determine it."[19] (Hartmann 2001: 76). Performative construction processes are therefore always regarded as open-ended.

If facts or realities are constructed out of potentialities via performative acts, then this, with regard to the construction of gender, can mean that people are born with the possibilities of constructing a gender. A subject can be perceived or perceive itself as belonging to a gender, depending on the point in time (gender variability: in this context historicity of birth); on socio-culturally prevailing discourses and orientations (gender variability: in this context normativity of gender); on spatial circumstances (a dimension of an intersectionally conceived gender); on corporal circumstances (corporal/physical dimensions of gender); on social attribution and individual subjective appropriation (social dimension of gender; aspect of attribution and appropriation of gender); and depending

19 | Personal translation of: "Es gilt zu unterstreichen, dass Performativität das Subjekt zwar erst hervorbringt, sie determiniert es aber nicht."

on sexual desire, sexual orientation and sexual practices (sexual dimension of gender). Combinations of the various gender dimensions are conceivable. Thus, a person with a penis but without testicles can dress in a skirt, put on makeup, speak in a deep voice, be forceful and competitive, musically gifted and live heterosexually with a person with a vagina, an elevated bosom, facial hair and a socially more prestigious professional status, who is dwarfing the former person by a head's length. Groups with similar characteristics could then form a gender group or attribute themselves to a group with similar combinations of gender dimensions. These self-attributions could vary depending on the situation and change over the course of a biographical life. Affiliations could be attributed or personally appropriated. They can change just as much as the understanding or the notions of what is considered, at a certain point in time, as normality in a particular place, depending on the socio-cultural notions, on which values and notions are recognized as norms and on what is to be understood as a particular gender in a particular place and at a particular time, and how subsequently appropriated genders can in turn influence exactly these factors and aspects in a particular place and at a particular time etc. This is what is meant by mutual construction processes of gender, constitutions of the subject and categorial orders. This is what is meant by construction processes in which aspects of performance, of repetition and of norming play remarkable roles.

This makes clear which significant role human beings themselves can play in the construction process of their subjectivity, their individuality, when recognition processes are considered in the context of attributions – appellations, according to Althusser (1977) – and appropriations in the sense of reversals or denials of the appellation. Recognition processes and thus construction processes of genders need to be seen in their polyphony, and it is the task of science and academics to reveal these polyphonies and retrace their variability.

Fields of tension surrounding a definition of gender

Since the early 1990s and with the realization of the constructedness of gender, the differentiation between sex, gender and desire became a familiar one, particularly through the writings of Judith Butler (1991, 1995, 1997); sex often referred to the so-called biological gender, gender stood for the so-called social gender, and desire for the expression of sexual desire or sexuality.

In the understanding of doing gender, the so-called social gender signified the assumption that people are, in a way, socialized into specific gender roles. The assumption that people are turned into women and into men, as Simone

de Beauvoir already claimed in 1949 with regard to women when she said: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." (de Beauvoir 1949). By contrast, sex, i.e. the so-called biological, corporal, physical gender, continued for a long time to be perceived as unambiguous, meaning either unambiguously female or unambiguously male. With Judith Butler's equally seminal work "Bodies that Matter" (Butler 1993) and with expanding research in the field of biology (see Streckeisen 1991: 158 and Henke et al. 1998: 43-64), the constructedness and the supposed unambiguity of biological gender was deconstructed. It became evident that neither the body nor the biological gender or the gendered body could be defined by the bipolar order of a biological male and female gender. Desire, sexual desire and sexuality were for a long time neglected in a debate that was often reduced to sex-gender, and were discussed most frequently in the context of discriminations of persons with homoerotic orientations and lifestyles.

The blocking out of transgender and intersex persons

Transgender and intersex persons are the subject matter of queer theory, which has established itself since the 1990s, in most cases rejects all categorial orders whatsoever and "opposes those who would regulate identities or establish epistemological claims of priority for those who make claims to certain kinds of identities." (Butler 2004: 7). In approaches adopted by developmental psychology and pedagogy these gender groups often remain unmentioned (Abriß 2006; Gesell 2008; Hoffmann 1997; King 2013; Kühn 2006; Sporbert 2009), are regarded as disruptions as well as disorders (Hartmann/Becker 2002; Vetter 2010), and in the field of health practice are frequently considered a phenomenon to be dealt therapeutically (Averkamp 2012). Additionally, transgender and intersex persons are defined as competing groups: "One tension that arises between queer theory and both intersex and transsexual activism centers on the question of sex assignment and the desirability of identity categories. If queer theory is understood, by definition, to oppose all identity claims, including stable sex assignment, then the tension seems strong indeed." (Butler 2004: 7). What transgender persons are in part fighting for, i.e. a life in a male or female gender and correspondingly in the respective gender body, which should, if necessary, be produced with the help of hormone intake or surgery, seems at first glance to be in opposition to intersex persons who often insist on being recognized in the, with respect to the prevalent bipolar gender order, ambiguous situatedness of their gender. The question now is how to include and regard as equally legitimate within a theoretical foundation both the desire for unambiguity and the desire for the recognition of a gender hitherto defined as ambiguous in terms of bipolarity.

Connotations of transgender and intersex persons with homosexuality

Even though according to Laura Adamietz homosexuality and transsexuality should, thanks to the early 20th century works of Krafft-Ebing, Hirschfeld und Ellis, be regarded as separate phenomena (Adamietz 2011: 102), with the emergence of psychoanalysis around Sigmund Freud a notion of transsexuality as a flight from homosexuality, combined with a supposed fear of castration, led to an erotization of cross-dressing that endured long into the 1970s and seems to have remained virulent to this day (Adamietz 2011: 103). If transsexuality was again established as an independent concept in the medical field, primarily due to the work of the American doctor Harry Benjamin, who furthered the development of surgical possibilities and harbored a certain disillusionment with the effectiveness of psychotherapeutic measures (Adamietz 2011: 103), then one should note that Benjamin's concern was a surgery that transformed men into women and the creation of a "class of transsexuals [...] who were [according to Benjamin] absolutely in need of treatment and whom he sought to demarcate from other less severe cases."[20] (Adamietz 2011: 103).

Assumptions about transsexuality have shifted to a more open concept since the 1970s, not least due to the debates of the women's movement. If transsexuality as such was understood primarily in medical terms and as a gender identity disorder (Adamietz 2011: 34, 37), then Adamietz notes that the term 'transgender' could induce a depathologization and that the pronounced differentiations between pre- and post-operative phases, and thus between so-called transvestites and transsexuals, become irrelevant. She further points out that not all those persons she refers to as transidentical seek a surgical or hormonal adjustment of their body (Adamietz 2011: 37). Adamietz emphasizes that the term 'transgender' is not regarded as conclusively defined either; according to her there is "among those concerned no consensus about its meaning."[21] (Adamietz 2011: 38). She goes on to say that this umbrella term should denote a range of subjectivities that are in conflict with traditional gender norms and stereotypes and should not be used as an instrument for exclusions (Adamietz 2011: 38). Intersexuality, the phenomenon to be understood as a gender that can be attributed neither to one nor the other of the two prevalent genders, is considered by Adamietz as evidence for the "faultiness of the assumption of absolutely natural sexual dualism."[22] (Adamietz 2011: 105).

Intersexual persons, she writes, are often forced to reassign themselves to one of the two prevalent genders by means of surgery, since, at least as yet, "the

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20 | Personal translational of: "Klasse von Transsexuellen [...], die unbedingt behandlungsbedürftig seien, und diese von anderen weniger schlimmen Fällen abzugrenzen."

21 | Personal translation of: "Unter den Betroffenen besteht kein Konsens über seine Bedeutung."

22 | Personal translation of: "Transsexualität ist nach Adamietz zu verstehen als Beleg für die Fehlerhaftigkeit der Annahme absoluter natürlicher Zweigeschlechtlichkeit."

reigning order of sexual dualism is unable to recognize a 'third gender'."[23] (Adamietz 2011: 105). Thus we must at this point differentiate between those persons who do not wish to assign themselves to either a male or female gender, and those who disagree with the gender attributed to them mostly on the grounds of present physical features, and who may or may not seek a surgically or hormonally produced change.

Other cultures – other genders

From 25 November 1997 to 8 March 1998 the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum für Völkerkunde (Ethnological Museum) in Cologne, Germany, hosted an exhibition titled 'She and He. Woman power and male domination in a cultural comparison.'[24] The exhibition as well as the accompanying volume specifically addressed the issue of 'third gender and changing identities'[25] – a novelty and at the same time an expression of the changing debate in the context of the women and gender research which was virulent at the time (Völger 1997).

The exhibition acquainted visitors with the Guevedoces, a term used for a group of people living in the Dominican Republic. At birth they cannot be unambiguously identified as either male or female. Often, a masculinization sets in with puberty, which however does not change the respective person's status of being a Guevedoce, a status which allows some leeway between being a woman and being a man. Another group represented in the exhibition were the Kwolu-Aatmwol of Papua New Guinea who, in expectation of a pubertary masculinization, are raised in a gender-spanning fashion with a tendency towards the male principle and thus develop identities beyond the familiar concepts of femininity and masculinity. As a third gender they are neither discriminated against nor particularly highly esteemed. Additionally the exhibition highlights the Muxe in Juchitán, Mexico, and the Hijra in India. What was remarkable was there being no mention of a third or fourth gender in the European region, which nowadays, more than 25 years later, seems hardly conceivable, considering that since the 1990s debates within women's and gender studies have changed and binary, heteronormative patterns have been increasingly questioned while pointing to the constructedness of genders, with the term 'gender' continuing to be unambiguously ambiguous.

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23 | Personal translation of: "Die geltende Ordnung der Zweigeschlechtlichkeit vermag keine 'dritten Geschlechter' anzuerkennen."

24 | Personal translation of: "Sie und Er. Frauenmacht und Männerherrschaft im Kulturvergleich."

25 | Personal translation of: "Drittes Geschlecht und wechselnde Identitäten."

Attempting a Definition of Gender

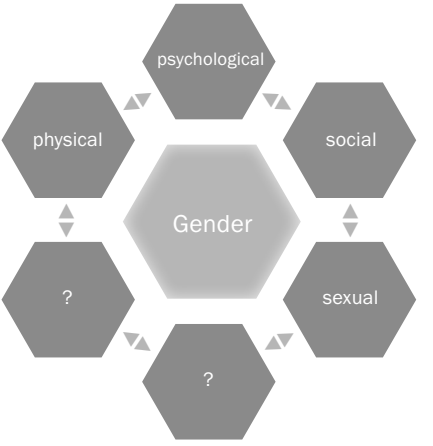

Figure 2: Gender and Gender Dimensions.

Gender comprises,

- in its physical dimensions, biomorphological, genital, chromosomal, gonadal and hormonal characteristics (corporal or physical gender),
- in its psychological dimensions emotions and cognition; these psychological dimensions describe the feeling as well as the self-perception of gender and thus oscillate between attribution and appropriation, or put differently, between attribution by others and self-attribution, and turn into self-designations which may or may not more or less agree with the definitions or descriptions by others (psychological gender),
- in its social dimensions the gender roles that describe a person's behavior as belonging to a certain gender; this role behavior includes facial expressions, gestures, speech volume, posture; this also comprises societal presence, as for instance gender presence in various areas of society, and also attributions of functions such as certain forms of division of labor, but also the attribution of responsibilities regarding various areas of society, such as politics/public sphere, private life/family, job market, educational sphere, science/research, art (social gender),
- in its sexual dimensions sexual desire or sexual orientation such as monosexual, asexual, bisexual, heterosexual, pansexual, but also sexual practices such vis a fronte and vis a tergo forms of sexual intercourse, sadomasochism, exhibitionism; these dimensions also concern the relational forms of sexual gender such as monogamy, polygamy, polyamory and corresponding institutionalized forms of relational sexual gender such as marriage, registered partnerships, non-registered partnerships with one or more partners, singles (sexual gender).

To indicate that this definition of gender is to be regarded as open-ended, two boxes have been left blank in the figure 'Gender and gender dimensions'.

Having defined gender in this way, it is possible to conceive of a great variety of combinations between the elements of the different dimensions. This definitional framework aims to enable an equal representation of existing and lived pluralities.

The gender attributed to a person and appropriated by them can be perceived as a part of their identity, without assuming, as explained above, the existence of an identitary identity. A person's gender can comprise dimensions of the corporal/physical, psychological, social and sexual gender and is considered modifiable, polypolar, plural and intersectional, terms which will be briefly discussed in the following.

A modifiable, polypolar, plural and intersectional gender continuum

Gender is considered:

- modifiable in the sense that it can shift depending on the historical, socio-cultural, spatial and normative context and can in turn impact these respective contexts. Gender can change in the course of a life's biography, although it should also be emphasized that a gender appropriated in a situation, in a phase of life of shorter or longer duration, can in turn change the life biography. One could thus also speak of a punctual or situative gender (gender variability: historical and normative; punctual/ situative gender);
- polypolar in the sense that gender is understood as situated on a continuum, without any binary, bipolar framing, without binary markers such as unambiguously female or unambiguously male (polypolar gender);
- plural in the sense that polypolar genders are thought of as being situated on a continuum, whereby the individual gender dimensions can shift with respect to each other and multiple forms of gender can be constructed depending on time, space etc. (gender as a continuum);
- gender should also be regarded in the context of an intersectional perspective, with categories such as age, ethnic orientation/ cultural origin, socio-economic status, education and general physical constitution, in order to speak of an intersectionally constituted gender. This also includes the spatial and material dimension of gender (intersectional constitution of gender).

In defining gender in its physical, psychological, social and sexual dimensions as modifiable, polypolar, plural and intersectional in its disposition, as well as in its location on a continuum, we take our leave from the gender category as a binary, dichotomous and heteronormative structural category of societal orders.

Gender as a continuum

As already mentioned several times, gender is regarded as being situated on a continuum. For the range of characteristics of the category of gender this signifies that all human possibilities/potentialities with regard to the body, psyche, social behaviour, sexuality located on this continuum can become, in the most diverse combinations, genderized characteristics via discursive/performative labeling practices and interactive doing. These characteristics then signify one gender – for a varying period of time, with a more or less far-reaching situational ambit, for a more or less numerous group of people. Specific aspects/characteristics of the physical, psychological, social and/or sexual gender can be joined and combined into one specific gender category. A segment or clusters of characteristics of possibilities situated along the continuum such as this can generate stereotypes which can then, depending on time, place and culture, be attributed as specific characteristics of a certain gender. These segments can comprise elements of the various dimensions of gender (physical, psychological, social and sexual). Such clusters of characteristics that until the 1970s stereotyped, for instance, the female sex as gentle, emotional, weak, maternal, domestic, caring, desiring one – and only one – man, equipped with an elevated bosom, vagina, ovaries and uterus, would, according to the definition attempted above, in the future not be regarded as arranged in a bipolar or binary way, but rather in a polypolar order, which means that the opposition of female and male is void and that other gender configurations, as for instance transgender and/or intersex, can also be regarded as a pole. The clusters of characteristics can encompass the most diverse combinations of human possibilities and be considered as a gender. A person with a beard and bust breastfeeding a child would no longer be regarded as somehow weird or as a sensation. Categorial permeability is no longer considered to be compact, as it was in the previously dominating two-gender order, but rather to be porous, and the categorial boundaries between possible genders are no longer fixed but open and fluid.

In the definition of gender attempted here, plurality is considered the norm, which means that all kinds of genders are considered normal or recognized as normative, and that masculinity and femininity are not regarded as the only valid norms. While the currently still existing gender order assumes that the attributed gender is also appropriated and that everything else is treated as abnormal, deviant or pathological, the suggested definition of gender offers the possibility of representing a higher variance with respect to the attribution and appropriation processes, in the sense that so-called deviations can more easily be regarded as differences that may possibly be considered as belonging to another

gender or another gender configuration. Appellations as defined by Althusser (Althusser 1977) can equally easily be followed by reversals, i.e. acceptance, as by non-acceptance of the gender attributed through appellation. An ontologization as a consolidation of a fixed way of being or of an indissoluble nature of a gender is rejected, so that the true world of believers transforms into an uncertain world for non-believers.

In conclusion, we will once more briefly illustrate the significance of such a definition of gender for the relation of the sexes/genders to one another: The positioning of possible genders towards each other is considered polypolar; all possible genders are regarded as equivalent. At times one gender has a greater force of influence, and at other times it is another one; from this circumstance, however, no structural primacies are derived. The categorial demarcation of the possible genders towards each other is considered to be fluid, permeable and adjustable and thus flexible. The gender order is regarded as plurally constituted; the logic of 'as-well-as' applies; normative patterns emerging in the construction process are considered to be open and reversible and make no universalist claims on validity.

Looking Ahead

The new definition of gender suggested here aims to do justice to the plurality of gender without one particular gender per se taking precedence over another or being considered superior. This definition is intended as a contribution towards deconstructing the prevalent heteronormative gender order and achieving a gender order of diversity. Genders and gender orders constituted in this way could lead to depathologizations, the removal of taboos and to the general recognition of all those genders which have until now not fitted into the rigid brace of dual sexuality; moreover, this present brace of a rigid bipolar femininity and masculinity could be dissolved. This could also be reflected in linguistic symbolizations. While until the beginning of the 1970s the so-called male speech forms always included everyone, it was in no small part due to the women's movement that female speech forms came into use in order to make women, at that time still understood as a collective subject, visible. In German, Lehrer (male teachers) became Lehrer(innen) – male(female) teachers – male/female teachers (Lehrer/innen), female and male teachers (Lehrerinnen und Lehrer) and also fe/male teachers (LehrerInnen). Eventually the form 'teaching persons' (Lehrende) became prevalent, for the first time highlighting the bipolarity of the female and

male designations and replacing them with a form that was able to comprise more than two sexes or genders. The form 'male_female teacher' (Lehrer_innen) was also intended to contribute to this; however, it can ultimately be read as a preservation of the male and female concepts in their supposed significance as cornerstones or even a limitation of the sexes/genders. In accordance with the attempt to redefine sex/gender as situated on a continuum, the appropriate representation would be to write '_male_female_teacher_' or '_teaching_persons_' (_Lehrer_innen_). This present attempt at a definition of sexes/genders could also have an impact on the field of research, something not explicitly discussed here due to lack of space. This much we can say: as long as _male_female_researchers_ (_Wissenschaftler_innen_) continue to presume a sex/gender binary, they will construct "binarities against this background where we could also see a continuum."[26] (Meissner 2008: 10). A binary sex/gender assumed in the eyes of the beholder leads to the "discovery of a biological, psychological and social binarity."[27] (Meissner 2008: 10). We hope the present attempt at a definition will contribute to a future in which researchers will set their eyes on diversity, in order to be able to recognize diverse genders.

This moment might also be a good one to consider what a world that got by without the category of gender would look like, if there were no gender whatsoever in the sight of anyone's eye. The amendment of the German civil register law of 1 November 2013 mentioned above has provoked a great deal of debate. Ralf Schuler, for instance, asks in the edition of Bild online from 13 August 2013:[28] "Is Germany abolishing the sexes?"[29] and reassures us by quoting the family expert of the CDU, Peter Tauber, who said to Bild: "The provision enables intersexual people to later decide without pressure how they want to live. Keeping the gender column open was expressly chosen in order not to break with the basic principle of two genders, but to keep it open."[30] A clear example of how, despite progressive provisions, one can continue to adher to traditional patterns depending on one's political persuasion – and depending on what is in the eye of a particular beholder. Nevertheless, the Bild article points to similar provisions in India, Brazil, Kosovo and Belgium and says about Australia: "So far Australia

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26 | Personal translation of: [konstruieren sie] "vor diesem Hintergrund Binarität, wo auch ein Kontinuum gesehen werden könnte."

27 | Personal translation of: "Entdeckung einer biologischen, psychologischen und sozialen Binarität."

28 | See URL: http://www.bild.de/politik/inland/geschlechtsumwandlung/schafft-deutschland-die-geschlechter-ab-31864862.bild.html [03.02.2014]. Bild is a populistic daily newspaper in Germany.

29 | Personal translation of: "Schafft Deutschland die Geschlechter ab?"

30 | Personal translation of: "Die Regelung ermöglicht intersexuellen Menschen, sich später ohne Druck zu entscheiden, wie sie leben wollen. Das Offenhalten der Spalte Geschlecht ist extra gewählt worden, um das Grundprinzip der zwei Geschlechter nicht zu durchbrechen, sondern eben offen zu halten."

31 | Personal translation of: "Australien ist bislang das einzige Land der Welt, in dem ein drittes Geschlecht staatlich anerkannt ist."

is the only country in the word that officially recognizes a third gender."[31] If we may at this point mention the fact that this country is, after all, an entire continent, then we can observe a general tendency which is also expressed in the GEO edition of 13 December 2013 mentioned above, where Fred Langer, in his comment on the cover topic in which the aspect of hormone treatment of children is investigated, notes with respect to gender reassignment: "The question could be so much less loaded if that of gender – man? or woman? – would lose some of its weight."[32] (GEO 2013: 108). The regional press has also discovered the issue of the gender order, covering it through remarkable oversimplifications. In the daily paper Trierischer Volksfreund of 30th December 2013 Jacqueline Maron, a student at the University of Trier, is introduced in her capacity as a co-consultant of the feminist women and lesbians department of the student's union. When she states in the text: "I want to see us moving away from the binary system of gender. I don't see a man, I don't see a woman, I see the person"[33] (Trierischer Volksfreund 2013: 12), then the article's headline reads: "Moving away from the gender system."[34]

As long as this utopia of a world without powerful gender categories is still a dream, one can only reiterate that gender is neither God-given nor preordained by nature, but should be considered as a constantly changing result of construction processes. These construction processes should be regarded both as doing gender and as discursive-performative, and they can do justice to the diversity of human possibilities, because it is this diversity which can be considered natural, as Mariela Castro Espín so succinctly put it: "Diversidad es natural" – diversity is natural.

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32 | Personal translation of: "Die Frage könnte so viel weniger beladen sein, wenn jene nach dem Geschlecht – Mann? Oder Frau? – an Gewicht verlöre."

33 | Personal translation of: "Ich möchte, dass wir uns vom binären Geschlechtersystem weg bewegen. Ich sehe keinen Mann, ich sehe keine Frau, sondern den Menschen."

34 | Personal translation of: "Vom Geschlechtersystem weg bewegen."

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